A Casebook for Comparative Politics

A CASEBOOK FOR COMPARATIVE POLITICS

An Open and Collaborative Educational Resource

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CONTENTS

Part I. Case Studies

INTRODUCTION FOR STUDENTS

Welcome to the study of Comparative Politics. If you are reading this book, it's likely that you're taking a class called Comparative Governments, World Politics, Introduction to Political Science, or something similar. If you've been assigned this book for your class, it's probably because your Professor wants you to look at individual examples (or "cases") of some of the concepts and ideas that you're going to learn about in your course.

This book is designed primarily as a companion to other texts. In this book, we're going to presume that you already know (or are learning about) terms like "regime", "political culture", "interest groups", "political parties", "ideology", "parliamentary and presidential forms", "democratic backsliding", "political economy", and many other concepts that are commonly used in the study of Political Science. What this book is going to do is take those concepts and ideas, and show you how they "work" in the real world, by looking at several countries around the globe.

That's why the book is titled "A **Casebook** for Comparative Politics". Each chapter explores a particular "case" (a country). The author of each chapter (all of whom have

taught this material many times over their careers) have taken those key concepts mentioned in the last paragraph (plus several others) and applied them to a single country. You'll notice, as you go through each chapter, that all of the cases are organized in a similar way. We've each started by discussing a brief history of how this country (or "state", to use the term that Political Scientists tend to prefer) came to be in the first place. We then talk about Identity, Political Culture and Civil Society, Participation (things like elections and parties), and formal Political Institutions (Presidents, Parliaments, Assemblies, Courts, and the like). Each chapter concludes with some discussion of current economic and foreign policy issues facing that particular country. Depending on which class your Professor is using this book for, it's highly likely that you're learning about many (if not all) of these concepts. The goal of the authors is that these case studies will provide some concrete examples and demonstrations of how these ideas show up, in different ways, around the globe.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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A NOTE FOR FACULTY

This book is intended to serve as a companion text for courses in Comparative Politics, Introduction to Political Science, and similar subjects. The target audience is lower-division undergraduates. Each chapter constitutes a single country (case), with material on seven (7) major topics: History, Identity, Culture and Civil Society, Participation, Formal Institutions, Political Economy, and Foreign Relations. The book was originally designed to complement the ASCCC-OERI introductory textbook in Comparative Politics (Bozonelos et al. 2022), but could also be used with similar texts in both Comparative Politics (such as Oberle et al. 2024) or Introductory Political Science (such as Rom et al. 2022).

The following table reflects major changes in Version numbers. Approximately a dozen additional cases are under development, and will be released in new Versions through the middle of Calendar Year 2026. Potential contributors should contact MarkL.Johnson@minnesota.edu for further information.

Version Number (Release Date)	Additions and Updates
1.11 (Oct 2025)	Updated information on new government formation and election results for Germany; Minor corrections (typos and grammar) to selected cases; addition of Adoption Report link for faculty adopters
1.1 (July 2025)	Case chapters added for France, India, and Canada
1.0 (Jan 2025)	Initial publication with chapters on the United Kingdom, Kenya, Nigeria, Germany, Greece, Cuba, and the Republic of Ireland.

Prospective faculty authors who wish to propose a case chapter addition are encouraged to contact MarkL.Johnson@minnesota.edu .

Faculty members using this book are encouraged to submit an Adoption Report.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Mark L. Johnson

As Chief Editor of the collection, I owe a great deal of thanks and gratitude to several people. First, to all of the contributors and co-authors, a huge thank you for your hard work and dedication to seeing this project to fruition. The genesis of this book lies in a long series of conversations that I've had with numerous colleagues through the years at APSA Teaching and Learning Conferences, amongst the members of the APSA Status Committee on Community Colleges, and within the editorial team at the *Journal of Political Science Education*. It's an idea that I'd had for years, but without nudging from Victor Asal (SUNY-Albany), Erin Richards (Cascadia College), Julie Mueller (Southern Maine Community College), and Joseph Roberts (Roger Williams University), I wouldn't have had the courage to try and put this together. But, even then, it was still only an idea. The authors of each chapter did the real work, and this volume wouldn't exist without that commitment and spirit of collaboration. So, if you're reading one of these chapters, and find something particularly inspiring and compelling, I hope you'll consider looking up that author's contact info (there's a brief bio at the beginning of each chapter) and dropping them a quick note.

A special thanks is also due to Dino Bozonelos (Victor Valley College) and Josh Franco (Cuyamaca College), the lead authors of the original OER textbook in Comparative Politics (introcp.com). It takes a special kind of grace to be open to the suggestion that somebody else would like to write a supplemental text that's intended to complement your already-existing work. Dino and Josh were more than welcoming to the idea, and provided logistical advice and technical assistance. Finally, there are two people within the Minnesota State Colleges and University system who deserve recognition. Gary Hunter, the Chief Counsel for Intellectual Property within the System Office, provided some needed legal advice on how to manage a crowd-sourced OER project that brought in authors from so many different institutions. Karen Pikula, Psychology Instructor at Central Lakes College, is the long-time statewide trainer and coordinator for OER projects across the MinnState System. She's been a great mentor to me, as well as just about every other OER author in the state.

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the "About the Author" inset boxes at the beginning of each chapter.

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PART I
CASE STUDIES

1.

UNITED KINGDOM: ENGLAND, SCOTLAND, AND WALES

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and how to overcome them, open educational resources, and immersive learning.

Chapter Outline

Source: Central Intelligence Agency, 2024

Why Study this Case?

The United Kingdom has been a geopolitical player for many centuries and its political development is well-studied. While a small country, comprised of Great Britain, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, it plays an outsized role in Europe and around the world. In recent years, attention has focused on it due to the political machinations of Brexit and the turmoil over immigration. The battle between "Remainers" and "Leavers" led to the rise and fall of several Prime Ministers and a downturn in its economy. Like the United States, gender inequality has remained a tenacious problem, with women's pay lagging behind men, even when women enter the workforce with higher qualifications. Over the past 50 years, more women have entered politics, serving in the Parliament and as Prime Minister. Another interesting dynamic is the interplay between the political parties within and between each nation of the U.K., which underlays the outcomes of Brexit in the current era.

Editor's Note: A separate chapter is being prepared on Northern Ireland. Although there is some discussion of Northern Irish issues in this essay, that society will be explored in great depth in that future chapter, with emphasis on the religious and cultural uniqueness of that area and its relationship with the United Kingdom.

Section 1: Brief History

The United Kingdom comprises Great Britain, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. This chapter includes Great Britain, Wales, and Scotland. Northern Ireland is covered in a separate chapter.

Wales was annexed by England in 1284 and was incorporated into the United Kingdom by King Henry VIII by his Act of Union 1536 and the Laws of Wales Acts in 1535 – 1542 (Wikipedia Contributors, 2024). The United Kingdom was created in 1707 when Britain, Scotland, and Wales were united by the Treaty of Union and the Acts of Union. The Act of Union of 1800 created the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. Great Britain defeated

the Jacobite uprisings by the Stuarts at the Battle of Culloden in 1746. At the end of the 7-Years War (1756 – 1763), the UK greatly expanded its empire as the outcome of the Treaty of Paris, which incentivized the French to assist the 13 American colonies (1776 – 1783) in defeating Great Britain (History.com, 2009). From 1919 until 1922, Sinn Fein led a war for independence against Britain, which ended in a stalemate. In 1922, the Free State of Ireland seceded from the UK under the Anglo-Irish Treaty, leaving Northern Ireland under the rule of Great Britain (Britannica Editors, 2024). (See the chapter on the Republic of Ireland and the chapter on Northern Ireland)

Empire

The first British Empire began with King Henry VII in 1496, trailing the explorations of France, Italy, Spain, and Portugal. At its greatest extent, the British Empire covered 35.5 million sq. kilometers (13.7 million sq.miles), ruling over some 500 million people. It covered a quarter of the Earth's surface. The empire lasted just under 400 years with colonies in the Americas, throughout Asia, Australia and New Zealand, and across Africa (Wikipedia Contributors, 2024).

Throughout the 16th century, Great Britain expanded its territories into the Americas, with mixed success, gaining and losing various Caribbean Islands, Guiana in South America, and the American colonies while succeeding in defeating the French in Canada. In North America, the French were defeated at the Battle of Quebec (part of the French and Indian

War) in September 1759 by Major General James Wolfe, gaining the expanding empire of French Canada (Britannica Editors, 2024). The British defeated Spain in 1789, and a few years later, Spain was defeated on the west coast at Vancouver Island and inland, which were also claimed for Britain. During this time, Great Britain competed with other continental states in the African Slave Trade. The Crown also paid privateers to attack ships from other continental powers, taking cargo and impressing crews into slave labor and prison. The Royal African Company was granted a monopoly in the slave trade in 1672. Overall, the British slave trade transported approximately 3.5 million Africans until Parliament abolished slavery and the slave trade in 1807.

The British victory at the Battle of Plassey in 1757, where they defeated the Nawab of Bengal and his French allies, established the British East India Company as a dominant military and political force in Bengal. In the subsequent decades, the British East India Company expanded its territories, either directly governing or using local rulers under the threat of force from its Presidency Armies, primarily composed of Indian sepoys led by British officers. The British and French conflicts in India became part of the Seven Years' War (1756–1763) involving major European powers.

Since 1718, Britain sent about a thousand convicts annually to the American colonies as punishment for various crimes. After losing the Thirteen Colonies in 1783, Britain needed a new place for this purpose and chose Australia. In 1770,

during a scientific expedition, James Cook mapped the eastern coast, claimed the land for Britain, and named it New South Wales. In 1787, the first ship carrying convicts set sail and arrived in 1788. Australia was claimed through proclamation since Indigenous Australians were deemed too uncivilized for treaties. Colonization brought diseases and violence that, along with the forced dispossession of their land and culture, devastated Indigenous populations. Britain continued sending convicts to New South Wales until 1840, Tasmania until 1853, and Western Australia until 1868.

Cook claimed the North and South islands of New Zealand for Britain in 1769 and 1770. Initially, European settlers interacted with the indigenous Maori primarily through trade. European settlement increased in the early 19th century, particularly in the North, where many trading stations were established. On February 6, 1840, Captain William Hobson and around 40 Maori chiefs signed the Treaty of Waitangi, which is considered New Zealand's founding document despite ongoing disputes over differing interpretations of the Maori and English versions (Wikipedia Contributors, 2024).

Between World War 1 and World War II, the United Kingdom lost the political, military, and financial ability to hold onto its colonial possessions, and they each attained independence. While Australia, New Zealand, and Canada still recognize the ascendance of the British monarchy, each is an independent democracy.

Figure 1.1 – The Extent of the British Empire in 1921 (Vad ac, 2011)

Wales

Wales is a country within the United Kingdom. The Irish Sea borders it to the north and west, England to the east, the Bristol Channel to the south, and the Celtic Sea to the southwest. As of 2021, Wales had a population of 3,107,494. The country covers an area of 21,218 square kilometers (8,192 sq mi) and features over 2,700 kilometers (1,680 mi) of coastline. Wales is predominantly mountainous, with its highest peaks in the north and central regions, including Snowdon (Yr Wyddfa), its tallest summit. Situated in the north temperate zone, Wales experiences a changeable maritime climate. The capital and largest city is Cardiff.

The Welsh Language Act 1967 removed Wales from the legal definition of England established by the Wales and Berwick Act, legally recognizing Wales as a separate entity within the UK for the first time since the Laws in Wales Acts 1535 and 1542. The 1967 Act also allowed for the use of Welsh in more areas, including some legal contexts.

In a 1979 referendum, Wales overwhelmingly voted against creating a Welsh assembly, with 80 percent opposed. However, in a 1997 referendum, the vote was much closer, with a narrow majority of 50.3 percent in favor. This led to establishing the National Assembly for Wales (Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru) in 1999 under the Government of Wales Act 1998, granting it authority over Wales's central government budget. However, the UK Parliament retained some control over its powers.

The Government of Wales Act 2006 reformed the National Assembly, making it easier to grant additional powers and creating a government system with a separate executive accountable to the legislature. Following a successful 2011 referendum, the Assembly could make laws on devolved matters without the UK Parliament's consent.

In the 2016 referendum, Wales voted to leave the European Union with the UK's Brexiters. Oxford University geography professor Danny Dorling suggested that the Leave vote was influenced by the high proportion (21 percent) of retired English people living in Wales.

The Senedd and Elections (Wales) Act 2020 renamed the National Assembly to "Senedd Cymru" in Welsh and the "Welsh Parliament" in English, reflecting its expanded legislative powers (Wikipedia Contributors, 2024).

Scotland

Scotland is a country within the United Kingdom, occupying nearly one-third of the UK's land area. It includes

the northern part of Great Britain and over 790 nearby islands, mainly in the Hebrides and the Northern Isles. Scotland shares a 96-mile (154 km) land border with England to the southeast and is otherwise surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean to the north and west, the North Sea to the northeast and east, and the Irish Sea to the south. As of 2022, Scotland's population was 5,439,842, making up 8% of the UK's population. Edinburgh is the capital, while Glasgow is the largest city.

Scotland became an independent sovereign state in the 9th century. In 1603, James VI inherited the Kingdom of England and the Kingdom of Ireland, creating a personal union of the three kingdoms. On May 1, 1707, Scotland and England united to form the Kingdom of Great Britain, with the Parliament of Scotland merging into the Parliament of Great Britain. A Scottish Parliament was re-established in 1999, devolving powers over many domestic policies. Scotland maintains a distinct legal system, educational system, and religious history, which have all helped preserve its unique culture and national identity. A 2014 referendum on remaining in the United Kingdom captured 55.4% to remain. The parliamentary plans after the Brexit split, discussed below, precipitated a consideration to float a second independence referendum, but it failed to gain traction (Wikipedia Contributors, 2024).

Section 2: Ethnic, Religious, and Cultural Identity

"The core of the population lies in and around London, with significant clusters found in central Britain around Manchester and Liverpool, in the Scottish lowlands between Edinburgh and Glasgow, southern Wales in and around Cardiff, and far eastern Northern Ireland centered on Belfast (Central Intelligence Agency, 2024)."

Population

total: 68,459,055 United Kingdom
male: 34,005,445
female: 34,453,610 (2024 est.)

Nationality

noun: Briton(s), British (collective plural)
adjective: British

Ethnic groups

White 87.2%, Black/African/Caribbean/black British 3%, Asian/Asian British: Indian 2.3%, Asian/Asian British: Pakistani 1.9%, mixed 2%, other 3.7% (2011 est.).

Languages

English
The following are recognized regional languages: Scots (about 30% of the population of Scotland), Scottish Gaelic (about 60,000 speakers in Scotland), Welsh (about 20% of the population of Wales), Irish (about 10% of the population of Northern Ireland), Cornish (some 2,000 to 3,000 people in Cornwall) (2012 est.).

Religions

Christian (includes Anglican, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Methodist) 59.5%, Muslim 4.4%, Hindu 1.3%, other 2%, unspecified 7.2%, none 25.7% (2011 est.).

Section 3: Political Culture and Civil Society

Political scientists Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba described the political culture of the United Kingdom as a deferential civic culture in 1963. In the UK, factors like class, regionalism, and the nation's history, including the legacy of the British Empire, influence its political culture (Almond, 1965).

The United Kingdom has long exemplified the development of a nation through a complex, multi-layered

system of social, political, and economic solidarities. It has integrated national identities (English, Scottish, Welsh, and Northern Irish) with a broader British identity and, for a few decades, was a member of the European Union, which ended with Brexit on January 30, 2020. This system has been facilitated by the sharing of political authority and economic resources between its national entities, the establishment of a welfare state that redistributes resources across nations and social classes, and the monarchy's constitutional role.

However, the mechanisms that have sustained cross-national solidarity for many years face challenges, jeopardizing the UK's foundational framework. Power sharing among the various nations and actors has come under intense scrutiny for their capacity to adequately represent diverse interests and voices. This scrutiny has produced movements like Scotland's pursuit of independence through a referendum. The welfare state, a crucial institution for maintaining solidarity, has been undermined by austerity policies implemented in response to the financial and economic crisis. Finally, the UK's decision to exit the European Union, determined by a referendum in June 2016, has eroded the solidarity that had previously been a cornerstone of the UK's identity. For more reading on the increase in protests in the U.K., read *Decade of dissent: how protest is shaking the UK and why it's likely to continue* (Bailey, 2020).

3.1 – Civil Society

Civil society is considered the third sector of the polity, which includes the family and the community and their relationships with each other and with the government. There are two primary definitions of civil society. The first posits that civil society comprises a voluntary organization system that empowers citizens to challenge the government and each other. The second definition emphasizes informal organizations, such as kinship ties and patron-client relationships, as the cohesive elements that facilitate smooth societal functioning. Although variations exist among theorists, most scholars tend to analyze civil society from one of these two perspectives (Hollis, 2002).

Robert Putnam posits that in a robust civil society, citizens actively engage in public affairs and form associations, which do not necessarily need to be political in nature. Whether individuals join a bowling league or advocate for a political cause, the key is their cooperation and interaction. Such interactions foster the development of "horizontal bonds of fellowship," which Putnam identifies as characteristic of a healthy civil society. He explicitly excludes kinship ties from his definition, viewing these "vertical bonds of authority" as inward-looking and detrimental to broader societal interaction. According to Putnam, societal stagnation occurs when groups do not interact. For similar reasons, he excludes religion, particularly Roman Catholicism, as practiced in Italy,

arguing that its hierarchical organization makes it an "alternative to civic community" rather than an integral part of it. The ultimate aim of a strong civil society, Putnam argues, is to produce effective governance (Putnam, 1994).

Civil Society in the UK is considered the "third sector" of the polity, influenced over time by historical changes in politics, economics, and culture. The National Council of Voluntary Organizations (NCVO) publishes an annual almanac tracking civil society participation. Voluntary participation by the public is trackable for charities and other formal non-governmental organizations, but informal volunteering is more difficult to track (Government of the United Kingdom, 2018).

In 2022, 165,758 voluntary organizations operated, the majority of which were small or micro-organizations. Over a third of the population volunteered time at least once a year during the pandemic, with rates dropping from 37% to 30% between 2019 and 2021, and remaining steady afterward. Social services is by far the largest sector, with approximately 32,000 registered organizations. The second and third-largest sectors are culture and recreation. Government support for the third sector has dropped from 37% in 2009 to around 26% in 2022. Ethnic diversity in the voluntary sector workforce is low, only 10%, compared with 14% in the public sector and 13% in the private sector. The voluntary sector workforce comprises about 3% of the total workforce and is 90% white.

Data and graphics can be found at [UK Civil Society Almanac 2022 | Home | NCVO](#) (UK Civil Society Almanac, 2024).

3.2 – Gender

"Gender equality in the UK is better than in the US, although gender gaps, gender-based violence, and disadvantageous social norms facing women and girls persist, and gains in the human capital of women and girls remain untapped," according to the data from the World Bank. The following graphic demonstrates the Gender Landscape in the United Kingdom (World Bank Group, 2024).
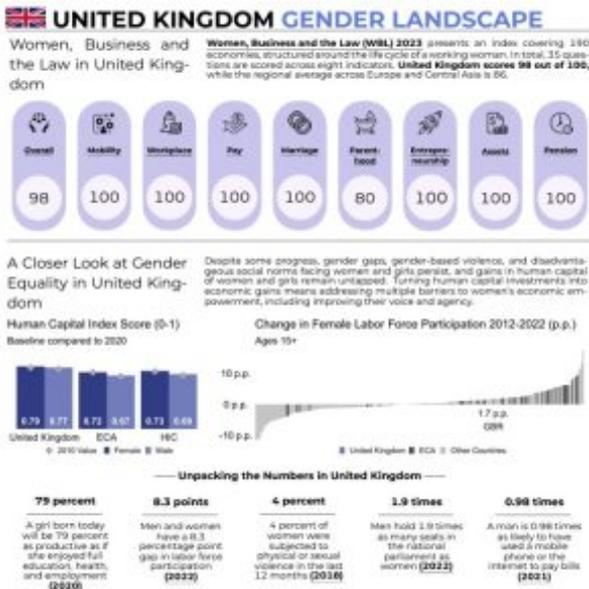
Figure 3.1 – Gender Status in the United Kingdom (World Bank Group, 2024).

Gender inequality remains a tenacious problem in the United

Kingdom. It affects multiple dimensions of women's and men's lives, including the gender pay gap, representation in politics, education and employment, and health and life expectancy. Despite progress, disparities in pay persist. Women continue to earn less than men on average for similar work. On average, women enter the workplace with higher qualifications than men but are paid at lower rates from the beginning—almost two-thirds of women entering retail work as assistants, while managers and directors are men. Once women have children, the pay gap widens. This means that because women are paid less, they save less for later life. While the proportion of women Members of Parliament has increased, there's still room for improvement. In 2019, 34% of MPs were women, compared to just 3% in 1979. Women in the UK still struggle for educational and healthcare parity with men, but efforts are underway to improve.

Some of these initiatives include the Gender Equality Policy Hub, which maps relevant policies, consultations, and inquiries about inequality for women and men. It also takes into account civil society initiatives and international events. The Gender Equality Roadmap outlines government actions to tackle gendered inequalities across life stages and focuses on participation, power, education, the economy, justice, and culture. The UK is also committed to implementing the UN Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and achieving Sustainable Development Goal 5: Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and

Girls. In line with CEDAW, the UK passed the Equality Act of 2010, which protects against workplace discrimination, including sexual harassment and unequal pay. It also has strategies in place to combat violence against women and has a focus on gender-specific needs in the criminal justice system (Government of the United Kingdom, 2019).

Section 4: Political Participation

4.1 – Political Parties and the Electoral System in the House of Commons

By the mid-19th century, the Tories had evolved into the Conservative Party, while the Whigs transformed into the Liberal Party. During the late 19th century, the Liberal Party shifted toward the political left. Disagreements over Irish Home Rule led to the formation of the Liberal Unionists, who eventually aligned with the Conservatives. For much of the 19th and early 20th centuries, political power in the UK alternated between the Liberals and Conservatives. However, by the 1920s, the Liberal Party experienced a sharp decline due to waning public support and internal resignations. Rising from an alliance of the labor movement, trade unions, and socialist organizations, the Labour Party supplanted the

Liberals as the main opposition to the Conservatives (Wikipedia Contributors, 2024).

Since then, governance in the UK has primarily alternated between the Conservative and Labour parties, though the system is not strictly two-party. Smaller parties have played significant roles, particularly at regional levels. The Liberal Democrats were the third-largest party until the 2015 general election when they were surpassed by the Scottish National Party (SNP) in parliamentary seats and membership and by the UK Independence Party (UKIP) in the popular vote.

The UK's first-past-the-post electoral system often disadvantages smaller parties nationally while benefiting those with concentrated regional support. This disparity was stark in the 2015 general election, where UKIP and the Green Party secured 4.9 million votes (12.6% for UKIP and 3.8% for the Greens) but only one parliamentary seat each. Following the election, a coalition of smaller parties—including UKIP, the Liberal Democrats, the SNP, Plaid Cymru, and the Green Party—submitted a petition with 477,000 signatures to Downing Street, advocating for electoral reform (Wikipedia Contributors, 2024).

Proportional representation has been introduced for various devolved and regional elections since 1997, including those for the Scottish Parliament, the Senedd (Welsh Parliament), the Northern Ireland Assembly, the London Assembly, and, until Brexit in 2020, the European Parliament. This shift has allowed smaller parties to gain greater

representation. Historically, UK political parties operated as private organizations without state recognition. However, the Registration of Political Parties Act 1998 formalized their status by establishing a party register. Despite these changes, party membership in the UK has seen a sharp decline, dropping by over 65% from 1983 to 2005—from 4% of the electorate to just 1.3% (Wikipedia Contributors, 2024).

4.2 – The 2024 Election

In the July 2024 election, the Labour Party won a landslide, winning 411 seats out of 650, regaining power after more than 14 years in the opposition. Its leader, Keir Starmer, was elected Prime Minister. The Conservative Party, led by Rishi Sunak, suffered a sharp downturn, gaining only 121 seats, down from 365 won in 2019. The Liberal Democrats came in a distant third, winning only 72 seats, followed by the Scottish National Party with 9 seats, Sinn Fein with 7, and Reform UK (formerly UKIP) with 5. As of July 2024, thirteen parties are represented in the House of Commons, with six parties seating between 1 and 4 MPs (International Parliamentary Union, 2024).

4.3 – Major Political Parties

Established in 1900, the **Labour Party** is a social-democratic political organization in the United Kingdom, described as an alliance of social democrats, democratic socialists, and trade

unionists. It is the governing party, positioned on the center-left of the political spectrum, having secured a victory in the 2024 general election. Currently, it is the largest political party regarding votes cast and seats held in the House of Commons. The party has produced seven prime ministers and fourteen ministries. Annually, the Labour Party holds its Labour Party Conference during the party conference season, where senior figures advocate for party policies. Under Harold Wilson and James Callaghan, Labour governed from 1964 to 1970 and from 1974 to 1979. In the 1990s, Tony Blair moved Labour to the political center with his New Labour project, leading the government from 1997 to 2010 under Blair and then Gordon Brown. In the 2020s, Keir Starmer also shifted Labour towards the center, governing since 2024 (Wikipedia Contributors, 2024).

Labour is the largest party in the Senedd (Welsh Parliament) and is the sole party in the current Welsh government. It secured the majority of Scottish seats in the 2024 general election. Labour is affiliated with the Party of European Socialists and the Progressive Alliance and holds observer status in the Socialist International. The party includes semi-autonomous branches in London, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, and it supports the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) in Northern Ireland while still organizing there. As of March 2024, Labour has 366,604 registered members. (Wikipedia Contributors, 2024).

Founded in 1834 as a successor to the Tory Party, the

Conservative and Unionist Party, commonly known as the Conservative Party and referred to as the Tories, is one of the two principal political parties in the United Kingdom, alongside the Labour Party. Since its defeat in the 2024 general election, it serves as the Official Opposition. The party occupies the right-wing to center-right of the political spectrum, encompassing various ideological factions, including one-nation conservatives, Thatcherites, and traditionalist conservatives. The party has produced twenty prime ministers. Notable leaders include Winston Churchill during World War II and Margaret Thatcher, who led the party from 1979 to 1990 and succeeded by John Major until 1997. David Cameron aimed to modernize the party after becoming leader in 2005, with the Conservatives governing from 2010 to 2024 under five prime ministers, most recently Rishi Sunak (Wikipedia Contributors, 2024).

Since the 1980s, the Conservative Party has generally embraced liberal economic policies that favor free markets, including deregulation, privatization, and marketization, although it historically supported protectionism. The party advocates for British unionism, opposing a united Ireland and Scottish and Welsh independence, and has been critical of devolution. Historically, it supported the maintenance of the British Empire. There are Eurosceptic and, to a lesser extent, pro-European factions within the party. Traditionally, the party espoused socially conservative views. Regarding defense

policy, it supports an independent nuclear weapons program and a commitment to NATO membership.

The **Liberal Democrats** are a liberal political party in the United Kingdom, established in 1988. Ed Davey currently leads the party. As the third-largest party in the UK, they hold 72 seats in the House of Commons, 84 seats in the House of Lords, four in the Scottish Parliament, one in the Welsh Senedd, and over 3,000 local council seats. The Liberal Democrats have strong support in northern Scotland, southwest London, South West England, and mid-Wales. The party operates as a federation of the English, Scottish, and Welsh Liberal Democrats and partners with the Alliance Party of Northern Ireland.

Ideologically, the Liberal Democrats are a centrist to center-left party, drawing from liberalism and social democracy. The party supports constitutional reform, including a shift to proportional representation, and advocates for civil liberties, social-liberal policies on LGBT rights, drug liberalization, education, and criminal justice. Economically, they favor a market-based economy with social welfare spending. The party is progressive, internationalist, and pro-European, having supported the People's Vote for continued EU membership and greater European integration. They have historically advocated for environmental protections and opposed military interventions like the Iraq War (Wikipedia Contributors, 2024).

The **Scottish National Party** (SNP; Scots: Scots National

Party, Scottish Gaelic: Pàrtaidh Nàiseanta na h-Alba is a Scottish nationalist and social democratic party. The party holds 63 of the 129 seats in the Scottish Parliament and 9 out of the 57 Scottish seats in the House of Commons. It has 453 local councilors out of the 1,227 available. The SNP advocates for Scottish independence from the United Kingdom and Scotland's membership in the European Union, promoting progressive social policies and civic nationalism. Established in 1934 through the merger of the National Party of Scotland and the Scottish Party, the SNP has maintained continuous parliamentary representation at Westminster since Winnie Ewing's victory in the 1967 Hamilton by-election. The 2024 general election resulted in the SNP losing 38 seats, making it the second-largest party in Scotland and the fourth-largest in the Westminster Parliament. The SNP has no members in the House of Lords, adhering to its principle of opposing the upper house and advocating for its abolition (Wikipedia Contributors, 2024).

Sinn Féin (shin FAYN, Irish: [We] Ourselves') is an Irish republican and democratic socialist political party active in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. The original Sinn Féin was established in 1905. Its members played a crucial role in founding the revolutionary Irish Republic and its parliament, the First Dáil, and were significantly involved in the Irish War of Independence, during which the party was closely associated with the Irish Republican Army (1919–1922).

Sinn Féin is currently the largest party in the Northern Ireland Assembly, having secured the largest share of first-preference votes and the most seats in the 2022 election, marking the first time an Irish nationalist party has achieved this. Since 2024, Michelle O'Neill has served as the first-ever Irish nationalist First Minister of Northern Ireland. From 2007 to 2022, Sinn Féin was the second-largest party in the Assembly, after the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), with its nominees serving as deputy First Minister in the Northern Ireland Executive. In the House of Commons of the United Kingdom, Sinn Féin has held seven of Northern Ireland's seats since the 2024 election, maintaining its policy of abstentionism at Westminster (Wikipedia Contributors, 2024).

Plaid Cymru (English: /plaɪd ˈkʌmri/ Welsh: [plaid ˈkəmri], lit. 'Party of Wales'; officially Plaid Cymru – the Party of Wales, often referred to simply as Plaid) is a center-left to left-wing Welsh nationalist political party in Wales, committed to Welsh independence from the United Kingdom. In 1925, Plaid Cymru won its first seat in the UK Parliament in 1966. Currently, the party holds 4 of the 32 Welsh seats in the UK Parliament, 12 of the 60 seats in the Senedd, and 202 of the 1,231 principal local authority councilors.

While it remains part of the United Kingdom, Plaid Cymru advocates for further devolution of powers from the UK Government to Wales, including broadcasting and communication powers, devolution of the Crown Estate,

welfare, and rail. The party also opposes nuclear power and nuclear weapons, including the UK's Trident program, and supports lowering the voting age to 16 for all elections (Wikipedia Contributors, 2024).

Reform UK is a right-wing populist political party in the United Kingdom. Initially founded as the Brexit Party in November 2018, it advocated for a no-deal Brexit and won the most seats in the 2019 European Parliament election in the UK. However, it did not secure any seats in the 2019 general election. The UK withdrew from the European Union (EU) in January 2020, and a year later, in January 2021, the party was renamed Reform UK. Following Nigel Farage's return to leadership in early June 2024 during the general election campaign, the party saw a significant increase in support. Reform UK gained five Members of Parliament (MPs) in the election and received the third-highest popular vote, with 4,117,221 votes, accounting for 14.3% of the vote share. Nigel Farage had previously been the leader of the UK Independence Party (UKIP), a right-wing populist and Eurosceptic party, during the early 2010s (Wikipedia Contributors, 2024).

The Green Party of England and Wales (often known simply as the Green Party or the Greens) is a green, left-wing political party in England and Wales. The party currently has four representatives in the House of Commons and two in the House of Lords, along with over 800 local councilors and three members of the London Assembly. The Green Party was established in 1990, alongside the Scottish Greens and

the Green Party Northern Ireland, following the division of the pre-existing Green Party, founded initially as the PEOPLE Party in 1973. The party's ideology blends environmentalism with left-wing economic policies, advocating for well-funded and locally controlled public services. It supports a steady-state economy with regulated capitalism and proportional representation. The Greens take progressive stances on civil liberties, animal rights, LGBT rights, and drug policy reform. The Green Party advocates replacing the UK's first-past-the-post voting system with proportional representation to allocate parliamentary seats based on national vote share (Wikipedia Contributors, 2024).

Section 5: Formal Political Institutions

The UK is a constitutional monarchy and parliamentary democracy operating under the Westminster system, also known as a "democratic parliamentary monarchy." It is a centralized, unitary state where the Parliament of the United Kingdom is sovereign. Parliament consists of the elected House of Commons, the appointed House of Lords, and the Crown (personified by the monarch). The primary business of Parliament occurs in the two houses, but royal assent is required for a bill to become an act of Parliament (statute law). Due to parliamentary sovereignty, the British constitution is

uncodified, comprising various written sources, including parliamentary statutes, judge-made case law, international treaties, and constitutional conventions. The Supreme Court recognizes several principles underlying the British constitution, such as parliamentary sovereignty, the rule of law, democracy, and adherence to international law (Wikipedia Contributors, 2024).

The lower chamber of the UK Parliament is the **House of Commons**, which contains 650 statutory seats. They are elected to serve five-year terms unless snap elections are called by the Prime Minister or the House of Commons votes no-confidence in the Prime Minister, at which time new elections are set. As of 2024, 387 men are seated and 263 women (40.5%). An electoral quota is voluntary for political parties but not required.

The upper chamber of the UK Parliament is the **House of Lords**, which usually numbers around 800 individuals (785 in 2024). Of these, 662 Life Peers are appointed by the Crown on the recommendation of the Prime Minister, while hereditary peers hold 92 seats and 26 archbishops and bishops. Seats are held by 557 men and 228 women (29%). There is no electoral quota for women (International Parliamentary Union, 2024).

King Charles III is the current monarch and head of state of the UK and 14 other independent countries, collectively known as the "Commonwealth realms." The monarch holds all executive authority as the personal embodiment of the Crown and is fundamental to the UK's law and functioning

of government. However, these powers, including those of the royal prerogative, are generally exercised on the advice of ministers responsible to Parliament and the electorate. The monarch retains the right to be consulted, to encourage, and to warn in performing official duties and has several reserve powers to uphold responsible government and prevent constitutional crises.

For general elections to the House of Commons, the UK is divided into 650 constituencies, each represented by one member of Parliament (MP) elected by the first-past-the-post system. MPs serve for up to five years and must then stand for re-election if they wish to continue as MPs. Since the 1920s, the Conservative Party (Tories) and the Labour Party have been the dominant political parties in the UK, leading to a somewhat two-party system. Other political parties have also won seats in the House of Commons, though never more than the Conservatives or Labour.

The Prime Minister is the head of government in the UK, leading a Cabinet of senior ministers selected and directed by the Prime Minister. All are Members of Parliament (MPs) who hold Portfolios in the major policy areas. The principal opposition party maintains a "shadow government" where PMs hold the same portfolios and an alternative set of policies is held. That way, if the government fails through a vote of no confidence or an election, the next government is probably ready to step up.

The Government serves as the main instrument for public

policymaking, administers public services, and, through the Privy Council, promulgates statutory instruments and advises the monarch. Nearly all prime ministers have concurrently served as First Lord of the Treasury and have continuously held this position since 1905, along with being the Minister for the Civil Service since 1968 and Minister for the Union since 2019. Appointed by the monarch, the Prime Minister is an MP, the leader of the political party with the most seats in the House of Commons, and holds office by commanding the confidence of the House. The current Prime Minister, as of July 2024, is Keir Starmer, leader of the Labour Party.

Although not part of the United Kingdom, the three Crown Dependencies (Jersey, Guernsey, and the Isle of Man) and 14 British Overseas Territories are subject to the sovereignty of the British Crown. The Crown exercises its responsibilities for the Crown Dependencies mainly through the British government's Home Office and the British Overseas Territories principally through the Foreign Office.

As the first country to undergo the industrial revolution, Britain created unprecedented wealth, setting new benchmarks for economic prosperity globally. It was also the first country to develop a modern parliamentary system, where a representative body, founded on the consent of the governed, became the primary ruling entity. While representative institutions existed on a smaller scale in some European cities, the British Parliament's consolidation of power over the monarchy across the United Kingdom established a new

framework and political standard for legitimacy. Despite facing significant challenges, this framework continues to govern the UK today (Belanger M. a., 2024).

A unique feature of the British political system is its lack of a written constitution in the conventional sense. Unlike most nations with a written constitution detailing government structure, leadership mechanisms, citizenship definitions, and rights, the UK's constitution comprises a millennium of political processes and practices. This includes parliamentary acts, such as the Bill of Rights in 1689 and the Magna Carta, which initially established the King's duty to consult wealthy barons. The constitution also encompasses conventions or practices that are not codified but have evolved into relatively inviolable precedents. For instance, before the Fixed-Term Parliaments Act of 2011, there was no explicit constitutional requirement for elections at least every five years, yet no prime minister would breach this convention. Although there is occasional debate about the need for a written constitution, the prevailing view is that the current constitution has proven flexible and effective over time, providing stability and continuity unmatched by many other countries with multiple constitutions.

The United Kingdom does not operate under a single legal system, owing to Article 19 of the 1706 Treaty of Union, which ensured the continuation of Scotland's distinct legal framework. Today, the UK is governed by three separate legal systems: English law, Northern Ireland law, and Scots law. In

October 2009, the United Kingdom Supreme Court was established to replace the Appellate Committee of the House of Lords. Additionally, the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, which shares members with the Supreme Court, acts as the highest appellate court for several independent Commonwealth countries, British Overseas Territories, and the Crown Dependencies (Government of the United Kingdom, 2024).

English law, applicable in England and Wales, and Northern Ireland law are rooted in common law (or case law) principles, originating in medieval England and forming the basis of legal systems worldwide. The courts of England and Wales are overseen by the Senior Courts of England and Wales, comprising the Court of Appeal, the High Court of Justice (for civil cases), and the Crown Court (for criminal cases). Scots law, conversely, is a blend of common-law and civil-law principles. Its principal courts include the Court of Session (for civil cases) and the High Court of Justiciary (for criminal cases). The Supreme Court of the United Kingdom serves as the highest court of appeal for civil cases under Scots law (Government of the United Kingdom, 2024).

Section 6: Political Economy

The years between the two World Wars were a time of continual conflict between powerful new unions representing

importing economic sectors such as mining and transport on the one hand and a state dominated by commercial interests. These conflicts reflect the tensions between free market policies, which generate growth but also tend to foster inequality and the demands of democratic citizens for policies that both foster growth and address those inequalities at the same time. In countries where politicians have to be responsive to these demands, the result has been variations on a set of social programs known generally as the Welfare State. In the United States, this term often connotes programs focused on the poor, but elsewhere, it refers to universally available benefits. Examples include health insurance, social security, free public education, and unemployment insurance (Belanger M. a., 2024).

The UK has a regulated social market economy. It ranks as the sixth-largest economy in the world and the second-largest in Europe by nominal GDP based on market exchange rates. The UK's pound sterling is the fourth most-traded currency in the foreign exchange market and the world's fourth-largest reserve currency, following the US dollar, euro, and yen. In 2023, sterling was the second best-performing G10 currency against the dollar, with a gain of about 5%, surpassed only by the Swiss franc. London is the global capital for foreign exchange trading, holding a 38.1% share of the $7.5 trillion daily global turnover in 2022.

The Treasury, headed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, develops and executes the government's public finance and

economic policy. The Department for Business and Trade oversees business, international trade, and enterprise. The Bank of England, the UK's central bank, issues notes and coins in pound sterling, while banks in Scotland and Northern Ireland can issue their own notes, provided they hold enough Bank of England notes in reserve. In 2022, the UK was the world's fourth-largest exporter, behind China, the US, and Germany. The UK's estimated nominal GDP for 2024 is £2.765 trillion, a 23% increase from the 2019 figure of £2.255 trillion, before leaving the EU, based on similar US and EU exchange rates. Inflation in the UK rose by 2% in the year to May 2024, meeting the government's target (WorldData.Info, 2024).

6.1 – Brexit

For much of the second half of the 20th Century, Britons demonstrated strong support and fidelity to the major political parties. At the time, the UK was part of the European Common Market, and in 1975, a referendum asked the population if they wanted to remain in the EC, which they did by a two-to-one majority. The outcome was driven by high inflation, high unemployment, and a stagnating economy. The European Common Market was seen to be in better condition, which would benefit the UK. In the 21st Century, that all changed. In the early 2000s, the population was politically divided by waves of immigrants due to the wars

in the Middle East and Africa and the impact of the 2008 Great Recession, which caused a strong economic downturn across Europe. The expansion of the European Union from nine to twenty-eight states, many economically weaker than the original group, led the Conservative Party in the UK to doubt the viability of the European Union and want to renegotiate its position. David Cameron, a strong Prime Minister who had just been reelected in 2016, decided that the population should "have their say" in an "in or out referendum (Clark, 2017)." He believed he could convince the population that the UK's sovereignty was secure.

The right-wing UKIP party, led by Nigel Farage, had been gaining seats in Parliament and was a loud voice for the "Leave" coalition. Farage then, as now, is a populist opposed to ongoing immigration policy, an issue even many Remainers embraced. Farage, whose campaign to build a "people's army," was supported by the vast numbers of the discontented. On board was future Prime Minister Boris Johnson, another conservative leading "Leave" voice who was more popular with party members than then Prime Minister David Cameron. He brought along those who were Euroskeptics who did not want to be seen supporting Farage.

Cameron was betting that most of the population would vote to "Remain," maintaining the less-risky status quo. "Remain was the position of the majority of MPs in parliament, Cameron's government, the business community, and the international community. They led a campaign called

"Project Fear" that sought to frighten the populace into believing Brexit would cause extreme financial and economic hardship and convince everyone that leaving was a threat to the UK's security.

The Referendum was held in 2016. To everyone's surprise, "Leave" won with 51.9% of the overall vote and 54% of the vote in England. For the first time in its history, the House of Commons was required to follow a policy to which three-quarters of the body was opposed. The overall turnout was 72%, with 28% of eligible voters not participating. Post-referendum polling of non-voting eligible voters indicated that the majority would have voted with Remainers (Clark, 2017). Brexit created a seismic shift in the UK's politics and economics. It would cause a conundrum for Northern Ireland's trade relationship with England, the Republic of Ireland, and the European Union. "Remainers" have attempted to float another referendum but have not received the support needed.

Survey research was regularly conducted before and after the referendum by Clark, Goodwin, and Whiteley (2017), in conjunction with their annual social surveys (ECMS) conducted since 2007 and the European Social Surveys. Data analysis shows that while economics was a significant factor in the referendum, attitudes on immigration comprised a more substantial push variable. For current information about immigration, go to [Summary of latest statistics – GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](www.gov.uk). The rules under which the divorce from the

EU would occur and a new set of bilateral agreements were attempted under Prime Minister Teresa May. Failing a parliamentary vote and snap election, May was replaced by Boris Johnson. Prime Minister Johnson successfully negotiated Article 50 (the divorce) with the EU and situating new trade arrangements.

Public opinion of post-Brexit consequences demonstrates that many regret leaving the EU. Between 2016 and 2023, the economy stabilized, but immigrant flows are perceived to increase rather than decrease. (Stowers, 2023). Among "Leavers," support for Brexit dropped from 88% to about 77% in 2023, and support for returning to the EU has increased, but it is not enough to hold another referendum focused on returning to the EU. As of May 2024, 55% of the population believe that leaving the EU was a mistake, compared to 33% who prefer to stay out. Since mid-2022, poll numbers show that over 50% of respondents hold regrets about leaving the European Union, and in late 2023, only 31% of respondents wanted to return to the EU, while 30% wanted to improve trade relations (Stowers, 2023). See the graphic of change in opinion just below from Statista (Statista, 2020-2024).
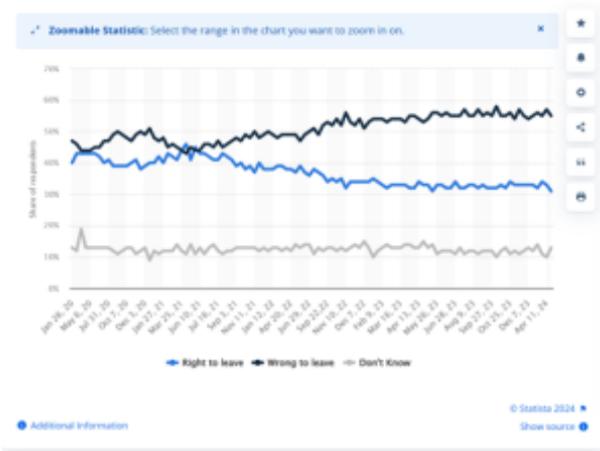
Figure 6.1 – British public opinion about Brexit has changed since 2020 (Statista, 2020-2024).

6.2 – Trade

The UK includes Trade in its foreign policy agenda. The Minister of State holds the portfolio for Business and Trade. The new Trade Minister in July 2024 stated that he hoped that ongoing barriers between the UK and EU can be removed (Balmer, 2024).

After leaving the European Union and its customs union, the UK established the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA), which took effect in 2020. This agreement maintained tariff- and quota-free trade between the UK and the EU but did not provide a framework for deeper future integration. Consequently, the UK and the EU have a rigid customs and regulatory border (Freeman, 2022). This marked an unprecedented event in global trade, as no state had previously departed from such a deeply integrated agreement.

Research by Freeman et al. (2022) indicates that UK-EU trade declined sharply post-Brexit but gradually recovered in line with global trends during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, following the pandemic, the UK reduced the range of products it exported to the EU by 30%, primarily affecting low-value trade relationships. Imports from the EU also plummeted through 2021 due to increased trade costs as businesses adjusted their supply chains and shifted trade flows away from the EU. Many firms began sourcing materials from alternative markets or targeting non-EU countries for exports, bypassing the EU altogether (Freeman, 2022).

The graphs below illustrate the fluctuations in UK monthly trade in goods with both EU and non-EU countries, highlighting the impact of Brexit and the COVID-19 pandemic on trade flows.

In 2022, the UK exported goods and services worth £340 billion to the EU, representing 42% of its total exports. Simultaneously, the UK imported £432 billion in goods and services from the EU, accounting for 48% of total imports. This imbalance resulted in a trade deficit of £92 billion with the EU, compared to a £5 billion surplus with non-EU countries (Ward, 2024).

It is important to note that these figures are presented in current prices, unadjusted for inflation. Other factors, such as the pandemic and changes in data collection methodologies post-Brexit, may also have influenced these statistics. Despite these complexities, the data provides a broad overview of the

evolving UK-EU trade relationship during this period. (Ward, 2024)

UK monthly trade in goods with the EU
£ billions, January 2018 - February 2023
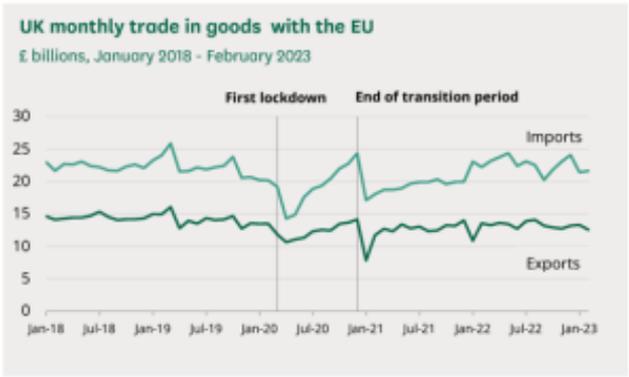
Source: ONS, series JIM7 and JIM8

UK monthly trade in goods with non-EU countries
£ billions, January 2018 - February 2023
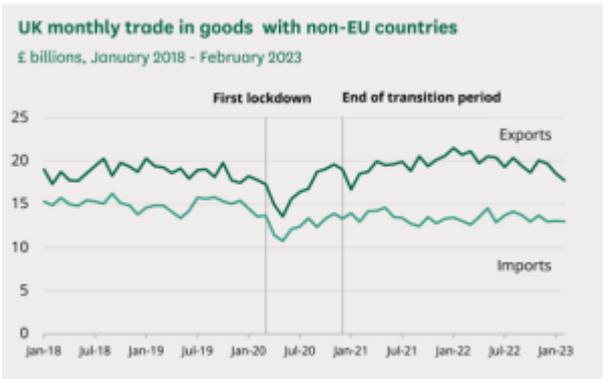
Source: ONS, series JIN2 and JIN3

Another source of post-Brexit trade issues is Northern Ireland's situation. When the UK was a member of the EU, Northern Ireland traded over the border with the Republic of Ireland without barriers. Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland wanted to continue this relationship after Brexit, but new rules needed to be written. Northern Ireland comprises only 1% of UK trade.

The status of Northern Ireland under the withdrawal

agreement is multifaceted and continues to be a subject of contentious debate. In essence, Northern Ireland retains membership in the EU market for goods and possesses a hybrid customs status, which places it partially within the EU and UK customs territories. These provisions obviate the need for a customs border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland but have necessitated establishing a customs and regulatory border in the Irish Sea, separating Great Britain from Northern Ireland. Consequently, the trade repercussions of Brexit are anticipated to manifest differently in Northern Ireland compared to the remainder of the United Kingdom (Freeman, 2022). This agreement is called the Northern Ireland Protocol Bill. Under Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, the Protocol was abandoned for the new Windsor Framework. Improvements within the new deal include keeping the same system for food safety, establishing permanent regulations on the movement of some goods, and removing onerous pet travel regulations. The "Stormont Brake" is a new mechanism that permits London to hold a sovereignty veto over any new goods rules for Northern Ireland impacting the United Kingdom (Horne, 2023).

6.3 – Poverty and Income Inequality

The United Kingdom is a developed country in the High Income grouping of the World Bank. The overall population

was about 66 million people in 2021. The unemployment level is 4.1%, and the UK's GINI index is .32 as of 2023. Its share of the population living below $2.15 a day has dropped from 0.05% (2018-2020) to 0.25% in 2021. However, the population living at or below $6.85 per day has risen from .5% in 2016 to .74% in 2021. That is about .5 million people living in poverty in the UK (World Bank Group, 2024). The GINI index measures income distribution across an entire population, ranging from 0 to 1 where 0 represents perfect equality and 1 represents perfect inequality. But this is not the whole story. Unemployment at the national level does not consider ethnicities, only males and females with various educational levels. Note: See the discussion about women's pay gap in the section on Gender.

Comparativists often examine how income is distributed between income groups rather than just using GDP, GNI, and per capita income. Studying income distribution tells us how much difference there is between the lowest income groups, the highest income groups, and the size of the middle class. The chart below shows the distribution of income among income groups for 2021. The highest 20% holds 40% of all income in the UK, while the lowest 20% holds only 7.6%. The three middle-income groups hold about 52% of national income (World Bank Group, 2024).
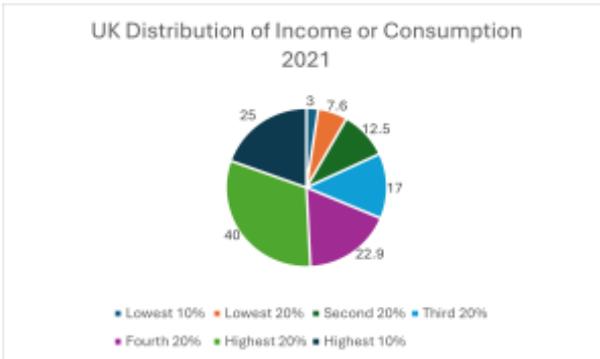
Figure 6.2 – Income Distribution in the UK (World Bank Group, 2024)

The McKinsey Group for Black Economic Mobility has found that while efforts have been made to improve employment access for Black, Bangladeshi, and Pakistani citizens, disparities remain. In 2019, these three groups earned 15% to 16% less than White workers, compared with Indian and Chinese workers, who earned 15%-20% more than White workers on average. The McKinsey Group surveyed 80 UK companies, finding that two-thirds of companies made significant improvements in promoting higher-than-average workforce participation of women, but only 50% had higher participation of ethnic minority groups (Dixon-Fyle, 2023).

The population is far from accepting ongoing inequalities. During the decade of 2000 – 2010, protests among groups increased as the banking crisis of 2007-2010 brought widespread shutdowns, causing a significant number of people to suddenly become unemployed. The graphic below shows the rise in the types of groups and their focus areas protesting UK government actions, or lack thereof, during the economic

crisis (Bailey, 2020). "The end of the 2010s, however, now allows us to provide an overview of the changing nature of protest trends in Britain. As the figure below shows, reported protest events steadily rose throughout the decade. In 2019 there were over 280 reported protest events, compared with 154 in 2010 – and only 83 in 2007, the year before the global economic crisis hit (Bailey, 2020)."

Figure 6.3 – Nature of public protests, 2010s (Bailey, 2020)

Section 7: Foreign Relations

The diplomatic foreign relations of the United Kingdom are managed by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, led by the Foreign Secretary. The Prime Minister and various other agencies play a significant role in policy formulation, while numerous institutions and businesses also contribute to and influence these processes. Trade is held under the Foreign Secretary (Wikipedia Contributors, 2025).

During the 19th and early 20th centuries, the United Kingdom was the preeminent global power, particularly during the "Pax Britannica" era characterized by unmatched

dominance and unprecedented international peace in the mid-to-late 1800s. The UK maintained its status as a superpower until the Suez Crisis of 1956 and the subsequent dissolution of the British Empire, which led to a gradual decline in its global influence. Despite this, the United Kingdom remains a major power and is a permanent United Nations Security Council member. It is also a founding member of the G7, G20, NATO, AUKUS, OECD, WTO, Council of Europe, OSCE, and the Commonwealth of Nations, the latter being a remnant of the British Empire.

The UK had been a member of the European Union (and its predecessor organizations) since 1973. However, following the 2016 membership referendum, the process of withdrawing from the EU commenced in 2017. It culminated with the UK's formal exit on January 31, 2020, and the end of the transition period on December 31, 2020, by establishing a trade agreement with the EU. Since the referendum and the conclusion of trade negotiations with the EU, UK policymakers have actively pursued new trade agreements with other global partners.

The United Kingdom holds a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council. It is a member of numerous international organizations, including NATO, AUKUS, the Commonwealth of Nations, the G7 finance ministers, the G7 forum, the G20, the OECD, the WTO, the Council of Europe, and the OSCE. The UK operates the British Council, an organization in over 100 countries specializing in

international cultural and educational exchanges. The UK maintains a "Special Relationship" with the United States and a close partnership with France, known as the "Entente Cordiale," sharing nuclear weapons technology with both nations. The Anglo-Portuguese Alliance, the oldest binding military alliance in the world, further underscores the UK's historical alliances (Wikipedia Contributors, 2025).

Additionally, the UK is closely connected with the Republic of Ireland, sharing a Common Travel Area and cooperating through the British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference and the British-Irish Council. The UK's global influence is bolstered by its trade relationships, foreign investments, official development assistance, and military engagements.

Under the recent leadership of Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and the Conservative Party, the primary foreign policy emphasis has been on the "Global UK" initiative, with a significant focus on bolstering UK interests in the Asia-Pacific region. The Labour Party, under the leadership of Keir Starmer and Foreign Secretary David Lammy, is concentrating foreign policy efforts on reinforcing the UK's transatlantic relationships. Policy documents from both parties identify the war in Ukraine and the threat posed by Russia as the foremost security concerns. Additionally, China is regarded as the UK's principal economic competitor, given its ongoing efforts to strengthen its economy and consolidate its influence in the Asia-Pacific region (Goddard, 2023).

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2.

FRANCE

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Chapter Outline

Why Study this Case?

Starting with the ancien régime, which can be characterized as an absolute monarchy, the

French political order has also included empires, a revolutionary dictatorship, a fascist regime, provisional governments, and parliamentary and semi-presidential democracy. The French case illustrates wide ranging forms of political life from authoritarianism to democracy, along with 15 different constitutions in over 200 years of its post-French Revolution history. The French Revolution (1789-99) laid the foundations for modern democracy in Europe and a political culture that emphasizes French citizenship and equality. In addition, the post-World War II Fifth Republic (1958-present) broke the tumultuous cycle of revolutions, authoritarianism, and unstable democracy, as well as established a statist political economic approach, which still provides benefits and worker protections that are no longer commonplace in developed democracies. Finally, France has been a core partner in the creation and enlargement of the European Union (EU). While France has committed to economically and politically unified Europe, the French economy has slowed, and both France and the EU have begun to question France's leadership role within the EU.

Section 1: A Brief History

Modern day France is made up primarily of the lands that the Romans called Gaul, which also included what is now Belgium and Luxembourg, as well as parts of Switzerland, the Netherlands, Germany, and Northern Italy. Roman control of Gaul was established in the Gallic Wars (58-50 BCE) through the conquests of Julius Caesar. With the end of Roman Gaul in the 5th century, the Germanic Franks under Clovis I, the founder of the Merovingian dynasty, unified much of Roman Gaul under a new name, Francia for Frankish lands. Frankish rule continued with the Carolingian dynasty in the mid-8th century, and through Charlemagne's expansion into old Roman lands, Francia became part of the Holy Roman

Empire. During the Middle Ages, the Kingdom of France emerged from western Francia in the late 10th century with the founding of the Capetian dynasty, and in the late 12th century, Philip II was the first to call himself the King of France. A succession dispute between England and France sparked the Hundred Years' War in 1337, which was fought primarily between House of Plantagenet, who ruled England, and the House of Valois, who ruled France. The war ended in 1453 with a French victory that drove the future development of French nationalism and monarchic power. Over the next 300 years in what is called Early Modern France, a centralized absolute monarchy emerged, with the development of military and financial organization and a professional bureaucracy. This brief history will illustrate the rise of the modern nation-state from Early Modern France, the French Revolution, and the Napoleonic period, democratization under the Third and Fourth Republic (1870-1940 and 1946-1958), to the stable democratic state under the Fifth Republic (1958-present).

1.1: Early Modern France (1453-1789)

The **ancien régime**, which describes the Kingdom of France before its toppling during the French Revolution, includes France in the Middle Ages and Early Modern France. Initially in medieval France, military and political power was largely decentralized. The royal bureaucracy and court was small with a limited reach. Nobles were not unified as a class, rather they

had local bases of power, through their own lands and military organizations and their roles in the influential *parlements*, or regional judicial appeals courts. The three-estate system was also established during this time with the First Estate, which was comprised of Catholic clergy. The Second Estate included landed and titled nobility, and the Third Estate held the remaining population of commoners. The monarchy created the **Estates General**, a limited consultative assembly that could petition the king and be consulted on fiscal policies. However, the Estates General was not a standing assembly, and it could only be convened by the king.

Early Modern or Renaissance France describes the development and dominance of **absolute monarchy** beginning in the 1500s, until the French Revolution in 1789. The state-building hallmarks of French absolutism like a professional army and bureaucracy, a centralized tax system, and a successful mercantilist economy evolved over many years, driven by financial exigencies, internal and religious conflicts, and territorial expansion. This period saw the addition of eastern and southern border territories that were autonomous or part of the Holy Roman Empire and the Spanish kingdoms of Aragon and Navarre. This era's territorial expansion is the basis of the borders of France today. France also engaged in several European wars including the Italian Wars (1494-1559) and the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648) as well as internal Wars of Religion (1562-1629) between French Catholics and Protestants. The costs of war and maintaining territorial

control led to financial pressures that required more efficient tax collection and the collection of fees for holding state positions, even prompting the creation of new offices for purposes of royal revenue. The *taille*, a land tax on peasants and commoners was a key source of royal finances but there were many other national taxes including the *gabelle*, a tax on salt. Administrative consolidation and control also required that feudal personal patronage systems be replaced by state-centric institutions like the intendancy system, with local level royal representatives and the regional *parlements*, staffed by *noblesse de robe*, hereditary or purchased judicial offices. Administrative and tax expansion moved power to the center and away from local nobles.

The reign of Louis XIV (1643-1715) represents the height of unconstrained absolute monarchy with the lavish transformation of the Palace of Versailles, which became the seat of French government and the royal court, and the waging of expensive wars in addition to further colonial expansion primarily in the Americas, the Caribbean, and India with some outposts in Africa, which started with Francis I (1494-1547). Notably, while the influence of the Estates General waxed and waned during the *ancien régime*, Louis XIV never once convened the Estates General. By the start of Louis XVI's reign (1774-1792), the debts of war and court expenses tested the monarchy's unchecked political power. To secure more funding and to increase popular support, Louis XVI convened the Estates General. Historically, each estate had one vote,

allowing the First and Second Estate to overrule the Third Estate, which was the only estate subject to the *taille*. King Louis XIV initially resisted when the Third Estate called for one single National Assembly, which would be dominated by the more numerous members of the Third Estate but then capitulated when faced with demonstrations and civil unrest. With rising food prices and popular discontent with the aristocracy, Parisians seized control of the Bastille, a fortress turned royal prison that was used by Louis XIV to jail his enemies, including the political opposition. The storming of the Bastille on July 14, 1789, sparked the French Revolution. Although the **French Revolution** ended the *ancien régime*, royal absolutism made several important contributions in making the modern nation-state in France through state-led lawmaking and law enforcement, war-making and national defense, money raising through taxation systems, and the growth of a professional bureaucracy.

1.2: The French Revolution and the Napoleonic France (1789-1815)

After the storming of the Bastille in 1789, the National Assembly effectively governed France and it made sweeping reforms that abolished feudalism, established state control over the French Catholic Church, suspended the parlements, drafted a new constitution, and issued the **Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen**. The Declaration of the

Rights of Man and Citizen outlined the universality of natural human rights regardless of noble birth or faith, which included individual rights to property, freedom and life, with equal protection by law. This statement of principles remains today in the constitutions of the French Fifth Republic (1958-present). The revolution also promoted the separation of church and state, a national identity, and rational bureaucratic rule where public offices, judicial roles, and taxation laws no longer depended solely on noble birth and religious privileges. For example, a lasting legacy of the National Assembly was the complete redesign of French administrative organization to standardized administrative *départements* or departments of similar size with the same sub-administrative institutions and locally elected officials. Départements, which are still used today, created uniform administrative standards while also integrating these subnational units into the still powerful centralized state. Over the next three years, the National Assembly continued to make legislative and judicial reforms and create new state institutions, including a short-lived unicameral legislative branch of elected representatives, the Legislative Assembly and replacing the regional parlements with an independent judiciary. However, food shortages and economic depression, along with military defeats, exacerbated political and social divisions and led to popular revolts and the abolishment of the monarchy in 1792.

The Legislative Assembly called for the formation of the

National Convention, which was tasked to create a new Constitution without the monarchy. The National Convention established the First Republic (1792–1795). The National Convention was also the first French legislative body that allowed male suffrage without class-based eligibility restrictions. However, the moderates were squeezed both by conservatives with ties to the monarchy and clergy and radical secular republicans. The National Convention, which had to contend with civil unrest and food riots due to shortage and high prices as well as ongoing war efforts, delegated increasing governance powers to the Committee of Public Safety. With the 1793 insurrection, the Jacobins, a radical anticlerical militant faction seized control of the Committee of Public Safety, suspended the constitution, and began executing enemies of the Republic by guillotine. The Reign of Terror was a year-long period of state-sanctioned violence, with a series of mass killings and public executions including those on the political right: clergy, nobles, and King Louis XVI and Queen Marie Antoinette. However, it also grew to target those in opposition and finally ended with the execution of Maximilien Robespierre, leader of the Jacobins, as the revolution turned on the Jacobin dictatorship.

Weakened in the aftermath of the Reign of Terror, the Committee of Public Safety was replaced by the Directory (1795–1799) led by moderates, which was established by the new 1795 Constitution. Facing internal and external pressures, the Directory was overthrown in a coup led by

Napoleon Bonaparte, which marked the end of the French Revolution. Napoleon Bonaparte was appointed First Consul in the new more autocratic but nominally republican government, the Consulate (1799–1804). Under a new Constitution, the Constitution of the Year VIII, Napoleon Bonaparte consolidated his power into a one-man dictatorship. He established a merit-based civil service open to all classes with new elite schools to train new civil servants. In 1804, the Consulate established the **Napoleonic Code**, a unified legal system with many of its elements still used in France today. The Napoleonic Code kept many revolutionary principles like the rule of law, due process, rights of the accused, the separation of church and state, and the freedom of religion, but also reinstated the pre-revolutionary patriarchal control of man over his wife and children and removed divorce by mutual consent.

In 1804, France returned to absolutism with the founding of the First French Empire as Napoleon Bonaparte took the title of Emperor by popular referendum. Napoleon Bonaparte's successes in war expanded France's borders east and west, through the annexation of Tuscany, Piedmont, Genoa, and the Rhineland, and the placement of relatives onto the thrones of Holland, Westphalia, Italy, Spain, and Warsaw. Moreover, with allies in Austria and Germany, Napoleon's Grand Empire spanned much of the European continent, allowing him to wage economic warfare against the British through blockades, known as the Continental System. After a

decade of rule, in 1814, Napoleon abdicated following a series of military defeats and his short return from exile ended with his final defeat at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815. Following Napoleon's final exile in 1815, a constitutional monarchy was restored as Louis XVIII returned to France as the King, with a new constitution, the Charter of 1814 ending the First Empire. King Charles X, who followed Louis XVIII, abdicated the throne after the 1830 Revolution. Then the 1848 Revolution, during which King Louis-Phillippe abdicated the throne, led to the establishment of the Second Republic with the election of Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte as President. With the Coup of 1851, Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte proclaimed himself Emperor Napoleon III in 1852, founding the Second Empire (1852-1870). Under Emperor Napoleon III, France began to rebuild its colonial empire, which it had mostly lost by the French Revolution, expanding into Africa and Southeast Asia. The Second Empire ended with the capture of Napoleon III and French defeat in the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871).

1.3: Third and Fourth Republic (1870-1940 and 1946-1958)

The Third Republic started as a provisional government that considered a return to monarchy but established a parliamentary republic with the 1875 Constitution, which included a bicameral parliament and a president. Despite the

70-year longevity of the Third Republic, which included the Belle Époque (1871-1914), a cultural golden age, it was marred by short-lived unstable governments that were weakened by the many divisions between political factions like anarchists, monarchists and many other groups in between. For example, the Paris Commune was a revolutionary municipal government of radicals that controlled Paris for two months, from March 1871 to May 1871, which ended only through French army's intervention and repression. The centrist Democratic Republican Alliance dominated the parliament in the early 1900s, but its dominance was challenged by the liberal Radical Party, founded in 1901, creating a polarized government by the 1930s. However, a strong centralized bureaucracy managed economic and military modernization and France's growing colonial empire, including the integration of colonies into France's administrative and economic systems.

Following its defeat in the Franco-Prussian War, France's main rival was Germany and France entered World War I (1914-1918) against Germany through its treaty obligations to Russia. With the entry of the United States into the war, France and its allies, the United States, Britain, and Italy, defeated Germany. Despite French victory and the return of Alsace-Lorraine to France, World War I was a war of attrition fought through trench warfare, which involved about 1.5 million French casualties. The high human cost of World War I and the effects of the Great Depression (1929-1939)

exacerbated further political and social divisions and contributed to the instability of ruling coalition governments in the interwar period. The government of Bloc National, a right-wing coalition (1919-1924), was followed by the first Coalition of the Left, made of left-wing parties (1924-1926), not to be confused with a later second Coalition of the Left (1932-1934). The Popular Front, an alliance of Communists, Socialists, and Radicals narrowly won the 1936 legislative elections but lasted only a year until 1937, when centrists took back control of the government until the end of the Third Republic in 1940. The interwar period also saw the founding of the first mass conservative rightwing nationalist party, the French Social Party (PSF). The Third Republic's weak and ineffectual governments have been attributed to this political whiplash. Despite appeasement policies, including the Munich Agreement (1938), France entered the war with the German invasion of Poland in 1939. The French government's rapid collapse after its defeat in the Battle of France led to the Vichy regime (1940-1944), an authoritarian collaborationist government from the French right and center during German occupation. Charles de Gaulle led the Free French, an organization of the French resistance groups. He later led the formation of a provisional government with the liberation of France in 1944.

Charles de Gaulle advocated for a presidential system to address the paralysis of the Third Republic's party-based system. However, a national referendum on the 1946

Constitution, which created the Fourth Republic (1946-1958), established a bicameral parliamentary system with proportional representation with executive power resting in the Prime Minister, and a largely symbolic President. Like the Third Republic, no single party or coalition was able to govern for long during the Fourth Republic. However, economic recovery was accelerated through the Monnet Plan, a national economic plan of modernization and industrial expansion policies, and the aid from the United States' Marshall Plan. In addition, the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) was proposed by French foreign minister Robert Schuman and French economist Jean Monnet to aid in economic reconstruction while strengthening Franco-German economic and political relations. France signed the Treaty of Paris (1951) sharing production of coal and steel between France, Italy, West Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands. The Treaty of Rome (1957) established the European Economic Community (EEC), which included a gradual reduction of customs duties and a customs union with a goal of creating a common market with member states.

Despite progress with European cooperation, the Fourth Republic's costly determination to hold onto its colonial empire eventually caused its demise. Initially, in the 1946 Constitution, colonies were given local autonomy and limited representation in French parliament. Military losses in Vietnam, led to French withdrawal in 1954. Negotiations for

Tunisian and Moroccan independence were completed in 1956. The Suez Crisis (1956), which began with the Egyptian nationalization of the Suez Canal, built and operated by the concessions of the French government, ended with French withdrawal. However, France attempted to hold onto Algeria until the Algerian War of Independence (1954-1962), which turned into a French political crisis, risking civil war. The May 1958 crisis began as a coup by French military units, colonial officials and settlers in Algeria, supported by rightwing extremists and military leaders in France and Algeria, who supported Charles De Gaulle's return to power and Gaullist principles of nationalism and a strong state. Coup leaders took control of Algiers and set up a new government. The National Assembly agreed to Charles De Gaulle's offer to end the crisis and lead a new government with a new constitution that would create a strong executive in the President.

1.4: Fifth Republic (1958-present)

Charles De Gaulle founded the Fifth Republic in 1958 with a national referendum that supported the new constitution and the creation of a new government with a strengthened presidency under a **semi-presidential system**. De Gaulle was elected President in 1958, remaining the first president of the Fifth Republic until his resignation in 1969. With De Gaulle's executive authority, his policies of national independence saw France become a nuclear power, expel NATO forces from

France, promote continental European integration while vetoing British entry into the Common Market, nationalize important industries and firms, establish a welfare state, grant independence to Algeria in 1962 and many other remaining colonies, and provide military and economic aid to its former colonies to foster a French-speaking bloc in international relations. By 1968, French students, who did not have the experiences of World War II, participated in protests across universities that spread to workers and factories across France. These protests called for educational reforms and improved wages and working conditions, but the movement stalled as various factions emerged and enthusiasm waned. While he survived the protests with his party's 1968 re-election to a majority in the National Assembly, in 1969, De Gaulle called for a referendum on constitutional reforms and resigned when they failed. Despite De Gaulle's exit, the Fifth Republic remains to the present day. Powerful presidents from conservative to socialist have continued to lead a strong centralized state. However, since the 2000s, an increasingly divided parliament and the rise of the right, along with a sluggish economy and growing budget deficit, and concerns about immigration have produced an enduring political malaise. The unease over what direction France should take has impacted the 2007 election of conservative Nicolas Sarkozy, the 2012 election of socialist François Hollande, and the 2024 collapse of parliament in centrist Emmanuel Macron's second term.

Section 2: Ethnic, Religious, and Cultural Identity

French identity today is the product of centuries of state formation from its Celtic origins in Roman Gaul through the assimilation of European provinces and territories and its French-speaking former colonies and overseas territories. Assimilationist policies have their origins in the French Revolution with the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen that identified all French people as citizens of the state, which took a leading role in establishing and maintaining a national identity. The French government promoted its republican approach to assimilation toward colonized peoples in the 19th and 20th centuries by offering the rights of French citizenship to those who adopted French culture, educational systems, and language. Critics of assimilation focus on the erasure of local identities and ethnic groups and on the unrealized promise of equal rights and status for colonial subjects. The impacts of French imperialism from the colonial era have persisted through common cultural and language ties, including a formal international organization of French-speaking states, the International Organization of La Francophonie. Despite historical ties to the Catholic Church, French secularism, which also has its origins in the French Revolution, has privileged the state over religious identity. However, the shift in composition of immigrants from

primarily European in origin to countries in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia has strained the long-standing subordination of ethnic and religious identity to national identity.

2.1: Ethnic and National Identity

The French state privileges national identity because of its governing principles of equality of people before the law, regardless of class, ethnicity, or race. As a result, in France, the government's census does not collect data on ethnicity or race, with a formal ban on these demographic questions in 1978. However, the French National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE) collects data on immigrants, defined as anyone of foreign nationality born outside France, including those who have acquired French citizenship. In 2021, there were 7 million immigrants living in France, comprising 10.3% of the total population of 68 million, with 2.4 million, or 37% of immigrants having acquired French citizenship (INSEE, 2024a). The proportion of immigrants from Europe, namely Portugal, Italy and Spain, continues to fall while immigrants from Africa, in particular North Africa, now make up the largest group of the immigrant population. In 2023, 3.5 million immigrants born in Africa lived in France, which represents 48% of the immigrant population in comparison to the second largest group of 2.4 million immigrants, who were born in Europe, and the third largest

group of 1 million immigrants, who were born in Asia (Tanneau, 2024; Rouhban, 2024a; Rouhban, 2024b). Non-European minorities are more likely to emphasize ethno-racial identity than those with European origin, even in the second generation (McAvay & Safi, 2023). However, ethnic representation in French politics is low due to its focus on class and secularism (Tiberj & Michon, 2013).

Modern European immigration to France started in the 19th century with the Industrial Revolution and continued through post-World War II. The increase in non-European immigration began post-World War II with the disintegration of France's colonial empire and conflicts in Vietnam and Algeria. Immigrants from non-European origin experience higher unemployment and lower wages, occupy less skilled jobs, and are twice as likely to be poor (Rouhban & Tanneau, 2023). Language barriers and discrimination have led to the marginalization of immigrants and unequal access to employment, housing, social services, and transportation. The immigrant population is also centered in the urban areas, particularly in the *banlieues* or suburbs of the Île-de-France, which is the Paris administrative region. The *banlieues* were the center of the month-long 2005 French riots that highlighted the grievances of immigrant youth, who were primarily of North African origin, that included persistent poverty, unemployment, and police harassment. Debates on immigration policy have intensified with an economic slowdown, higher unemployment rates, and the rise of the

anti-immigrant far-right, who have highlighted economic and social costs as well as the threats to French identity and national security. France's reckoning with immigration also coincides with debates on the role of religious identity, which is presented in the next section.

2.2: Religious and National Identity

France as a secular nation does not have a state religion. ***Laïcité*** or secularism is a constitutional principle enshrined in the 1958 Constitution that is rooted in the French Revolution. During the French Revolution, France was the first to emancipate its Jewish population by offering citizenship and equal rights. The foundation of *laïcité* is the separation of a citizen's private life, including the free exercise of religion and public spaces in which all citizens are equal regardless of ethnic or religious identities. As a result, no religion should influence the state and the state should not recognize or fund any religion, which is enshrined in the 1905 law on the Separation of the Churches and State. The Jules Ferry laws (1881-1882) established state-funded schools, including universities that are independent from the Catholic Church. Despite legal equality under *laïcité*, the Dreyfus Affair (1894-1906), in which Alfred Dreyfus was wrongfully convicted of treason, highlighted issues of antisemitism and set off a political crisis between anticlerical republicans and conservative pro-military right. During World War II, the

Vichy regime under the German occupation participated in the French Holocaust.

Similar to race and ethnicity, the French census does not include questions about religious affiliation because of state-led secularism. However, INSEE collects data on religious demographics. Although historically France has been a nation of Catholics and it remains the dominant religion, religious disaffiliation has increased. In 2019-2020, 51% of the population aged 18 to 59 in France reported no religious affiliation (Drouhot et al., 2023). Islam is the second most dominant religious identity at 10% of the French population in comparison to Catholicism, the religious identity of 29% of the population, the growing category of non-Catholic Christianity at 9% of population, and Judaism at less than 1% (Drouhot et al., 2023). Immigrants from countries with a Muslim tradition from the Middle East and North Africa region are more likely to have a religious affiliation with Islam and they are more active in their practice (Drouhot et al., 2023).

France currently has one of the largest populations of Muslims in Europe and public expressions of Muslim identity like the headscarf have sparked contentious debates on the scope of free exercise of religion under *laïcité*. In 2004, the French government banned wearing of headscarves and religious symbols in public primary and secondary schools. An additional ban on full-face veils was passed in 2011. The state role in guaranteeing secularism is increasingly under pressure

from French Muslims who believe in religious accommodation in contrast to those who believe that secularism will better integrate a growing French minority of Muslims. Anti-immigrant right-wing parties have sought to further restrict Islamic practices with the rationale of protecting French secularism and national identity and security. In 2015, the Islamic terrorist attacks, most notably at *Charlie Hebdo*, a weekly magazine that had published cartoons of the Islamic prophet Muhammad, further heightened religious tensions and the popularity of right-wing parties. Debates on immigration and the role of ethnic and religious identity in France have been important elements in the 2007 election of conservative Nicolas Sarkozy, the 2012 election of socialist François Hollande, and the 2022 election of centrist Emmanuel Macron. Secularism as part of French national identity has had renewed support across the left and center right. Hollande supported the ban on headscarves and Macron has signed laws that require varying levels of French language proficiency for residency permits, limit birthright citizenship for children of immigrants, and allow the government wider powers to deport immigrants with criminal records and rejected asylum seekers.

2.3: French Language and Culture

Enshrined in Article 2 of the 1958 Constitution, French is the official language of France, and the French language is

the foundation of French identity. French is also the official language of 25 other states and 36 international organizations. The *Académie Française*, established 1635 under King Louis XIII, is the official authority on the French language and still publishes an official dictionary for the French language. The *Académie Française* has also opposed the state recognition of regional languages, which occurred in 2008. The French language was also a cornerstone of assimilationist policies under French colonialism to establish administrative, economic and cultural control. In 1970, the International Organization of La Francophonie was established to promote French language and support the cooperation of the global community of French-speaking people.

The French state has traditionally played a key role in advancing French language and culture through the educational, cultural, and economic policies and through state-sponsored institutions like the *Académie Française*, the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture, and the Royal Academy of Dance. The Jules Ferry laws (1881-1882) established free, mandatory, and secular education, which further standardized the use of French language. The rise of a modern French nation state includes the centralization of politics and government but also culture, with the main centers of production in the Paris region. The cabinet-level post of Minister of Culture was created by Charles de Gaulle in 1959, and the Ministry of Culture has control of the

national museums and monuments, including the National Archives.

Section 3: Political Culture and Civil Society

The French Revolution granted citizens the right to form associations, including political clubs that would later develop into political parties, and also what we would call non-governmental organizations (NGOs) today. However, Emperor Napoleon I in the First Empire and Emperor Napoleon III in the Second Empire undermined associations by requiring them to be authorized by the state, leading Alexandre de Tocqueville to characterize French civil society in the early 1800s as weak. Civil society organizations were granted legal status in 1881, the same year that the secular public education system was established by the Jules Ferry laws. Many of these early civil society organizations countered the Catholic church and religious organizations, strengthening the state against conservative and royalist opposition. The 1901 Law of Associations guaranteed freedom of association, which still is in force today, but only state approved associations have legal rights. The Vichy regime (1940-1944) banned most NGOs but they re-developed in the post-World War II period in the context of a highly centralized state.

The Fifth Republic's ***dirigisme***, an economic doctrine of

state control of economy, investment, and regulation of important industries, meant that civil society organizations, particularly in the economic sector, have remained divided and weak (Levy, 1999). However, France is well known for its regular strikes and protests, which are often mobilized by unions and have sometimes changed government policy. The *Société nationale des chemins de fer français* (SNCF), the national state-owned railway company, has had at least one strike per year since 1947. From 2000-2019, France averaged 127 days not worked per 1,000 employees, with a decrease to 77 days from 2020-2023 (Vandaele, 2024). In areas like civil rights, the environment, social services, and recreation, a strong central government with an increasing number of laws have given NGOs an important role in negotiating and navigating these non-economic areas (Archambault et al, 1999; Camus, 2023). These civil society organizations in France's third sector are primarily small, numerous, and decentralized (Archambault et al, 1999). Instead, mass protests have been the most common method to demonstrate public concerns and interests to the government.

3.1: Labor Unions and Employer Federations

Despite the prevalence of strikes in France, only about 8% of the French workforce are union members, a downward trend since World War II. The Directorate of Research, Economic

Studies and Statistics (DARES), the research and statistical section of the French Ministry of Labor, reports that union membership is much stronger in public sector, where around 18.7% of employees are in unions, than in the private sector at 8.4% (Pignoni, 2016). In addition, men are more likely to be union members than women, with 11.8% of male employees in comparison to 9.8% of female employees (Pignoni, 2016). Collective bargaining rules allow for unions to negotiate for all employees, not only members, and professional elections determine leadership. Unions in France are also funded primarily by the state, as well as taxes on employers. As a result, there is little incentive for rank-and-file membership. Along with the gradual decline in the industrial sector, high unemployment and job insecurity has further eroded union membership.

Shrinking membership, collective bargaining, partisan alliances, and rules that allow more than one union to represent workers in a single firm has left French labor unions in competition with one another, increasingly fragmented, and weak. A 2008 law requires a union to win at least 10% of the votes at company level to be considered representative at company level, 8% of the votes at industry level to be considered representative at industry level, and 8% of the votes at national level to be considered representative at national level. There remain five unions that are nationally representative with membership across the French economy. These five in order of size are: French Democratic

Confederation of Labor (CFDT), General Confederation of Labor (CGT), General Confederation of Labor-Workers' Force (FO), French Confederation of Christian Workers (CFTC), and French Confederation of Management-General Confederation of Executives (CFE-CGC). CFDT, which took first place from CGT in 2017, is moderate and allied with the political center. CGT has long been linked to the far left, notably the French Community Party (PCF) and still has many PCF members. FO broke from CGT due to CGT's connection to the PCF and it remains center-left. Outside of the five national unions, there are several smaller independent unions including Fédération syndicale unitaire (FSU), which represents the French education sector.

The fragmentation and weakness of French labor unions led to the staging of mass strikes to negotiate with the government and employers, creating the paradoxical tradition of frequent general strikes and protest movements. Unions have had success in mobilizing the public against changes to their welfare benefits and pension reforms. In 2006, the French government was forced to withdraw its plans for a new employment contract for workers under the age of 26 that made it easier to fire them in the first two years of an employment contract. However, in 2010, despite protests that paralyzed France, French President Nicolas Sarkozy's proposed reform raising the retirement age from 60 to 62 became law. The 2018 protests against a fuel tax increase sparked the large-scale Yellow Vest movement against the

Macron government. Although the movement ultimately fizzled, Emmanuel Macron has faced continued protests against pension reforms, notably the 2023 protests against a law that raised the retirement age from 62 to 64.

The French business sector is organized through employer federations. French Association of Private Enterprises (AFEP) is the main lobbying group for large private sector companies. AFEP represents 118 of the largest private corporations, including Airbus and Louis Vuitton Moët Hennessy. The two largest employers' federations in France are the Movement of the Enterprises of France (MEDEF), focused on small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and the General Confederation of Small and Medium Companies (CPME), which represents small business owners. In addition, there are numerous employer federations for a single trade or industry. Employer federations have generally supported the political right, reduced taxes on businesses, economic reforms that increase flexibility in hiring and firing, and less government intervention. With many business and political leaders being *énarques*, graduates of the National School of Public Administration (ENA) now called the National Institute of Public Service, close relationships between the political and business class have allowed significant access points to and from the state.

3.2: Political Culture and Ideology

French political ideology has traditionally been divided along the left-right spectrum since the French Revolution. France's multi-party system comprises a mix of conservative, social liberal, social democratic, nationalist, communist, socialist and green parties. However, the party system is fragmented, with factions even inside parties. Parties must form alliances or coalitions to govern, which have historically been organized around the center-left and center-right. However, political ideology has been less important than individual political leadership because of the **populist** legacies of revolution, the weakness of civil society, and the important role of the state and its executive. Moreover, the increasing importance of cross-cutting cleavages like nationalists and globalists and welfare state reformists and preservationists have led to the development and prominence of new third parties like Emmanuel Macron's centrist Renaissance party (RE) that has rejected left and right labels. At the same time, French leaders on the left and right have a long populist tradition of appealing directly to the masses to speak for ordinary people and French identity and in opposition to established political elites. Successful populist attacks against the elitism of Macron's government by Marine Le Pen, the leader of the far-right National Rally (NR) have contributed to electoral losses for Marcon's Together for the Republic coalition in 2024's European Parliament and National Assembly elections.

In addition to the populist strain in French political culture, mass protests are also a commonplace expression of French political culture. In the face of sluggish economic growth and fiscal challenges, the changing scope of French welfare system that offers healthcare, pension, and unemployment benefits have been a significant protest point, as mentioned in the previous section. Mass protests unrelated to the welfare state have included civil rights, climate change, globalization, increasing economic inequality, immigrant rights, Islamophobia, LGBT rights, racism and police brutality, and women's rights. For example, the 2018 Yellow Vest movement coalesced around economic inequality, namely low wages and high taxes. In 2019, Black Vests protested for the rights of undocumented immigrants. The 2020 anti-racist and anti-police brutality protests, which were motivated by the global Black Lives Matters movement challenged the long-held idea of France's colorblindness, highlighting continuing racial injustices in France.

Section 4: Political Participation

4.1: Electoral System

The electoral system in France is majoritarian with a two-round runoff for Presidential races and the National Assembly,

the lower house of parliament. Presidents are elected every five years in two rounds, unless a candidate earns 50% of the vote in the first round. The second round takes place two weeks later, which is between the top two candidates. The National Assembly has 577 single member districts (SMD), in which there is one winner per district. Candidates with over 12.5% of the vote advance to a second-round winner-take-all contest, unless a candidate earns 50% of the vote in the first round. The two-round **runoff system** ensures that the election winner has a majority of the vote but at the cost of some disproportionality, which is typical for SMD systems. In 2022, Emmanel Macron's Together for the Republic coalition won 39% of the second-round vote but 42% of seats in the National Assembly. While the two-round runoff system does encourage more candidates and parties than traditional SMD systems in the United Kingdom and the United States, the second-round plurality rule and the first round 12.5% threshold makes it difficult for smaller parties to win seats. The right-wing National Front, later rebranded as National Rally, won 9% of the second-round vote but 1% of seats in 2017. France's majoritarian two round runoff system has typically produced legislative majorities. However, the 2024 snap elections called by Macron resulted in a hung parliament with huge gains by National Rally, which has led to a tenuous center-right government, already on its second Prime Minister, François Bayrou, in its first six months. The absence of a stable majority may lead to further snap elections, the first of which

could occur in July 2025 ahead of the next scheduled National Assembly elections in 2029.

The Senate, the upper house of parliament, is elected indirectly by an electoral college, which includes about 150,000 regional councilors, department councilors, mayors, municipal councilors in large communes, and National Assembly members. This indirect system of electors has favored rural areas and conservatives. As a result, the Senate is typically politically oriented to the right. The leftist Socialist Party coalition won short-lived control of the Senate in September 2011, which was the first time that the Socialists had held a majority. The right bloc led by the Union for a Popular Movement (UMP) reclaimed control in 2014. There are 348 Senators representing both single-member and multi-member districts. In districts where one to two Senators are elected, the election is held in two rounds, unless a candidate receives over 50% of the vote. In districts where there are three or more Senators, the election uses proportional representation rules based on their party list order.

Campaign finance is highly regulated in France and monitored by the National Commission of Campaign Accounts and Political Financing (CNCCFP). Donations to political parties are capped at €7,500 (about $8,600) per year, and only French citizens or residents may contribute to a political party, no corporate donations. Spending limits are determined by the type of election and the public financing of parties is based on party's vote share and seat share. For

presidential elections, states reimburse 20% of spending to all parties and 50% if the candidate wins more than 5% of the total vote. The National Council on Audiovisual (CSA) regulates the coverage of election campaigns by radio and television broadcasters. Political television advertising is banned six months before an election and there is no election coverage the weekend before an election, but equal time is offered to candidates.

All voters in France are registered automatically once they reach voting age, which is eighteen years old and placed on the electoral roll. In France, electoral abstention is measured by the number of voters who abstained from voting divided by the number on the electoral roll. Abstention rates are highest in referendums and European Parliament elections and lowest in presidential elections. The abstention rates in National Assembly, regional, departmental, and municipal elections have been increasing steadily since 1959. Although the 2024 snap elections saw the highest turnout since the 1990s.

4.2: Referendums

The 1958 Constitution that established the Fifth Republic, allows for a national level referendum called by the President. National referendums under Charles de Gaulle were used to bypass government institutions like the parliament and approve contentious proposals like Algerian independence. Referendums can solidify a popular mandate but can also be

risky. De Gaulle called for five referendums and when he lost the 1969 referendum about reforming the Senate, he resigned. Since de Gaulle, referendums have been used more sparingly and most notably to approve important changes in the European Union (EU). A 1972 referendum on the enlargement of the European Communities (later the EU) was approved by 68% of voters under President George Pompidou. President François Mitterrand held a 1992 referendum on the founding of the EU through the Maastricht Treaty, narrowly approved at 51%. In 2005, President Jacques Chirac lost a referendum on the European Constitution with a 55% no vote. The failure of this referendum weakened Chirac's presidency and halted the use of referendums on the EU by later Presidents.

4.3: Local Government Elections

France is a strong **unitary** state with power concentrated in the national government. Decentralization efforts that began in the 1980s have increased the power of local governments but the President and the national government still control taxes, spending, and policymaking. There are three levels of local government, which are region, department, and commune. The largest grouping is regional with 27 regions, with five regions being overseas regions. The regions are led by regional councils that are elected every six years. Next, there are 101 departments, with five overseas departments, which are also

classified as the five overseas regions. Departments are governed by directly elected councils. Communes are local municipalities that vary in size from cities like Paris to small villages. There are about 35,000 communes, with about 200 in overseas regions. Each commune has a mayor and a municipal council but the size and election method for the municipal council depends on the commune. National Assembly deputies and Senators can also simultaneously hold local elected positions at the region, department, and commune level with some restrictions on executive positions and multiple mandates at the same level.

4.4: Party System

In the Fifth Republic, until recently, there have been relatively stable left and right majorities that have alternated power between center-left and center-right coalitions. In the 1960s and 1970s the leftist political coalition revolved around the French Communist Party (PCF) and the French Socialist Party (PS) along with minor parties like the Radical Party of the Left (PRG). The right political bloc centered on the Rally for the Republic (RFR) and Union for a Popular Movement (UMP). Each coalition had won about half the French vote, ensuring the dominance of the two major coalitions under a SMD two round system, which necessitated coalition building to win the second round. Since the 1980s, the two-bloc system dominated by four parties has weakened with the decline of

the PCF and the rise of rightwing National Rally (RN). Coalitions still organize along the left and the right, but they are no longer as independent and stable. The 2000 presidential term reduction reform to five years to match the National Assembly's terms and the 2001 electoral calendar reform that moved parliamentary elections after presidential elections have led to the decline of cohabitation. The decreased likelihood of cohabitation, meaning divided government where the President is a different party than the majority party in parliament has shifted coalition and party building powers to Presidential campaigns and leadership. In addition, the two round runoff system allows for the development and growth of once smaller parties like RN and these smaller parties can have important roles in forming a majority coalition.

President Name	Dates and Terms in Office	Political Party	Prime
Charles de Gaulle	1359-1969, resigned in his second term	Union for the New Republic (UNR)	Miche Ge UNR Jac Murv
Georges Pompidou	1969-1974, one term, died in office	Union of Democrats for the New Republic (UDR), replaced the Union for the New Republic	Jacqu (1969 Pier
Valéry Giscard d'Estaing	1974-1981, one term	Independent Republicans (RI) and Union for French Democracy (UDI)	Jacqu Ray and U
François Mitterrand	1981-1995, two terms	French Socialist Party (PS)	Pierre Lau Jac for the Mi Édi Pier Édo RPR
Jacques Chirac	1995-2007, two terms	Rally for the Republic (RPR), renamed Union for a Popular Movement (UMP)	Alain Lio Jean UMP Do (2005

Nicolas Sarkozy	2007-2012, one term	Union for a Popular Movement (UMP)	Franço
François Hollande	2012-2017, one term	French Socialist Party (PS)	Jean-M Ma Ber PS
Emmanuel Macron	2017-present, two terms	Renaissance (RE)	Édoua Repub Jear Élis Gal Septer Mic 2024- Fra 2024- Mover

Table 4.1: Presidents and Prime Ministers of the Fifth Republic

4.4.1: The Left

In the post-World War II period, the French Communist Party (PCF) had the largest membership and regularly won about 20% of the national vote but it was excluded from government. PCF joined the French Socialist Party (PS) in electoral alliances and was rewarded with some cabinet level positions, but PCF's popularity gradually waned with the collapse of the Soviet

Union, although it still has members from the working class and unions at the local level. Since the 1970s, the PS has been the main anchor for the French center-left and left, as the largest party of the French left. PS advocates for social democratic policies, with the state regulating a capitalist economy, including state-owned firms and a strong welfare state focused on economic equality. PS is also in favor of European integration. PS was founded in 1969 and, under the leadership of François Mitterrand, moved toward a more moderate social democratic ideology while maintaining an alliance with the PCF. PS first won power in 1981 with Mitterand's presidential win. Mitterand held the presidency over two terms from 1981-1995 but the electoral successes of PS largely waned until the 2012 presidential election of François Hollande.

In Mitterand's first term, he attempted to implement the 110 Propositions, a set of socialist reforms that included nationalizing banks and large industrial firms, an increase on upper level tax rates and a wealth tax, an increase in wages and layoff protections with a reduction in working hours, and an expansion of social benefits. However, instead of ushering in a period of economic recovery following the 1973 recession, exports declined, the franc lost value, and unemployment continued to rise. Mitterrand pulled back on the PS's socialist agenda, losing the support of leftist voters and the PCF, while increasing support of the rightwing National Front (RN). PS lost its control of the National Assembly in 1986 and

Mitterand named conservative Jacques Chirac as Prime Minister, who led a conservative retrenchment of socialist reforms. Cohabitation allowed Mitterrand to recover and focus instead on European integration and shift the PS toward the center.

Mitterrand was re-elected President in 1988 with a more moderate agenda that included parental leave rights and Minimum Insertion Income (RMI), which is a minimum income guarantee. The left held only a plurality in the National Assembly and not a majority in 1988 and in 1993, PS lost its fragile hold on the National Assembly due to accusations of corruption and internal factions within PS. During his second term, Mitterrand focused on furthering European integration and successfully negotiated and then convened a referendum for the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty. Facing a leadership crisis after Mitterrand, PS lost the 1996 presidential election while PS with its leftist coalition won the 1997 National Assembly election and PS leader, Lionel Jospin became Prime Minister under cohabitation with President Chirac. PS lost both the National Assembly and presidential elections in 2002 and 2007.

In 2012, PS returned to power with the presidential election of François Hollande and a PS-led majority in the National Assembly. Hollande is an énarque and a career bureaucrat that campaigned on a leftist platform that included same sex marriage, a wealth tax, stronger state regulation of the financial sector, and the lowering the retirement age. However, his

agenda was stymied by continued unemployment and rising budget deficits, and he declined to run for a second term in 2017 with his historically low approval ratings. The French Green Party, rebranded as The Ecologists (LE) in 2023, has developed electoral successes in local and national elections, winning 6% of the overall vote in the 2012 legislative election. In 2012, LE signed a coalitional agreement with PS, allowing LE to form an official parliamentary group, along with the coalition's promise to reduce nuclear energy production and cabinet level positions for LE. PS lost the presidential and National Assembly elections in 2017. The winner of the 2017 presidential election was Emmanuel Macron, a former member of PS and of Hollande's cabinet who left to form an independent centrist party Forward! (EM), later rebranded as Renaissance (RE). PS's 2017 presidential candidate Benoît Hamon also left PS to form a new independent leftist party, Génération.s (G.s), two months after the 2017 presidential election, in response to the decline of PS.

The 2022 presidential elections resulted in a new low with 2% of the national vote and in the 2022 legislative elections, PS joined a left-wing alliance, the New Ecologic and Social People's Union (NUPES), which included PCF, LE, G.s, **La France Insoumise (LFI)**, and Ensemble! (E!). NUPES won 131 seats and 32% of the vote, making it the leading opposition bloc. However, PS suspended its membership from NUPES with the refusal of LFI to denounce Hamas in 2023. In 2024, PS joined a broad left-wing coalition New Popular Front

(NFP) in opposition to Marcon's Together for the Republic coalition and the far-right National Rally (RN). In both 2022 and 2024, LFI, which was founded in 2016 by another former PS member, Jean-Luc Mélenchon won more seats than PS and in 2022, the LFI candidate, Mélenchon placed third after Macron and Marine Le Pen of RN. The 2022 and 2024 elections have illustrated the growing fragmentation of the left and the uncertain future of PS's central role on the left.

4.4.2: The Right

Charles de Gaulle and the Union for the New Republic (UNR), which was the political party that was founded to support de Gaulle, represents the rightist tradition in the Fifth Republic and his political successors were described as Gaullists and neo-Gaullists. The right controlled the three consecutive presidencies from the founding of the Fifth Republic under de Gaulle, to Georges Pompidou and then ending with Valéry Giscard d'Estaing in 1981 with Mitterand's victory. In the period after de Gaulle's resignation, the right bloc centered on the Gaullist Rally for the Republic (RFR), founded by Jacques Chirac, and the center-right pro-Europe Union for a French Democracy (UDF), started by Giscard d'Estaing. The division of RFR and UMP was based less on ideology and more on personality and presidential aspirations. The Union for France, a RPR/UDF coalition, won the 1993 National Assembly election and RFR candidate Jacques

Chirac won the 1995 presidential election. In 1997, a Socialist majority retook the National Assembly and the right had to make compromises for the welfare state. Chirac's presidency faced twin challenges of slower economic growth and maintaining the welfare state illustrated by the successes of privatization and the euro but also stagnant unemployment. In 2002, Chirac, facing internal factions in the RPR that were Euroskeptics, pushed for the political right to create a single party, Union for a Popular Movement (UPM), leading to the decline of UDF. UPM, which is the largest conservative party in France, is a traditional right party that advocates for the free market and business while remaining socially conservative. In 2002, Chirac easily won the second-round runoff against Jean-Marie Le Pen of the right-wing National Front (RN), who unexpectedly took second place over Lionel Jospin of PS.

In 2007, conservative UPM candidate Nicolas Sarkozy won the presidential election on a platform of economic growth and employment as well as immigration and crime control. The Sarkozy government cut taxes, raised the retirement age to 62, cut public sector employment, and allowed employers to increase the work week. Sarkozy's agenda was no match for the 2008 global economic crisis and the subsequent 2009 euro-zone debt crisis, which instead led to austerity measures, high unemployment, and mass protests. Sarkozy's domestic controversies also included deportations, bans on religious headscarves, a poorly received debate on French national identity, objections to cabinet appointments, and accusations

of corruption and nepotism. In 2012, Sarkozy lost his bid for a second term to leftist PS candidate François Hollande and the Socialist coalition also won control of the National Assembly. In the wake of Sarkozy's loss, the UPM implemented primary elections that further divided the UPM along ideological lines and personal loyalties. Sarkozy returned to politics in 2014 and won the leadership of UPM, renaming it the Republicans (LR), but lost his bid to run as the Republican candidate to François Fillon. Fillon and the Republicans suffered losses in the 2017 presidential and National Assembly elections. Its fourth-place finish behind the right-wing National Rally in the 2022 legislative elections further diminished the Republican bloc.

The far-right populist National Front, now called National Rally (RN), was founded by Jean-Marie Le Pen in 1972 and it was viewed as a fringe nationalist party focused on protecting French identity, reducing immigration and deporting undocumented immigrants. RN first gained national prominence when the electoral system briefly experimented with proportional representation in the National Assembly in 1986 and it won 35 seats with 10% of the vote, ahead of PCF. The 1988 National Assembly election returned to single member districts and two round runoffs, which resulted in the RN's loss of seats to one seat. The RN won 15% in the 1997 legislative elections but again won one seat. The 2002 presidential election's second round runoff included the RN for the first time with Jean-Marie Le Pen losing to Jacques

Chirac. From 2003-2010, RN seemed to be in decline with the UMP adopting the RN's immigration and crime control stances. With Jean-Marie Le Pen's daughter, Marine Le Pen's leadership of the RN, which began in 2011, the RN's relevance has been renewed with its push into the mainstream through a broadened agenda that includes anti-terrorism, anti-globalization, and **Euroskepticism** while distancing itself from its racist and xenophobic roots. Marine Le Pen came in third in the 2012 presidential election and RN established itself as the third largest party after PS and UPM in the 2012 legislative election, winning two seats in the National Assembly. In 2014, RN also won European elections with 25% of the vote, beating both PS and UPM. Mirroring her father's 2002 presidential run, in 2017, Marine Le Pen lost against Emmanuel Macron in the second round run off. Making gains in the 2024 European parliamentary elections, RN won the most delegates for a single party, outnumbering Macron's Together for the Republic and the Socialist Party's coalition, which led to Macron to call for a disastrous snap election. In the 2024 snap legislative elections, RN again came in third behind Macron's Together for the Republic and the leftist bloc New Popular Front (NFP) but this time won 125 seats in the National Assembly. RN's increasing popular mainstream support has solidified its place as the third largest political bloc in French politics.

Candidate Name	Political Party
Emmanuel Macron	Renaissance (RE)
Marine Le Pen	National Rally (RN)
Jean-Luc Mélenchon	La France Insoumise (LFI), left-wing
Éric Zemmour	Reconquête! (REC), right-wing
Valérie Pécresse	The Republicans (LR)
Yannick Jadot	The Ecologists (LE)
Jean Lassalle	Résistons! (RES), center-right
Fabien Roussel	French Communist Party (PCF)
Nicolas Dupont-Aignan	Debout la France (DLR), Gaullist
Anne Hidalgo	French Socialist Party (PS)
Philippe Poutou	New Anticapitalist Party (NPA)
Nathalie Arthaud	Lutte Ouvrière (LO), Trotskyist communist party

Table 4.2: 2022 Presidential Election Round 1

Source Data: Ministry of the Interior, 2022

Candidate Name	Political Party	Vote Share
Emmanuel Macron	Renaissance (RE)	58.55% (18,
Marine Le Pen	National Rally (RN)	41.45% (13,

Table 4.3: 2022 Presidential Election Round 2
Source Data: Ministry of the Interior, 2022

4.4.3: The Center

The success of Emmanuel Macron and his new centrist party, Forward! (EM) in the 2017 presidential and legislative elections showcased the collapse of support for the Socialist party bloc on the left and the UPM bloc on the right. Macron's win as the leader of a new and independent center party, EM later renamed Renaissance (RE), may also signify the beginnings of the development of a new French political center. Macron was a former member of PS but he is an *énarque* with a background in banking and as an economic adviser and minister under Hollande. RE is a socially progressive centrist party that advocates for a globalized free market and European integration. RE's leadership was drawn from the younger technocrat class both from the center-right

and center-left and many of RE's candidates were young newcomers to elective office. Macron also appointed cabinet members from both the center left and right. As a centrist party, RE found support from centrist Socialists and conservatives, weakening PS and UPM, allowing for the rise of the far-right RN. Despite legislative majorities, Macron's economic reforms sparked the Yellow Vest movement and he was not able to complete his planned agenda. Faced with the choice of Macron or Marine Le Pen, voters elected Macron in the 2022 presidential election. However, Macron's Together for the Republic coalition successively lost votes on both the left and right in the 2022 National Assembly elections. Then in 2024, Macron's coalition lost its plurality position to the broad left-wing coalition, New Popular Front (NFP) in snap legislative elections. The 2024 snap election did not produce the centrist victory Macron gambled on and instead created a hung parliament that necessitated concessions to parties of the right to govern. Macron and his coalition's recent electoral losses and shift to the center-right call into question the hold of France's new center on politics.

Political Party	First Round Vote Share	First Round Seats	Second Round Vote Share
National Rally (RN)	29.26%	37	32.05%
New Popular Front (NFP)	28.06%	32	25.80%
Ensemble! (Macron's coalition)	20.04%	2	24.53%
The Republicans (LR)	6.57%	1	5.41%
Union de l'extrême droite (far right coalition)	3.96%	1	5.00%
Divers droite (miscellaneous right)	3.60%	2	3.60%
Divers gauche (miscellaneous left)	1.53%	0	1.47%
Regionalists	0.97%	0	1.06%
Horizons, center-right	2.06%	0	0.95%
Divers centre (miscellaneous center)	1.22%	0	0.65%

Union of Democrats and Independents, center-right	0.51%	0	0.44%
Divers (miscellaneous)	0.45%	0	0.14%
The Ecologists (LE)	0.57%	0	0.14%
French Socialist Party (PS)	0.09%	0	0.10%
Extrême droite, far-right	0.19%	1	0.09

Table 4.4: 2024 Snap Election National Assembly Results
Source Data: Ministry of the Interior, 2024

Section 5: Formal Political Institutions

5.1: Constitution

The Fifth Republic was founded with the adoption of the 1958 Constitution, which is France's sixteenth Constitution. The preamble of the 1958 constitution references the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen from 1789, and the 2005 Charter on the Environment and Article 1 declares France as a secular and democratic nation with

popular sovereignty, equality before the law, regardless of origin, race, religion, and equal access to women and men in politics, and professional and social areas. The remaining Articles 2 to 89 are divided into 15 Titles. The Gaullist 1958 Constitution replaced the Fourth Republic's pure parliamentary system of government with semi-presidentialism, in which an elected president shares executive powers with a prime minister and cabinet and serves fixed terms. France uses the premier-presidential subtype of semi-presidentialism in which the President can choose the prime minister and cabinet but only the parliament can hold the prime minister and cabinet accountable with a **motion of censure**, meaning a vote of no confidence. The 1958 Constitution also established a civil and criminal justice system, a Constitutional Council, an advisory Economic and Social Council, and a parliamentary High Court that has the power to impeach the President, which has yet to occur.

The constitutional amendment process allows for modifications approved by a national referendum initiated by the President or a parliamentary process guided by the president in which an amendment is adopted by both houses of parliament and then approved by a national referendum or a three-fifths majority vote in both houses of parliament. There have been 25 amendments to the 1958 Constitution, which have included the integration of European Union treaties and the 2024 right to abortion amendment. Some major changes to the 1958 Constitution are the 1962 amendment that

allowed for the direct election of the president, the 2000 amendment that reduced presidential terms from seven to five, and the 2008 amendment that limited Presidents to two consecutive terms. Cohabitation, where the president and the prime minister are from different political parties, was common in the 1980s. However, the 2000 presidential term reduction amendment and the 2001 electoral calendar reform law that pushed parliamentary elections after presidential elections have led to the decline of cohabitation.

5.2: The Presidency

According to the French Constitution, the French president is directly elected for five years and appoints the Prime Minister, who proposes cabinet ministers to the President, who then appoints them. The President can also dissolve the National Assembly, the lower house of parliament and employ emergency powers in a state of emergency. In addition, the President chairs the **Council of Ministers** (the cabinet), enacts laws, and is the head of the armed forces. However, the President is one part of the dual executive in which the president is the head of state while the prime minister is the head of government. The exact distribution of powers between the dual executive is not specified in the 1958 Constitution. The lack of formal powers has not stopped Presidents from Charles de Gaulle to Emmanuel Macron in exerting their acquired powers through popular mandates, national

referendums, and precedents set by unified governments in the early Fifth Republic, where the legislature and the President were from the same party or coalition. For example, the President's important power to appoint Prime Ministers with legislative approval and dissolve the National Assembly has evolved into the power to remove the prime minister and cabinet members despite a legislative majority to uphold those appointments. Similarly, the president's role as commander-in-chief of the armed forces and diplomatic role as head of state have become, in practice, control over defense and foreign policy, despite a shared responsibility over defense and foreign policy with the prime minister and cabinet ministers.

While French Presidents must enact laws, they do not directly govern according to the Constitution. The Government of France consists of the Council of Ministers, which is led by the prime minister as the head of government. The prime minister proposes the cabinet, who are appointed by the President, because while not formally part of the government, the President chairs the Council of Ministers. The prime minister and the cabinet can issue decrees and propose laws to be introduced to the National Assembly, particularly domestic policy and economic policy, which are outside the presidential domain of defense and foreign policy. However, when the president has a supporting majority in the National Assembly, they can propose legislation and dictate all types of policy through their control over the prime minister. Additionally, from the Constitution, the President has a

suspensive veto, meaning they can ask the parliament to reconsider a law and through the prime minister, they can enact a law unless the National Assembly passes an absolute majority vote of no confidence, which has been rare, occurring twice in 1962 and in 2024. Macron used this constitutional power in 2023, when he enacted a law raising the retirement age to 64 without a vote in the National Assembly.

The President does not have unlimited executive power. When a national referendum failed, de Gaulle resigned. Under cohabitation, the president typically appoints a prime minister from the same political party or coalition as the legislative majority to avoid the risk of a parliamentary motion of no-confidence. During cohabitation, the president usually focuses on defense and foreign policy, while the prime minister takes control of domestic policy and economic policy. While cohabitation is less likely since the 2000 reform making presidential terms the same as parliamentary terms, in 2022, Macron's coalition did not have a majority in the National Assembly. Then in 2024, Macron was further weakened as he faced a hung parliament after he called snap elections, and the National Assembly passed a no confidence vote in his short-lived center-right government.

5.3: The Government of France: Prime Minister and Council of Ministers

The Government of France includes the prime minister and

the Council of Ministers. The prime minister is appointed by the president but must have the majority support of the National Assembly. The prime minister is the formal head of the Council of Ministers and proposes the Council of Ministers to the President. However, the President presides over the Council of Ministers and can appoint and remove cabinet ministers. Unlike parliamentary systems, the prime minister and the cabinet cannot serve as members of the legislature at the same time. This separation between the legislature and the prime minister and the cabinet, also links the prime minister and the cabinet more closely with the president. When the president has majority support in the National Assembly, the prime minister can easily be replaced, and the prime minister takes a secondary role in supporting the president's agenda in the legislature. Similarly, the Council of Ministers can also be subordinate to the President's agenda in their role of writing and proposing bills to the National Assembly when the President has the support of the National Assembly. Prime ministers can be removed by a vote of no confidence in the National Assembly, which has only occurred twice, in 1962 and 2024. While cohabitation has waned since 2000, split ticket voting between the president and the legislature could emerge again to produce cohabitation. In 2022, Macron won re-election but his political coalition garnered only a plurality. Then in 2024, Macron's coalition lost that plurality leading him to appoint conservative Michel Barnier of the LR party as prime minister for a short lived

three months, from September 2024 to December 2024, until a successful no confidence vote in the National Assembly.

5.4: The Legislature: National Assembly and the Senate

The French Parliament is bicameral with the Senate as the upper house and the National Assembly as the lower house. The 577 deputies of the National Assembly are directly elected for five-year terms from single-member districts and the 348 Senators are elected for six-year terms through indirect elections. The jurisdiction of the legislature is outlined in Article 34 of the 1958 Constitution and includes civil liberties and rights, nationality, civil and criminal law, fiscal laws, electoral law, labor laws, property rights, nationalization and privatization of businesses, and the budget. The government is responsible for all other remaining areas and for the application of all laws. For the most part, the French parliament is constitutionally designed to be weaker than the dual executive, with the National Assembly having more political power than the Senate. The National Assembly has the sole power to pass a vote of no confidence, which then forces the government to resign. The French president also has the converse power, to call snap elections and dissolve the National Assembly. If the National Assembly and the Senate cannot agree on a bill, the final decision rests with the National Assembly, whose majority will determine the bill's fate. Most

bills can pass through either house first, but finance or social security financing bills must start in the National Assembly. The National Assembly also has the power to question the government both by writing and orally, which is done weekly on Wednesday and aired publicly.

The president of the National Assembly is elected by its members and there are six vice-presidents that cover different areas like international relations and communication. The National Assembly's Bureau is the executive decision-making body, which includes the National Assembly president, vice-presidents, three questeurs or administrators, and twelve secretaries. Deputies in the National Assembly are organized into parliamentary groups by political party or coalition and these parliamentary groups determine committee assignments and representatives to the Bureau. Bills introduced in the National Assembly are assigned to one of eight standing committees or specially created committees. The committee appoints a rapporteur who gathers information and submits a report to the committee. The committee may also hold hearings. Once the committee adopts a bill, the National Assembly will hold a general discussion and then the bill is examined and voted on. An approved bill is passed on to the Senate who must approve the exact same bill, which can be shuttled back and forth between both houses until both agree on the same bill or both houses can agree to a joint committee to negotiate a compromise bill. When negotiations are not successful, the government will give the final say to the

National Assembly. If a bill is approved by the parliament, the President must sign the bill into law.

The Senate with its indirect elections and smaller size is less prominent than the National Assembly but has a similar role in the legislative process. The 1958 Constitution gives the Senate equal footing only on constitutional laws by first requiring the Senate's approval to pass the law and second adopting it with the National Assembly in a joint Congress via a three-fifths vote. The National Assembly cannot have the final say on changes to the Constitution. Article 24 of the 1958 Constitution also gives the Senate the role of representing France's departments and communes. The president of the Senate is elected from its members, and they are the second in line to the French president. The Bureau of the Senate, which is an executive body chaired by the President and includes eight vice-presidents, three questeurs or administrators, and fourteen secretaries. Senators are organized into political groups by party and coalition affiliation, which assigns Senators to seven Senatorial standing committees and the Bureau. A bill is assigned to a standing committee or a special committee, which examines the bill and if it is adopted, the bill is presented to the Senate floor for voting. Once a bill is approved by the Senate, it is sent to the National Assembly for its approval. The bill is shuttled back and forth until the same bill is agreed upon or a joint committee creates a compromise bill that can be approved. However, the National Assembly

can pass non-Constitutional laws including authorizations to allow the military to intervene abroad without the Senate.

The French parliament has the primary legislative power to pass laws, but the government controls the agenda of the legislature for two weeks out of the month during the parliament's nine-month session. The legislature has the power to propose legislation, but most bills originate from the government and indirectly the President, if the government is unified with the President. The legislature has limited power to amend bills because amendments must be approved by the government, which can reject an amendment and insist on voting on a bill in its entirety. The government also has the sole constitutional power to propose budget bills and if the parliament does not approve the government's budget bill after 70 days, it becomes law. From Article 49.3 of the 1958 Constitution, the government can also propose bills as votes of confidence, in which proposed laws are passed unless an absolute majority vote of no confidence is passed. This allows the government to pass laws without the National Assembly, which has been done more than 100 times since 1958, mostly in the 1980s and 1990s, leading to a 2008 constitutional reform that limited this to finance and social security funding bills or one member or government bill per session. Macron, through his prime minister at the time, Élisabeth Borne, has mostly recently used this constitutional tool in 2023 to increase the retirement age. The government can also

effectively legislate through decrees using Article 38 of the Constitution with the authorization of parliament.

5.5: The Judiciary

In France, the judicial system is based on **code law**, originating from the Napoleonic Code that offers detailed legal codes that judges interpret and apply, limiting their autonomy. However, unlike common law system, judges in France have a role in charging the accused and they can question and cross-examine witnesses. The French court system is divided into two levels, ordinary courts and administrative courts. Ordinary courts have jurisdiction over both civil, involving private individuals and criminal law. In both civil and criminal cases, there are minor level courts and major level courts. There are courts of appeal for those minor level and major level cases and for specialized courts like Labor Court. In addition, the Courts of Assizes deals with felony cases both at the trial and appeals level. The Court of Cassation is the highest level of appeal in the ordinary court system that hears appeals cases from the courts and appeals and the courts of assizes. Administrative courts have jurisdiction over cases between individuals and government institutions. The lower courts are called the administrative tribunals, and the Administrative Court of Appeal hears appeals on the decisions of the administrative tribunals. There are also specialized administrative courts that deal with the financial audits and asylum. The Council of the

State is the highest-level appeals court on the administrative side. Judges in France must take competitive examinations held by the National Center for Judicial Studies but they are appointed by the French President from the recommendation of the High Council of the Judiciary. Judges are appointed for life and cannot be removed without due process, allowing for judicial independence.

The 1958 Constitution also created the **Constitutional Council** to supervise elections and determine the constitutionality of laws, including international agreements. Appeals from the Court of Cassation and the Council of State can be taken to the Constitutional Council if the case deals with a constitutional principle or violation. Nine members are appointed for nine years, with three appointed by the president, three from the National Assembly, and three from the Senate. The president of the Constitutional Council is selected by the French president for a term of nine years. The High Court has the power to impeach the president, which has not yet occurred in the Fifth Republic. Either the National Assembly or the Senate can propose to convene the High Court, which must be approved by the remaining house of parliament. The High Court is led by the President of the National Assembly and removal of the President requires several stages including signature collecting, culminating in a two-thirds vote.

5.6: The Economic, Social and

Environmental Council

The 1958 Constitution also created the Economic and Social Council, renamed the Economic, Social and Environmental Council (CESE) in 2008 after the adoption of the Charter on the Environment in the constitution. CESE is a consultative assembly that advises the government and parliament on the development and evaluation of economic, social and environmental policies. CESE makes recommendations on referrals received from the government, parliament, and public petitions. The 175 members of CESE are civil society stakeholders across 19 representation groups, including youth organizations. CESE elects its own President, and the Bureau is made of one representative from each group for a total of 20 members. The President and the Bureau make decisions on CESE's recommendations and appoints working groups to organize and lead debates on the referral it receives. CESE's reports are published in the Official Journal of the French Republic, which publishes all government laws and policies.

Types of Political Institutions	French Features of Political Ins
Legislative-executive relations	Semi-presidential
Subtype of semi-presidentialism	Premier-presidential
Legislature	Bicameral parliament
Lower house of the legislature	National Assembly
Upper house of the legislature	Senate
Unitary or federal system	Unitary
Electoral system for president	Two round run-off system
Electoral system for lower house	Two round single member distric
Electoral system for upper house	Indirect electoral college
Constitutional judicial body	Constitutional Court

Table 5.1: Overview of French Political Institutions

Section 6: Political Economy

France is the seventh largest economy in the world and the second largest economy in European Union by gross domestic product (GDP) measures. France's historically strong centralized state has led a mixed economy, which includes both a free market and government intervention. In addition, robust social welfare policies that began in the Fourth Republic were adopted by the Fifth Republic. However, high unemployment and slower economic growth since the 1980s has pushed France's GDP per capita ranking from eighth worldwide in 1980 to twenty third in 2024 according to International Monetary Fund measures. In addition, the national debt has increased substantially due to social spending costs. In 2023, at 57%, France has the highest share of government spending as a proportion of GDP in the European Union and among developed economies and one of the highest tax burdens (INSEE, 2024b). The state's inability to adapt and address the cost and sustainability of France's welfare state has been blamed for France's lack of international competitiveness and sclerotic economy. Moreover, the lackluster performance of the French economy has contributed to the political malaise and uncertainty about France's direction and its role in European Union.

6.1: Dirigisme (1946-1983)

The Fifth Republic's dirigisme, an economic doctrine of state control of the economy, investment, and regulation of important industries set out to modernize and transform France's post-World War II economy as well as protect it from foreign competition. Under dirigisme, France nationalized major banks, public utilities, and key industrial sectors like car manufacturing and supported important companies and industries as national champions like Airbus with subsidies, tariffs, and tax policies. The newly created planning ministry, the General Planning Commission (1946-2006) used indicative planning, which included government credit policies, subsidies, and employment regulations to guide investments and technological developments. The planning ministry's multiyear plans set production targets in key manufacturing and energy sectors as well as provided investment targets and funds. As a result, the state owned shares of state sponsored firms and encouraged mergers to form national champions, which were large firms and groups in key sectors identified by the planning ministry. State ownership was in mostly areas of infrastructure and transportation, including the national railway company (SNCF), the national electricity utility (EDF), the national natural gas utility (GDF), and the national airline, Air France. Dirigisme also required the development of a meritocratic technocratic class taken from the grande écoles, which are elite

but public professional training schools in the natural, social, and applied sciences. Charles de Gaulle established the National School of Administration (ENA), later replaced by the National Institute of Public Service in 2022. Graduates of ENA or *énarques* are trained for civil service but they also move between the bureaucracy and political office as well as leadership positions in business. Four of eight French presidents since 1959 have been *énarques* as well as numerous prime ministers.

Rapid economic growth followed in the thirty-year period after World War II, called *Les Trente Glorieuses* or thirty glorious years. Dirigisme's success also resulted in a substantial public sector employment, a generous welfare system and a high state tax burden, which later became liabilities in a highly competitive and globalized economic landscape. With the election of socialist president François Mitterrand in 1981, the government nationalized private banks and large industrial firms, further increasing state ownership of the economy. However, as exports declined, the franc lost value, and unemployment continued to rise, the government pulled back from dirigisme in 1983. By the mid-1980s, economic growth also slowed, oscillating between 1-3% and unemployment rose to over 10%, an average rate that endured until about 2016. While unemployment rates since 2022 have fallen to around 7%, high unemployment still affects the younger population disproportionately. At the same time, an aging population and a large number of public sector employees drawing on the

benefits system means that the current welfare system cannot be sustained by contributions of a smaller number of younger workers.

Name of Company	Share of percentag
Électricité de France (EDF), energy	100%
Société nationale des chemins de fer français (SNCF), national railways	100%
ARTE France, television and film	100%
La Poste, postal service	34%
Air France-KLM	28%
Orange, telecommunications	Senate
Renault, carmaker	15%
Airbus, aerospace	11%

Table 6.1: Examples of State Ownership of Energy, Industrial, Services & Finance, and Transportation Firms

Source data: Agence des participations de l'État, 2024
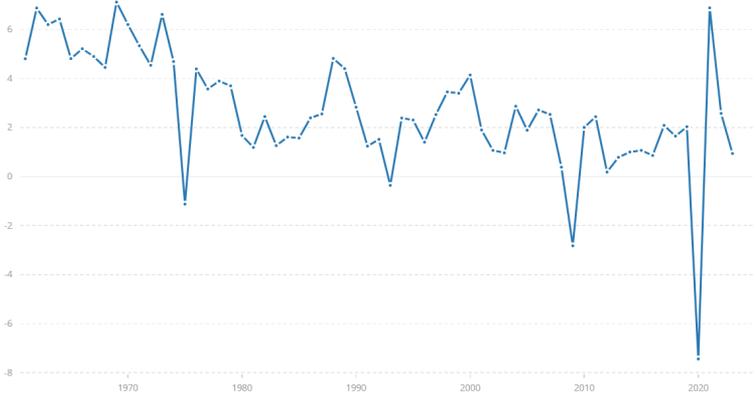
Figure 6.1: French GDP Growth Rates from 1961-2023

Source Graph: World Bank, 2025a

Source Data: World Bank national accounts data, and OECD National Accounts data files.

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Figure 6.2: French Unemployment Rates from 1991-2024

Source Graph: World Bank, 2025b

Source Data: International Labor Organization, 2025

6.2: Post Dirigisme (1983-present)

Despite liberalizing and privatizing the economy since 1983, the government continues to own shares in firms from important industries. Critics of the state's role in the economy have pointed to its failure to change as a core cause of economic stagnation in a new globalized economy. French political culture has also been attributed to the government's hesitation to embrace liberalization and enact economic reforms that would reduce the French welfare state. French national identity has been tied to strong citizen benefits and worker protections, which has led to mass protests against pension reforms and globalization. However, political debates on preserving or reforming the welfare state and embracing or resisting economic liberalization have produced calls for change but no clear consensus on what that change should entail. The 2007 election of conservative Nicolas Sarkozy, the 2012 election of socialist François Hollande and the 2024 collapse of parliament in centrist Emmanuel Macron's second term have all come from successive appeals to change the government's course and improve its performance.

The Sarkozy government implemented a number of reforms including tax cuts, the increase in the retirement age to 62, public sector employment cuts, and the deregulation of businesses. In the face of high unemployment and austerity

measures due to the 2009 eurozone crisis, the public responded with mass protests in 2010 and the 2012 election of Hollande. Hollande proposed a wealth tax, stronger state regulation of the financial sector, and increasing social welfare spending. However, his agenda was stymied by a stagnant economy, continued unemployment, and rising budget deficits from social spending. Hollande also faced nationwide protests in 2016 when he reformed labor laws that made it easier to fire workers and create new jobs and allowed workers to be paid overtime. Centrist Macron, who won the 2017 election advocated for social spending reforms, payroll tax reforms, a globalized free market, and European integration. However, he has also faced mass protests against raising the retirement age to 64 and tax increases that have disproportionately impacted the poor and working classes. His current government is in a tenuous position after the disastrous snap election of 2024 and the National Assembly's vote of no confidence that forced the government to resign in 2024. Despite resistance, the public has increasingly recognized that economic and welfare state reform is necessary but electoral winners have swung from the right to left to the center depending on economic and government performance.

6.3: European Union (EU)

France along with Germany is a founding member of the European Union and it adopted the euro in 1999. Currently

20 of 27 members of the European Union use the euro and make up the eurozone currency union. The 2009 eurozone crisis began when huge public debts in Portugal, Ireland, Italy, Greece, and Spain (PIIGS) threatened to cause widespread default. The Maastricht Treaty required countries to keep annual budget deficits under three percent of GDP and public debt under 60 percent of GDP. However, many members states had violated these requirements over the years without consequence. The EU's response to the eurozone crisis was led by German Chancellor Angela Merkel, President Sarkozy, and the president of the European Central Bank. While Germany took on much of the financial cost of the bailout plan, as the eurozone crisis wore on, Sarkozy's austerity measures to raise the value added tax, which applies to goods and services, increase the retirement age, and decrease public deficits were unpopular and helped lead to his electoral loss in 2012. Although financial stability returned, France's economy under Hollande was slow to recover and the EU itself has been increasingly attacked by the right-wing National Rally (NR), which has campaigned for weakening France's EU ties and a return to policies of economic nationalism and protectionism. In 2024, the RN won the European Parliament elections in France, and it leads the European Parliament's third-largest alliance, Patriots for Europe, a right-wing coalition that includes members of right-wing parties in Austria, Hungary and Czech Republic.

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) of the European

Commission, which is the EU's main executive body, provides agricultural subsidies and rural development support. Initially, the CAP was a Franco-German compromise introduced in 1962 to allow German access to French markets, while French agriculture would be supported through subsidies. In 2023, CAP remains a significant part of the EU's budget at 25%, although down from a high of 73% in 1980 (European Commission, 2024). France has been and continues to be the largest recipient of CAP funds leading to calls of unequal distribution from other EU members. Proposals to reform CAP have been difficult to pass with France being a primary supporter of preserving CAP despite its costs. French identity has been strongly tied to its food and agriculture and the public has largely supported Frech farmers in their objections to globalization in the agricultural sector. The costs of CAP from environmental to financial have created dissension among EU members and efforts to reform CAP are growing.

Section 7: Foreign Relations

Since the post-World War II period, France has had important roles in many international organizations, including economic organizations related to trade, finance, and development like the World Trade Organization, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. This section will

focus on the three key multilateral political organizations that developed from the Cold War (1947-1991), the European Union (EU), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and the United Nations (UN). As the Cold War developed between the two major powers, the United States (US) and the Soviet Union, France was forced from its more primary role as the birthplace of European democracy and as a central alliance partner in World War I and II to a more secondary role in the new bipolar international order. However, the ability of France to leverage its power effectively in international organizations can explain the different approaches it has taken with the EU, NATO, and the UN over time.

Since Sarkozy's presidency, French presidents have adopted a more activist foreign policy role. In Operation Serval (2013-2014), Hollande sent French troops to Mali, which allowed the Malian government to successfully retake lost territory and sue for peace. In 2015, he played a key negotiating role in the Iran nuclear deal, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. With Operation Chammal, Hollande also began French intervention in Iraq and Syria that is ongoing under Macron. While Macron withdrew French troops from Mali in 2022, he has sent French ships to defend the Red Sea from Houthi piracy, as part of the EU's Operation Aspides since 2024. With President Trump's retreat from the US's long-term allies and trading partners, France has the opportunity to increase its prominence in foreign policy.

7.1: European Union (EU)

During the Cold War, the EU offered France the best opportunity to build a unified European bloc that could hold its own against both the US and the Soviet Union. France was instrumental in supporting a stronger economic and political union, facilitating the establishment of the euro and the European Parliament over successive treaties and enlargements. The 2009 eurozone crisis and Brexit (2016-2020), in which the United Kingdom left the EU, have showcased the long-term weaknesses of the EU's financial and monetary institutions, which have no control over individual members states' fiscal policies. Member states have independence in taxes and spending, which impact member states' economic growth, inflation, and unemployment differently. In addition, France now faces the similar problems as the PIIGs with high debt. The economic recession stemming from the eurozone crisis has lessened the French public's enthusiasm for the EU and showcased differences in how French and German governments approached the crisis. German Chancellor Merkel supported Sarkozy's unpopular austerity measures, which were repudiated by Hollande despite growing French public debt and flat economic growth under Hollande. Since its European Parliament election victories, the rightwing National Rally (RN) has found mainstream support for its Euroskepticism, although it has retreated from its proposals to leave the eurozone. Instead,

Marine Le Pen has called for less French financial support and allowing for national preferences for French firms. La France Insoumise (LFI) on the left has also found electoral support since 2022 with its Euroskeptic agenda, leaving the shrinking political center to continue its pro-Europe agenda. Indeed, Marcon has supported further policy coordination and integration, in particular through his proposed European Political Community, as the solution to the EU's problems with France continuing its leadership role.

France has also played a key role in the EU's enlargement efforts and protecting the Franco-German relationship that has traditionally undergirded the EU. De Gaulle famously blocked British entry into the EU during his presidency. Since the EU's 2004 and 2007 post-Cold War enlargement, France has blocked further enlargement in particular objecting to Turkey accession to the EU. However, in the face of the 2022 Ukraine invasion and the 2024 US presidential election, Marcon is now reconsidering enlargement as a way Europeanizing against US and Russian interests. Regardless of potential future enlargement, there is a growing divide between the member states that are part of the eurozone, the center and those that are not, the periphery, which could weaken the EU in the long-term but preserve France's central role in the EU.

7.2: North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

France is a founding member of NATO, a European and North American political and military alliance. NATO is a collective security system in which member states agreed to defend each other against attacks from outside the system. Under de Gaulle, France chafed under American dominance. De Gaulle withdrew French troops under a US-led NATO command in 1966 and pursued the independent development of nuclear weapons. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, President Mitterrand saw an opportunity for France to take a larger role and more responsibility in NATO. France has participated in major NATO operations including in Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Somalia, and Libya. In 2009, President Sarkozy agreed to have French troops again represented under US-led NATO command in a larger rapprochement with the US during his presidency. Operation Harmattan was France's part of NATO's 2011 intervention in the Libyan Civil War to implement an arms embargo and a no-fly zone. French air strikes and NATO support contributed to defeat of Muammar Gaddafi, which increased France's visibility as a military partner. France is also the third largest contributor to the NATO budget after the US and Germany. Presidents since Mitterand have typically focused on recentering NATO towards Europe and blocking NATO's further enlargement. However, similar to EU enlargement, Marcon is embracing

NATO enlargement as a way to counter US and Russian interests.

7.3: United Nations (UN)

France is a founding member of the UN and French is one of the official working languages of the UN. France holds one of five permanent seats on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), which protects international peace and security and approves changes to the UN Charter. The key role of the UNSC is to approve peacekeeping operations, international sanctions, and the use of force. The UNSC is also the sole body that can issue resolutions that are binding on member states and only permanent members of the UNSC can veto resolutions. France has rarely used its veto power with its last veto recorded in 1989. Objecting to US unilateralism, in 2002, France threatened to veto any US-led resolution on authorizing the use of force in Iraq, leading the US to instead call first for Iraqi disarmament, which it later used a pretext for war. Germany, who is not a permanent member has called on France to share its seat as an EU seat. However, France has resisted by advocating for the enlargement of the UNSC as well as suspending veto power in the case of a mass atrocity. France is the sixth largest contributor to the UN budget and the peacekeeping budget, which is separate from the UN budget. Outside of the UNSC, France has been active in the areas of human rights and the environment. France hosted the

2015 UN Paris Climate Conference, and it played a leading in role in the development of the ensuing 2016 Paris Climate Agreement. The principles of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen provided foundational ideas for the UN's 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. France has also been a member of the UN's Human Rights Council (UNHRC) five times for two-year terms since the UNHRC was established in 2006.

Key Terms/Glossary

ancien régime the period before the French Revolution that was ruled by absolute monarchy supported by a feudal system and religious authorities

absolute monarchy a government in which the king is the sole political authority, including executive, legislative, and judicial power

code law a system in which the law which is taken from legal code not from legal precedents

Constitutional Council a constitutional authority that supervises elections and determines the constitutionality of laws, including international agreements

Council of Ministers the cabinet appointed by the president on the advice of the prime minister

Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen a basic charter of human and civil rights from the French Revolution,

which is part of the 1958 Constitution's preamble and has inspired the United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights

dirigisme an economic doctrine of state control of economy, investment, and regulation of important industries

Estates General a weak national assembly that represented the clergy, the nobles, and commoners before the French Revolution

Euroskepticism political viewpoint that is critical of the European Union and European integration in general

French Revolution the 1789-1790 revolution that overthrew the absolute monarchy

French Socialist Party the former dominant political party on the left

laïcité French secularism that puts national and state identity before religious identity and separating the church from the state

La France Insoumise (LFI) the far-left political party founded in 2016 that has diminished the dominance of the French Socialist Party

Napoleonic Code the French Civil Code established in 1804 that codified the rule of law, which is still in use today with modern reforms

National Assembly the directly elected lower house of the French legislature

National Rally (RN) far right political party founded in 1972 that has become more mainstream

motion of censure a vote of no confidence by the National Assembly that can for the Prime Minister and cabinet to resign

populist political appeals to the power of ordinary people against elites and establishment institutions

prime minister the head of government, who is appointed by the French president and approved by the National Assembly

semi-presidential system a legislative-executive system that includes a president, a prime minister and a legislature

Republicans (LE) a conservative party in the Gaullist tradition, formed in 2015 from what was the Union for a Popular Movement (UMP)

runoff system an electoral system where candidates are elected in two rounds, unless a candidate earns 50% of the vote in the first round

Senate the indirectly elected upper house of the French legislature

unitary system a system in which the state is governed by the central government, which holds most or all political authority

Further Reading

Academic Journals

French Politics: http://www.palgrave.com/gp/journal/41253

French Historical Studies: https://read.dukeupress.edu/french-historical-studies

Modern & Contemporary France: https://www.tandfonline.com/journals/cmcf20

French Politics, Culture & Society: https://www.berghahnjournals.com/view/journals/fpcs/fpcs-overview.xml

French Cultural Studies: https://journals.sagepub.com/home/FRC

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French Government Websites

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The Economic, Social and Environmental Council: https://www.lecese.fr

National Assembly: https://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/

The National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies: https://www.insee.fr

The Ministry of Labor: Directorate of Research, Economic Studies and Statistics (DARES): https://dares.travail-emploi.gouv.fr/

Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs: https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr

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3.

GERMANY

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Chapter Outline

Why Study this Case?

Although Germany was one of the last large countries in Europe to unify in the late 19th century, it rose to be both a military and economy powerhouse by the early 20th century, and then experienced a long period of instability due to its role in both World Wars. Its rise from the horrors and devastation of the Nazi regime, and then its peaceful reunification after the end of the Cold War, could be considered a political and economic miracle. As a federal system (somewhat unique in Europe), as well as a Parliamentary government (the norm on the continent), it provides a fascinating case study.

Section 1 – Historical Background

The lands and people that constitute modern Germany have a long and varied history. The term "Germania" is first recorded

in the 1st century BCE as the name of a province of the Roman Empire, which constituted several areas in Northern and Central Europe. However, the Roman use of that term is generally thought to extend to all peoples and lands of that region, not just those who spoke Germanic languages. Even if we just talk about the peoples who spoke Germanic languages, there were, at one point, almost 1800 different political entities (mostly Duchies) that exercised some form of independence and governing authority. This background essay can't begin to capture all of that nuance. However, we will talk generally of the three historical Empires ("Reichs") in German history up to 1945, before shifting to the modern-day democratic state that we see today.

1.1 – The Holy Roman Empire

Charlemagne, the King of the Franks (a Germanic-speaking group), was crowned Emperor of the Western Empire by Pope Leo III in 800 CE. Although the term "Holy Roman Empire" was not generally used until the 13th century, Charlemagne's crowning, and the unification of the Germanic princes and kingdoms under him, is generally thought of as the first step in the rise of that political entity. The Frankish kingdom went through several divisions and dynastic changes over the next century and a half. Eventually, Otto the Great (Otto the First) was crowned King of the Eastern Franks in 936, and recognized as Emperor (by Pope John XII) in 962. However,

the role of Emperor, as used in this context, was not a powerful King (in the same sense that the Kings of England, France, and Spain would emerge in the Late Middle Ages). Rather, the Emperor's purpose was more to mitigate disputes among the various Kingdoms, Principalities, and independent city-states within the realm, as well as to conduct foreign affairs with the Pope and the non-Germanic Kingdoms of Europe. After Otto's death, his successors were largely elected by the other Germanic Kings and Princes; the general rule would then be for the Pope to recognize that "King of Germany" with the title of Holy Roman Emperor as well. For much of its history, the Empire was less of a unified political entity, and more of a loose confederation. In fact, this political disunity is generally considered to be the reason why the Empire eventually fell. With the rise of unified nation-states, especially powerful military entities such as England, Spain, and France, the Germanic Empire became a frequent victim of the expansionist urges of those other powers. The Napoleonic Wars of the early 19th century eventually spelled the end of the Empire. Francis II, the last Emperor, saw his armies defeated in 1805. As a result, many of the small principalities, especially in what is now western Germany, left the Empire and joined the Confederation of the Rhine, which the French leader Napoleon created as an alternative German state. Francis himself abdicated the throne in 1806, bringing the thousand-year history of the Empire to a close.

Figure 1.1 – The Holy Roman Empire, ca 1648 (by Astrokey 44, CC BY-SA 3.0)

1.2 – The Second Reich

Although Napoleon had defeated the Holy Roman Empire (as well as Spain, Austria, and the Netherlands), he over-extended his own military by warring with Russia, Prussia, and Britain, and eventually surrendered. In 1814-1815, the Allies who had defeated France met at Vienna, and redrew the map of Europe. Recognizing the weakness of the Imperial model, but also concerned that a unified Germany could threaten its neighbors, the Congress of Vienna settled on a new type of structure: the German Confederation. The roughly 300 Duchies, Margraves, and Principalities (including many that were ruled directly by a local Bishop or Abbot) that had existed prior to 1806 were consolidated into about forty such entities. The two largest and most powerful of these were the Austrian Empire and the Kingdom of Prussia. However, each of the

individual Princes and Dukes (of the forty or so that remained) maintained authority within his own lands. Disputes between the rulers, and any issues of foreign affairs, would be decided by a Federal Convention, which consisted of the ruler of each member state. The Austrian Emperor (or his representative) chaired the Convention meetings, but all decisions would have to be unanimous. Each member state would then be bound by those agreements.

However, this arrangement only lasted for about a half century. As Prussia (which was industrializing much more quickly than most of its neighbors) grew in economic and military power, and both it and Austria found themselves in disputes with many of the smaller kingdoms (and each other), the Confederation eventually divided into factions. The Seven Weeks War (in 1866) was a quick and decisive victory for Prussia over Austria, and most of the northern Principalities and Duchies joined the new North German Confederation under Prussian leadership. By 1871, every remaining state except for Austria and Liechtenstein had joined the new Confederation, which renamed itself as the "German Empire" in that year. The King (Kaiser) of Prussia, Wilhelm I, became the Emperor of Germany, and his Chief Minister, Otto von Bismarck, became the Chancelor (roughly equivalent to the Prime Minister in Great Britain at the time) of this new Empire (which became known in popular parlance as the "Second Reich", as a replacement for Charlemagne and Otto's original "First Reich").

Figure 2.1 – German Empire: 1871-1918 (by ziegelbrenner, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Although each constituent state within the Empire still kept its Prince or Duke as a formal Head of State (only Prussia and Bavaria had "Kings"), the organization of this new entity (which was largely the handiwork of Bismarck) gave most of the real political authority to Prussia. Legislative powers were shared by an elected Reichstag and an appointed Bundesrat (the members of this upper house were appointed by each State). However, the Chancellor served solely at the pleasure of the Kaiser of Prussia (in his capacity as Emperor), and no law could be passed without consent of the Bundesrat. Because Prussia had the most powerful Army within the Emperor, this gave the Kaiser (and Bismarck) great influence over both the foreign affairs of the entire Empire, as well as internal debates in the Bundesrat. Under Bismarck and Wilhelm I, the Junkers

(land-owning aristocrats from eastern Prussia) dominated the government of the late 19th century. Laws suppressing the independence of the Catholic Church (which had become increasingly hostile towards the Protestant Prussian monarchy), labor unions, and even the activities of Socialist parties, were passed.

However, with the death of Wilhelm I in 1888, the short rule of his son Frederick (for less than four months), and the rise of Wilhelm's grandson (Wilhelm II) as Emperor, Bismarck found himself increasingly isolated. Unlike his father and grandfather, Wilhelm II intended to be more hands-on in ruling the Empire, and resented Bismarck's dominance. The Chancellor resigned in 1890, leaving Wilhelm II in charge.

Wilhelm then steered Germany towards a policy of military aggression (including a naval buildup that Britain perceived to be threatening to her interests, as well as vetoing a key defense treaty with Russia). At the same time, various social and economic pressures were being put on the government: the Socialist, Centre [Catholic Agrarian], and various Liberal parties all won significant numbers of seats in Reichstag elections in the period, but Wilhelm and his Ministers refused to negotiate with them. In 1914, after the assassination of the Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand (the successor to the throne of Austria-Hungary) by a Serbian nationalist, Wilhelm pledged his military support to Austria (Germany's sole remaining major ally in Europe). With Russia, France, Britain, and Italy (and eventually the United States, after 1917) on

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the other side, Germany and Austria fought a long, costly, and (eventually) losing battle against the Allies. The "Great War" (what we today call World War One) ended in November 1918 with the collapse of Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire, as well as the abdication of Wilhelm II (Emperor Charles I of Austria didn't technically abdicate, but renounced any intent to participate further in the governing of his Empire – his title was abolished by the Austrian government in 1919). King Ludwig III of Bavaria (the other major constituent monarchy within the Empire) fled to Hungary.

1.3 – The Weimar Republic and the Third Reich

In the wake of Wilhelm's abdication, the fall of the Empire, and the devastation of military defeat, Germany faced a great political, economic, and social crisis. Sailors in Kiel rebelled against their officers, close to a million factory workers went on strike, and labor councils in Bavaria declared a "Socialist Republic" as an alternative to the Catholic monarchy that had ruled that part of southern Germany. A short-lived Provisional Government managed the demobilization of the Army, and accepted the Allied-imposed peace terms of the Treaty of Versailles. In response to the demands for a more representative political system, a group of party leaders within that Provisional Government (mostly Socialists, with a few Communists and Liberals) met at Weimar (a music and artistic

center in Thuringia), and drafted a new Constitution (hence the name "Weimar Republic"). Instead of an Emperor, this system would feature a President (elected by the citizens for a seven-year term) with broad powers. The Reichstag (sometimes referred to as the National Assembly in this period) would remain in place, with elections taking place in multi-member districts, and seats allocated by proportion. The Chancellor was to be appointed by the President, but Presidents were expected to only appoint those who could command a majority of the Reichstag.

Historians of the Weimar Republic tend to focus on its weaknesses. The proportional system of election tended to reward small, ideologically focused parties, which made compromise and broad consensus difficult to achieve. In the early years of the Republic, four centrist parties (Social Democratic and Democratic Liberal on the center-left, and Catholic Centre and Peoples Party on the center-right) tended to dominate the Chancellorship and Cabinet positions. However, the economic crises of the late 1920s and early 1930s saw the rising influence of the far Left (particularly the Communists) and extreme Nationalist groups (such as the National Socialist German Workers' Party, or Nazi, in its shortened form). The refusal of these ideologically extreme parties to compromise with the larger centrist parties is often cited as one factor in the collapse of the Weimar Republic.

Another weakness was the formal relationship between the President, the Chancellor, and the Reichstag. In most modern

Parliamentary systems, the Head of State (President or Crown) appoints the Prime Minister (or Chancellor, in German-speaking countries) from the majority party. If no party has a majority, then there is usually some formal mechanism (a negotiated coalition agreement, or a vote in the Parliament) to ensure that the Prime Minister/Chancellor has the support of the majority of the Legislature. No such mechanism existed in the Weimar system. Instead, the President appointed a Chancellor whom he believed could command the support of the Reichstag. As long as the Chancellor's proposed legislation passed the Assembly, it was assumed that he had the confidence of that body. However, if the Chancellor authored a proposal that failed, then he "lost the confidence" of the Reichstag, which triggered either a new Presidential appointment to the job, or even new elections. In the fourteen years of Weimar government (counting the Provisional Government), there were twenty different Cabinet/Governments, thirteen men serving as Chancellor, and eight elections for Reichstag (including five between 1928-1933). Of those twenty Cabinet/Governments, at least half did not have a party membership reflecting the majority of the Reichstag.

One of the other key factors that led to the collapse of the Weimar system was the peace imposed by the Allies at Versailles in 1919. France and Belgium, where most of the key battles took place, demanded heavy reparations from Germany, especially in the form of payments for economic

loss. Alsace-Lorraine (an area that had been warred over for centuries) was returned to France. The neighboring Ruhr and Rhine River Valleys, which were the key industrial engines of Germany, were to be occupied by the Allies for up to twenty years, with those countries being given the first right to the area's rich coal deposits. Large portions of eastern Prussia (including several large estates belonging to the old Junker class) were annexed to the re-formed Poland (which had been carved up by Austria, Prussia, and Russia back in 1815 at Vienna). The resentment at being treated like a conquered people, as well as the economic collapse brought on by reparations and the larger Great Depression of 1929, fueled those extremist political movements which sought to undermine the Republic. The Provisional Government which had accepted the Versailles terms (not that they had any real choice in the matter) was particularly resented. Many of those same leaders that had been forced to accede to the Versailles Treaty later held prominent roles in the early days of the Weimar system. But many Nationalists, especially the NSDAP leader Adolf Hitler, never forgave the "stab in the back".

Figure 1.3 – Reduction in German and Austrian borders after Versailles (derivative work: Fluteflute from Map_Europe_1923-fr.svg: Historicair, CC BY-SA 2.5)

As the Reichstag struggled with maintaining stable alliances that could produce answers to these pressing economic and social pressures, the President (at the time, Paul von Hindenburg, an aged former Commander of German forces in World War I, and a conservative Junker) began to rely more on the powers of his office to try and lead the country. Although the drafters of the Weimar Constitution had intended for the President to serve as a counterweight to what they feared would be a Reichstag dominated by political radicals, they did not anticipate the assembly itself becoming paralyzed by

faction. The Constitution contained a provision (Article 48) which allowed the President to rule by emergency decree in limited situations. From 1928-1933, Hindenburg called five Reichstag elections. None of these resulted in a governing coalition, so the President began using his Article 48 powers to appoint minority Chancellors (all of whom lost votes of confidence in short order). Finally, in March 1933, Hindenburg invited Adolf Hitler, leader of the growing NSDAP (National Socialist Party) to serve as Chancellor. Hitler then persuaded the President to use his emergency powers to ban several political parties (including the Social Democrats and Communists, which were the next two largest parties in the Reichstag at the time). The new government then transferred all powers to itself (stripping the legislative body of any remaining authority). President Hindenburg died at the age of 86 the following year, and Hitler merged the offices of President and Chancellor, declaring himself "Fuhrer" (Leader). Thus was born the Third Empire (Third Reich).

Figure 1.4 – The Reichstag Fire of 1933 was used by Hitler to ban the activities of the Social Democratic and Communist Parties (public domain photo from the US National Archives)

It is assumed that the reader is at least somewhat familiar with the key events of World War II. Hitler and his Nazi party pledged to restore Germany to its economic, military, and political dominance (hence the emphasis in Nazi propaganda on the "Third Reich", which Hitler tried to portray as the logical continuance of the Empires of Charlemagne and Bismarck). However, the devastation of the First World War and the Great Depression made that very difficult. A tactic which Hitler would use to effective (and devastating) ends was

to blame Germany's opponents. These opponents included not just its traditional rivals such as France, England, and Russia, but INTERNAL groups such as Socialists, Communists, trade unions, Liberals, and religious minorities (especially Jews). Hitler also demanded "lebensraum" (living space) for Germans, and started to claw back some of the territories that had been reallocated at Versailles. Annexation of the Czech province of Sudetenland (1938) was agreed to by other European leaders (at the Munich Conference) as a concession to avoid war. However, the following year, Germany annexed two of the remaining regions of Czechoslovakia, and then (with the assurance of Soviet Russia that they would share the spoils), Hitler's Army invaded Poland in September 1939. That invasion provoked the outbreak of World War II. Eventually, Germany would ally itself with Italy and Japan (the Axis Powers). The original allies were led by Britain and France, and eventually grew to include many other countries in Northern and Western Europe. Hitler turned on his Soviet allies in June 1941, and then Japan attacked the American Naval base at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii six months later, which brought the United States onto the Allied side as well.

By the end of the European war, in May 1945, Germany had been invaded and divided into four zones of occupation (the United States, Britain, France, and Soviet Union each controlling a zone). It is estimated that at least 50 million people died during World War II, including six million

European Jews who were systematically arrested, interned in concentration camps, and murdered (the "Holocaust"). One of the last deaths was Hitler himself, who committed suicide in the final week of the European war, as the Allied armies were closing in on Berlin.
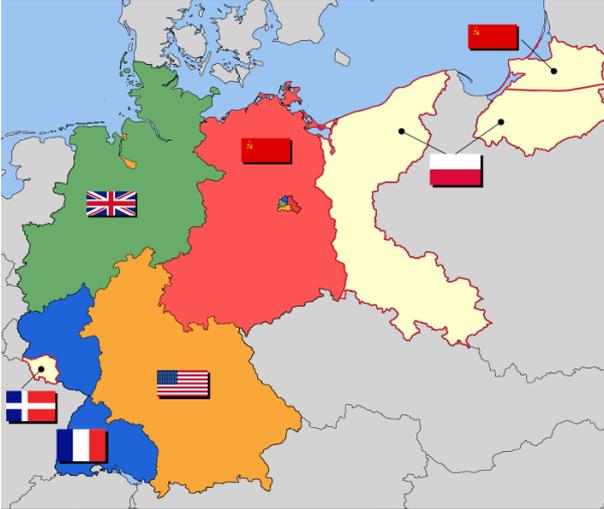
Figure 1.5 – Germany was divided into four occupation zones at the end of World War II. The areas in pale yellow were permanently separated from Germany, and annexed to France, Poland, and the USSR (by 52 Pickup, CC BY-SA 2.5)

1.4 – Two Germanies, the Basic Law, and Reunification

With Germany divided and occupied at the end of 1945, the Allied powers could have imposed terms on the defeated Empire, similar to what had happened at Versailles in 1919. However, the four major Allied powers quickly settled into the two camps that would contest the Cold War for the next forty years. Although the "Big Three" (Soviet, British, and American) leaders had agreed to cooperate in the governing of their zones at the war-time conferences at Yalta and Potsdam, those agreements broke down over issues related to refugee resettlement, allocation of agricultural and industrial supplies between the zones, the role of non-Communist political parties in the Soviet sector, and even which currency could be used as legal tender. The Soviets imposed a blockade on the western sectors of Berlin (that city was located in the eastern [Soviet] zone, but was itself divided into four separate zones) in 1948. The Americans and British responded with the Berlin Airlift, which delivered 2.3 million tons of food, coal, and other supplies, over the next 15 months. The Soviets ended the blockade in May 1949, but the lack of trust between the two sides continued. The Communist party had already boycotted Berlin's city elections in December 1948, which resulted in two city governments (one for the eastern [Soviet] zone, the other for the three western zones). Just days after the end of the blockade, the three western zones in the rest of the country

combined to form the *Federal Republic of Germany* (the FRG, or West Germany). The Soviet zone was renamed the *German Democratic Republic* (the GDR, or East Germany). That country, for the next forty years, operated as a one-party Communist state. Like its fellow Warsaw Pact members (Poland, Hungary, Romania, and others) it was not formally part of the Soviet Union, but relied heavily on that power for trade, military defense, and foreign alliances. The western part of Berlin (which was surrounded on all sides by East Germany) remained technically under American, French, and British military occupation (because of certain clauses in the Potsdam agreement), but those Allies allowed the city broad powers of self-rule. It was technically not a part of the Federal Republic, but considered itself a "de facto" (in fact) State of West Germany (even if it didn't have "de jure" [in law] status).

Figure 1.6 – East and West Germany: 1949-1989 (public domain photo from Library of Congress)

Delegates from the three larger western zones (each Lander, or State, in those areas, had elected assemblies in the immediate post-war years) met at Bonn near the end of the airlift, and ratified the "Grundgesetz" (Basic Law), which would serve as West Germany's Constitution. However, the Western Allies, as well as most of the delegates themselves, were careful to NOT call this document a Constitution ("Verfassung"). This agreement was intended to be provisional only, until all of Germany (including the Eastern/Communist zone, as well as occupied West Berlin) could be unified into a single state.

For most of West Germany's history, the country was a key ally to the United States, Britain, and the other Western

powers. It joined the NATO alliance in 1955, and agreed to host several key US military installations (the Air Force base at Ramstein and Army barracks at Grafenwohr are still two of the largest American military centers outside the US). Despite strong pacifist and anti-nuclear-weapons movements in Western Germany (which will be discussed in later sections), the FRG remained, for most of its history, strongly within the NATO and Western alliances. The two Germanies finally granted diplomatic recognition to each other in 1972 (although they never formally had embassies in each other's territories, only "permanent missions").

In East Germany, as mentioned before, a single-party (Communist) state was established. That country, along with most of the other "Eastern Bloc" nations, formed the Warsaw Pact (a Soviet-led counter to NATO) in 1955. Travel and trade with the West was severely restricted (after the end of the 1948-49 blockade, East Germany provided for restricted land and air corridors between West Berlin and the rest of West Germany, but Eastern Bloc residents were mostly prohibited from using these transportation networks).

East Germany's isolation, Communist ideology, as well as its dependence on the Soviet bloc, hampered its economic growth and cultural vitality. Although the Warsaw Bloc nations, including East Germany, maintained strong militaries, the Communist system eventually began unable to keep up with the more market-oriented economies of Western Europe. As the Soviet system began to crumble in the late 1980s, the East

Germany government, led by Erich Honecker, refused to follow the lead of the Mikhail Gorbachev, the Soviet Premier who called for *glasnost* ("openness") and *perestroika* ("restructuring"). Contested election results in May 1989 led to mass protests against the GDR government, and when Hungary opened its border with the Austria the following month, many East German citizens took advantage of the opportunity to flee to the west (through Czechoslovakia, also a Warsaw Pact member). In response to these events, Honecker ordered the closure of the East German border with its southern neighbor, and then, despite urging from Gorbachev to open negotiations with opposition groups, authorized soldiers to shoot protestors during a large rally in Leibniz (in early October 1989). Rival factions in the East Germany Communist party succeeded in overturning that order, and less than 10 days later, voted to remove Honecker from office. On the night of November 9th, 1989, East Berlin residents, taking advantage of a temporary lifting of the travel ban, began to chip away at pieces of the wall that divided the city in two. East German soldiers, without any orders as to how to respond, stood by and watched. The Berlin Wall, erected at the height of the Cold War in 1961, had fallen.

Figure 1.7 – West and East Berliners stand on Brandenburg Gate, which had divided in the city, in November 1989 (from Lear 21, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Within the next two years, every Communist government (including that in the Soviet Union) had been replaced by a more pluralistic and democratic form. East Germany, which had long claimed to be the only legitimate state for the entire country, agreed to reunification with the West in October 1990, less than a year after the fall of the Berlin Wall. The Basic Law, which the FRG had adopted in 1949 as a temporary and provisional mechanism, was recognized as the charter for a reunified Germany, which would finally be a single state again after forty years of division.

Section 2 – Ethnic and

Religious Background

Although the vast majority of the country are ethnic Germans, the country has experienced a large increase in its foreign-born population in recent years. Although Germany, especially since reunification in 1990, has long welcomed migration from other parts of the world, the surge of non-German speaking immigrants, especially from the Middle East and Eastern Europe, has put a strain on the social welfare system, and led to a political backlash in some parts of the country.

Germany also has a long history of religious strife (the Protestant Reformation started in Germany), although, like in many parts of Western Europe, the traditional split between Catholics and Protestants has become much less salient in the 20th and 21st centuries. Germany's role in the Holocaust, and the hollowing out of its once-thriving Jewish population during World War II, remains a contentious subject in the country. Only recently has the nation begun to come to grips with the consequences of that era. Furthermore, the rise in Middle Eastern and Muslim immigration has led to concerns among some Germans about how to assimilate those new residents into the larger society.

German is the only official language in the nation, although the government does recognize four smaller regional languages (Sorbian, Danish, North Frisian, and Romani), which are spoken by long-standing ethnic minorities living along border regions (BBC).

2.1 – Ethnic Makeup and Migration

In 1990 (the same year as reunification), ethnic Germans made up 93% of the country's population. In 2023 (a third of a century later), that percentage had dropped to 84% (Federal Statistical Office 2023). Migration to Germany in recent years can be attributed to primarily three key policies. In 1961, Germany and Turkey signed a guest-worker agreement (the "Gasterbeiter" program), which was intended to bring in temporary workers for lower-skilled tasks such as mining and construction. Although this arrangement was to provide for temporary employment, large numbers of those workers stayed in Germany for longer terms, with many bringing families with them. By 1990, approximately 2 million Turkish guest-workers were living more or less permanently in the country (out of a population of about 79 million at the time). Today, Turks make up the largest contingent of non-German residents.

Germany's membership in the European Union, which allows for expedited work permits across national borders, also makes it an attractive destination for laborers from less-developed EU countries. In 2023, 36% of the foreign-born population in Germany came from other EU members, with the vast majority coming from the relatively poorer countries in Eastern and Southern Europe.

As one of the leading economies in the EU, Germany has also played a key role in several regional agreements regarding

humanitarian migration onto the Continent. In 2015, largely in response to the civil war in Syria and a large influx of African migration into southern Europe (especially Turkey and Italy), Angela Merkel (Germany's Chancellor) announced that her government would allow asylum seekers to seek refuge in Germany directly (without waiting in the first EU country they entered, which had been long-standing policy in the Union). In 2022, in response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Germany and other EU powers agreed to an expedited visa program for Ukrainian war refugees. In 2023, according to the Federal Statistical Office (Germany's Census), Ukrainians and Syrians were the next two-largest contingents (after Turks) of the foreign-born population living in Germany. As we will see in subsequent sections, this rapid increase in the non-German population has led to some concern, especially from political parties on the Right, about the impact of this immigration on Germany's economy and society.

2.2 – Germany's Population Demographics

A major impetus for this boon in immigration lies in Germany's shrinking birth-rate. Like many developed industrial societies, Germany is considered a Stage Five country in the traditional Demographic Transition Model, where the death-rate exceeds the birth-rate, and fertility drops

below the necessary 2.1 births per woman in order to maintain a steady population. Germany's birth rate is 1.46 per woman (as of 2022), according to World Bank data. Like most countries in this situation, Germany has chosen to open up its immigration system in order to have enough workers (and tax-payers) to staff its economy (and to support its comparatively generous social safety net). Even with this increase in migration, Germany's population is actually estimated to begin shrinking after 2025, while its two chief economic rivals in Western Europe (France and the United Kingdom), are expected to continue moderate population growth over the next fifty years.
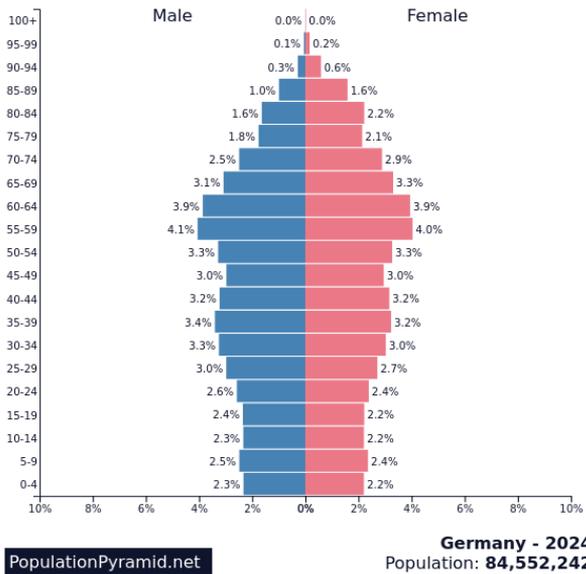

Figure 2.1 – Germany's small birth rate has led to an aging population (provided by www.populationpyramid.net through a CC-BY 3.0 license)

2.3 – Religious Identity

It has already been mentioned that Charlemagne, Otto, and their successors held dual titles: King of the Germans AND Holy Roman Emperor. The latter title was intended, by the Catholic Church, to identity the defender of the faith in the western part of Europe. However, in the early 16th century, critics of the Church's political and theological positions began to resist its hegemony not only in Germany, but in other parts of Europe. The Protestant Reformation is generally thought to begin with the publishing of Martin Luther's *95 Theses* (a series of critiques of the Pope and Catholic Bishops) at the Chapel in Wittenberg, in October 1517.

Lutheranism, as the new creed was generally called, quickly found adherents not only among some of the peasantry, but especially among the growing class of skilled town workers, as well as local rulers who had long resented the influence of the Pope. The Peace of Augsburg (1555) recognized the ability of individual Kings, Princes, and Dukes within the larger Empire to choose the official religion for their realms. However, this treaty did not recognize the validity of other religious faiths (such as Anabaptism and Calvinism), nor did it provide for the rights of individual believers who found themselves living in a kingdom or principality recognizing a different faith. A civil war within the Empire (the Thirty Years War of 1618-1648) ended with the Peace of Westphalia, which extended official recognition to Calvinism, as well as individual conscience

rights for any Christian. Even though the three major Christian faiths could claim adherents across Germany, the general pattern of Catholic dominance in the southern areas (especially Austria and Bavaria), with Protestants being more common in northern and eastern Germany (especially Prussia), can be traced back to this period in German history.
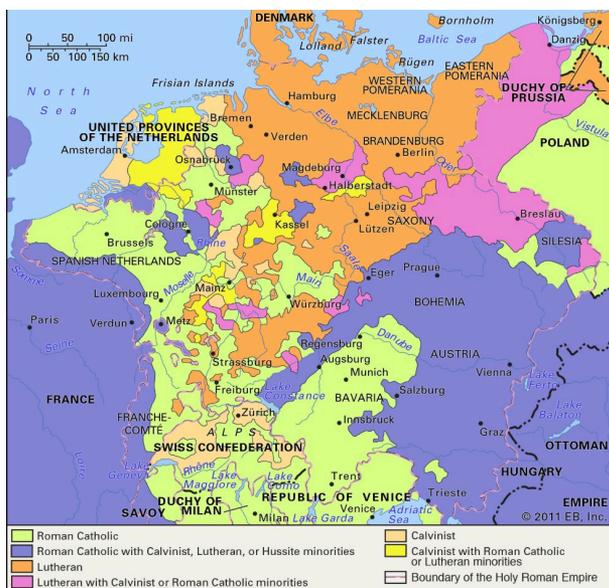

Figure 2.1 – Official denominations after the Peace of Westphalia (from Encyclopedia Brittanica – https://www.britannica.com/event/Thirty-Years-War#/media/1/592619/1790)

Germany's Jewish population has long been small, compared to most of its regional neighbors. One of the clauses in the Westphalia treaties provided for religious freedom for Jews in the newly-formed Dutch Republic (today's Netherlands).

Other large Jewish populations lived east of Germany, in Poland and Romania. However, despite their small numbers (about 500,000, or about 1% of the pre-WWII population), German Jews represented a cultural and economic elite. One study estimates that about 20% of all corporate directors in Germany in the 30 years prior to World War Two were Jewish, and that Jews were heavily represented in professions such as law and medicine. However, Hitler's "Final Solution" (the eradication of European Judaism) devastated this community, as well as those larger Jewish populations in Holland, Poland, and Romania (all of which were occupied by Nazi armies). Germany's Jewish population was reduced to just a few thousand survivors by 1945 (Windolf n.d.)

Germany's commemoration of the Holocaust has long been mired in controversy. In the years immediately following the war, most remembrances focused on elite resistance to Hitler (such as the failed von Stauffenberg plot in July 1944), or on memorials to all of Germany's war dead (both military and civilian). By the mid-1970s, Western Federal Republic officials began to hold memorial services every November 9th (the date in 1938 on which the Frankfurt Synagogue was destroyed). However, in the East, Communist Party observances tended to emphasis the "defeat of Fascism" more generally, without specific reference to the targeted victims. In 1995, the re-unified German government finally set an official annual commemoration on January 27th (the date on which Soviet troops liberated the Auschwitz concentration camp in 1945).

Berlin's Holocaust Memorial, which is still criticized today for its abstract design, as well as its lack of names of victims, was completed in 2005, sixty years after the end of the war (Schiller 2022).

In contrast to the small Jewish remnant, Germany's Muslim population is one of the fastest-growing on the European content. As mentioned in Section 2.1, on ethnic migration, Germany's status as a destination for Middle Eastern refugees (particularly from Syria), and the long-standing guest-worker program (from Turkey) is a key reason for this growth. From 2010 to 2016, the Muslim population is estimated to have grown from 3.3 million (4.1% of the population) to just under 5 million (6.1%). By 2023, that number was estimated at over 5.5 million (6.6% of the population). A Pew Research study in 2017 found that public opinion was divided on the effect of this growing wave of migrants. Although 65% of poll respondents said they had a "mostly" or "very" favorable view of Muslim immigrants, 61% agreed with the statement that "Muslims want to be distinct from the rest of German society". The same poll showed that 61% of Germans worry that Muslim immigration "increases the likelihood of terrorism" (Pew 2017).

Another trend to mention is the rise in secularism and a lack of any religious belief among a large number of Germans. While this trend is similar to that found in many industrialized societies in Western Europe (as well as North America), there is a marked regional pattern found in Germany. The Federal

Statistical Office collects data about religious membership (because registered church members pay a tax which goes to support the religious and social programs of their preferred denomination). Forty years of official state atheism in Communist East Germany has led to a markedly reduced level of religious identity in that part of the country. In fact, almost every district in the former Democratic Republic reports that more than 50% of their citizens adhere to no religious belief or affiliation. Meanwhile, large swaths of western Germany show majority (or significant plurality) membership in either a Catholic or Protestant church (estimates are that less than 5% of all Christian church members actually attend on a weekly basis).
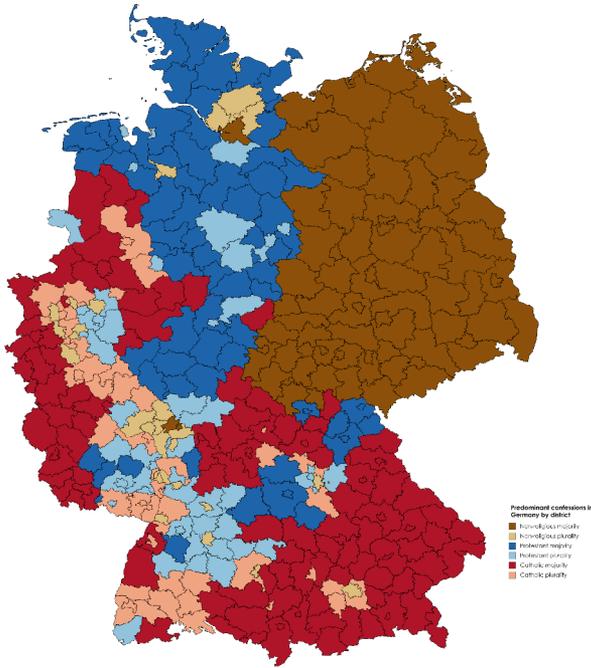
Figure 2.1 – Even after reunification, religious identity is very different in East and West Germany (https://vividmaps.com/predominant-confessions-germany-district/)

Section 3 – Political Culture and Civil Society

The Basic Law (which serves as Germany's Constitution) provides for an extensive set of protections for individual rights. In fact, the first 19 articles (out of 146 total) deal exclusively with "fundamental rights". Most of these rights apply to all persons in Germany, regardless of citizenship status. In fact, the very first article begins with this sentence: "Human dignity shall be inviolable." After the horrors of the

Nazi period, the drafters of Germany's new regime seemed determined to guarantee the primacy of basic civil rights.

3.1 – Protections of Minorities

Article 3 of the Basic Law provides a sweeping anti-discrimination clause, prohibiting favoritism on the basis of sex, parentage, race, language, homeland or origin, religious faith, political opinion, or disability. It also specifically requires the government to provide for affirmative action policies on the basis of sex. However, this policy has been limited by a European Court of Justice ruling in 1996, which found that the State of Bremen's quota policy for public workers violated European Union rules (Feminist Majority Foundation 1985).

3.2 – Anti Military and Nuclear activism

Even though Germany has long been a key member of the NATO defensive alliance, there is a long history in German politics of protests against the American military presence. In 1979, NATO announced the "double-track decision", which would expand the network of short-range nuclear missiles in Western Europe (with the majority placed in West Germany), while at the same time trying to negotiate a limit of intermediate- and longer-range weapons with the Soviet Union. This decision sparked mass protests in West Germany, and is often considered a key spark in turning the Green

movement from a loose network of environmental and anti-nuclear-power advocates into a formal political force (the Green party, as we will learn later in Section 5, was founded in 1980, and won seats in the national Parliament as early as 1982). Several large rallies, with hundreds of thousands of protestors, occurred annually from 1981-1986 (Holmes 2014: Chapter 3).

3.3 – Restrictions on Nazi symbols

Article 21 of the Basic Law declares that political parties that "undermine democratic order" are unconstitutional, and several other sections of the constitutional document lay the ground for what became know to be "de-Nazification", where the West German government fired civil servants who had served the National Socialist government of the Third Reich. The party ban has been used twice (in the 1950s) to ban anti-democratic parties, but the Federal Constitutional Court has taken a much dimmer view of those efforts in recent years. In Section 5, we will learn about the failed attempt to ban the National Democratic Party in 2017, and more recent controversy over the legality of the Alternative for Germany (AfD) Party, which is rising in the polls.

This sensitivity about German's Nazi past extends to criminal law. Displays of Nazi symbols (such as the swastika) can be punished by fines, and even up to three years in jail. However, the law is applied inconsistently, depending on the

context (such as educational displays, news broadcasts, and artwork). The Federal Court of Justice has struggled to balance this concern about the dangerous power of Nazi symbols with German's tradition as an open society, with a commitment to free speech (Bierbach and Kaminski 2019)

Section 4 – Political Participation and Parties

As indicated above, Germany in the post-war era, especially in the West, has an established record of high levels of activism and political participation. In national elections (such as for the national and European Parliaments), Germany's voter turnout has consistently been above 70% since reunification in 1990. This is just slightly below the percentages found in other Northern European countries (such as Denmark, Norway, and Sweden), but much higher than other traditional Western European powers such as France and the United Kingdom. As the graph below shows, turnout in the former East Germany lags that of the West (albeit only slightly). This is a trend found across Europe since the end of the Cold War, where voter turnout in former Warsaw Pact and Soviet satellite states have only recently begun to rise above 50% (Voter Turnout Database).
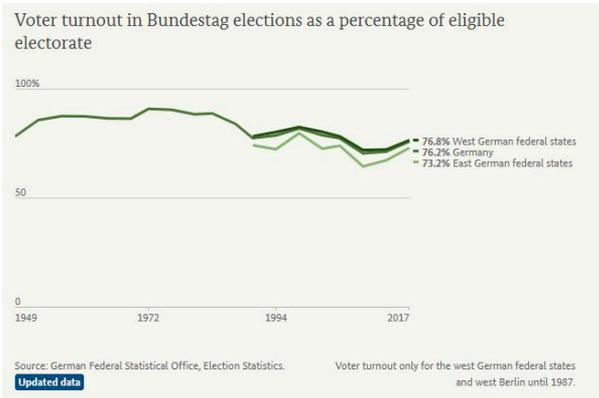
Voter turnout in Bundestag elections as a percentage of eligible electorate

100%

76.8% West German federal states
76.2% Germany
73.2% East German federal states

50

0
1949   1972   1994   2017

Source: German Federal Statistical Office, Election Statistics.
Updated data

Voter turnout only for the west German federal states and west Berlin until 1987.

Figure 4.1 – Voter turnout in Germany through 2017 (source: German Federal Statistical Office)

4.1 – Electoral System for the Bundestag

Germany's Parliamentary structure, and the powers given to each chamber, will be explored in the next section. The lower chamber, the Bundestag, is elected directly by the citizens of Germany. However, the system used for this is quite complex, and often confusing (even to Germany's own voters). It is considered a form of Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) voting, where voters have both a representative from their local district, as well as a group of members who represent the breadth of ideological views. Each voter casts two votes on the same ballot. The first vote is for an individual representative from that voter's particular district (there are 299 districts, allocated proportionally by State/Land population). The winner in each district is determined by a simple first-past-the-post/plurality method (the same method used in US House

of Representatives and British House of Commons elections). The second vote is for a party list (each political party nominates a list of candidates). An additional 299 seats are then distributed (using the same general proportion by Land population) by the percentage that each party receives in this second vote.

However, a common outcome occurs in Germany (and other MMP systems used around the world): the number of seats won in individual districts (especially by the major parties) can be higher than the percentage of seats that are earned when looking at the proportions of the second votes (these are referred to as "overhangs"). Germany also has a minimum threshold rule: a party must gain at least 5% of the second vote nationally, or at least 3 individual district seats, in order to actually claim its seats in the Bundestag. This minimum was specifically adopted in order to avoid the splintering of parties which occurred in the Weimar era. An exception to this rule exists for parties that represent one of the four recognized minority groups, which is how the South Schleswig Voters Association, which represents the Danes and Frisians of that State, holds one seat (Thurau 2022).

Any party who meets the threshold rule can then qualify for the allocation of seats under the second vote. In the 2021 election, for example, the Party of the Left (Die Linke) only captured 4.9% of the second vote, but won exactly three seats outright. Because of the overhang seats, and then a second rule which provides for the addition to "adjustment seats"

in order to maintain proportionality, the Left parlayed those three district wins into 39 seats in the next Parliament. These two rules (providing for "overhang" and "adjustment" seats) have caused the Bundestag to grow from its "natural size" of 598 representatives to an actual member of 736 in the body that was elected in 2021.

A reform to this system was passed by the SPD/Green/FDP coalition government in 2023, and was used for the first time in 2025. The original proposal would have eliminated overhang seats and required an absolute 5% minimum on the second vote to claim any wins. The Left Party and the CSU (a Catholic-dominated party that only contests elections in Bavaria) sued in the Federal Constitutional Court. In July 2024, the Court ruled that the size of the Bundestag could be capped at 630 members, but that individual district winners from small parties (even those that fall short of the 5% threshold) must still be seated. However, those parties that drop below the 5% minimum, and any claiming overhang seats, are not guaranteed any additional seats during the adjustment calculations (Siefken 2024). It is expected that the government that emerged out of the 2025 election will have to make further changes to this law in order to comply with Court's ruling. Some members of the CDU/CSU winning coalition, in fact, have vowed to revisit the entire issue, believing that the lack of guaranteed constituencies for major party winners harms rural voters and smaller cities (Knight 2025).

In the February 2025 election, twenty-three (23) individual constituency winners were not seated because their party's vote share on the second ballot capped the total number of party seats. Eighteen (18) of those 23 were from the CDU/CSU alliance; four came from the AfD; and one from the SDP (Bundestag 2025).
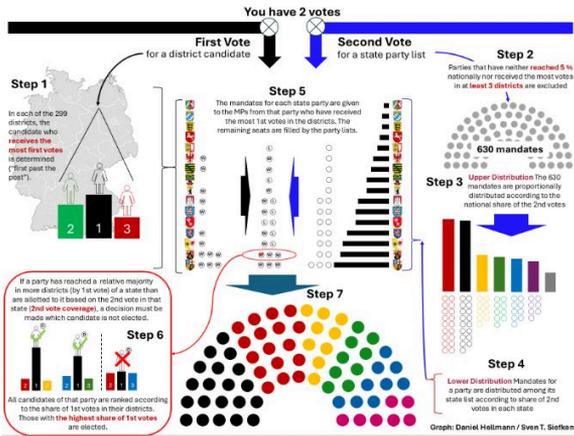

Figure 4.2 – Voters cast two separate ballots for elections to the Bundestag (source: https://americangerman.institute/ 2024/08/ electoral-reform-in -germany /)

Bundestag elections must occur every four years. However, it is possible for early, or "snap" elections to be called prior to the full four year period. This scenario will be described in Section 5.

4.2 – Political Parties

In the immediate postwar years in West Germany, most elections were contested by two larger broad-based parties, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and the Social Democratic Party (SDP). Two smaller parties, the Christian Social Union of Bavaria (CSU) and the Free Democratic Party (FDP), have also played significant roles in every national election since 1949 (and most of the governing coalitions as well). In recent decades, especially since reunification, several smaller parties (the Greens, Die Linke/The Left, and the Alternative for Germany) have emerged on the scene, and challenged the dominance of the traditional party structure.
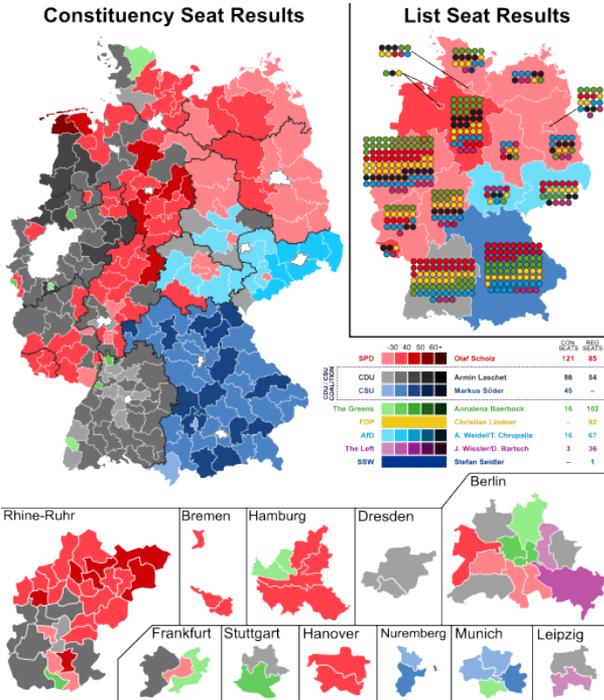
Figure 4.3 – Results from the 2021 Bundestag election. Each party uses a consistent color scheme in its advertising and marketing materials. (by Erinthecute, CC BY-SA 4.0)

4.2.1 – Christian Democrats

As has been mentioned before, parties in the Second Reich era and the Weimar Republic period tended to form not only for ideological reasons, but along confessional lines as well. For example, two of the key center-right parties in the Weimar era were the Centre Party (which was predominantly Catholic) and the German National Peoples Party (which appealed to

the Protestant Junker class). Although both parties held similar positions on fiscal and social policy, they remained divided over issues of religious identity. In the postwar era, the remnants of these and other center-right parties merged to form the Christian Democratic Union, which became the most dominant force in West Germany outside of Bavaria. Under its first leader (and the first Chancellor of the FRG), Konrad Adenauer, the CDU focused on restoring the German economy in the postwar years. It appealed to many of the remnants of the traditional nationalist and anti-Socialist parties as well. The party's platform in this era emphasized a pro-Western foreign policy, opposition to Socialism and Communism, and industrial and labor policies centered around economic liberalism (free-market economics). The CDU held the Chancellorship for twenty years after the war (1949-1969).

After thirteen years in political opposition (1969-1982), the CDU won again during leader (and new Chancellor) Helmut Kohl. Kohl continued the traditional CDU policy of anti-Communism and strong ties with NATO, and engineered the reunification of Germany after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. However, the lagging effects of industrial recession from the early 1980s, as well as the high costs of raising the standard of living in former East Germany, forced Kohl to raise taxes (which went against traditional CDU platform principles). His government lost power in 1998.

Angela Merkel, the first woman Chancellor of Germany,

and the first holder of that office raised in the former East Germany, became party Chair of the CDU in 2000, and then led the party to victory in 2005. The party that Merkel led, however, became much more socially liberal (for example, she called for a vote in Bundestag in 2017 to legalize same-sex marriage, despite her personal opposition). Partially as result of being in a Grand Coalition (this term will be explained in Section 5) with the SPD for much of this period, Merkel found it necessary to compromise in order to maintain her Chancellorship. It was her government that agreed to phase out nuclear power in 2011, and which opened up Germany to high levels of humanitarian migration in 2015.

After Merkel's retirement in 2021, the CDU found itself back in opposition. The party's new leader, Friedrich Merz, led the party to victory in the February 2025 election, and is the current Chancellor. Merz rose to power in part because of concern among CDU members that the party, under Merzel, had lost touch with its traditional voter base. Merz has called for the nuclear power ban to be reversed, for delaying some of the provisions of the 2020 European Green Deal, and for curbing immigration.

In Bavaria, the second-most populous State (and the most predominately Catholic), the CDU does not contest elections at any level (local, State, or Federal). Instead, the center-right is represented by a separate "sister party", the Christian Social Union (CSU). This arrangement is partially a holdover from the Weimar era, which featured a Bavarian splinter from the

larger Catholic Centre Party. It continued into the postwar era partially as a result of Bavarian nationalism (as a counter to the more separatist Bavaria Party, which faded in power in the 1960s). Even today, the CSU is considered the more conservative of the two parties: it emphasizes Catholic social teachings on issues such as abortion and same-sex marriage, and supports the ability of church-run institutions (such as schools and medical facilities) to equally access state funds. Every CDU government has relied on support from the CSU for its majority, and the two parties sit next to each other in the Bundestag. They also coordinate national campaign strategy during Federal elections.

4.2.2 – Social Democratic Party

Germany's oldest remaining political party dates back to 1875, when several smaller parties representing labor unions, the working class, and some Socialist factions merged together to form the Socialist Workers Party. Even though Bismarck and Kaiser Wilhelm I banned Socialist organizations in 1878, the Party continued to win support in local and regional elections. After the ban was lifted in 1890, the party adopted its current name (Social Democratic Party, or SDP).

Although officially Marxist during most of its pre-1949 existence, the SDP often functioned more like a more moderate Social Democratic movement. Rather than preaching revolution, the SDP, like its Labor Party counterpart in England, supported economic reforms within the existing

political system (such as maximum hour laws, minimum wage rules, and protections for child labor). It quietly supported the war effort in 1914-1918 (which led to further splits within the Socialist and Communist factions). As was mentioned earlier, the SDP was one of the key major parties during the Weimar period, and participated in several of the government coalitions (including several times when it controlled the Chancellors office). After being banned by the Nazis in 1933, it existed only as an underground protest and reform movement. At the end of World War II, the party found itself split in half by occupation. The eastern members were forced, by the Soviet occupying forces, to merge with the Communists to form the Socialist Unity Party (this was the group that would rule East Germany as a single-party dictatorship from 1949-1989).

The western remnants of the SDP re-formed in the immediate postwar years, and stood for election in every Federal Republic Bundestag (and unified German) election since 1949. During the early years of the Republic, it held the second-largest number of seats in the Bundestag, but remained in opposition. In 1959, the party formally amended its platform to renounce nationalization of industry, and to emphasize that it wished to reform capitalism, not destroy it. This shift, combined with the popularity of West Berlin Mayor Willie Brandt, led the SDP into its first victory in the Bundestag elections of 1969.

As Germany's first SDP Chancellor, Brandt represented the

more moderate wing of the party. He reaffirmed West Germany's role in NATO, encouraged German participation in European integration (the forerunners to the modern European Union), and remained silent on US policy in Vietnam (despite pressure from many in his own party to critique a key ally). However, Brandt did break with West German tradition by signing the treaties that recognized the Soviet Union and East Germany. Brandt's government also expanded federal spending on health care, transportation, education, and welfare.

However, a significant faction of SDP members still held on to more radical beliefs. One of Brandt's secretaries was exposed as a secret agent for the Stasi (the Eastern German secret police) in 1973. Brandt resigned as Chancellor in 1974 and turned the office over to fellow SDP-er Helmut Schmidt. The party maintained its governing coalition through 1982, when it returned to opposition against the CDU Chancellor Helmut Kohl.

As was mentioned above, Kohl's government lost support over the costs of reunification (especially an unpopular tax hike in 1991). The SDP returned to power after the 1998 elections, under the Chancellorship of former Lower Saxony Governor Gerhard Schroder. At the same time, the British Prime Minister Tony Blair (of the Labor Party) was pursuing his "Third Way" approach to Socialist government policy, with an emphasis on tax cuts, balanced budgets, and rolling back government spending on social welfare programs. Schroder

tried to implement similar policies in Germany, although his coalition partners (the Greens) and some of the more left-wing members of his own party resisted some of these proposals. In the 2005 election, which brought Angela Merkel of the CDU to power, the SDP retained enough seats to force a Grand Coalition, and even held a majority of the Cabinet posts (despite holding fewer Bundestag seats) from 2005-2009.

The SDP later served as partner in Merkel's last two Cabinets (2013-2021), with Olaf Scholz (who later served as Chancellor), as Finance Minister, and then Vice Chancellor. When Scholz rose to the Chancellorship in 2021, he was forced into a three-party coalition with the Greens and the more free-market oriented Free Democrats (FDP). This "traffic light coalition" (red for the SDP, yellow for the FDP, and green for Alliance 90/Greens) arrangement had existed in some State governments in the 1990s, but this was the first time that it had been attempted on the Federal level. As a leader in the European Union, and as a reflection of the Greens and his own party's positions on climate policy, Scholz' government tried to maintain Germany's commitments to de-nuclearization, transition away from fossil fuels, and alternative energy subsidies. However, the challenges brought by Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine (Russia is a major supplier of natural gas to Western Europe, especially Germany) have put enormous pressure on the German economy. In December 2024, Scholz' government lost a vote of confidence, and he was forced to call early elections in February 2025 (Politico). Although the

SDP lost its plurality in that election, it was still invited to join the current government (described in Section 5.2). The current co-leaders of the SDP (Barbel Bas and Lars Klingbeil) both serve as Cabinet ministers in the current Grand Coalition government.

4.2.3 – Free Democratic Party

The Free Democratic Party (FDP) was formed in 1948 as a coalition of various anti-monarchist, anti-clerical, and liberal factions. Liberalism, as a political philosophy in Germany, can be traced back to the founding of the Second Reich in 1871, although it tended to factionalize prior to 1933. Liberals of that era tended to emphasize expansion of the right to vote, a weakening of the role of the Churches in public affairs, and low taxes and free trade. However, various liberal parties of the Second Reich and Weimar eras tended to fissure around which of those issues to emphasize, as well as over questions of foreign policy and military preparedness. In the postwar era, the FDP has advocated for less government spending, lower taxes and regulations on the private sector, and a separation of education and social services from the influence of the Catholic and Lutheran Churches. However, the party has also experienced some internal divisions over foreign policy (especially as it relates to spending on military preparedness and foreign aid) and environmental protection.

They have generally been the third largest party in terms of Bundestag seats (except for the 2013-2017 period, when

they had no Bundestag representation), and they have been a partner in more coalition governments than any other party in modern German history. At various times since 1949, the party has shown flexibility in its platform, and thus has been comfortable aligning itself with either the CDU/CSU or the SDP to form a government. The current FDP leader, Christian Lindner, served as Finance Minister in the Scholz government until November 2024, when he was dismissed by the Chancellor over disagreements about budget policy. That firing led to FDP leaving the coalition, and then the vote of no confidence which triggered the February 2025 election. However, the FDP ended up falling below the 5 percent threshold in that election, and thus currently has no membership in the current Bundestag (Poloni 2025).

4.2.4 – The Greens (Alliance 90/Greens)

West Germany's version of the Green party (Die Grunen) dates back to the anti-nuclear and peace movements of the late 1970s and 1980s. By 1980, Green candidates were running for local and state office, and they first entered the Bundestag in 1982. The party platform has long centered around issues such as pacificism, limiting the influence of NATO on German foreign policy, restrictions on industrialization, and the rights of sexual minorities. A scandal which exposed several Party officers as Stasi (East Germany secret police) informants, as well as efforts by some Greens to slow the reunification process, undercut the Party's successes in the early 1990s. They were

able to maintain some representation in the Bundestag thanks to a merger with Alliance 90, a group of small anti-Communist (but still left-wing) parties from East Germany. The formal name for the current Party (Alliance 90/Greens) reflects this merged history.

The Greens have participated in three Federal governments, each time as junior partner with the SDP (1998-2002, 2002-2005, and 2021-2025). The current Green party has maintained most of the core principles in domestic policy, particularly regarding individual liberties and a strong emphasis on environmental sustainability. Although its early iterations opposed nuclear power and the US/NATO military presence, those positions have softened somewhat in recent years. Germany's over-dependence on Russian gas has created concern about how to balance affordable energy with environmental concerns. Russia's human rights record, including its invasion of Ukraine in 2022, has caused the Green leadership to re-evaluate how NATO and other European alliances could be used to blunt Russian aggression.

4.2.5 – Die Linke (The Left)

When East Germany's Communist government fell in 1989, the ruling Socialist Unity Party expelled most of its leadership (including Erich Honecker, the last ruler of the old GDR), and reorganized itself as a Social Democratic Party (adopting the name "Party of Democratic Socialism"/PDS). However, unlike the more dominant SDP in the West, it still contained

a significant membership that ascribed to a Marxist-Leninist philosophy of anti-capitalism. In the early years of reunification, PDS won significant support in the State legislative elections in most of the former East, but only had modest showings in Bundestag (Federal) elections.

In 2005, as a response to SDP Chancellor Schroder's economic reforms, a group of western SDP members, representing the left flank of that party, broke off and formed a new "Labor and Social Justice" Party. In the federal elections later that year, the PDS in the East and Labor and Social Justice (in the West) agreed to not complete directly with each other in the same districts and States, and to form an alliance in Parliament with whatever members could be elected. This joint list approach yielded 53 seats, the fourth-largest party grouping in the 2005 Bundestag. In 2007, the two parties merged to form "Die Linke" (usually called "The Left" or "The Left Party" in English).

The Left's platform calls for extensive tax increases, restrictions on corporate mergers and acquisitions, and large investments in public works. It is the most pacifist of all German political parties: it would remove Germany from the NATO alliance, and ban the deployment of Germany's military forces outside its borders. Although it is a nationwide party, it consistently performs better in the former States of East Germany, largely by appealing to frustration with the ongoing lag in economic development since reunification. The Russia-Ukraine war has created a fracture within The Left.

Some of the more pacifist elements support Ukraine, seeing Russia as the aggressor. However, others, concerned about what they perceive as "fascist elements" within the Ukrainian government, have rejected sanctions against Russia. In the February 2025 election, an alternative party, dubbed the "Sahra Wagenknecht Alliance – Reason and Justice" appeared appear on the ballot (Wagenknecht, a former member of the Bundestag, is the leader of the more pro-Russian faction). While Die Linke enjoyed a last-minute surge in the polls to finish with over 8 percent (64 seats) in the new Bundestag, the SW Alliance barely missed the threshold (at 4.9%).

4.2.6 – Alternative for Germany (AfD)

The "Alternative fur Deutschland" (AfD) began in 2013 as an offshoot of the CDU, opposed to Chancellor Merkel's European Union policies (especially a bailout of government debt in Greece and Spain). Its original leadership focused on economic issues, with emphasis on public debt and what it saw as Germany's increasing interdependence on the Eurozone. In the 2017 federal election, it won the third-highest number of seats.

However, in the years since that high-water mark, the party leadership, as well as much of its rank-and-file membership, has taken a turn towards the populist Right. In the wake of Germany's acceptance of migrants from Syria and other parts of the Middle East after 2015, it has advocated for closing Germany's borders, leaving the European Union, and a ban on

the public display of Muslim symbols. Many AfD leaders also support Russia in its Ukrainian war, although the motivation is based more on an opposition to European integration and a resentment against Ukrainian migrants. Like The Left, AfD has its strongest levels of support in the States of the former East Germany, which many observers ascribe as a protest vote against globalization and economic integration (Millar 2025).

The original founders of AfD have mostly quit the party over this shift to what they fear is a renewal of xenophobia. Some local party leaders have been accused of displaying symbols that represent Germany's Nazi past, and others have been accused of making antisemitic remarks. As mentioned in Section 3, Article 21 of the Basic Law does allow federal authorities to ban political parties that "undermine the democratic order". However, such a ban would be immediately appealed to the Federal Constitutional Court, which has sole authority to interpret Germany's Basic Law. In 1952, the Socialist Reich Party (which actively flouted the prohibition on the use of Nazi imagery) was successfully banned. Four years later, the same thing happened to the Communist Party in West Germany (even though it actually held seats in the Bundestag). However, an attempt to ban the National Democratic Party (another nationalist, populist faction) in 2017 was overturned by the Court. In October 2024, over a hundred Bundestag members filed a petition to ban AfD. However, the Scholz coalition collapsed, and the

government disbanded, before a vote could be taken (Thurau 2024).

In the most recent election (February 2025), AfD surged to its largest showing yet, with just under 21% of the vote. They hold 152 seats (out of 630) in the current Bundestag, and are the second largest Parliamentary group. However, CDU leader Merz (the new Chancellor) has consistently ruled out asking AfD to join the government, and has supported the continuation of the "firewall" that prevents AfD from joining a federal or state governing coalition. However, SPD leaders have accused the CDU of relying on AfD votes on migration and social welfare legislation (Thurau and Schumacher 2025).

In May 2025, the federal government's domestic intelligence service (the BfV) classified Alternative for Germany as an "extremist" organization, citing its anti-Muslim views. This designation will allow for increased monitoring of party leadership, and possible revocation of government-provided matching funds. Several SDP members, including one current Cabinet minister, have renewed their proposal to ban the party. However, the ruling CDU/CSU is split on the issue, with several party leaders expressing concern that banning AfD will backfire (Marsh and Heine 2025).

Section 5 – Political Institutions

Germany is a Federal Parliamentary Republic. That means that sovereignty (political power) is split between the national and State (Lander) governments, depending on the issue. This is somewhat unusual in Europe, where most systems are unitary, with the national government setting policy for the entire country. However, unlike the situation found in the United States (also a Federal system), Germany's governmental structure is Parliamentary (similar to the United Kingdom).

5.1 – Executive

When the architects of West Germany's new political system wrote the Basic Law in 1949, they took care to avoid one of the features that led to the collapse of the Weimar Republic. In the interwar period, German Presidents had broad powers to appoint (and dismiss) Chancellors. While the Reichstag (the lower chamber of Parliament) had the power to pass votes of no confidence on Chancellors, the President also had the ability to dismiss those officers, regardless of the opinion of the majority of the Legislative body. Also, because there was no formal mechanism for the Reichstag to approve new Chancellors, the President had wide latitude to appoint his preferred candidates. As we've already learned, this imbalance

in power led to multiple elections between 1928-1933, as President von Hindenburg and the fractured Legislature struggled to reach consensus.

Under the Basic Law, the office of President exists, but it is more analogous to a figurehead (similar to the King of England, rather than the President of the United States). He (there has been no female President yet to date) signs all legislation passed by the legislative bodies, but the Chancellor (or another Federal Minister) must counter-sign the law as well. Presidents may veto laws that he believes to be unconstitutional, but all vetoes are reviewed by the Federal Constitutional Court (described below). The President represents Germany in matters of international affairs (signing treaties, attending ceremonies with other heads of state), but the policy-making process (such as the terms that actually end up in those treaties) belongs to the Chancellor and the other government Ministers.

Presidents serve for five-year terms, and can be elected for up to two consecutive terms (five of the twelve post-1949 Presidents have been elected to a second term, but only two of those served for the full ten years). Presidents are elected by a special Convention. The entire Bundestag membership serves as delegates; an equal number of delegates are appointed by the State (Land) governments. Convention elections are not set on a consistent five-year calendar (as Presidential elections are done in the US); several Conventions have been called early to replace a President who resigned, which then shifts the

scheduling of the following Convention to allow the new officeholder to serve the full five years.

One area where the President has some authority is in nominating Chancellors. After each Bundestag election, the President consults with each political party leader (each party designates a candidate for Chancellor during the electoral campaign) to determine which party, or group of parties, has enough votes to form a government (i.e. to put together a group of Cabinet Ministers which has support from the majority of the lower chamber). The President will then nominate a Chancellor from whatever group can form a Cabinet. That nominee has to be approved by a majority vote of the Bundestag (this is a change from practice in the Weimar era). The President then appoints the remainder of the Cabinet Ministers, in consultation with the newly-elected Chancellor. If no Chancellor candidate can win a majority, the President does have the power to appoint the candidate with the largest number of votes (a plurality) to the office, but only after a period of time has passed, and after the Bundestag members themselves have had the opportunity to nominate other candidates. This last scenario, while possible under the Basic Law, has never happened.

Government have fallen in modern Germany due to votes of no confidence. However, it has occurred with much less frequency than in the Weimar era. This is due to two rules within the Basic Law. The first is that for an opposition party to successfully depose a Chancellor, they must propose an

alternative candidate, who can garner the majority support of the existing Bundestag. This "constructive vote of no confidence" has only been used once. In 1982, the SDP government of Helmut Schmidt, which relied on support from the FDP as a junior partner, was replaced by the CDU-led Cabinet of Helmut Kohl. This occurred because the FDP leadership, frustrated with Schmidt's budget policies, resigned their Cabinet seats, and then threw support to the CDU.

The Basic Law does also allow for the Chancellor to actually call for a "vote of confidence" on his or her own government. This may occur for a variety of reasons. Usually, it happens because one or more members of the governing coalition leave their parties and join the opposition, or, as occurred in 1982 and 2024, an entire party membership within the governing coalition resigns en masse from the Cabinet. A much rarer occurrence is when polling shows a major shift in support for each party, and the sitting Chancellor wants to test public support for his or her government (this is what occurred in 2005). However, the President must agree to call early elections after a failed vote of confidence. Alternatively, he could call on the opposition parties to try and form a government. This requirement has limited the use of the vote of no confidence in the postwar era (it has only happened four times since 1949).

5.2 – The Federal Cabinet (and the importance of Coalitions)

As hinted at before, most Executive power lies in the hands of the Chancellor and the Federal Cabinet. The Cabinet consists of the heads of each department (Minister of Finance, Defense Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs, etc). The Basic Law invests broad policy-making power in the hands of the Chancellor. The Legislature must pass all laws and budgets, and the various Cabinet Ministers are tasked with implementing those directives. However, as the chief Executive of the Cabinet, the Chancellor has broad authority to advise (and even direct) those Ministry activities. Technically, the Chancellor can't dismiss a Cabinet Minister (only the President can do that), but a tradition has emerged in German politics that recognizes the primacy of the Chancellor as head of his or her own government. Federal Presidents have tended to acquiesce to the preferences of the Chancellor, unless doing so would violate the law.

As has been implied several times up to now, German governments, like that found in many Parliamentary systems around the world, can consist of a simple majority of one party, or (more likely) a coalition of several parties. Given the fractured nature of the country's political parties, majority governments are quite rare: only one of Konrad Adenauer's four Cabinets (in the 1950s and early 1960s) was a majority government, consisting only of CDU and CSU members (as

well as one German Party Minister; the German Party was a nationalist faction that faded from influence by the early 1960s). Every other German Cabinet since 1949 has required support from one or more other parties in order to obtain a majority to secure election.

All nine of Germany's postwar Chancellors have come from either the CDU or the SDP. The most common junior partner has been the Free Democrats (FDP). That party's platform, which mixes free-market economics with a more liberal view on social issues, allows it to have the flexibility to join either of the two major parties in Cabinet formation. Negotiations for coalition government always include some sort of compromise between the party leadership on pressing issues, and the Chancellor usually offers key Ministry positions to the junior partners. For example, in the current government, Olaf Scholz, the Chancellor (SDP) asked the President to appoint FDP leader Christian Lindner as Finance Minister, and agreed to adopt several FDP policy positions regarding public debt.

However, coalitions have not been without risk. Lindner's austere financial positions frustrated several Ministers of Scholz' other coalition partner (the Greens), as well as some key Bundestag members in his own SDP party. Scholz' dismissal of Lindner as Finance Minister in November 2024 led to the mass resignation of the other FDP Cabinet members, and the resulting vote of no confidence.

Chancellor (with party)	Years in Office
Konrad Adenauer (**CDU**)	1949-1963
Ludwig Erhard (**CDU**)	1963-1966
Kurt Georg Kiesinger (**CDU**)	1966-1969
Will Brandt (**SDP**)	1969-1974
Helmut Schmidt (**SDP**)	1974-1982
Helmut Kohl (**CDU**)	1982-1998

Gerhard Schroder (**SDP**)	1998-2005
Angela Merkel (**CDU**)	2005-2021
Olaf Scholz (**SDP**)	2021-2025
Freidrich Merz (**CDU**)	2025-current

*The German Party (DP) was a small nationalist and pro-monarchist pa

**The German Social Party (DSU) was a small conservative party that e
3rd Cabinet for a few months in 1990, then lost all of its seats in the nex

Figure 5.1: Germany's Cabinet coalitions: 1949-2025 (created by Mark L. J

Another possibility is a so-called "Grand Coalition", where the leaders of the two major parties agree to share power, with only the smaller parties in opposition. Scholz himself came to national prominence as Finance Minister in Angela Merkel's CDU-led third Cabinet (and Vice Chancellor in the fourth). Although Grand Coalitions have been very common in Austria (Germany's southern neighbor), only five of the 25 postwar governments in Germany included membership from both major parties. The last CDU government prior to the rise of Willy Brandt as SDP leader (1966-69) was the first Grand Coalition. This arrangement wasn't found again in Germany until the Chancellorship of Angela Merkel (2005-2021). Three of Merkel's four Cabinets included SDP members. The current Merz government (2025-) is also a Grand Coalition.

5.2 – Federalism and the German Legislature

As the only directly elected body in Germany's Federal system,

the Bundestag is the chief policy-making authority. It adopts the national budget, must authorize all use of military force outside the borders of Germany, and verifies the adoption of treaties that have been negotiated by the government. This last power is quite important, given Germany's status as a member of the European Union. As the EU has taken on more policy-making authority (particularly in areas like trade agreements, environmental protection, and energy policy), the Bundestag must decide how (or even if) to implement those directives at the domestic level. As has already been indicated, Chancellors and Cabinet Ministers hold their offices because of the support of the Bundestag. The partisan makeup of that body determines which parties have enough support to form governing coalitions.

Germany has a second legislative body, the Bundesrat (the Federal Council, or Council of States). As a Federal system, Germany's sixteen States (also known as Land) retain quite a bit of sovereignty. Article 30 of the Basic Law grants broad authority to the Lander governments, and Articles 70 through 74 list many areas that belong to either the Land or Federal government exclusively, as well as those that are exercised concurrently (by both levels). Germany's State governments guard that sovereignty through the Federal Council, the Bundesrat.

Unlike the much larger Bundestag, members of the Bundesrat are not elected by the public. Each State (Land) government, like the Federal system, has an elected legislature

(a Landtag), with a Minister-President as head of government (similar to the Office of Governor in the US, and with powers similar to the Chancellor at the Federal level). Most State governments, like their Federal counterpart, have coalition ministries, so it's common for multiple parties to be represented in the State governments. Those Minister-Presidents then appoint representatives, which reflect the coalition majority in their respective state. Each state appoints between three and six members of the Bundesrat, depending on population. Bundesrat members, unlike their counterparts in the larger chamber, do not have free reign to vote as they wish. They are expected to represent the positions of their appointing State governments; hence, each State delegation votes as a bloc.
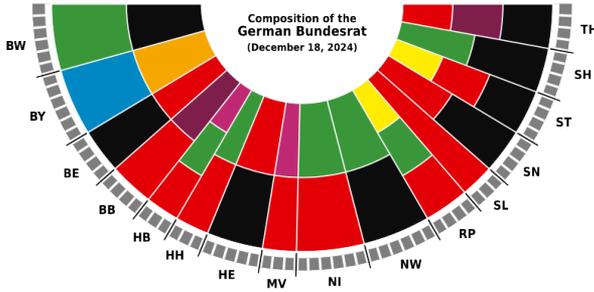
Figure 5.2 – Each Bundesrat delegation represents the governing coalition of that State government (by Aeroid, CC BY-SA 4.0)

Although the Bundesrat does not have the power to amend laws (and their ability to even propose new laws is somewhat limited by the Basic Law), they still serve as an important check on the other institutions of the Federal government. All bills proposed by the government go to the Bundesrat first, which must comment on it before it can be voted on in the Bundestag (although there are some time limits on this process, so the State Council can't delay things indefinitely). More importantly, any bill that affects either the exclusive State powers, or any of the Concurrent powers (which the States will have to implement), must be approved by the Bundesrat before it can be sent to the President for final signature.

Roughly half of all bills are subject to Bundesrat approval for final action. For treaties, and other laws that do not directly affect the powers of the State governments, the Bundesrat may attempt to veto those measures, but the Bundestag may (by majority vote), override that action.

State and Abbreviation	Population (2023 est)	Bundesrat Votes
Baden-Wurttemberg (BW)	11,339,260	6
Bavaria (BY)	13,435,062	6
Berlin (BE)	3,782,202	4
Brandenburg (BB)	2,581,667	4
Bremen (HB)	691,703	3
Hamburg (HH)	1,910,160	3
Hesse (HE)	6,420,729	5
Lower Saxony (NI)	8,161,981	6
Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (MV)	1,629,464	3
North Rhine-Westphalia (NW)	18,190,422	6
Rhineland-Palatinate (RP)	4,174,311	4
Saarland (SL)	944,424	3

Saxony (SN)	4,089,467	4
Saxony-Anhalt (ST)	2,180,448	4
Schleswig-Holstein (SH)	2,965,691	4
Thuringia (TH)	2,122,335	4

Figure 5.3 – Allocation of Seats in Bundesrat (created by Mark L. Johnson)

5.3 – Court System

Germany's legal system operates on the Roman civil code system, where the courts are tasked with applying the written law to specific questions. This differs from the common law system found in many English-speaking countries, where courts apply precedents from previous cases, even if the facts of the case differ from previous ones. Actual trials, both civil and criminal, take place in localized courts which are administered at the State level. However, these courts apply both federal and state law, depending on the specific questions at hand. The lowest (and most numerous) level of courts (Local courts) have jurisdiction over lesser crimes and small civil disputes. The next group (Land courts) serves as both trial court (for more serious crimes and larger civil disputes), as well as the appellate

authority for the Local courts. Regional courts (whose boundaries mostly conform to Land boundaries) serve as the Intermediate-level appellate courts, hearing appeals on whether the lower courts applied the law correctly. The Federal Court of Justice is the court of last report for all appeals on questions of civil and criminal law. The German system also has special jurisdiction courts for issues related to administrative law, patents, tax collections, and labor relations (each also has its own court of last resort, separate from the Federal Court of Justice). All judges in the German system are appointed by the State or Federal government (depending on which level they serve), through a civil service hiring procedure, run by either the Federal or State Ministry of Justice.

5.4 – Federal Constitutional Court

What none of the other courts have is authority over interpretation of the Basic Law. All questions of constitutional interpretation are decided by the Federal Constitutional Court. This Court can't decide appeals on active cases in the regular court system, although it is common for lower courts to pause proceedings, and then ask the Constitutional Court for an interpretation on whether a statute (law) passes constitutional muster. The Court is also consulted quite frequently by the other institutions of the Federal system (President, Chancellor, both legislative chambers, or State

governments) when there is disagreement over constitutional questions. We have already seen some examples in this chapter about how the Court has been utilized to interpret the meaning of the Basic Law.

The Court consists of sixteen Justices, appointed for twelve-year terms, with no allowance for reappointment. Half of the members are selected by the Bundestag, and half by the Bundesrat. A Justice must receive at least two-thirds of the vote in the appointing chamber in order to be seated. Most cases are heard in three-judge panels, with decisions requiring unanimous agreement by all three Justices. In the event that a panel issues a decision that seems to contradict a previous ruling, all sixteen Justices may meet in plenary session to resolve the question.

Section 6 – Political Economy

Long a major economy in Europe, Germany has experienced some recent struggles to maintain its position as a leading financial and industrial power.

6.1 – Labor Unions and Neo-corporatism

Although Germany is certainly a market-based economy, its approach to industrial and labor relations is different from that

found in other capitalist societies. The right to form and join labor unions is enshrined in Article 9 of the Basic Law. Since 1949, unions in Germany have generally enjoyed the right to engage in "sectoral bargaining". This means that the union that represents workers in a particular industry (for example, in steelmaking) has the right to negotiate contracts with every large employer (in this case, all of the steel mills) within an entire region of country. Smaller employers are covered under localized negotiated contracts. Non-unionized employers can hire workers outside of negotiated contract terms, but are not protected from strikes (as a trade-off for agreeing to sectoral contracts, major employers are insured against their labor forces going on strike). A 1976 law (passed by the Helmut Schmidt-led SDP government) required labor union representative on corporate boards (in firms with more than 2,000 employees), and provided for "work councils" (in most companies, even smaller ones), which manage day-to-day operations of the company (Jager, Noy, and Schofer 2022). This arrangement has led some scholars to refer to the Germany economic model as "neo-corporatist". Traditional corporatism, as practiced in countries such as Italy, Spain, and Portugal during the 1930s and 1940s, saw those governments grant sole recognition not just to particular labor unions, but also to youth organizations, religious clubs, and other institutions claiming to represent certain sectors of civil society. Neo-corporatist models still allow for competition in most sectors of society, and, as indicated above, German

employers still have the option to operate outside of sectoral bargaining (as long as they're willing to accept the risks of strikes and other organized labor action).

6.2 – The Shrinking German Economy

Germany is the only country among the G7 (the group of seven highly industrialized Western economies) to experiencing a drop in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2023, and estimates project that its 2024 GDP will also show a loss (Fletcher, Kemp, and Sher 2024). Energy costs due to the Russia-Ukraine war have soared. Much of Germany's energy infrastructure (pipelines and transfer facilities) are dependent on supplies from the east, and switching to western LNG (Liquefied Natural Gas) would be much more expensive. The 2011 decision to shutter all nuclear plants, and convert to renewables, has continuously been hampered by a lack of development for wind and solar projects (Lontay 2024). German's major manufacturers have also struggled to balance consumer demand and the requirements of the EU's rather aggressive environmental policies. Volkswagen (VW), a major symbol of German industrial might, has estimated that it will have to lay off 300,000 workers, and close three plants, as a result of lessened demand for electric-powered vehicles. However, given the legal status of VW's unions, such an action might not be possible (Schmidt, Steitz, and Amann 2024).

6.3 – Lagging Economic Indicators in the East

Although East and West Germany were unified in 1990, the economic conditions in the two countries were starkly different. East Germany, being a command economy on the Soviet model, was dominated by state-owned firms that produced goods not because there was market demand for those products, but because the government deemed them essential. West Germany, on the other hand, was already a major industrial and financial power, integrated into not only the European common market, but as a key trade partner with other large industrial economies in North America and Asia.

In 1991, as was indicated earlier, the Kohl (CDU) government introduced a "solidarity tax", which was intended to fund economic development projects in the States of the former East Germany, in an attempt to equalize the two economies. In 2019, the Merkel government reduced the tax for all but the richest Germans. A current case pending in the Federal Constitutional Court may lead to the end of this arrangement, although the Court will likely not rule until later in 2025 (DW 2019; Reuters 2024).

Although the Federal governments efforts have led to equalizing of economic conditions across the country, the eastern States still lag their Western counterparts. A German Institute for Economic Research study in 2017 showed that the average worker in the western states earned about 3,000

Euros a month, compared to 2,300 in the east. Twice as many eastern workers were earning the minimum wage, according to the same study, and the average family net worth in the west was about 2.5 times higher than in the east (Kaufmann 2020). As indicated Section 5, both Die Linke (The Left) and the Alternative for Germany (AfD) score higher percentages of the vote in the eastern part of the country, partially by tapping into these economic frustrations.
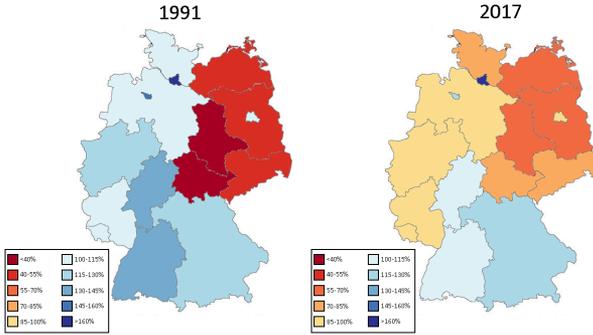
Figure 6.1 – Although the former States of East Germany have made economic progress since 1991, Federal Statistical Office data show that State-level GDPs still lag the national average (https://mapsontheweb.zoom-maps.com/post/184617217427/gdp-per-capita-of-german-states-as

-percent-of) Section 7 – Foreign Affairs and International Politics

When the United Nations was created at the end of World War Two, the five key Allies (the US, UK, Soviet Union, China, and France) assumed the most influence in the new organization, especially with their status as Permanent Members of the Security (and the veto that went along with that status). With the Federal Republic an ally of the three western powers, while the Democratic Republic was part of the Soviet sphere, neither Germany was admitted to the UN until 1973. However, the Federal Republic (West Germany) did join the NATO alliance in 1955, and participated in the various European Community organs (that culminated in the founding of the European Union in 1993).

7.1 – Germany and the United Nations

Since their joint admissions in 1973, both Germanies served as non-permanent members on the Security (West Germany in 1977-78 and 1987-88; and East Germany during the 1980-1981 term). Since reunification, the nation has sat on the Council four times (the last in 2019-2020), and is a candidate for the 2027-28 term (Troller 2019; Germany in the United Nations 2024).

Germany is the fourth-largest contributor to the United Nations budget (approximately 6% of the total). Currently, German troops are participating in peace-keeping missions in Lebanon, Kosovo, and South Sudan (Germany in the United Nations 2024). Germany, along with Japan, Brazil, and India, has long supported a proposed reform to the Security Council, which would give those four countries (plus two in Africa) permanent seats (including the veto). However, competing proposals from several countries in the developing world (as well as resistance from some current Permanent Members to the entire concept of expansion) have left those debates in limbo (Hasselbach 2023; Thibault 2020).

7.2. The NATO alliance and the European Union

As has been mentioned before in multiple places, West Germany joined the NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) alliance in 1955, and welcomed an American military presence on its territory ever since (with the expanded nuclear weapon presence in 1979 already discussed in Section 3). In the same time period, West Germany was one of the original members of the European Economic Community (founded in 1957), the forerunner of today's European Union. From the perspectives of West Germany's allies (especially France, the UK, the US), the reasons for this alliance are multi-faceted. Recall that Germany, less than two decades earlier,

had unleased the horrors of war on the rest of the world. By integrating at least part of Germany in the Western economic system and a defensive alliance, it was hoped that this relationship would tie the fortunes of West Germany to its western neighbors, thus averting the chances of future conflict. As one of the conditions of joining NATO, the Adenauer government vowed to never pursue its own nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons. However, this prohibition didn't apply to those types of weapons from being placed on German soil (since they were owned and controlled by the Americans or the British).

This economic integration, as has already been discussed in previous sections, created one of Europe's most vibrant economics. Despite its current challenges, Germany's overall GDP (Gross Domestic Product) is still third highest in the world (and the highest in Europe), and in the Top Twenty on a per capita (per person) basis. Germany, along with its Nordic neighbors (particularly Holland and Denmark) is one of the chief funders of the European Union, and has been the lead in setting EU policy in several areas (such as the debt relief and Middle East migration examples mentioned earlier).

However, the current geopolitical situation brought about by the Russian invasion of Ukraine has created challenges for the German government. German memories of Soviet occupation and an even longer tradition of Russian-German rivalry for primacy in Central Europe would suggest that Germans would be sympathetic to the Ukrainian side.

However, Germany has long been dependent on Russian gas supplies for its energy needs. Germany also has allowed its defense spending to lag behind that of most of its other NATO allies. Even though all NATO countries agreed to spend at least 2% of their GDPs on defense in 2014, Germany has only recently begun to raise its defense budget to anything near that mark (the most recent proposal, for 2025, would bring Germany up to 1.9%). Another complication is that France, the other leading funder in the EU (now that the United Kingdom has left the organization after Brexit) would like to shift European security policy away from being led by the NATO (which many Europeans fear is too US-centric), towards making the European Union both a financial AND military alliance (Dempsey 2022; Ash 2024; Cameron 2024).

As a key economic power, and due to its geopolitical importance in Northern and Central Europe, Germany is sure to play a key role in international affairs for years to come.

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4.

INDIA

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Chapter Outline

India is both the world's largest democracy and the most populous country. It is a former British colony, and gained independence in the midst of the contemporary world's largest population transfer as British India divided into the countries of India and Pakistan. As a leader in South Asia, its political and economic fortunes have the potential to shape those of surrounding countries. Once among the world's poorest countries, India is now a rising economic power. However, India is not immune from the current global climate of democratic backsliding and has seen rollbacks in minority rights and protections in recent years.

Section 1: A Brief History

Pre-Mughal India (pre-1500s)

Prior to the 1500s, the **Indian subcontinent** experienced the rise and influence of various religious movements. While Hinduism remains the most dominant and largest within India today, the subcontinent experienced notable periods of Buddhist and Jain influence that developed internally. Prior to the eighth century CE, other groups, like the Aryans, Greeks, and Scythians, spread their influence eastward into the subcontinent. Islam emerged as a religion in the seventh century and made it to what is today northwest India by the 680s CE alongside expansions of various empires, such as the Persian, Afghan, and Mongol empires. The Mongols (also called the Mughals) became the most dominant of these later arrivals, eventually ruling vast swathes of the subcontinent.

Mughal Empire (1526-1857)

Although its rulers were Muslim, the Mughal Empire governed a religiously diverse population with a degree of liberalism, rather than requiring conversion to Islam, and governed in part by building on already-existing indigenous governance structures, including non-Islamic legal systems. As the pre-Mughal history suggests, India has long been home to

a variety of religious traditions that have peacefully coexisted and cooperated; the rigid delineation between groups, practices, and power that encouraged conflict really emerged later, under the British.

The Mughals unified what had been numerous smaller monarchies throughout the subcontinent, expanding and consolidating its control from 1526-1707, when the empire reached its peak strength. The gradual weakening of the Mughal rulers paved the way for the rise of other social actors, like revenue farmers, merchants, and bureaucrats, marking a decentralization of power in the Empire. The economy still generally prospered during this time through the middle of the 1700s. In 1770 and 1783, portions of India experienced famines, which also coincided with periods of increased European, and especially British, colonial activity.
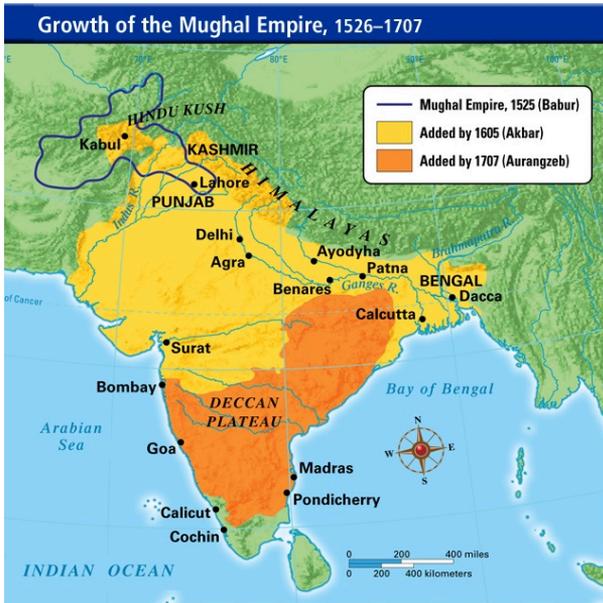
Image 1.1: Map of Mughal Empire Growth, 1526-1707 (Wikimedia Commons)

India as British Colony (1600s-1947)

The first British incursions into territories on the Indian Subcontinent occurred in 1608 by the British East India Company, which was formed in 1600 with the express goal of expanding British trade. The British East India Company would increase its involvement in the country over the next 150 years, until its activities in India were subjected to closer oversight by the British government and India itself placed under the control of a British Governor-General in 1773. Following this, British control of India increased – taxation systems were set up for the British to collect revenues from local rulers, the amount of territory controlled by the British

increased, and various ethnic and religious groups in the subcontinent were subdued through armed conflicts against British troops. In 1857, the most widespread of these anti-British uprisings, the Sepoy Rebellion, occurred. While the final spark was the introduction by the British of bullets rumored to be greased with pig and cow lard (thus violating both Islamic and Hindu religious rules), tensions had been building since the early 1820s and the introduction of British paramountcy, or dominance over Indian politics, economics, and culture. The British responded to the mutiny with excessive violence and gruesome executions of those suspected of involvement. The rebellion highlighted to the British that more direct control over Indian affairs was necessary. In 1858, the East India Company was dissolved altogether, and governance of India became a matter for the British government itself, as opposed to a private company acting under the authority of the British government. This handover from the British East India Company to direct British control over the governance of India marked the period of history known as the British Raj, which continued until India's independence.

During this time, the British consolidated their control over India, with each of British India's provinces led by a governor. The government of the Raj was made up exclusively of British officials, although small numbers of Indians were appointed to serve in consultative roles. During the Raj, the British parliament passed nearly 200 laws concerning India.

There was also backlash to British rule during this time, and an Indian nationalist movement aimed at self-rule emerged beginning in the mid-1880s. Two Indians were members of the British parliament during this time, though they were not agreed on the issue of Indian nationalism – one member was one of the founders of the Indian National Congress while the other supported the British Raj. Beginning with an 1892 law, Indians were allowed to be elected to legislative positions in the Indian government, and a 1909 follow-up law increased the representativeness of these officials along religious and social lines.

British India, which at its largest included all or part of current-day India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Myanmar, was extremely important to the British colonial mission, and it was said that India was "the Jewel in the Crown" of the British Empire. India was Britain's oldest and most profitable colony, and India's independence in 1947 began the longer process of the dismantling of the British colonial system that occurred into the 1960s, when many African and Asian territories gained their independence.

Other European Colonial Influences

In addition to the British, the Portuguese, Dutch, and French also made colonial inroads into India at various times.

The Portuguese were among the first European colonizers to come to India, in the late 1400s, and were the last to give

up their colonial holdings, vacating Goa only in 1961 after an Indian military operation. Their main area of influence was the central western coast of the country, including Bombay (now Mumbai) and the contemporary states of Maharashtra and Gujarat in the north and west and Goa in the south. Portugal was second only to the British in their influence in India – although the Dutch and French held territory, their colonial possessions were much smaller in scope and were more historically isolated. Goa was the center of Portuguese power on the subcontinent as well as a social center as well. The Portuguese court, military, and church all headquartered in Goa, and Goa held a status similar to Lisbon, the capital of Portugal. The arrival of the Dutch in India in the early 1600s, with their blockade of Goa, marked the beginning of the decline of Portuguese influence, although as noted above, the Portuguese would retain a presence on the subcontinent until the early 1960s.

The Dutch, in the form of the Dutch East India Company, arrived in India in the early 1600s and established trading posts on both the west coast (Surat), and east coast (Bengal) of the subcontinent. They also installed military troops along the Malabar coast in the mid-1600s to protect against invasion by other powers. However, the primary Dutch interest in south and southeast Asia was in modern day Indonesia and Malaysia, and lost many of their territories to the British in a series of treaties, forfeiting almost all of their trading posts by the mid-1820s.

The French were the last main colonial influence in India, arriving in the 1660s. They always possessed far less territory than the other colonial powers. They also established a trading post at Surat in the west, though their primary area of influence was Pondicherry, on the southeast coast. The French were primarily interested in trade, rather than outright occupation and rule, until the 1740s, when French politics moved in favor of expanding the French empire into India. However, France began losing ground to the British in conflicts beginning in the late 1750s, vacating India completely beginning after independence, leaving its last areas of control in 1954, with a treaty recognizing these transfers of power ratified in 1962.

Independence Movement, Changing Colonial Policy, and Independence (1860s-1947)

With the transition to the British Raj, an independence movement emerged to end British rule in India altogether. The independence movement gathered pace and was especially active beginning following World War I.

Beginning in the 1860s, British allowed areas of India to be governed by provincial councils that incorporated Indians on a non-official consultative basis. These councils spread from Bengal, Bombay, and Madras to most provinces by the

early 1880s, and the number of Indians on the councils, still in a non-official capacity, also increased over time.

The Indian National Congress, the largest nationalist organization, was formed in 1885 and initially sought elections for the provincial councils and increased representation of Indians in the administrative bureaucracy – efforts which met with only modest success. The British doubling down on imperialism in the late 1890s and early 1900s provided justification for a more hardline Indian national movement. British attempts during the same period sought to increase discord between Hindus and Muslims by creating a separate Muslim-majority province, Bengal, and encouraging the creation of the Muslim League, a Muslim nationalist organization, in 1906.

Bengali elites opposed the politicization of religious (as opposed to national, as Indian) identity, and a swadeshi (own country) movement emerged to oppose such societal and geographical divisions. Both moderate and more radical Indian nationalists joined together in the swadeshi movement, cooperating in actions like a boycott of British goods in 1905-1906. However, the nationalist movement eventually split, with the moderates retaining calls for autonomy and self-rule, and radicals calling for outright independence. Britain annulled the partition of Bengal in 1911, which also led to the increase in the professionalization of Muslim nationalism in the leaders of the Muslim League like Muhammad Ali Jinnah.
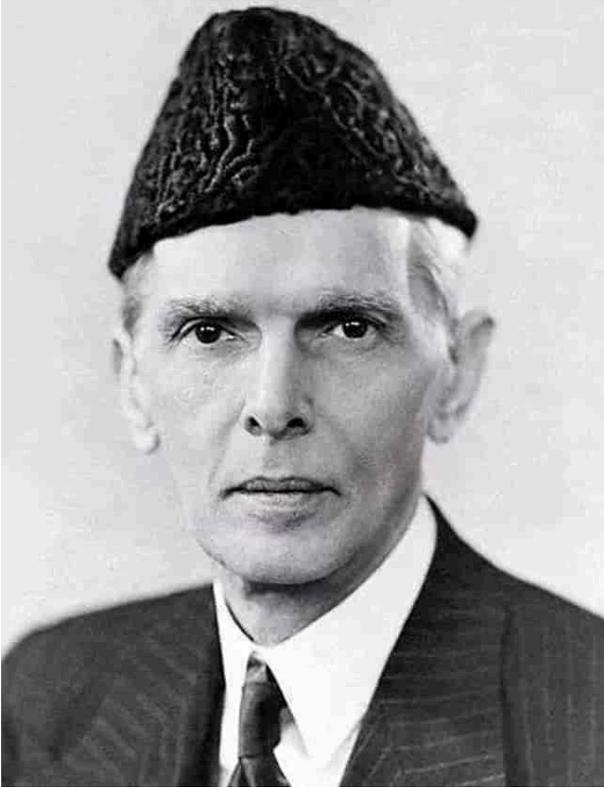
Image 1.2. Muhammad Ali Jinnah (source: Store Norske Leksikon)

Over 1 million Indian soldiers fought for Britain during World War I. Calls for autonomy, self-rule, and outright independence subsequently increased after the war, marking a shift to a more consistently active phase of the independence movement, with periods of increased cooperation between moderates and radicals and the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League during the war.

Britain granted some liberalization of Indian governance from 1919-1935, but kept the vast majority of power in British

hands. The 1935 Government of India Act accepted the notion of a united (Hindu and Muslim) Indian federation, increased voting rights, and granted the provinces more autonomy; Indians were also given increased power in the provincial councils, officially participating in all areas of their governance. However, there was no transfer of power regarding defense or foreign affairs.

Mohandas (Mahatma) Gandhi emerged as a leading nationalist figure during the 1920s and 1930s, and sought a united India of all people within British Indian borders, regardless of religion, and, within Hindu, caste. Not all nationalist activists agreed with this vision. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, who would go on to chair the committee that drafted the Indian Constitution, was himself a Dalit and advocated against untouchability and for expanded rights for Dalits. His own eventual conversion from Hinduism to Buddhism prompted large numbers of other Dalits to do the same. Gandhi's glossing over of real, existing divisions in Indian society under a banner of nominal "unity" also prevented some of those divisions from being addressed in ways that might have made the scale of the eventual rupture smaller.

Additionally, Gandhi's explicit drawing of religion into politics alienated Muslim League leaders who sought unity between Hindus and Muslims without directly invoking religion. Gandhi nonetheless also emphasized issues that created cross-cutting cleavages among India's various groups,

fostering cooperation on issues like non-payment of rents and revenue to the British.

Radical nationalists in the Indian National Congress, like Jawaharlal Nehru, tried to get Gandhi to argue for outright independence instead of increased autonomy, but Gandhi helped defeat a 1928 Congress resolution calling for complete independence. The Muslim League and Congress cooperated against the British until 1937, when the Muslim League was spurned by the increasingly radical nationalist Congress Party.
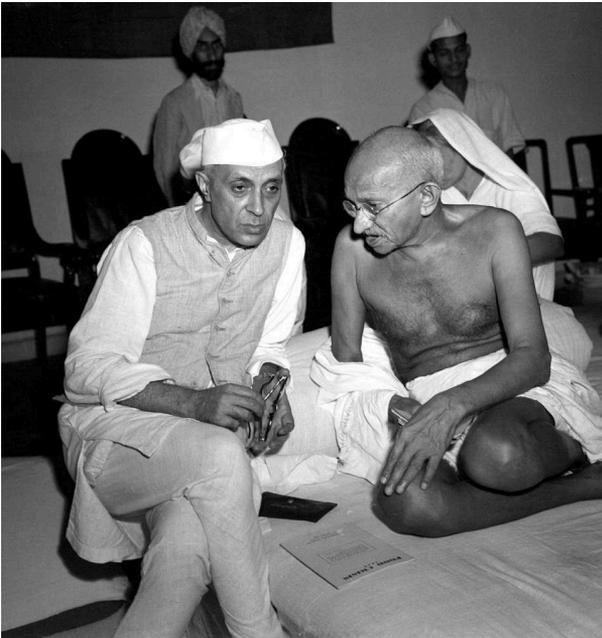

Image 1.3. Jawaharlal Nehru (left) and Mohandas Gandhi (right) – (Wikimedia Commons)

Perhaps the most famous, though by no means the only, civil disobedience movement led by Gandhi was the Salt March of 1930, which was a protest against British control over the

sale of salt. Gandhi and others embarked on a march to the sea where they then made their own salt, from the salinated seawater, breaking British law in doing so. Gandhi was arrested for his role in organizing and leading the march, but he did not stop his calls for nonviolent resistance to British rule.

Before World War II, the Indian National Congress was split into conservative and radical factions, while a separate Muslim nationalism, under the leadership of Jinnah and the Muslim League, was increasing, pushing the predominantly Hindu Congress and the Muslim League further apart politically.

India again contributed vast numbers of soldiers – roughly twice as many as in World War I – and amounts of materiel to the British effort in World War II. Britain's clear reliance on Indian troops coupled with its refusal to grant self-rule led to the Indian National Congress launching its Quit India movement in 1942. Gandhi organized this campaign as well, now solidly on the side of independence and a withdrawal of the British from the subcontinent. While Gandhi himself participated only in nonviolent resistance in the face of British crackdowns on the movement, he stopped speaking out against protestors who used violence, arguing that the British were the responsible for the violence by the act of their presence in India.

Britain was considerably depleted – especially financially – after World War II, severely constraining its ability to maintain its previous level of occupation and control over the

subcontinent. Nationalist calls for independence increased, and the Indian National Congress and Muslim League moved further apart politically, with the Muslim League eventually calling for a separate, independent Muslim state. The British ultimately backed this plan for partition, although the mechanisms by which millions of people would relocate across new national borders were unclear until after Pakistan declared independence on August 14, 1947, and India declared its independence a day later, on August 15, 1947. Jawaharlal Nehru became the country's first prime minister upon independence, governing until his death in 1964. In January 1948, Mohandas Gandhi was assassinated by a Hindu hardliner who was angered by Gandhi's politics of inclusivity, including Muslims.

Partition

The reorganization of territorial possession and new international borders in what had previously been a unified British India, called **Partition**, had devastating consequences for all major groups in India. Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs faced displacement and forcible evacuation while also inflicting these acts on other groups as the populations sought to be on the "right" side of the new border between India and Pakistan. Punjab in particular was itself partitioned between Pakistan and India, with Pakistani Punjab forming the core of that new country. Moreover, Pakistan was divided into two

non-contiguous sections, with East Pakistan comprised of East Bengal (West Bengal is in India), separated by a large piece of India from West Pakistan, located in India's northwest.

Even before the formal declaration of the Partition plan by Lord Mountbatten in June 1947, thousands of people were killed in Bihar and Calcutta (now Kolkata, in what would become West Bengal). During the weeks and months of the Partition process, riots, abductions, and other atrocities occurred, affecting especially Muslims and Sikhs, as the widescale population transfers unfolded. All told, hundreds of thousands of Muslims were killed, blamed for the division of India. Additionally, the population movements shifted (West) Pakistan's population from 49% Muslim in 1941 to 97% Muslim in 1951. East Pakistan faced a smaller shift shifted from 71% Muslim in 1941 to 75% in 1951 (Hodson 1969).

India and Pakistan also failed to reach agreement on the distribution of certain pieces of territory, namely the province of Kashmir, which both countries have laid claim to since they became independent and remains a constant source of tension and competition between the two countries. Kashmir traditionally had a majority Muslim population, but a Hindu ruler, complicating the increasingly politicized narrative of Muslim vs. Hindu in Indian politics. Multiple full-blown wars have been fought over control of Kashmir, with the territory itself functionally partitioned (already the product of partition between India and Pakistan) between areas under the control of India, Pakistan, and China. Nonetheless, this status quo

remains unstable and prone to skirmishes between Indian and Pakistani military troops.

Image 1.4. Division of Kashmir between India, China and Pakistan (Central Intelligence Agency)

The Congress Dominance (1964-1977)

At independence, the Indian National Congress was the single largest political party in the country, and the one most able to compete at all levels of government. From Nehru's taking the helm as prime minister at independence through 1996, the Congress Party dominated national politics in India. So, too, did Nehru's descendants – his daughter Indira Gandhi (no relation to Mohandas), became prime minister in 1966,

two years after Nehru died in office – dominate the Congress Party. From independence through the 2024 general election, a member of the Nehru-Gandhi family has been in charge of the Congress Party almost continuously.

Indira Gandhi, riding the popularity of and affection for her father, was re-elected prime minister following elections in 1967. Although Congress popularity was diminished in that election compared to previous elections, Gandhi was able to rule without a **coalition**, and took an increasingly hardline, s well as personalizing politics more explicitly, leading a faction of the Congress Party when it split due to internal divisions in 1969. Gandhi called for new elections at the end of 1970, and used those elections to shore up her own power. A period of unrest broke out in 1974, and in 1975, the High Court of Allahabad ruled that her 1971 election victory was invalid due to her use of state materials during her campaign. In response, Gandhi convinced the president to declare a **state of emergency**, granting her broad powers to repress her political opponents, including through imprisonment, censorship, and mass sterilization.

The Emergency, as it has come to be known, seriously undermined India's claims to be a democracy, and lasted until the 1977 parliamentary elections. In that campaign, Gandhi's branch of the Congress Party failed to win a plurality of votes, and Gandhi was replaced as prime minister by Mararji Desai, of a new political party, the Janata Party, which had combined

the other Congress faction, the Jana Sangh, the Socialist Party, and the Bharatiya Lok Dal.

Image 1.5. Indira Gandhi (Source: Prime Minister's Office, India)

1.8 Congress Decline (1977-2014)

The Desai government sought to undo some of the damage to democracy of the Emergency, including unbanning organizations and repealing censorship laws. However, the biggest factor unifying the opposition to Gandhi was that opposition itself, and the Janata Party also split into factions, paving the way for Indira Gandhi to return to power in 1980

as the head of a new Congress Party explicitly aligned with her – Congress Party (I[ndira]).

Upon her return to power, in February 1980, Gandhi invoked a constitutional measure known as **President's Rule** to remove state governments from power and impose national rule in nine states controlled by the opposition or which had not had state-wide elections in the past two years.

In 1984, the followers of the leader of a Sikh separatist movement in Punjab state occupied the Golden Temple in Amritsar, which was the primary Sikh holy place. Because of the loss of a significant portion of Punjab, any further loss of control over Punjab was seen as unacceptable by the Indian government. In July 1984, a national order, called Operation Blue Star, was given to retake the temple through force, angering the Sikh community because of the functional attack on their holy site. In October, Gandhi was assassinated by two of her Sikh bodyguards, which then prompted retaliatory killings of Sikhs by the Congress Party.

Though Gandhi has been unable to make the Congress Party more popular, her assassination created a groundswell of support for the party, which earned its highest vote share to date in the December 1984 parliamentary elections. Rajiv Gandhi, Indira's oldest son, who had taken her place in power after her assassination was returned to power as prime minster after the election. Rajiv Gandhi's period of rule was marked by a settlement with the Sikh leader whose followers had occupied the Golden Temple and an attempt

to reduce corruption, though he was himself accused of corruption in 1987. The Congress Party lost its hold on power to a coalition of the Janata Dal, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), and communists in the 1989 election.

New prime minister VP Singh was seen as more of a technocrat, or skilled in technical expertise rather than true political savvy, announced the implementation of the recommendations of the Mandal Commission, which was created in 1979 and released a report in 1980 that sought to improve the social, economic, and political position of "Other Backward Castes," which comprised a majority of the Indian population. This announcement was very unpopular with high-caste Hindu nationalists, including the BJP, which had campaigned in 1989 on the issue of building a temple on the grounds of a mosque that had been built in Mughal times in the Uttar Pradesh town of Ayodhya. This proved to be a popular campaign issue, and the BJP increased the number of seats in won in 1989 to 88 (up from two in 1984). As BJP's inroads during this period suggests, there was also increasing Hindu nationalist rhetoric and activity, including vigilantism against Muslims for various perceived, rather than actual, crimes, during the Singh administration.

Image 1.5. Babri Masjid Mosque in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh (Samuel Bourne/ Wikimedia Commons)

In 1990, the president of the BJP led a demonstration against the Ayodhya mosque, though he was arrested before he could arrive at the mosque and construct a temple in its place. In response to his arrest, Hindu militants took control of the mosque, which sparked a counterattack by the national government. In light of this, and the announcement of the Mandal Commissions recommendations, the BJP withdrew its support of the Singh administration, prompting new elections in 1991.

Although in competition with each other, the joint power of the increasingly influential lower castes as well as upper-caste Hindu nationalists also meant a decline in the overall popularity of the Gandhis' Congress Party. Nonetheless, Rajiv Gandhi's assassination on the campaign trail in 1991 propelled the Congress Party (I) back into power,

though short of an outright majority in the lower house of parliament. PV Narasimha Rao, who became prime minister, oversaw a period of economic liberalization and the move away from the extremely inefficient and economically hobbling "Licence Raj" system for private businesses. Rao and Congress lost further ground among the lower castes (for not implementing the authorized Mandal recommendations) and Muslims (for allowing the destruction of the Ayodhya mosque), declines which primarily benefitted the BJP in the 1996 elections.
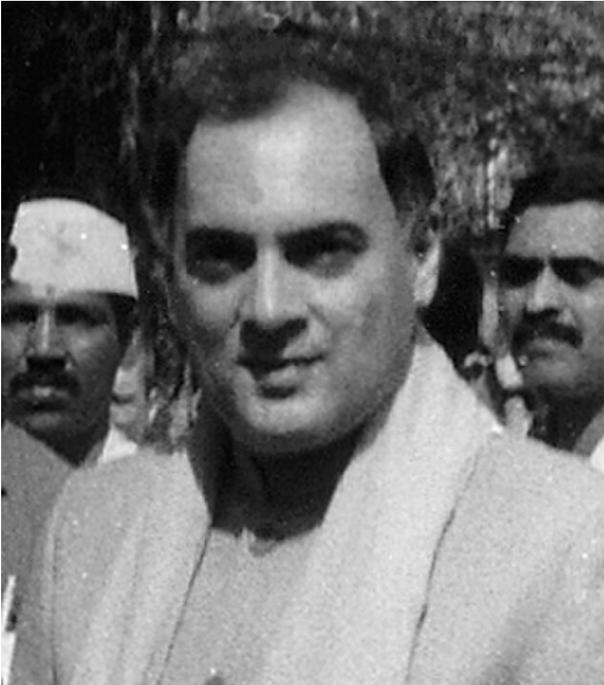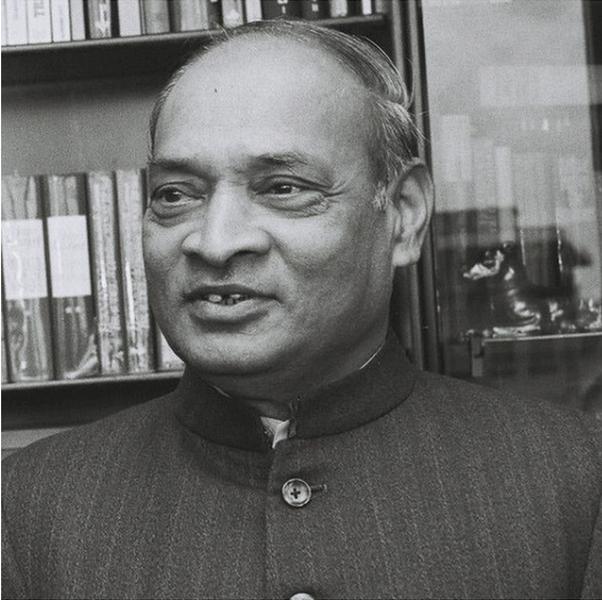

Image 1.6 Rajiv Gandhi (ISKON Russia)

Image 1.7. PV Narasimha Rao (Christian Lambiotte, European Commission)

The BJP was the largest party in the lower house after the 1996 election but lacked a majority. As neither Congress nor the BJP could rule without a coalition, a group called the United Front, with support of Congress, took power. However, the Congress Party (I) remained wary of the United Front's hold on power, and forced the prime minister to resign, doing so again when the new prime minister was appointed, triggering elections in 1998. The BJP gained seats in the 1998 elections, but the parties experiencing the most growth in the lower house were regional parties, which more than tripled the number of seats they collectively held.

The BJP-led coalition ruled without significant parliamentary drama, the first coalition to do so. During this

term, prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee oversaw the testing of nuclear weapons, anti-Muslim violence by Hindu nationalists, and closer ties to the United States.

In 2004, the Congress Party, now led by Rajiv Gandhi's widow Sonia, returned to power as part of a coalition. Sonia Gandhi declined to become prime minister out of concern that her Italian heritage would be weaponized by the Hindu nationalist-BJP, leaving Manmohan Singh to become prime minister. Singh most notably continued India's move toward economic liberalization.

Image 1.8. Sonia Gandhi (Source: Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs, India)

Image 1.9. Atal Bihari Vajpayee (Wikimedia Commons)

In the 2009 elections, Congress again won the most seats, followed by the BJP, with regional parties again gaining ground. In this term, Singh's administration faced numerous accusations of corruption which greatly diminished its ability to govern, as well as its popularity. After hobbling along for years, new elections were held in 2014.

In this election, the BJP won, with Narendra Modi at its head, seeming to mark a new era in Indian politics less based on party competition and more based on ethnoreligious

nationalism and single-party dominance, which will be considered throughout the remaining sections of the chapter.

Image 1.10 Narendra Modi (Source: Prime Minister's Office, India)

Section 2: Ethnic, Religious and Cultural Identity

2.1. Official Languages

India has no national language and 22 official languages, largely associated with states. However, many more languages and dialects are spoken throughout the country. The two official languages of India spoken by the most people are Hindi

and English, which jointly serve as the **lingua franca**s in the country. English has traditionally served as the language of the elites and the administrative apparatus, although Prime Minister Modi announced in 2022 that he would use Hindi to conduct all official government business. That announcement coincided with a report from a parliamentary committee that recommended the use of Hindi as the language of instruction in higher education in Hindi-speaking areas, and the use of **vernacular or regional languages** in the same academic settings elsewhere in the country, with English as an optional language. These recommendations have been controversial in parts of the country where Hindi is not the dominant language (Salomone 2022). The Modi administration also adopted a policy in 2020 that promoted education in vernaculars with gradual shifts away from mandated English education. Because of the mixture of regional languages, the linguas franca, and Modi's new push of Hindi, there is a high degree of bi- and multilingualism in the country.
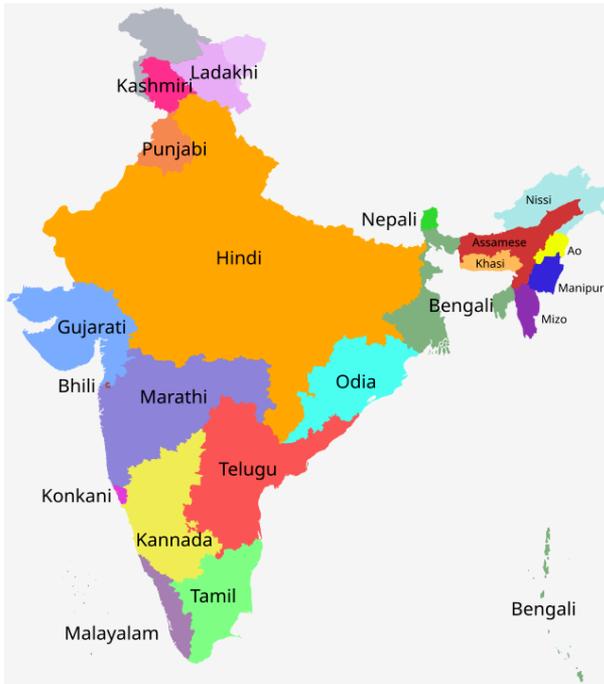
Image 2.1. Map of India by Most-Commonly Spoken First Language (Wikimedia Commons)

2.2. Linguistic and Ethnic Groups

India's various languages call into four broad linguistic families: the Indo-Iranian subfamily of Indo-European languages (central and northern India), the Dravidian family (central and southern India), the Austroasiatic family (eastern India), and the Tibeto-Burman subfamily of Sino-Tibetan (northeast India). Most languages in the country fall into the Indo-Iranian or Dravidian language families.

India's ethnic groups can be broken into three main categories that correspond in part to the geographic distribution of the language families: Aryan, Dravidian, and

indigenous. The Aryan groups largely reside in the northern part of the country, while people of Dravidian descent primarily live in the southern part of the country. The indigenous communities comprise the groups legally recognized as Scheduled Tribes, and have received many of the same legal protections and political programs as the Scheduled Castes, discussed more in Section 2.4

For both language and ethnicity, broad distinctions can be drawn between the northern and southern parts of the country, although many of the indigenous groups also living in the central part of the country, running from west to east across the width of the country.

2.3. Religious Groups

Although India is constitutionally recognized as a secular state, religion and religious identity plays an important role in the country. The two largest religions in the country by far are Hinduism (~80% of the population) and Islam (~14%), with notable populations of followers of Christianity (~2%) Sikhism (2%), Buddhism (0.7%), and Jainism (0.4%). Since before independence, religion, and especially the division between Hindus and Muslims, has been India's most salient identity category and the one most prone to violence (see sections 2.5.1 and 2.5.2 for more about Hindu supremacy and religious violence).

While religions like Christianity and Islam are found

worldwide, Hinduism, Sikhism, and Jainism are more geographically concentrated around India.

Hinduism is actually a diverse set of religious beliefs, united in the belief in a supreme deity that is omnipresent, both in the universe and within people. In part because of its internal diversity, Hinduism does not have the degree of formal institutionalization as other religions, such as many Christian and Muslim denominations. It also holds that people are intrinsically divine and that people's purpose in life is to seek out and recognize that divinity. Other key beliefs of significant portions of Hindu traditions are in a continuous cycle of life, death, and reincarnation, and in karma, which holds generally that the actions people take have consequences, and that good actions are more likely to lead to good outcomes, while bad actions are more likely to lead to bad outcomes, reflecting a sort of cosmic balance. Karma determines the path one takes during the cycle of life, death, and reincarnation.

Sikhism emerged in the 1400s by Guru Nanak, who developed a religious doctrine based on egalitarianism and social justice, which he viewed as standing in contrast to both Hinduism and Islam. In 1699, a community known as the Company of the Pure emerged within Sikhism that became more associated with a warrior stance, marked by "the five Ks, taken from the words *kesh* (uncut hair), *kangha* (comb), *kirpan* (sword), *kara* (steel bangle) and *kaccha* (breeches)" (Minority Rights Group 2023). Sikhs were important members of the British Indian Army during

the colonial period and at times have called for a Sikh state that was independent of India.

Jainism and Buddhism emerged as reactions to some interpretations of Hinduism, and generally hold that all living beings, people, animals and plants alike, have souls, and that the path to enlightenment lies in nonviolence and the minimizing of harm and violence against living things. Jainism and Buddhism also believe in reincarnation, or rebirth, and a person's path and social position being determined by their karma.
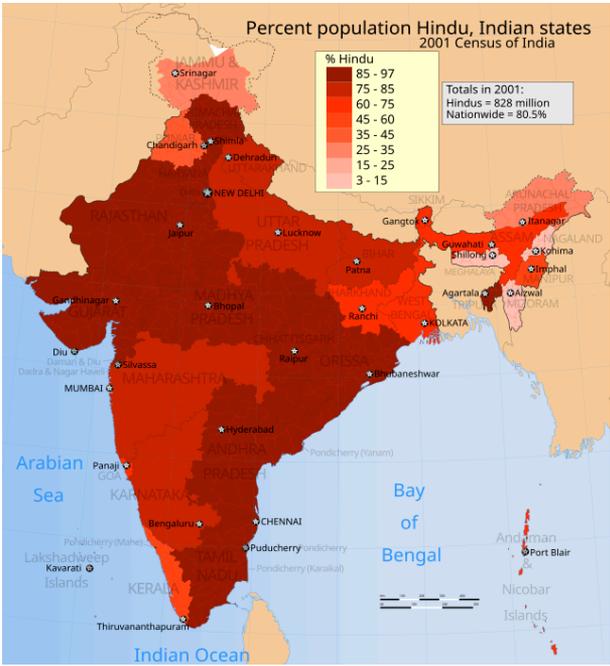

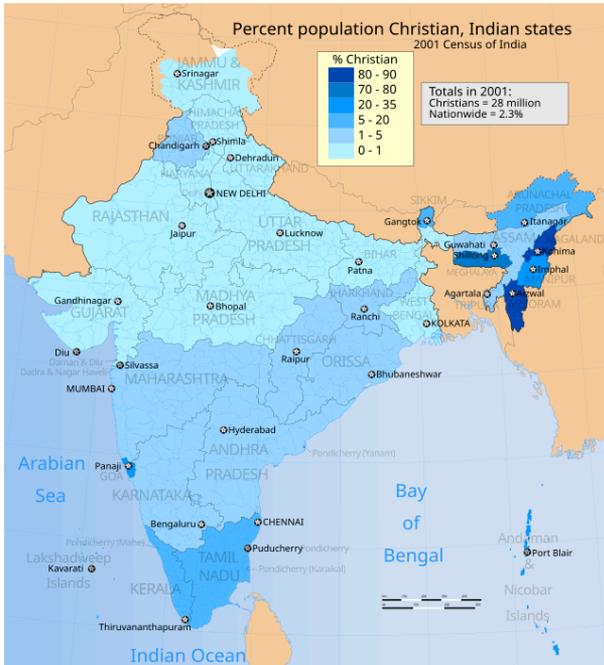Image 2.2. Hindu Distribution Map Based on 2001 Census (M. Tracy Hunter)

Image 2.3. Muslim Distribution Map Based on 2001 Census (M. Tracy Hunter)

Image 2.4. Christian Distribution Map Based on 2001 Census (M. Tracy Hunter)

2.4. Caste System

The caste system, throughout South Asia, was originally more diverse, with multiple local caste systems existing throughout the region, and operating more as a system of marriage restrictions, as opposed to a hereditary position. is a ranked hierarchy of social groups in India.

Much of the function and role of the caste system in India today has been shaped by the British colonial interpretations of and interactions with the caste system, creating a standard interpretation of what the caste system was and its implications. This formalized the caste system's role

and importance in society and politics in a way that frustrated India's founding fathers, especially Nehru and Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar. Ambedkar also helped draft the constitution of India and was the minister of Law and Justice in Nehru's first cabinet. These men, and other leading Indian intellectuals, viewed the caste system as a barrier to social and political equality and progress in the country, and hoped its importance would rapidly decrease to nothing. This is not what happened, and although the Indian constitution prohibits discrimination on the basis of a variety of social identities, including caste, and a number of affirmative action programs exist to increase opportunities for lower caste individuals, the caste system continues to play an important role in organizing Indian society, especially in rural areas, and influencing the social mobility of Indians.

As the British interpreted it, caste status is passed down hereditarily, with children taking on the caste of their parents. Caste has traditionally been associated with particular occupations. There are four main caste categories, with each main category containing a number of sub-categories. The highest-ranking caste is the Brahmans, followed by the Kshatriya. The Vaishyas are third in the hierarchy, ranked notably below the Brahmans and Kshatriya, but still considered high enough to be entitled to a "second birth" that would grant them access to special rituals and religious knowledge. The lowest ranking main caste are the Shudras, who are much lower than the Vashiyas, but still in the caste

ranking system. There were also historically people in occupations dealing with human waste, such as sanitation workers, were deemed so low in society as to be outside the caste system altogether and were classified as "untouchable." Individuals in this category are also called Dalits, and in Indian legislation, they are included in the Scheduled Castes (SC) category designated in the constitution. The term "Dalit" is preferred by many in that category, while the language of Scheduled Castes was meant to replace the "untouchable" term that was dominant in the British era.

An individual's caste status has historically been quite determinative of the educational, occupational, and economic opportunities available to them. Although there have been exceptions, such as B.R. Ambedkar, who authored the constitution and was also a Dalit activist, Dalits especially were often denied access to the full range of opportunities open to those with a higher caste status. In the late 1970s, the Mandal Commission made recommendations to help increase opportunities for those of lower castes. However, these recommendations were themselves controversial and were not really implemented until beginning in the 1990s.

Over time, there have been other groupings based on caste. The Brahmins, Kshatriyas, and Vaishyas are classified as General Category, or Forward, Castes. "Lower caste" is made up of other caste categories. The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes identified in the Indian constitution are different from the Other Backwards Classes (OBC) category,

which emerged in the 1990s in reference to other lower caste groups in Indian society who were socioeconomically and educationally disadvantaged but did not fall into the more strictly classified Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Educational and occupational reservations have also been made for people in the Other Backwards Castes. Over two-thirds of Indians identify themselves as belonging to lower caste categories, roughly split between the Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes on one hand and the Other Backwards Classes or Most Backward Classes; only four percent of the population identifies as Brahmin (Pew Research Center 2021).

2.5. Ethnic, Religious, and Cultural Conflict

As noted in Section 2.3, India's two largest, and most conflict-prone, religious groups are Hindus and Muslims. Tensions between these two groups pre-date independence, and indeed was the primary cause of the Partition that divided British India into the separate countries of India and Pakistan. However, there have been periods of violence against other religious groups as well. Violence against Muslims and Christians in particular have increased with the BJP's rise to power and the increase in the prominence of Hindutva ideology.

2.5.1. Hindutva

Hindutva is a right-wing extremist form of Hindu nationalism that advocates for India to be a Hindu (as opposed to secular) state, promoting Hinduism as a state religion and Hindu identity as the "pure" form of Indianness. Hindutva promotes Hinduism at the expense of other religious groups in India, and especially at the expense of Muslims and Christians, who are viewed as "outsiders" to India because of those religion's origins outside the geographical boundaries of the Indian subcontinent. This marginalization includes limitations on the rights of minority groups and even an increase in violence toward members of these groups.

Hindutva emerged as an ideological movement in the 1920s and drew inspiration from fascism. Hindutva leaders even allied themselves to the fascist leaders of Italy (Benito Mussolini) and Germany (Adolf Hitler) to emphasize their opposition to British colonial rule in the country. More recently, Hindutva has been championed by the Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) and the leader of the party and current prime minister, Narendra Modi, as well as by a Hindu nationalist paramilitary organization, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). Modi was previously chief minister of the western state of Gujarat, which faced riots led by Hindu groups after a train carrying Hindu religious pilgrims caught fire. Over 1,000 people, overwhelmingly Muslim, were killed, and more than 2,500 people were injured. Modi was determined to not be

responsible for the riots, but was heavily criticized for not doing more to stop the violence. Anti-Muslim and anti-Christian violence has increased since the BJP election win in 2014. In 2019, Modi invoked Hindutva ideas during the election campaign, further encouraging tensions between Hindus and other groups in society. As prime minister, Modi frequently visually ties himself to a Hindu identity by wearing colors associated with the religion. In many ways, what Modi is currently doing with Hindu identity is similar to what Gandhi did in the lead-up to independence, when he advocated for an open and explicit Hindu identity.

2.5.2. Anti-Muslim Violence

While the largest outbreak of anti-Muslim violence occurred around Partition, which resulted in a total of 200,000-2,000,000 deaths across religious groups and the displacement of 12-20 million people, other periods of violence have occurred, resulting in roughly 10,000 Muslim deaths since 1950. In general, Muslims have been the target of employment, housing, and education discrimination, and are the most common victims of religious violence. There has also been an uptick in anti-Muslim violence since the BJP and Prime Minister Narendra Modi came to power: hate crimes and hate speech have both increased markedly since 2014, and continue to increase the longer the BJP and Modi have been in power.

One form of anti-Muslim violence in particular has

emerged in more recent years. While the cow has been considered sacred by groups within Hinduism for hundreds of years, it has also become a point of importance to the Hindu right. In this context, cow protection mobs have emerged since the early 2010s and have almost exclusively targeted Muslims through riots and lynchings. Muslims are accused of slaughtering and eating cows, especially around the Eid holy days, sparking localized pogroms.

Moreover, the BJP government in Uttar Pradesh has also sought to undertake a census of cows (*The Economist* 2024), which could facilitate more violence if the number of cows over time is deemed to have changed more than expected by typical birth and death rates among the animals. Those accused of perpetrating violence against Muslims in the name of cow protection have typically faced little punishment (*The Economist* 2022).

2.5.3. Anti-Sikh Violence

Although the Sikh-majority state of Punjab was especially affected by Partition violence, the relationship between Hindus and Sikhs has been less consistently violent than that between Hindus and Muslims. Nonetheless, there have been period of notable anti-Sikh violence in the country, including during the 1960s-1980s and again after the BJP's rise to power.

With the reorganization of Indian states around language in 1966, Punjab became the only majority-Sikh state. Punjab's relationship with broader India was strained, mainly around

water rights and the division of the population of the previous territorial configurations from which the states of Punjab and neighboring Haryana emerged; with the creation of the new states, the Sikh population was split between them. This tension came to a head following the assassination of Indira Gandhi by her Sikh bodyguards in 1984. The assassination itself was a response to the Indian government's assault against a Sikh extremist who had taken refuge in the Golden Temple, the most sacred Sikh shrine. Operation Bluestar was seen as an attack on the broader Sikh community. In response to the assassination, Hindu vigilantes struck back against Sikhs, killing more than 2,100 Sikhs in the Indian capital and more than 600 Sikhs in other parts of the country.

Following this wave of violence, an agreement over aspects of the governance of Punjab was reached with Rajiv Gandhi, and Sikhs were granted fuller control over their internal religious governance. However, resentments over 1984 lingered, with generally higher levels of violence against and by Sikhs from the mid-1980s to the mid-to-late 1990s. Although the movement for an independent Sikh state declined in popularity beginning in the late 1990s, conditions remain conducive for an increase in tensions. And indeed, following the BJP's rise to power, Sikhs have been accused of being terrorists and secessionists, prompting an uptick in violence against Sikhs, including abroad, as in the 2023 killing of a Sikh activist (and American citizen) in New York City (Singh and Kaur 2023).

2.5.4. Anti-Christian Violence

Like violence against other religious groups in India, one source of tension with Christianity is the fear that Hindus will be coerced into converting to other religions. Laws have been passed to prevent coerced conversion. However, forced conversions are quite rare, and some anti-forced conversion laws come closer to criminalizing even voluntary conversion away from Hinduism (although there has been an increase in forced conversions *to* Hinduism) (Wilson 2023).

Some anti-Christian violence has targeted missionaries, though most of the violence has targeted Indian Christians. This violence has also increased with the rise of Hindutva ideology and the rise of the BJP and Modi. From 2012, anti-Christian violence has increased more than 400%, especially beginning in 2016 (Sen 2023). In 2016, there were 247 episodes of violence against Christians (Sen 2023). In 2021, there were 505 (Sen 2023). In 2023, there were over 700 and this number increased by more than a third in 2024, when there were more than 830 attacks (Sen 2025).

Section 3: Political Culture and Civil Society

3.1. Religious Organizations

3.1.1. Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS)

Perhaps the most important religious civil society organization in India today is the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), a primarily upper-caste Hindu nationalist **paramilitary organization** that was founded in 1925. The RSS is the lead organization in a broad umbrella of Hindu nationalist organizations, collectively known as the Sangh Parivar, which also includes the BJP. In this role, the RSS, even when less active itself, as provided a basis for other Hindu nationalist groups to mobilize. The RSS espouses the Hindutva ideology. It has been banned four times, including after the assassination of Mohandas Gandhi by one of its members, and the destruction of the mosque in Ayodhya that sparked anti-Muslim riots in 1992. It has been labeled a right-wing extremist organization (Atkins 2004) and has the largest membership of any such organization in the world, somewhere between 2.5 and 6 million members. The RSS participates in a variety of activities, like community outreach, education, youth empowerment, environmental conservation, and cultural preservation, but its Hindu supremacist orientation, and the marginalization of and violence toward

minority groups that accompanies Hindu supremacy, has kept it a controversial organization.

3.2.2 Non-Hindu Faith-Based Organizations

Other religious organizations, like those affiliated with Christianity and Islam, have often been established to minister to the needs of India's minority populations, including Dalits. Perhaps the most famous of these is the Missionaries of Charity in Kolkata (formerly Calcutta), founded by Mother Teresa and serving the poorest members of the community. Such organizations have also been the subject of controversy, accused by Hindu nationalist organizations of converting the poor and vulnerable away from Hinduism. Non-Hindu faith-based organizations have also found themselves facing restrictions after the implementation of amendments to the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) in 2020 (Pattnaik and Sahoo 2022), discussed in more detail in Section 3.5.

3.2. Feminist/Women's Movements

Modern women's movements emerged during the colonial era, in the late 1800s, focused on issues like education and economic empowerment. This era also saw the emergence of communication about social reform between women across the country, rather than primarily within families or local

communities, and doing so in forums like publications in both English and vernacular languages (Jaiswal 2018-2019). Many of the first women's organizations were founded by men, though national organizations formed by women emerged after World War I, including the All-India Women's Conference, the Women's Indian Association, and the National Council of Women in India. These newer organizations focused on issues like child marriage and women workers' rights. Women were also active in the independence movement and accompanying civil disobedience campaign.

The second wave of the feminist movement in India began in the 1970s (Nielsen and Waldrop 2014) with a focus on sexual and domestic violence against women, including **dowry** and honor-based violence, in which male relatives inflict harm on women perceived as causing damage to the family reputation through their presumed sexual activity. During this period, there were concerns that the preferences and activities of higher-caste and/or economically middle-class women would overshadow and marginalize those of lower-caste and working-class women. There were a wide range in the types of groups that emerged at this time, from organizations with ties to specific political parties, groups independent of these political parties but operating at relatively high levels, and grassroots organizations in local settings. Organizations also took on issues regarding gender discrimination outside of violence.

Issues of violence remain at the forefront of the women's

movements today, drawing increased awareness from high-profile cases of gang rape (Arya 2022). The prominence of concern over violence against women is underscored by attitudes in broader Indian society, where nearly 75% of adults see violence against women as a "very big problem" (Pew Research Center 2022). However, economic mobilization never went away completely, and the All-India Democratic Women's Association, the founded in 1980 in a merger between multiple rural and working-class women's organizations, is the largest women's group in the country in terms of number of members, geographic scope, and ability to adapt to emerging issues (Tricontinental 2021).

3.3. LGBTQ+ Movements

A discernible push for LGBTQ+ rights in India has been much more recent than the women's movement, only really emerging in the late 1970s with the first systematic research on homosexuality in India (Yadav 2021). The movement has also been centered on "grassroots lobbying and aggressive litigation" in "one of the world's most effective movements for rights for LGBTQ people (Schultz and Naqvi 2023). In the early 1980s, the first All-India **Hijra** Conference was held, with over 50,000 attendees, and Hijras were legally recognized as a third sex in 1994, which also granted them voting rights (which had previously been administered on the basis of nondiscrimination by sex, defined as male and female). The

Indian Supreme Court subsequently ruled in 2014 that transgender people fall into the Hijra category, and the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act of 2019 prohibits discrimination against transgender individuals, including in employment, education, and welfare programs.

In 2017, the Supreme Court ruled that an individual's sexual orientation falls under the Right to Privacy law, giving LGBTQ+ people the opportunity to be open about their identities. In 2018, the Supreme Court struck down a law criminalizing consensual homosexual acts. However, in October 2023, the Supreme Court issued a ruling declaring that same-sex marriage is not a fundamental right, thereby ruling against its legalization. Around the time of the decision, however, 53% of Indian adults supported same-sex marriage (Gubbala and Miner 2023).

3.4. The Media

With the exception of the period of The Emergency and again more recently under Modi, India has traditionally had an extremely robust media landscape. Newspapers were an especially prominent form of media prior to the notable increases in development in the country. Newspapers existed representing the full gamut of diversity in society, with newspapers published in the vernacular languages, Hindi, English, from across the ideological spectrum, and sometimes serving as the mouthpiece for specific political parties. When

rates of illiteracy were much higher, there were also individuals who served as news readers to share information with the portion of the population who could not read so that they could stay politically aware and engaged.

3.5. Civil Society Restrictions

In 2009, there were more than 3 million nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) registered in the country (International Center for Not-for-Profit Law 2025). However, especially after the 2019 elections, the Indian government has placed more restrictions on such groups, making it harder for them to operate, especially in the case of groups focused on human rights, as well as non-Hindu religious organizations (International Center for Not-for-Profit Law 2025; Purohit 2022).

Most notably, in 2020, the government placed increased limits on the ability of NGOs to receive funding from international donors. Using the amended FCRA, 6,000 NGOs had their permits for international donations revoked in January 2022; using previous versions of the law and other tactics, more than 20,000 NGOs have lost their ability to receive foreign donations since 2011 (Purohit 2022). The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights expressed concern about the FCRA after it was amended in 2020, fearing that it would become weaponized against

particular types of NGOs (United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights 2020).

Section 4: Political Participation

4.1. Voter Participation

India has a history of robust voter turnout rates, often between three-fifths and two-thirds of the electorate. In 2014 and 2019, voter turnout was between 66 and 67 percent. In some states, though, turnout has been much higher. For instance, turnout was 76.2% in Madhya Pradesh's 2023 state assembly elections, and West Bengal has over 80% turnout in its 2019 state elections (NDTV n.d.).

4.2. Electoral System for the Lower House

Members of India's lower house, the Lok Sabha, are elected using the first past the post (FPTP) rule in single-member districts. FPTP means that the candidate with the most votes wins, even if that vote total constitutes only a plurality, rather than a majority.

4.3. Electoral System for the Upper

House

Most members (238) of the upper house of India's parliament, the Rajya Sabha, are elected by state legislators through the single transferable vote. The remaining 12 members of the chamber are appointed by the president on the basis of their contributions to Indian society.

4.4. National Political Parties

Although there are two political parties that attract the most attention at the national level, in addition to the more strictly regional parties covered in section 4.5, there have also been a number of smaller, ideological parties, especially on the left. India has hosted a range of communist and socialist parties, although they have tended to play only a marginal role in recent elections. Parties have also existed focused on particular livelihoods, such as farmers/agriculturalists.

4.4.1. Bharatiya Janata Party (240 seats in 2024)

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) emerged in 1980 from another party, the Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS), which was itself a political arm of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) Hindu nationalist paramilitary organization. The BJS had joined an anti-Congress coalition after the declaration of The Emergency, but that coalition broke down, and the BJP

splintered off. Atal Bihari Vajpayee became the first BJP prime minister in 1996, but his government lasted less than two weeks before breaking down. Vajpayee and the BJP returned to power in 1998, serving as prime minister until 2004. Current prime minister Narendra Modi was a member of both the RSS and the BJS before joining the BJP and served as the chief minister of Gujarat for more than 10 years before becoming prime minister.

4.4.2. Indian National Congress (99 seats in 2024)

The Indian National Congress was founded in 1885, during the British Raj. As discussed in Section 1.7, Congress was the most powerful party in India for the first several decades after independence, never relinquishing control of the Lok Sabha for long, although its electoral support faced a general erosion over that time. That changed in 2014, when the BJP began its decade plus of continuous control. Despite Congress's general decline in popularity, it remains the second-most popular party in the country by far, and the other party that competes at a truly national level, rather than being primarily concentrated at the state level. In the 2014 election, Congress became the lead party in the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA), along with 25 other parties. The Congress party won 99 seats in the election, a far cry from their previous electoral successes.

4.5. Major Regional Political Parties (won 10+ seats in 2024 Lok Sabha election)

Because of India's regional diversity and complexity, not everything that is locally or regionally important will gain traction at the national level. Moreover, because seats are allocated based on population size, it is the large parties in the largest states that have the most opportunity to gain national representation and amplify those regional concerns.

4.5.1. Samajwadi Party (37 seats in 2024)

The Samajwadi Party (SP) was founded in 1992 and adheres to a socialist platform. It is most active and successful in the state of Uttar Pradesh but operates in other parts of India as well, including West Bengal, Maharashtra, and Gujarat. Some of its strongest supporters are people in OBC, as well as Muslims. The SP has allied with other parties at times to help enhance its legislative power, including the INDIA alliance in the 2024 general election. The 37 seats it won in that election made it the third-largest party in the Lok Sabha, behind the BJP and Congress.

4.5.2. All India Trinamool Congress (29 seats in 2024)

The All India Trinamool Congress (TMC) broke with the

Congress and was founded in 1998. It held relatively steady with its 2019 performance, remaining the fourth-largest party in the Lok Sabha. The TMC's stronghold is in West Bengal in eastern India, though it has also won state legislative assembly seats in Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Goa, Manipur, Meghalaya, and Tripura, often through defection by politicians in the India National Congress. Despite its previous break with Congress, it joined the INDIA alliance in opposing the BJP in the 2024 election.

4.5.3. Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (22 seats in 2024)

Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) was founded in 1949. It had some of the earliest representation by the lower castes and took an early stance against the imposition of Hindi as the only official language of India. After the 2019 election, the DMK was the third-largest party in the Lok Sabha; in 2024, it declined to the fifth-largest party. The DMK, like the SP, is in alliance with the Congress. The TMC's primary areas of influence are in India's far south, especially the state of Tamil Nadu.

4.5.4. Telugu Desam Party (16 seats in 2024)

The Telugu Desam Party (TDP) was founded in 1982 and has positioned itself as a party focused on supporting the Telugu

ethnolinguistic group, and is most active in the Telugu strongholds of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. The TDP allied itself with the BJP beginning in 1998, and continued to do so through the 2024 election, lending important support to the formation of the Modi government.

4.5.5 Janata Dal (United) (12 seats in 2024)

The Janata Dal (United) (JD(U)), was created in 2003 with the merging of the Samata Party, the Lok Shakti Party, and a faction of the Janata Dal. Its policies are social-democratic and secularist. It is most powerful in eastern and northeastern India, particularly Bihar, Manipur, and Arunachal Pradesh. The JD(U) has had a rocky relationship with the BJP and its alliance. It joined the BJP alliance in 2005, left in 2014 in opposition to the prominence of Modi, rejoined it in 2017, left again in 2022, and re-joined the BJP alliance in the 2024 general election, playing an important part in Modi being able to form a government.

4.6 Interest Groups

India has a long history of interest group formation and activity, but few studies have been conducted on the broader interest group environment and universe in the country (Patel 2022). Key areas of organization have been around agriculture, religion, student's issues, and the environment.

Student groups have played an especially important role, providing a training ground for futures in politics. They have been most prominent and important on the major campuses throughout India, and like other aspects of Indian society, like newspapers, have aligned with the ideologies of the major parties. Indeed, the biggest parties have student and youth wings to encourage mobilization.

Because of the federal organization of the Indian government, in addition to the organizations that operate at the national level, there is much more diversity and numerical representation of interests at the state level.

Voter Participation

India has a history of robust voter turnout rates, often between three-fifths and two-thirds of the electorate. In 2014 and 2019, voter turnout was between 66 and 67 percent. In some states, though, turnout has been much higher. For instance, turnout was 76.2% in Madhya Pradesh's 2023 state assembly elections, and West Bengal has over 80% turnout in its 2019 state elections (NDTV n.d.).

4.2. Electoral System for the Lower House

Members of India's lower house, the Lok Sabha, are elected using the first past the post (FPTP) rule in single-member

districts. FPTP means that the candidate with the most votes wins, even if that vote total constitutes only a plurality, rather than a majority.

4.3. Electoral System for the Upper House

Most members (238) of the upper house of India's parliament, the Rajya Sabha, are elected by state legislators through the single transferable vote. The remaining 12 members of the chamber are appointed by the president on the basis of their contributions to Indian society.

4.4. National Political Parties

Although there are two political parties that attract the most attention at the national level, in addition to the more strictly regional parties covered in section 4.5, there have also been a number of smaller, ideological parties, especially on the left. India has hosted a range of communist and socialist parties, although they have tended to play only a marginal role in recent elections. Parties have also existed focused on particular livelihoods, such as farmers/agriculturalists.

4.4.1. Bharatiya Janata Party (240 seats in 2024)

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) emerged in 1980 from another party, the Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS), which was itself a political arm of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) Hindu nationalist paramilitary organization. The BJS had joined an anti-Congress coalition after the declaration of The Emergency, but that coalition broke down, and the BJP splintered off. Atal Bihari Vajpayee became the first BJP prime minister in 1996, but his government lasted less than two weeks before breaking down. Vajpayee and the BJP returned to power in 1998, serving as prime minister until 2004. Current prime minister Narendra Modi was a member of both the RSS and the BJS before joining the BJP and served as the chief minister of Gujarat for more than 10 years before becoming prime minister.

4.4.2. Indian National Congress (99 seats in 2024)

The Indian National Congress was founded in 1885, during the British Raj. As discussed in Section 1.7, Congress was the most powerful party in India for the first several decades after independence, never relinquishing control of the Lok Sabha for long, although its electoral support faced a general erosion over that time. That changed in 2014, when the BJP began its decade plus of continuous control. Despite Congress's general

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Section 5: Formal Political Institutions

5.1. Overview of Governmental System

India is a federal parliamentary system. The parliament is comprised of two houses – the Rajya Sabha (upper house) and the Lok Sabha (lower house). The head of state is a president that is chosen by the two houses of parliament, and the head of government is a prime minister, chosen by a majority of the Lok Sabha, the lower house of parliament.

5.2. Constitution

India's first constitution after independence was ratified on November 26, 1949, and entered into effect on January 26, 1950. Prior to the constitution, India was governed by the British Government of India Act of 1935. The Indian Constitution is the longest in the world for an independent country, made up of 470 articles. It has been amended over 100 times since its original adopting, proving it to be a dynamic document that changes alongside changing political conditions in the country. It is therefore broad in scope, giving substantial protection to a number of provisions that might be governed through regular legislation in other countries. The sheer numbers of amendments and revisions

shows that it has been a flexible and responsive document, unlike some other constitutions that tend to be more rigid and fixed (like the US Constitution).

India is a secular state, meaning that there is no state mandated religion in the constitution. This has proved controversial at times, especially in the current period of rising Hindu nationalism and Hindu nationalist empowerment.

The constitution lays out the various parts of government and the qualifications of holding office. It designates the distribution of power between the national level government and the states, and within each level of government.

The independent Indian state was organized around development-centered social change, and viewed as a nation-building project, encapsulating not just what India already was, but what the leaders hoped India could be. Part of this was the belief that economic development held the key to making social reforms possible. This is part of why India was established as a socialist state, geared toward economic protections for the poorest citizens. Without a population healthy and educated enough to participate in the political and economic work of the country, further economic and social advancement would not be possible. This also guided India's foreign policy of noninterference, choosing to focus on development over ideology during the Cold War, making India open to aid from more quarters of the global North.

Perhaps most notably, the Indian constitution

identifies six rights that are deemed fundamental to all people: the right to equality, the right to freedom, the right against exploitation, the right to freedom of religion, cultural and educational rights, and the right to constitutional remedies. The right to equality enshrines both legal equality and pushes toward social equality. It is from the notion of social equality that the abolishment of untouchability and special protections for women, children, and Scheduled Castes and Tribes.

5.3 Federal Structure

India is made up of 28 states and eight union territories, with boundaries coinciding with language usage. Each state or union territory is further divided into administrative districts, which are comprised of cities, towns, and villages, providing a rich web of governance, though the degree of autonomy becomes more constrained the further down the hierarchy an entity is. That is, the states have less power than the national government, and local governments have less authority than state governments. Many of these subdivisions are more bureaucratic and administrative than political. For instance, administrative districts, may, but not do not necessarily, constitute parliamentary districts.

5.4. Executive – Prime Minister and President

5.4.1. Prime Minister

The prime minister serves as head of government, holding most of the executive power in the country when compared to the president. To hold office, the prime minister must be a citizen and be (or become within six months) a member of either house of parliament. The prime minister assists the president in carrying out a number of their functions. Most prominently, the prime minister serves as the leader of parliament. This involves overseeing the chambers and the proposal and passing of legislation. The prime minister appoints a number of positions, such as the chief election commissioner as well as other members of that body (see below for more about the election commission). Although not tasked with as many formal or ceremonial powers in the constitution, the prime minister is the real bearer of power in the country.

Table 5.1. List of Indian Prime Ministers

Name	Length in Office	Party
Jawaharlal Nehru	August 15, 1947-May 27, 1964	Indian National Congress
Gulzarilal Nanda (Acting)	May 27, 1964-June 9, 1964	Indian National Congress
Lal Bahadur Shastri	June 9, 1964-January 11, 1966	Indian National Congress
Gulzarilal Nanda (Acting)	January 11, 1966-January 24, 1966	Indian National Congress
Indira Gandhi	January 24, 1966-March 24, 1977	Indian National Congress, Indian National Congress(R)
Morarji Desai	March 24, 1977-July 28, 1979	Janata Party
Charan Singh	July 28, 1979-January 14, 1980	Janata Party (Secular)
Indira Gandhi	January 14, 1980-October 31, 1984	Indian National Congress(I)

Rajiv Gandhi	October 31, 1984-December 2, 1989	Indian National Congress (I)
Vishwanath Pratap Singh	December 2, 1989-November 10, 1990	Janata Dal
Chandra Shekhar	November 10, 1990-June 21, 1991	Samajwadi Janata Party (Rashtriya)
P.V. Narasimha Rao	June 21, 1991-May 16, 1996	Indian National Congress(I)
Atal Bihari Vajpayee	May 16, 1996-June 1, 1996	Bharatiya Janata Party
H.D. Deve Gowda	June 1, 1996-April 21, 1997	Janata Dal (United Front)
Inder Kumar Gujral	April 21, 1997-March 19, 1998	Janata Dal (United Front)
Atal Bihari Vajpayee	March 19, 1998-May 22, 2004	Bharatiya Janata Party (National Democratic Alliance)
Manmohan Singh	May 22, 2004-May 26, 2014	Indian National Congress (United Progressive Alliance)

314 | INDIA

Narendra Modi	May 26, 2014-present	Bharatiya Janata Party (National Democratic Alliance)

5.4.2. President

As head of state, presidents hold many ceremonial powers, but very few governing powers separate from the influence of the prime minister. Presidents must be citizens of India, at least 35 years old, and qualified to be elected to the lower house of parliament, although they are not a member of either house of parliament.

The president is elected by an electoral college, which is made up of members of the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, as well as the elected members of the legislative assemblies of the states and union territories. The number of electoral votes is based on state populations. The presidential election uses proportional representation in the form of the single transferable vote, which operates similarly to the alternative vote/ranked-choice voting. The president serves a five-year term, unless they are removed from office through an impeachment process. The president can be re-elected. The vice president is chosen through the same process.

The president has a number of formal powers, including nominating twelve members of the Rajya Sabha, dissolving the Lok Sabha to trigger new elections, and formally approving bills in order for them to become law (but following the

actions and recommendations of the prime minister). The president also proposes the annual budget and has nominal appointment power for a number of positions, and the ability to declare national, state, and financial emergencies, though again, most often based on the advice of the prime minister.

Table 5.2. List of Indian Presidents

Name	Length in Office	Party
Rajendra Prasad	January 26, 1950- May 13, 1962	Indian National Congress
Sarvepalli Radharkrishnan	May 13, 1962-May 13, 1967	Independent
Zakir Husain	May 13, 1967-May 3, 1969	Independent
V.V. Giri (Acting)	May 3, 1969-July 20, 1969	Independent
Mohammd Hidayatulah (Acting)	July 20, 1969-August 24, 1969	Independent
V.V. Giri	August 24, 1969-August 24, 1974	Independent
Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed	August 24, 1974-February 11, 1977	Indian National Congress
B.D. Jatti (Acting)	February 11, 1977-July 25, 1977	Indian National Congress
Neelam Sanjiva Reddy	July 25, 1977-July 25, 1982	Janata Party

Zail Singh	July 25, 1982-July 25, 1987	Indian National Congress
Ramaswamy Venkataraman	July 25, 1987-July 25, 1992	Indian National Congress
Shankar Dayal Sharma	July 25, 1992-July 25, 1997	Indian National Congress
K.R. Narayanan	July 25, 1997-July 25, 2002	Indian National Congress
A.P.J. Abdul Kalam	July 25, 2002-July 25, 2007	Independent
Pratibha Patil	July 25, 2007-July 25, 2012	Indian National Congress
Pranab Mukherjee	July 25, 2012-July 25, 2017	Indian National Congress
Ram Nath Kovind	July 25, 2017-July 25, 2022	Bharatiya Janata Party
Droupadi Murmu	July 25, 2022-present	Bharatiya Janata Party

5.5. Parliament

5.5.1. Lower House

The lower house of parliament is the Lok Sabha and has 554 members. Almost all seats (552) are elected from state and union territories based on population. Two seats are appointed to represent the Anglo-Indian (British Indian) community. States and union territories are divided into electoral districts, with a single member of parliament representing each district. Members of the Lok Sabha are elected directly by voters for terms of up to five years, depending on when the prime minister calls elections.

Like many lower houses in bicameral systems, the Lok Sabha is the more powerful chamber of parliament. The Lok Sabha exercises ultimate authority over the choice of the prime minister and the council of ministers through a vote of no confidence. If the two houses of parliament disagree about a non-monetary piece of legislation, a joint session of the two chambers occurs and the issue is decided by a majority vote of the joint session. Legislation dealing with spending and the budget must originate in the Lok Sabha, and the upper house has no veto power over budgetary bills.

Table 5.3. Lok Sabha Seat Distribution

State or Union Territory	Classification	# of Lok Sabha States	# of Lok Sabha Seats Reserved for Scheduled Castes and/or Scheduled Tribes (2008)
Andhra Pradesh	State	42	10
Arunachal Pradesh	State	2	0
Assam	State	14	3
Bihar	State	40	6
Chhattisgarh	State	11	5
Goa	State	2	0
Gujarat	State	26	6
Haryana	State	10	2
Himachal Pradesh	State	4	1
Jammu and Kashmir	State	6	0
Jharkhand	State	14	6

Karnataka	State	28	7
Kerala	State	20	2
Madhya Pradesh	State	29	10
Maharashtra	State	48	9
Manipur	State	2	1
Meghalaya	State	2	2
Mizoram	State	1	1
Nagaland	State	1	0
Orissa	State	21	8
Punjab	State	13	4
Rajasthan	State	25	7
Sikkim	State	1	0
Tamil Nadu	State	39	7
Tripura	State	2	1

Uttarakhand	State	5	1
Uttar Pradesh	State	80	17
West Bengal	State	42	12
Andaman and Nicobar Islands	Union Territory	1	0
Chandigarh	Union Territory	1	0
Dadra and Nagar Haveli	Union Territory	1	0
Daman and Diu	Union Territory	1	0
Delhi	Union Territory	7	1
Lakshadweep	Union Territory	1	0
Puducherry	Union Territory	1	0

5.5.2 Upper House

The upper house of parliament is the Rajya Sabha and has 250 members. The vast majority (238) are elected by the legislators of each state, while the president of India nominates 12 members. Members of the Rajya Sabha have six-year terms, and one-third are up for election every two years, much like in the US Senate. Although infrequent, the Rajya Sabha as on occasion blocked legislation passed by the Lok Sabha. The Rajya Sabha has co-equal power with the Lok Sabha in choosing the president, but has no control over the prime minister and council of ministers. If the Lok Sabha is suspended during a state of emergency, the Rajya Sabha can still convene and become a platform for articulating public concern, serving to place some limitation on executive power during such extraordinary circumstances.

5.5.3. Reservations and Quotas

In an effort to remedy decades of discrimination of the lower castes, India has adopted **reserved parliamentary (national and state) seats** for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in rough proportion to their presence in the population: 84 seats (~15.5%) are reserved for Scheduled Castes, and 47 seats (8.6%) are reserved for Scheduled Tribes in the Lok Sabha. At the state level, seats are allotted on the basis of the proportion of each group relative to the population of the state. These reservations were included in the constitution and were

originally designated to be in place for 10 years. Following the 104th amendment to the constitution, these reservations will now last until at least 2030. Based on the recommendations of the Mandal Commissions, Other Backwards Castes also have reserved seats in municipal bodies, in proportion to their population in the state.

In September 2023, India also adopted reserved seats for women (to come into effect after its next census), ensuring that at least 33% of the Lok Sabha and state legislative seats are held by women (UN Women 2023). Once the reservations have been implemented after the census, they are scheduled to remain in place for 15 years. However, much like the reservations for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, there is no guarantee that they will end after that initial period. The gender reservation will not affect the Rajya Sabha. Nonetheless, this reservation system is a unique feature to Indian politics, as usually gender representation is addressed through **gender quotas** applied to parties, in which parties must ensure that some proportion of their candidates are women, with no necessary guarantee that those women are then elected.

In the case of both the Scheduled Castes and Tribes and women, these reservations represent the lowest possible proportion – there are no prohibitions on larger numbers of Scheduled Castes and Tribes and women being elected.

Because of India's federal structure, there are additional rules for quotas and reservation at state and local levels,

although they do exist in some form all the way down the federal hierarchy.

5.6. Judiciary

The highest court in the Indian judiciary is the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court has original jurisdiction over disputes between the national and state governments, and between two or more state governments. The Supreme Court also serves as the court of last appeal for criminal and civil trials. The Supreme Court has the right of judicial review to determine constitutionality of laws, which can bring it into conflict with the parliament.

The Supreme Court is made up of a chief justice and 31 additional judges who are appointed by the president based on the input of the judges of the High Courts of the states as well as the prime minister. States have High Courts that are subordinate to the Supreme Court, rather than having separate state-level supreme courts.

In recent years, the Modi government has increased the role of the prime minster and parliament in the judicial nomination process, raising concerns about the politicization of the judiciary and democratic erosion (Fuchs 2024).

5.7. Election Commission

The Election Commission was created by the

constitution of India and is meant an autonomous agency and has traditionally run elections free from interference from other political actors. The commission oversees the registration of parties and candidates, sets the rules of campaigning, maintains voter lists, and oversees the voting process itself through electronic voting machines and postal voting in specific circumstances. Prior to Modi, the Commission was quite powerful; coordinating, conducting, and monitoring elections for nearly a billion people is no small feat. However, as with other institutions, there is now increasing controversy about whether it remains neutral or has been co-opted and manipulated by Modi to benefit the electoral fortunes of the BJP (*The Hindu* 2024a).

5.8. National Bureaucracy

The Indian national bureaucracy has its roots in the British colonial era, which is, in part, why is has such a high degree of centralization and wields so much power. The bureaucracy is highly professionalized, and serves to provide stability across the different administrations who hold executive and legislative power. Competition for jobs in the civil service is considerable, and the scope of the bureaucracy is substantial: there are roughly 4 million positions in the national-level civil service. The bureaucracy functions as a meritocracy, with examinations determining the level at which applicants can serve. Competition for these positions is fierce, in part because

they are seen as providing long-term stability for those employed. Like other bureaucracies, the Indian civil service provides the technical expertise to make laws passed by parliament implementable. Since the 1990s, the bureaucracy has played an especially important role in the liberalization of the Indian economy.

5.9. State Governments

As a federal country, the 28 state governments in India have important roles to play in the governance of the country. States can tax their populations to raise revenue. They have authority to implement policies related to land use and distribution, agricultural and industrial development, public order and security, water usage, education, and public health, among other areas. State government is also a key forum for patronage politics, making elections for state positions quite competitive.

The state-level executives are similar to the national level, with a chief minister wielding most of the power and a governor serving in a more ceremonial capacity. The chief minister is almost always the leader of the largest party in the state legislature; the largest party can also cast a vote of no confidence for the chief minister. The chief minister, cabinet, and council of ministers constitute the executive of the state government. The chief minister is the most powerful actor in the politics of the state, selecting the council of ministers and presiding over cabinet meetings.

The governor of each state is appointed by the president of the national government, and serves a five-year term with no term limits. The governor also has the ability to recommend with imposition of **President's Rule**, which removes of the state's elected government from power and allows the national government to rule the state directly. Although originally meant to be an extraordinary measure, President's Rule has been declared more than 100 times since independence in various states.

Each state also has a unicameral or bicameral legislature, which is invested with the power to pass laws on all matters under state control. Most seats in the state legislatures are elected directly by the public, though some members are appointed by the governor on the recommendation of the chief minister. Each state is also home to its own bureaucracy, operating similarly to the national-level bureaucracy in terms of competitiveness for jobs and administrative power.

5.10. Threats to Democracy

In power as prime minister since 2014, Narendra Modi is the third-longest serving prime minister in India's history, with only Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi serving longer terms, and Gandhi's some of Gandhi's terms in office were non-consecutive. Thus far, Modi has served in power continuously.

The BJP is a right-wing nationalist party, in a vein to similar

right-wing nationalist parties that have been gaining political inroads around the world in recent years. Under Modi's rule, India has experienced **democratic backsliding**, especially in terms of increases in religious intolerance, in the form of anti-Muslim language and violence as well as pro-Hindu language. In this vein, Modi has revoked Kahmir's autonomy and changed residency laws for the region in an effort to increase Hindu settlements. Modi has also further centralized power – a trend begun under Indira Gandhi – targeted opposition politicians with harassment, and placed limits on free speech, with India scoring 161st in the world on such metrics (Thorner 2024). One commentator has noted that the Modi regime's "attacks on civil society have exceeded any imposed since" The Emergency (Coll 2021), bringing the country "closer toward a one-party state" (Mashal et al. 2023).

However, support for Modi is not universal in India, even among Hindus, and he is less popular in the southern part of the country. Further, in the 2024 election, although Modi was returned to power as prime minister for a third term, the BJP did not win an outright majority in the Lok Sabha. In fact, the vote share for the BJP in 2024 in his electoral district of Varanasi was more than nine percentage points lower than in 2019 (*The Hindu* 2024b). In the Lok Sabha as a whole, the BJP lost over 60 seats in 2024 compared to 2019, and nearly 40 seats to the BJP's current rise to power in 2014 (Jha 2024).

There is some hope that the 2024 election results mean that India's democracy is still strong (Bajpaee 2024), but it

will remain to be seen whether Modi continues to strengthen his own hold on power at the expense of Indian governing institutions.

Section 6: Political Economy

6.1. The Indian Population and Growth Rate

One of India's biggest resources, but also long-term challenges, is its population size and population growth rate. With over 1.4 billion people, India is the most populated country in the world, and it has a birth rate of 2.0 births per woman, a decline from 5.7 births per woman in 1950. Like many other countries, India's national birth rate is now just below replacement level (Biswas 2024), although its population is expected to keep growing for the next few decades.

With falling birth rates, the population will be increasingly concentrated in older age groups, placing a greater burden on the younger age cohorts to support the non-working elderly population. Additionally, India's elderly population is already facing hardship, with more than 40% of Indians 60 or older in the bottom 20% of the wealth distribution in the country, meaning that "India is getting old before getting rich" (qtd. in Biswas 2024).

India 2020

- ■ Male surplus
- ■ Males
- ■ Female surplus
- ■ Females
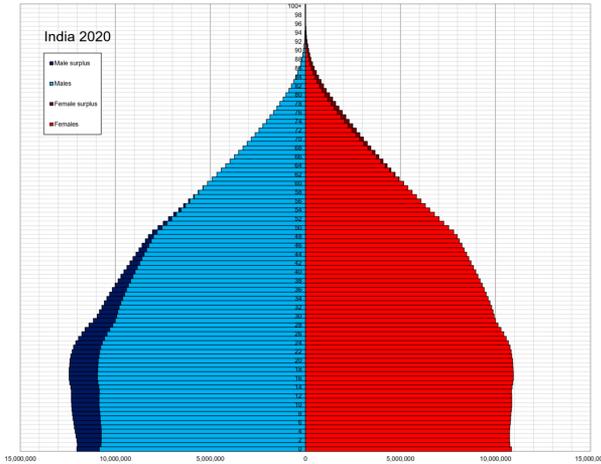
Image 6.1. 2020 Indian Population by Age and Sex (WIkimedia Commons)

6.2. Liberalization, Economic Growth, and Development

In the early 1990s, India liberalized its economy, transitioning from **import-substitution industrialization** (ISI) toward market- and trade-led economic growth. With that economic liberalization, India reformed its domestic economic regulation, reforming the "Licence Raj" in favor of deregulating the private sector to make it easier for businesses to form and grow.

Before the 2020 Covid-crash with a growth rate of -5.8%, India had growth rates of at least 3% annually since 1992. Following Covid, India's 2021 growth rate was 9.7%, and in 2023, the most recent year for which data is available at the time of writing this chapter, the growth rate was 8.2% (World

Bank Group 2025), among the highest in the world for that year. India's growth rates since 1961 are in Figure 6.1.

A major path to India's economic development has been its service sector, and especially the outsourcing of information technology and business processes from more developed countries to India. Infrastructure has traditionally been a limiting factor for development, although it has been making investments in infrastructure like highways and ports, as well as technological connectivity (Gutta and Kedia 2024). There have also been arguments that India should develop its manufacturing sector more, and that its reliance on growth related to the service sector is unsustainable (Talreja and Dasgupta 2022).

Even as India has grown, however, wealth disparities remain. In 2017, for instance, the top% of the Indian population held 77% of the total wealth (and 73% of the total wealth generated that year went to the top 1%). That means that 23% of the wealth is held by 90% of the population, but the poorest half of the population saw only a 1% increase in their wealth in 2017, meaning that most of the wealth growth is leaving behind the poorer members of society (Oxfam International 2022). This income inequality is worse now than it was even under British colonialism (Rajvanshi 2024).

Image 6.2. India GDP Growth (Annual %), 1961-2023

India GDP growth (annual %)

Image 6.2. India GDP Growth (Annual %), 1961-2023 (World Bank Data Group, 2025)

6.3. Composition of the Indian Economy

In fiscal year 2022-2023, the Indian domestic economy was comprised of five primary sectors. Manufacturing and construction generated 22.9% of GDP, financing, insurance, real estate, and other business services 18.8%, trade, transport, hotels, and communication 20%, agriculture, forestry, and fishing 9.4%, and public administration, defense, and other services 15.5% (Embassy of India – Berlin 2025). This means that roughly half the Indian economy was comprised of services-related sectors (Statista 2025). At independence, India's economy was primarily agricultural, so this shift away from agriculture as a percentage of GDP toward industry and services marks a major shift over time. However, the proportion of the population engaged in each sector of the economy is not necessarily reflected in its contribution to

GDP: In 2023, over 43% of the population was employed in agriculture (Trading Economics 2025), even though it constitutes less than 10% of the GDP. Additionally, a large majority of India's poor live in rural areas (World Bank Group 2012).

Over two-thirds of India's economic activity is made up by domestic consumption and investments. Although exports are projected to reach $1 trillion by 2030 (IBEF 2024), this would likely still be only around a third of the GDP.

6.4. India and International Financial and Monetary Institutions

6.4.1. International Monetary Fund

India joined the International Monetary Fund before it was even independent, in December 1945. It undertook three arrangements with the Fund: an Extended Fund Facility arrangement to help with a serious medium-term **balance of payment** problem, from November 1981-May 1984, and six Stand-By arrangements, which provided shorter-term balance of payment assistance, from March 1957-March 1958, June 1962-July 1963, July 1963-July 1964, March 1965-March 1966, January-April 1991, and again from October 1991-June 1993. Since 1993, it has not had any arrangements with the organization, and as of January 2025, it does not have any outstanding loans with the IMF.

6.4.2. World Bank

India has partnered with the World Bank for development projects focuses on education, rural livelihood, agriculture, and disease prevention, eradication, and treatment. Many of these projects were undertaken when India was classified as a low-income economy and were funded by the bank's International Development Association (IDA). In fiscal year 2018, India changed categories from low-income to low middle-income and is thus no longer eligible for IDA financing. However, the World Bank remains engaged in India and is now focused on supporting features of a developing economy: efficient resource usage, inclusiveness in education and employment, and a strong public sector able to meet the needs of an increasingly middle-class economy. To this end, the World Bank has loans of $18.2 billion spread across 83 specific lending operations, mostly centered in individual Indian states; only one-third of the projects are at the national level or involve multiple states simultaneously. By category, there are 13 agriculture projects ($1.7 billion in loans), 11 water projects ($2.5 billion), nine health, nutrition, and population projects ($2.5 billion), and nine urban projects ($1.3 billion) (World Bank Group 2024).

6.5. International Trade

India's biggest export markets are the United States, the

United Arab Emirates, the Netherlands, China, and Bangladesh. It imports the most goods from China, the United Arab Emirates, the United States, Saudi Arabia, and the Russian Federation.

Their biggest export categories are **consumer goods, intermediate goods, and capital goods**, while their biggest import categories are raw materials, intermediate goods, and consumer goods.

Table 6.1 Top 5 Indian Trading Partners, 2022

Rank	Imports (partner share)	Exports (partner share)
1	China (13.96%)	United States (17.72%)
2	United Arab Emirates (7.35%)	United Arab Emirates (6.92%)
3	United States (7.07%)	Netherlands (4.09%)
4	Saudi Arabia (6.30%)	China (3.33%)
5	Russian Federation (5.55%)	Bangladesh (3.06%)

(data source: World Integrated Trade Solution 2025)

Table 6.2 Indian Import and Export Categories, 2022

Product Category	Imports (product share)	Exports (product share)
Raw Materials	37.83%	6.07%
Intermediate Goods	30.09%	29.78%
Consumer Goods	11.92%	48.04%
Capital Goods	18.91%	15.55%

(data source: World Integrated Trade Solution 2025)

Section 7: Foreign Relations

7.1. India and the United Nations

British India was one of the founding members of the United Nations, signing the Declaration by United Nations in January 1942 and participating in the UN Conference of International Organization in April-June 1945.

India has served on the Security Council eight times, and is an active member of the General Assembly. India has also participated in a number of other UN committees, such as

the Human Rights Council, International Law Commission, International Seabed Authority Council, the Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, the Commission on the Status of Women, and the Commission on Population and Development, among others. In addition, India is an active contributor of troops to UN peacekeeping missions, with more than 260,000 Indian troops having served in nearly two-thirds of the missions that have been authorized around the world (Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations n.d.).

7.1.4. UN Peacekeeping Force in Kashmir

India, and specifically Jammu and Kashmir, has also been the site of a UN peacekeeping mission. The United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan was established in January 1949 and has operated in Kashmir ever since. The mission originally deployed to supervise a ceasefire agreed on by India and Pakistan in Jammu and Kashmir. When violence broke out again in 1971, the mission stayed and helps enforce the ceasefire agreed to later that year. However, the number of deployed personnel is relatively small, with only 109 members as of October 2024, 69 of whom are civilians. Since its inception, 13 members of the UNMOGIP staff have been killed (United Nations Peacekeeping n.d.).

7.3. India and Regional

Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs)

India participates in regional intergovernmental organizations to advance its national interests, especially, in the economic, strategic, and security domains. It has been argued that India also chooses the regional organizations it participates in as an avenue to "[bolster] its image and status as a key power in global affairs" (Kumar 2024). India has recently been most active in the following regional organizations:

7.3.1. Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC)

This organization is made up of the seven countries adjacent to the Bay of Bengal. BIMSTEC was created in 1997, and has Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, and Thailand as members.

7.3.2. South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)

The SAARC was established in 1985 and is meant to increase cooperation on economic growth, social progress, and cultural development between Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.

7.3.3. Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)

The SCO was created in 1996 as a collaboration between the People's Republic of China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, and Tajikistan. India joined the organization in 2017. Other countries have also joined alongside or after India, including Pakistan, Iran, and Belarus. The organization is focused on political, economic, security, and defense organization, and is the largest regional organization in the world by geography and population.

7.4. India's Rivalry with Pakistan

Since before independence, India has been locked in a political and military rivalry with Pakistan, largely stemming from the unfinished business of Partition, which did not neatly separate the two countries as intended. Both countries have laid claim to the province of Jammu and Kashmir, and armed conflicts of various size have broken out between the two countries several times, including in 2023 and 2024. Even in periods without active violence remain tense, however, with both countries on high alert. Kashmir remains the flashpoint issue between the two countries, and the most likely to face a re-emergence of violence. There has also been increased tension over Jammu and Kashmir within India itself following Prime Minister Modi's revocation of Article 370 of the Indian Constitution

that granted the state increased autonomy in 2019, a further crackdown on independent media in the state in 2022 and 2023, and electoral redistricting that favored Hindu-majority areas in the largely Muslim province in 2023.

India and Pakistan have also competed in the realm of nuclear weapons in an attempt to possess an ultimate weapon over the other. India began its nuclear program in 1967 and first tested nuclear weapons in 1974, followed by additional tests in 1998. Pakistan began developing its nuclear weapons program in 1972, and while it gained the ability to detonate a nuclear weapon in 1984, it did not successfully do so until May 1998, just weeks after India's second nuclear test.

India also participated in the Pakistani civil war that eventually produced the breakaway of East Pakistan into the independent country of Bangladesh. The conflict started in March 1971 with a Pakistani military operation in East Pakistan, which was home to a growing Bengali nationalist movement, driven in part by East Pakistan's political under-representation in the Pakistani parliament. The Pakistani military committed genocide in East Pakistan. India intervened in the conflict in early December 1971 in assistance to East Pakistan. Following air dominance by the Indian Air Force, Pakistan surrendered in mid-December 1971 in Dhaka, the capital of East Pakistan, which would also become the capital of independent Bangladesh.

There have been periods of short-lived **rapprochement** between India and Pakistan, including after Modi invited

Pakistani prime minister Nawaz Sharif to his inauguration in 2014. However, India canceled talks with the Pakistani prime minister in August 2014. Tentative cooperative steps were taken throughout 2015, and Modi visited Pakistan in December of that year. However, fresh clashes in Kashmir ended that round of thawed relations, and increasing Hindi nationalism under Modi and the BJP have seemingly diminished the likelihood of similar opportunities in the short- to medium-term.

7.5. India's Conflicts with China

Along with border tensions with Pakistan, India has had lingering territorial disputes with China since its independence as well, stemming from poorly demarcated natural barriers, like rivers, lakes, and snowfields between the two countries. The two countries fought a war over the border in 1962, with India ultimately losing territory to China. China also claimed parts of Kashmir, which have resolved into a more stable partition than between India and Pakistan. In the 1990s, India and China completed undertook multiple diplomatic agreements about their shared border, which improved the relationship between the two countries. However, much like with Pakistan, tensions and localized outbreaks of violence still occur periodically.

Key Terms/Glossary

Capital goods: Physical assets used for the production of goods and services, such as buildings, equipment, and machinery. Capital goods engage in the process of manufacturing.

Caste system: "A system of rigid social stratification characterized by hereditary status, [within-group marriage], and social barriers sanctioned by custom, law, or religion" (Marriam-Webster 2025)

Civil disobedience: A form of nonviolent protest that involves non-compliance with specific laws and refusal to pay particular taxes and fines

Colonialism: A policy involving some degree of political and perhaps economic control over a territory by another country. At one point, British has the largest empire in the world, with control over what became 50+ independent countries, a territory of roughly a quarter of the planet's land, and a population of more than 450 million people (National Geographic Kids n.d.).

Consumer goods: The output of production and manufacturing processes that are meant to be sold and consumed by individuals. Examples include clothing, electronics, and processed food items.

Democratic backsliding: The erosion of rights or liberties, such as freedom of the press or freedom of assembly, or the

manipulation of institutions, norms, and rules. This is often done in a way that benefits the incumbent party or official and undermines the ability of an opposition to win an election or compromises the freeness and fairness of elections.

Dowry: A payment made by a bride's family to the husband's family, theoretically to compensate the husband's family for the cost of incorporating the daughter into the family and providing for her. Illegal in India since 1961, but still a common social practice (Sukumar 2017).

Gender quotas: In most cases, gender quotas are requirements that parties will run a specified percentage of women candidates; this does not ensure that that proportion of women will ultimately be elected. In India, the gender quotas function more like **reserved seats,** and will ensure that a minimum proportion of legislative seats will be held by women at the national and state levels.

Hijra: A term used to refer to transgender, intersex, or gender-nonconforming individuals. Hijra is recognized as a third gender in India.

Hindutva: A Hindu nationalist ideology that, among other things, advocates for India to be a Hindu state that does not recognize the rights of other minority religious groups, especially Muslims.

Import-Substitution Industrialization: Economic development strategy in which countries focus on producing domestically items that they have been importing from other

countries. Domestic production is often protected by tariffs, quotas, and other trade restrictions.

Indian Subcontinent: The geographic area encompassing present-day India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh.

Intermediate goods: Also called semi-finished goods, these products are neither raw materials nor consumer goods, but are rather used as inputs into these finished goods and services.

Lingua franca: A language that serves as a common language for speakers whose **vernacular languages** are different.

Paramilitary organization: A group with military organization and training but that operates outside the bounds of a country's official military.

Partition: The division of British India, at independence, into the separate states of India and Pakistan. Resulted in the displacement of 12-20 million people and 200,000 to 1 million deaths.

President's Rule: A declaration by the president of India suspending the powers of state government and imposing direct national-level rule in a state.

Rapprochement: Increased cooperation between two countries that have a generally tense or conflictual relationship.

Reserved parliamentary seats: The allocation of parliamentary seats to be held by members of identified groups. In India, seats are reserved on the basis of caste identity, with Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes guaranteed representation in the designated number of seats.

State of emergency: A declared period of time in a country

in which usual limits on the executive's exercise of power are diminished and extraordinary powers, such as direct control of lower levels of government, are legally permitted. States of emergency are typically declared during heightened periods of unrest or instability.

The Emergency: Period of time in which India was under a state of emergency declared by the president of India at the request of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, from 1975-1977.

Vernacular/regional language: Languages spoken by people in particular areas, as opposed to necessarily having national or lingua franca status.

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5.

KENYA

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Chapter Outline

Why Study this Case?

Kenya is a leading economy in East Africa with a booming tourist sector. The country is recognized as a leader on the African continent

in technology and is run on 93% renewable energy. Kenya's public debt issues are similar to many developing countries, though how the government respond to reforms is different than other African nations. A push towards foreign direct investments makes Kenya the country to watch in the coming years.

Section 1: A Brief History

Kenya has a broad, rich, and complex history. From its prehistoric history dating back to 1.2 million years ago to its current status as one of the world's greatest tech innovation hubs, the country's history is marked by indigenous cultures, wild animals, colonial influences, and modern development.

1.1: History and Political Independence

Kenya's history is marked by the evolution from hunter and gatherer to agrarian and modern society. Oppressed under British rule in the 19th Century, Kenya's struggle for

independence gained momentum in the 1950s when many nationalist movements challenged colonial rule. The Kenyan tribes that suffered the most significant displacement by the British formed a rebellion group called the Mau Mau (literally meaning, Get out! Get Out! in Kiswahili). The Mau Mau rebellion lasted from 1952-1960, with the British army fighting back with the inscription of other Kenyans to fight their people, in addition to British soldiers. Mau Mau that surrendered were used to lead British soldiers to Mau Mau bases, ultimately to capture and kill the leader – Dedan Kimathi. Tens and thousands of Kenyans lost their lives before the British quashed the rebellion. Prisoners were held in detention camps, forced into isolation, labor camps, and tortured. However, global pressure mounted for state independence, leading the British to relinquish power over many states, including Kenya.

Figure #1.1: Kenyatta taking office and the British relinquishing rule,1964 (Photo by BBC news, 25 November 2022)

Kenya gained independence from the British in 1963, initially keeping Elizabeth II as the head of state and local leader Jomo Kenyatta as Prime Minister. In 1964, the country became a republic, at which time Kenyatta became the head of state and President.

1.2: Colonization

In 1885, Great Britian and European leaders gathered in Berlin to divide the African continent into territories for colonization. The conference, known as the Berlin Conference, serves as the world's largest planned coup d'état and forced annexation of global territory. While Portugal, Germany, Belgium, and Italy took 15% or less of the continent under its control, Britain took nearly 30% of Africa (with France just behind it), including what was known as British East Africa, including Kenya.

Figure #1.2: European colonization of Africa (Updated from map courtesy of Andreas 06, http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Blank Map-Africa.svg.)

Kenya's colonial era began in 1895 as a protectorate (maintaining some form of independence). Kenya became a formal British colony in 1920 (having no control over its internal affairs). The natives objected to losing sovereignty as they watched whites settle on their. The British displaced hundreds of thousands of Kenyans and provided whites with 999-year leases on land that rightfully belonged to Kenyans. Whites settled in fertile highlands, displacing tens and thousands of indigenous Kenyans, mainly from the Kikuyu tribe. The British categorized Kenyans into squatters, contract, or casual laborers. Squatters comprised agriculturalists and pastoralists who continued using the farmland of absentee whites for sustenance. These squatters had to work 270 days free if caught by the landowners. Contract laborers and casual laborers earned meager wages. Other demands of the British were taxes which, if not paid, led to fines and mandatory free labor:

•All Kenyans must work 60 days a year for the government with no pay

•All Kenyan men must wear identity discs

•All Kenyans must pay a poll tax (headcount tax)

•All Kenyans must pay a hut tax (housing tax)

Their white employers poorly treated Kenyans with no reprise from a prejudiced legislative system. Magistrates were unconcerned when white settlers used a punishment of their choice on laborers. Hospitals were not concerned with Kenyans' health issues, as religious missions took care of this.

Nationalized schools allocated education revenue unequally, and students endured punitive public examinations and a curriculum that favored the superiority of whites over Kenyans.

1.3: Borders

Precolonial East Africa straddled the equator between latitudes 4° N and 4° S and longitudes 34° E and 41° E. Today, the coordinates are 0.02° latitude and 37.9° E longitude. Kenya's capital city of Nairobi was spatially planned based on colonial racial segregation. Nairobi Located in South-Central Kenya, 140 kilometres south of the equator (NCC, n.d.-b), Nairobi's coordinates are 1° 17' 11.0004" South and 36° 49' 2.0028" East, with an elevation of 1,680 meters (LatLong.net, n.d.). Surrounded by forests, cliffs, and plains of about 113 km2 (about the area of Manhattan), Nairobi is adjacent to the Rift Valley's eastern edge and Ngong Hills to the city's west (Nairobi City County Assembly, n.d.).

The first three spatial plans for the city were the 1898 Plan for a Railway Town, the 1926 Plan for a Settler Capital, and the 1948 Nairobi Master Plan for a Colonial Capital (Wanjiru & Matsubara,2017). The 1948 Plan described the European zones of the city as areas of economic residential development; The Asian/Indian zones were official housing zones, and the African zones were called workers housing. The places where the Africans lived were areas with undefined land uses.

Informal settlements in Nairobi trace back to the colonial period when Africans were temporary city residents, especially the males working directly for the colonial government. African males lived in working quarters and could not bring their families to the city.

Section 2: Ethnic, Religious and Cultural Identity

Kenya is home to approximately 42 tribes with different languages and cultures. All have learned to live with each other; some are more dominant than others. Ethnic tensions rise mostly during presidential elections (every five years), founded in fear of one culture benefitting greatly over another.

2.1: Dominant Ethnic Groups

Kenyan ethnicities come from five major groups: the Kikuyu, Luhya, Kalenjin, Luo, and Kamba. The largest ethnic group in Kenya is the Kikuyu, with over 8 million people representing 22% of the Kenyan population. The Kikuyu and Kamba people occupy Nairobi and the Central Rift highlands. The Luhya, representing 14% of the population, inhabit areas near Lake Victoria. The Luo, 14% of the population, live in the western area of Kenya. In comparison, Kalenjin (12%) occupies the Rift Valley Province (11%), and Kamba (11%)

occupies the southern part of Kenya near Tsavo National Park..
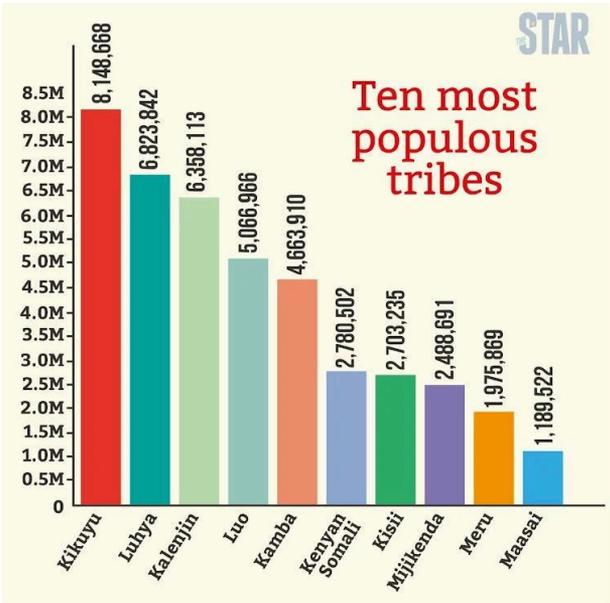
Figure #2.1: Major ethnic tribes of Kenya (Agutu – The Star, 2020)

2.2: Significant Ethnic Minorities

Other ethnic groups of Kenya are the Kenyan Somali, Kisii, Mijikenda, Meru, and the Maasai Tribe, which still maintain a pastoralist lifestyle on preserved lands. The Kenyan Somalis comprise 6% of the Kenyan population and inhabit the Northeastern Province. The Mijikenda comprise 5.% of the population and live at the northern limit of Kilifi County near Tanzania. The Meru (4.2%) is in habit areas near Mt. Kenya. The tribe most well-known to the global community, the

Maasai, only makes up 2.5% of the Kenyan population and lives along areas bordering Tanzania.

2.3: Official Language

Since 1929, English has been Kenya's official language. This change was a result of the colonial era, during which local languages were forbidden. The native languages from the Bantu, Nilotic, and Cushitic-speaking tribes, which made up 34 dialects, were affected by this shift.

- Bantu-speaking tribes: Central (6 tribes) including Kikuyu, Wester (3 tribes), and Coastal (6 tribes)
- Nilotic-speaking tribes: Plains (6 tribes), Highland (6 tribes) including Kalenjin and Lake River (1 tribe) including Luo
- Cushitic-speaking tribes: Eastern (5 tribes) and Southern (1 tribe)

More dialects exist that blend similar linguistic foundations of the 34. There are 68 languages in Kenya spoken amongst other Kenyans, with English as a common language.
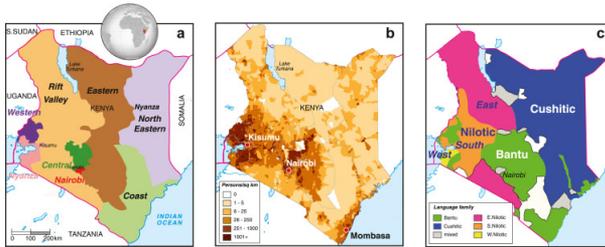
Figure #2.3: Geographical and linguistic structure, (Muinde et.al., 2021)

2.4: Dominant Religious Denomination

In Kenya's pre-colonial beginnings, there were dozens of tribal beliefs. Most tribes believed in a single creator, "Ngai" or "Were," meaning "God." The Maasai tribe and some of the population in Samburu and Turkan have kept their ancestral religious faiths. The dominant religion is Christianity (86%), including the Protestant, Methodist, Anglican, Baptist, and Pentecostal faiths. The second largest denomination is Catholic (21%). The missions during colonial times heavily influenced this subset of the population. The fourth largest dominant group is Muslims practicing Islam (11%). The practice of Islam results from Arab traders whose influence along the coastline of Kenya, particularly the Mombasa Coast, impacted shoreline communities.

2.5: Significant Religious Minorities

The Indian Ocean offers an easy journey to Kenya's Mombasa

Coast. Up to 1963, 35% of the Kenyan population was from India. They made the passage to work as merchants and farmers and to build railways. Others were indentured laborers who had to work to gain back their freedom. As of 1757, Great Britian controlled much of India and directly ruled the country in 1858. With a more extended history of colonizing Indians, British ideology characterized Indians as loyalists who could tame uncivilized Africans. Hindus, Sikhs, and Baha'is are religious groups influenced by Indians that currently make up less than 2% of the Kenyan population.

2.6: Historical Ethnic or Religious Conflict

The legacy of British colonization in Kenya has had a profound impact on the country's ethnic dynamics. Once peaceful and respectful, the various ethnic groups in Kenya now find themselves in a state of mutual distrust. Post-independence, a unified political voice for all Kenyans was not established. The African leaders who rose to power largely maintained the colonial structures, often to appease the West. This led to a power struggle among the ethnic groups, further fueling antagonism and division.

Kenya's first president, Jomo Kenyatta, was from the Kikuyu tribe. As a result, the President granted the Kikuyu ownership of the "white highlands, " the most fertile lands previously owned by white settlers. Kikuyu also benefitted

from abundant schools, modern roads, expanded health services, and infrastructure (piped water, electricity). In contrast, other tribes suffered. When Odiinga (former VP of Kenyatta) ran for President, the Luo tribe had hopes of gaining benefits to improve their lives. When Odinga lost the race, ethnic animosities ensued. Whichever tribe held power passed benefits to their own. The Moi presidency benefited the Kalenjin. The same trends continued across the five presidential races in Kenya: Kenyatta (Kikuyu), Moi (Kalinjin), Kibaki (Kikuyu), Kenyatta Jr. (Kikuyu), Ruto (Kalinjin). The most significant conflict occurred in 2007 and 2017 because of disputed election results.

Other conflicts over land ownership, cattle grazing, and water rights have decreased since 2017. The 1992 Rift Valley conflict between Kalenjin and Kikuyu over land ownership is among the worst, killing 5,000 and displacing 75,000. Conflicts in 1997, 2005, 2012, and 2017 were much smaller.

Northern Kenya is a hotbed of ethno-religious tension. The area is a recruitment spot for Somalia-based Islamist terror groups like Al-Shabaab. Somali refugees also settle in the region, increasing tension over land use and societal benefits.

Section 3: Political Culture and Civil Society

Political culture and Civil Society play significant roles in

Kenya. Over half the population has attended a political campaign event and over three-fourths support regular and open elections. Moreover, the Kenya National Civil Society Center works to improve democracy, human rights, equality, and freedom across the country.

3.1: NGO & Civil Society Activity

NGO activity in Kenya is vast. The top five NGOs working in Nairobi and rural areas are (1) Mercy Corps, (2) Amnesty International, (3) Oxfam International, (4) Save the Children, and (5) World Vision International. Most NGOs obtain funding from the US Agency for International Development (USAID) or the World Bank. Other agencies include Plan International, Doctors Without Borders, and CARE International.

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) are regularly funded by top NGOs or local government funding. These organizations know Kenyan communities well and serve better with immediate on-the-ground help. Kenya has a diverse range of CSOs, with nearly 15,000 registered with the government. Some CSOs in Kenya are Muungano Alliance, YOD-International, The Ruben Center, SHOFCO, BLEP, Pamoja Trust, and Mukuru Promotion Center, showcasing the variety of aid organizations in the country.

3.2: Ethnic and Religious Identities

Ethnic identities in Kenya match the skills and talents for which each tribe is known. The Bantu tribes are known for being excellent farmers, while the Nilotic tribes are talented pastoralists. Together, they make up the bulk of the Kenyan population. The Kikuyu tribe is known for their intelligence and business skills, while the Kamba are highly skilled in basketweaving and wood carving. The Kalenjin hold top records in multiple athletic competitions and integrate music and dance into their activities. The Luhya are agriculturalists, and the Luo are skilled fishermen and growers of sugar cane.

Cultural practices play a significant role in shaping ethnic identities in Kenya. Rituals for circumcisions, marriage ceremonies, meal preferences, burials, and other customs are unique to each ethnic group, contributing to the rich tapestry of Kenyan culture.

3.3: Underrepresented Identities

Much of the same identity metrics outline the underrepresented ethnic groups. The Mijikenda tribe is known for sacrifice rituals, while the Kisii and Embu grow much of Kenya's cash crops. The Kisii are also well-known for their soapstone carvings and pottery. The Somali tribe is entrepreneurial, and the Afro-Asiatic tribe is a descendant of Kenyan railway workers from India.

The Maasai tribe is known to be the most courageous and have remarkable tracking skills for wildlife. They are also the most knowledgeable about land preservation. Preservation of their identity has remained the same since pre-colonialism. The Maasai, spread across southeast Kenya and northeast Tanzania, are protected by the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). International law protects the tribe to an extent. Recent actions in 2023 and 2024 have uprooted the Maasai who live on the Tanzania side of the border, which may push more Maasai into Kenya.

The new Kenya 2010 Constitution forbids gender discrimination in law and customs. For instance, women who are married have the right to inherit land. Other rights for underrepresented groups are the right to education, equality in terms of access for the disabled, and discrimination because of gender, age, ethnicity, religion, language, religious belief, or marital status is illegal. However, LGBTQ+ and any expression of homosexuality in Kenya is illegal, with a penalty of 14-21 years imprisonment.

3.4: Public Opinion polling

Pew Research Center, Freedom House, and Afrobarometer frequently take public opinion polls in Kenya. Polls regarding identity focus primarily on politics and electoral violence. Afrobarometer noted in 2022 that 54% of Kenyans (all ethnic

groups) do not trust the electoral commission to count electoral votes fairly.

3.5: Governance

Governance in Kenya is democratic. The country operates with three branches of government: executive, bicameral parliament (Senate and National Assembly), and judiciary. The country's first election was under one-party rule, with the Kikuyu tribe in power. In 1991, Kenya introduced the multiparty electorate in response to citizens, students, and civil society's demands for more freedom. Kenya's first multiparty election in 1992 influenced further reform enforced under the Political Parties Act of 2011.

Figure #3.5: Kenya – Corruption Perception Index Score (Transparency International, 2024)

Kenya's current democratic status, as rated by Freedom House, is 'partly free'. This rating, with a score of 52/100, reflects the country's partly free political rights (22) and civil liberties (30). However, Kenya faces key challenges such as pervasive corruption and the vulnerability of journalists and human rights defenders. The World Economics Governance Index gives Kenya a 'D' ranking with 43.1 points, placing it below countries like Senegal (C rating) and Ghana (B rating). Transparency International ranks Kenya 128/180 for

corruption perception, highlighting issues with corrupt officials, restricted civic space, and access to justice.

Section 4: Political Participation

Political participation is high among voting-aged men and women in Kenya. With a population of 54 million people, 20% are under the voting age, and nearly 30% are between the ages of 18 and 34. Another 23% are between ages 3 and -64, leaving 3% 65 and above. Though voter registration is not compulsory, 22.1 million citizens are registered. Of that number, over 14 million citizens voted in the 2022 presidential elections.

4.1: Political Parties

Kenya has 27 registered political parties. The main parties are the Jubilee Coalition, which includes three parties: Jubilee (JP), Kenya African National Union (KANU), and the United Democratic Alliance (UDA). The Coalition consists of six parties, two of which received no votes in past elections: Orange Democratic Movement (ODM), Wiper Democratic Movement-Kenya (WDM-K), Amani National Congress (ANC), and Forum for Restoration of Democracy-Kenya (FORD-K). See the table below for an overview of ideological positions.

COALITION	PARTY	LEADER	IDEOLOGY
Jubilee	JP	Uhuru Kenyatta	Liberalism
Jubilee	KANU	Gideon Moi	Nationalism
Jubilee	UDA	William Ruto	Conservatism
NASA	ODM	Raila Odinga	Social Liberalism
NASA	WDM-K	K.Musyoka	Social Democracy
NASA	ANC	M. Mudavadi	Social Liberalism
NASA	FORD-K	M.Wetangula	Social Democracy

Table 4.1: Kenya -Democratic Parties (Wikipedia, 2024)

4.2: Interests Groups

Over 16 interest groups are active in Kenya. The four key groups are the Federation of Kenya Employers, the Inter-Religious Council of Kenya, the Kenya Association of Manufacturers, and the Kenya Association of Tour Operators.

Government committees represent each of these interest groups. The groups hold parastatal status, meaning they have some political authority serving the state indirectly. Some are clear about how they are appointed parastatal status; some are not. Under the categories in the table below, interest groups include manufacturers, property developers, the private security industry, and retail traders (see table below).

Parastatals and government corporations	
State owned enterprise	72
Higher & further education	42
Regulatory	64
Regional development agency	7
Research institute	18
Promotional organisation	2
Other	15
Total	220

Figure #4.2: Parastatal and government corporations (Victor Matara, State Corporations Advisory Committee, 2022)

4.3: Electoral Systems

The electoral system in Kenya consists of a bicameral parliament structure comprising a National Assembly and a Senate. Three-hundred thirty-seven members are elected across 290 constituencies. Candidates must be citizens of at

least ten years, 18 years or older, and of sound mind. Candidates must have post-secondary school education and not be subject to a prison sentence at least six months prior to running for office. A non-refundable nomination fee of 20,000 Kenyan shillings (approximately $ 200 USD) is necessary for a male candidate, and 10,000 Kenyan Shillings (approximately $ 100 USD) for youth, women, or disabled candidates.

Section 5: Formal Political Institutions

The formal political institutions of Kenya are the executive branch, led by an elected president, the bicameral parliament, and the judiciary. According to the new 2010 Kenyan Constitution, the president serves as both head of state and head of government in a multi-party system.

5.1: Democracy

Figure #5.1: Number of presidential candidates in the last seven elections in Kenya (KIPPRA).
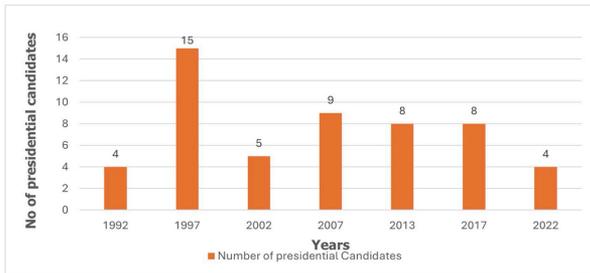
Source: ECK (1992,1997,2002,2007) and IEBC (2013,2017,2022)

Democracy began in Kenya with the opening of a multi-party system in 1992. Since then, Kenya has held open presidential elections every five years: 1992, 1997, 2002, 2007, 2013, 2017, and most recently, 2022. The number of candidates running for office was the highest in 1997 (see table above). Human rights issues and unlawful killings remain an issue, though the country's progress in democratic practices continues to improve.

5.2: Legislative System

Figure #5.2: Kenya Parliament in session (Parliament.go.ke – Kenya Government Factsheet, 2022).

The legislative system in Kenya is bi-cameral, comprised of the Senate (upper house) and State Assembly (lower house). Together, they comprise the two houses of parliament based at the Parliament Building in Kenya's capital city, Nairobi. The role of parliament is to promote democratic governance through the law and passing constitutional amendments, and it must represent the will of the people. The role of the Senate is to represent the interests of counties. In contrast, the National Assembly represents all constituencies regarding taxes, loans, and financial bills concerning county governments, as well as basic provisions such as food, water, employment opportunities, and national trade. There are 67 seats in the Senate and 349 seats in the National Assembly.

5.3: Executive System

The Head of State, the President, is elected every five years by public ballot. Candidates and their running mates get nominated by their party to run for office. A preliminary nomination occurs across party lines. After a candidate is nominated, he or she may run for office. When only one candidate is nominated, he or she is declared Head of State. Where two or more candidates are nominated, all persons registered to vote are entitled to one vote. Polls by individual ballot dropped into a secure box are guarded by election monitors.

An election monitoring body from several democratic countries may be present at voting polls to ensure democratic procedures and vote count accuracy. The countries that participated in the oversight of the 2022 Kenyan elections were the UN, the Norwegian Embassy, and several other multilateral organizations. A candidate who received more than half the votes and at least 25% of votes in more than half the counties is elected President.

The presidential cabinet (Cabinet Secretaries) is nominated by the President and approved by Parliament. This underscores the President's responsibility to form a capable and effective cabinet. The cabinet's function is to help direct government policy on national issues. The cabinet can be formed with a minimum of 14 seats and a maximum of 22 seats.

5.4: Judiciary

Kenya has a legal system based on customary, Islamic, and common law. The mixture can sometimes hinder development, institutional strengthening, and international law. The judiciary in Kenya operates at two levels – Superior and Subordinate Court. A President of Courts rules the Superior Court, i.e., the Supreme, Appeals, and High Court. A Principal Judge, elected by the judges of High Courts, answers to the Chief Justice for administration and court management. The judiciary also includes the Environment and Land Court and the Employment and Labor Relations. Subordinate courts are local magistrate courts that hear most of Kenya's civil and criminal cases.

Section 6: Political Economy

Kenya's political economy is centralized, with strong executive power but weak ideologies. However, the current president, William Ruto, has taken a different approach to boosting the economy, albeit hindered by considerable debt from the previous administration.

6.1: Political Economy

Figure #6.1: President Ruto at Google with staff (Nairobi Wire, 2023).

Kenya's economy has been hurt badly by the pandemic. The county received $750 million USD for economic recovery from World Bank in 2021. More money was lent to Kenya by the IMF, bringing the total to $2.34 billion USD by April 2021, with another billion added in July 2023. Moreover, the prior existing debt was at $83 billion USD. Despite the debt, the new 2022 President has launched an outreach to foreign countries and manufacturers to solicit Foreign Direct Investment to re-write Kenya's economy. Some of those manufacturing companies include Google, Levi Strauss, The Gap, and Microsoft.

6.2: Major trading Partners

Kenya, with its liberal/market-oriented position on trade, has fostered strong bilateral and multilateral relationships within East Africa (Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda). Its off-continent

trading partners include Europe, China, India, Pakistan, Netherlands, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and the US. This economic approach has propelled Kenya to become the fourth-largest economy in sub-Saharan Africa. In 2022, its most common partners accepting Kenya's exports were the US ($722M USD), Uganda ($677M USD), Pakistan ($541M USD), Netherlands ($502M USD), and Rwanda ($439M USD).

Kenya is a member of the East African Community (EAC), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

6.4: Import/Export

Kenya's geographical location makes it a good partner for import/export business. It sits at the gateway to other East African countries and has a modern port in Mombasa connected to a railway system modernized in 2017. The port has a 48-hour turnaround time, which enhances its competitiveness. In 2023, export value into Kenya from the US was $493.5 million per the Global Trade Atlas. Examples of US products imported into Kenya are petroleum products, chemicals, and aerospace parts. Kenya's exports to partners include agriculture, accounting for 33% of the country's gross domestic product and 65% of export earnings. The agriculture industry is the largest employer in Kenya, employing more

than 40% of the population. Other exports from Kenya include coffee, textiles, cement, iron and steel products.

Import Substitution was adopted in Kenya to protect consumer goods over capital goods and shield the local manufacturing industry. High tariff barriers and quantity restriction policies protect local producers.

6.5: Bank/Institutional Projects

The African Development Bank (ADB) is the primary local institution able to finance projects across the continent. As of Feb 2024, the bank agreed on a new 5-year plan to improve growth and human development. The plan is designed to increase private-sector growth for the structural transformation of Kenya's economy, with a specific focus on four areas: water, transport, skills, and economic governance. These areas have been chosen for their potential to reduce travel time on roads and improve access to affordable water, sanitation, and irrigation for farms, thereby significantly impacting Kenya's development.

The World Bank, the UN, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have a 60-year history of offering loans, hands-on engagement, and advisement for projects to improve economics and human development in Kenya. The UN has partnered with the Kenyan government on affordable housing projects. The World Bank has provided loans for infrastructure in Kenya's poorest rural areas, and the IMF has worked with

the Kenyan President and his staff on reforms to improve economic sustainability.

6.6: Economic Status

Recent changes to Kenya's economic status result from debt from the pandemic and loans from China for infrastructure projects. Kenya's debt ratio nearly doubled from 41% to 78% of its gross domestic product. Key issues are high youth unemployment, lack of jobs, and corruption within institutions. As of 2024, the country is under strict reforms led by the IMF, as government expenditures to pay debt are 60% of its revenue as of June 2024. According to Reuters, Kenya's credit rating has improved from B- to B due to the country's repeal of the 2024/25 Finance Bill. However, Kenya's Moody credit rating is Caa1, meaning the country has a high credit risk. See Figure 6.6 for historical debt from 2019 and future projections.

Kenya: National debt in relation to gross domestic product (GDP) from 2019 to 2029

Additional Information:
Kenya; IMF; 2019 to 2029
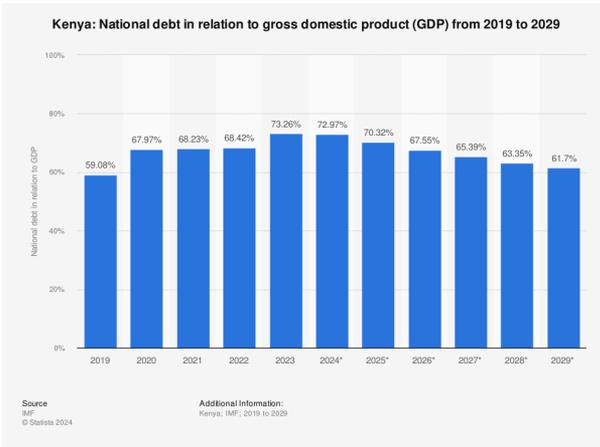
Figure #6.6: Kenya national debt from 2019 to current, and future projections (Statista).

Section 7: Foreign Relations

Kenya's foreign policy has been focused on peace and prosperity since 2014, is inclusive, and invites global participation. President Uhuru Kenyatta, elected in 2013, has made a concerted effort to make Kenya globally competitive while protecting the country's interests. Foreign relations policy and efforts were and remain in line with 2002 President Mwai Kibaki, whose national vision for development is referred to as Vision 2030.

The goal of the vision is to transform Kenya and industrialize it to become a middle-income nation by 2030. The progress has involved key foreign partners: the US, China, and Public-Private Partnerships. In 2015, Marketing to attract foreign business emphasized opportunities under the Special

Economic Zones Act. Investment in all sectors was made welcome across 47 county governments in Kenya. The timing of these foreign policies also coincides with President Uhuru Kenyatta's Big Four Agenda to attract foreign businesses to partner with Kenya for (1) food security, (2) manufacturing, (3) universal healthcare, and (4) affordable housing.

7.1: Role in the UN

Kenya is home to one of the four major UN offices outside of the UN headquarters in New York. The Nairobi office serves as the UN Headquarters in Africa. In 2021, Kenya presided over the opening of the UN Security Council. It was a historic first in the country's diplomacy and foreign policy. Kenya's role as rotational lead of the UN Security Council marks great progress for a country with only a two-year tenure at the council. Kenya's role in Security Council demonstrates its keeping with strategic goals to shape and enhance peace and security in Kenya.

Kenya is also a member of the World Bank, International Criminal Court (ICC), the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA), and the Common fund for Commodities.

7.2: Military Assistance from Kenya

In the spring of 2024, Kenya embarked on a peacekeeping

mission in Haiti in response to gangs overtaking the government and terrorizing citizens, displacing over 578,000 people. Five to seven additional countries join Kenya, providing personnel and military assistance to return control to the Haitian government. The Kenya-led multinational security support mission is backed by $60 million in US funding for riot gear, Humvees, sniper rifles, surveillance drones, firearms, and ammunition. Over $300 million USD is allocated to the mission.

7.3: UN Assistance to Kenya

The UN has aided Kenya in several ways. The capital city, Nairobi, is home to UN country offices, including the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Organization of Migration (IOM), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and the Association of Former International Civil Servants in Kenya (AFICS-Kenya). These organizations offer direct services to Kenya, including advocacy and capacity building.

The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights has supported accountability for human rights violations and the protection of civil society. The UNDP operates projects in Kenya in five areas: poverty reduction, democratic governance, peacebuilding and conflict resolution, energy and environment, and disaster risk reduction. UN-HABITAT has worked with Kenya on slum upgrading and

emergency shelter during the recent climate-induced flood disaster in May 2024.

7.4: Regional Partners

Kenya has six key regional partners across 14 counties: (1) the Democratic Republic of Congo, (2) Burundi, (3) Rwanda, (4) South Sudan, (5) Somalia, and (6) Uganda. All are part of the East African Community. Regional trade blocks include the Lake Region (LREB), North Rift (NOREB), Turkana's Frontier Counties Development Council (FCDC), West Pokot-Jumuia Ya Kaunti Za Pwani, Mombasa Southeastern Kenya Bloc, and Mt. Kenya and Aberdares Region.

7.5: Defense
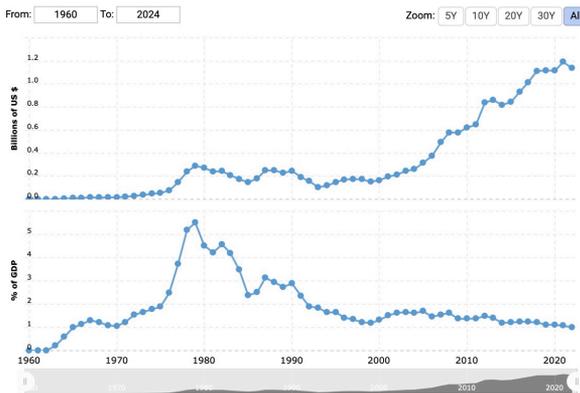
Figure #7.5: Kenya's military spending from 1960 to 2020 (Macrotrends).

The Kenya Defense Forces (KDF) consist of the Kenya Army,

Navy, and Air Force. The military budget for defense in 2022 was $1.14B USD. Soldiers are not exempt from paying taxes and must be between 18 and 26 to serve. Kenya has 24,000 armed forces personnel.

With growing issues of terror attacks along Kenya's borders and in the East African region, Kenya was invited by the UN and the African Union to join the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISON), a regional peacekeeping force. This multilateral defense alliance brings together defense forces from Uganda, Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Kenya. As of June 2024, Kenya is the newest major non-NATO ally. This action emphasized the importance of security in the East Africa Region. Kenya's bilateral defense agreement is with the US.

Suggestions for Further Study

Websites:

US Dept. of State Country Reports on Kenya – https://www.state.gov

Government of Kenya – https://www.president.go.ke

The World Bank Kenya – https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/kenya

Journal Articles:

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https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2024/07/09/kenyas-deadly-gen-z-protests-could-change-the-country

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6.

GREECE

John Tures

Dr. John A. Tures is a professor of political science at LaGrange College in LaGrange, Georgia, where he has been teaching since 2001. Born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, his family moved to El Paso, Texas, where he became interested in politics beyond America's borders. He earned his Bachelor's Degree in both Communications and Political Science from Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas in 1992. After working for USAA, he went on to attend Marquette University in Milwaukee where he received his Master's Degree in International Affairs in 1994. Tures enrolled in the doctoral program at Florida State University in Tallahassee, where he earned his Ph.D. in political science in 2000. After teaching a year at the University of Delaware and several

years at Evidence-Based Research, Inc. in Washington DC, before coming to LaGrange College. In addition to publishing scholarly journals (https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=3y3BVcEAAAAJ&hl=en&oi=sra), he is also a regular newspaper columnist (https://muckrack.com/john-tures/articles).

In addition to growing up next to Mexico, Tures also had the opportunity to travel the British Isles, Western Europe, and East Europe as the Berlin Wall was crumbling. While at Marquette, he and professors and fellow graduate students led undergraduate students to Russia as the country transitioned to democracy in 1993-1994, and the United Nations in the Summer of 1994. At Florida State University, he was part of a team that participated in a multi-week conference in Ohrid, Macedonia in 1996, and taught comparative politics twice in FSU's study abroad program in San Jose, Costa Rica. While at LaGrange College, he co-led a group of students throughout Greece, traveling from Thessaloniki to Philippi, Delphi, Monastery of the Holy Trinity, and Athens.

Chapter Outline

LaGrange College Political Science Professor John A. Tures and Co-Instructor, LaGrange College Chaplain Rev. Ashley Jenkins at The Parthenon. Photo Taken By Asher Tures

The Importance of the Library, As Well As Getting Out Of It

In the movie "Indiana Jones at the Last Crusade,"

the famed archaeologist tells his class "Seventy percent of all archaeology is done in the library...books, reading...." But in the next film "Indiana Jones at the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull," shortly after racing through a library with his son, bumping into a student, Jones answers his question, and adds "If you want to be a good archaeologist, you gotta get out of the library!"

Jones isn't simply being contradictory. To be a good archaeologist, you have to do both. That means in addition to reading, studying, and researching, it also helps to travel, visit the landmarks, speak with the people, and immerse yourself in the setting and plot of the place.

The field of comparative politics was created after World War II, in answer to questions of how free people could so willingly embrace totalitarianism. Since political science was such a new field, early comparativists had to rely upon the theories and research practices of established scholars, and one such field was anthropology, linked to archaeology, the study of different cultures.

In analyzing different political cultures, it helps to

know their history, their ethnicity, race and religion, their political institutions, parties, groups, organization, rules of participation, civil society, and economy. Much of those lessons will be learned in this text, and further reading you'll do as a student or even a professor, typically in a library.

But you also have to go beyond the library, the important other 30 percent.

You'll notice there are a lot of pictures of Greece in this chapter. Many contain students as well, from LaGrange College, as well as one from Agnes Scott College. I could have taken static photos of buildings, monuments and ruins, like the types you see in postcards. But I feel it is important to have the reader see students putting themselves were history was made, and key political debates were decided. In addition to the other sites, I took a few students to a nationalist political rally in Athens, something you can't experience either from reading a book or article, or even watching a news report about it on television or online.

There are plenty of sites that will tell you about

how students today are not reading as much as their earlier counterparts, and are less willing to travel, especially since COVID-19. It is my hope that this chapter on Greece will not only stimulate students to read more and learn more about the subjects covered in this text, which is why I provided online links. I even want them headed to the library for more. But I also hope to encourage students to see ours in these photos, imagining themselves heading there on adventures in the quest to discover more of the truth.

Section 1: History of Greece

The story of historic Greece began with the migration of European peoples from north of contemporary Greece around 1900s B.C. They were ruled by the Minoans of the island of Crete until around 1400 B.C., when the peoples of Greece threw off their control (*Encyclopedia Britannica* 2024). This new Mycenaean culture, derived from the Minoans, was part of the Bronze Age, until these people were defeated by invaders

from the sea around 1150. These new occupants of Greece began to replace the Bronze Age with an Iron Age, when other cultures learned to make steel and more powerful weapons (Encyclopedia Britannica 2024). Scholars are divided about whether the Bronze Age decline was due to natural disasters that destroyed cities and farmlands, or internal unrest from the disruption of trade routes and attacks from nomadic external tribes.

Pottery From The Museum Of The Royal Tombs Of Aigai In Vergina (Photo by the Author)

Though the time from late Bronze and early Iron Ages is called "The Dark Ages," some scholars see this term as misleading. Such people developed alphabets, languages, governance systems, pottery, and industry. This "Continuity Theory" interprets the development of Greek Society as evolutionary, not a series of sharp revolutions from an uncivilized past. Scholar B. C. Dietrich (1970) finds common threads over time for the Greek people, especially on religion. "This century has

fortunately abandoned the idea of the Greeks as a unique people who suddenly appeared on Earth, as if from another world, and magically at one stroke produced their singular culture," he writes. "Nor was Greek religion born in a vacuum but represented the end result of a lengthy development in which the entire Aegean area had a share." This "Early Iron Age Greece" (EIA) persisted until around 770 B.C. with the formation of the famous Olympic Games, considered a key defining moment of the "Classical" Greek Age (Morris 2008).

Mosaic Of Hades Abducting Persephone At The Museum Of The Royal Tombs Of Aigai In Vergina (Photo by the Author)

In an otherwise disparate confederation of Greek City-States, the Olympic Games cannot be understated as helping a common bond of culture. In addition to these athletic events at Olympia in 776 B.C., there were the "Pythian games at

Delphi, the Isthmian games of Corinth and the Nemean games (Swaddling 1988)."

Ruins of Classical Greek Architecture At Delphi, Greece (Photo by the Author)

This "Classical" Greek Age, which some characterize this time as starting in 480 B.C. with victories against the Persian Empire, is defined by both tangible creations and intangible contributions. "It was during the Classical Age that the Greeks arrived at some of their great intellectual and cultural achievements," writes Christopher Brooks (2020). This is defined not by the short-lived and abandoned "democracy" of Athens, but by more enduring contributions. "The fundamental concept of Greek thought, as reflected in drama, literature, and philosophy, was *humanism*. This was an overarching theme and phenomenon common to all of the most important Greek cultural achievements in literature, religion, drama, history-writing, and art. Humanism is the idea

that, first and foremost, humankind is inherently beautiful, capable, and creative," Brooks (2020) adds.

The Delphi Archaeological Museum In Greece (Photo by the Author)

Many modern students of politics are aware of the association between Greece and democracy. But there were several key differences between these classical and contemporary forms of government. Stanford University Political Science Professor John Ober, also a Classicist, explains. "Unlike the American system of representative democracy, where citizens vote for elected officials to represent their concerns in government, rule

in Ancient Greece was direct: Participation was not a choice but a civic duty," cites Melissa DeWitte (2024). She adds "In a class seminar devoted to deliberation, Ober described how the citizen Assembly made decisions and how those decisions represented the will of the demos, the collective judgment of the people about the best available course of action. The class then discussed some of the tensions that arise when conceptualizing a large, diverse population as a monolithic entity."

Our LaGrange College Class Walks Among The Ruins Of The Agora, Which Was Often The Center Of Athenian Democratic Life (Photo by the Author)

There is a desire to see that ancient form of "people rule"

as a more perfect form of government. Yet this system was not without its significant flaws. "But not everyone in ancient Athens was able to participate in political life," DeWitte (2024) documents. "Excluded from the franchise were women and slaves – not too dissimilar to the limitations America's Founding Fathers set when they wrote the Declaration of Independence, Constitution, and the Bill of Rights in the late 18th century." When you exclude someone from "people rule," is that individual really considered a person in the system?

The classical period was also a scientific revolution. "The importance of Greek scientific work is not primarily in the conclusions that Greek scientists reached, which ended up being factually wrong most of the time," Brooks (2020) writes. "Instead, its importance is in its spirit of rational inquiry, in the idea that the human mind can discover new things about the world through examination and consideration. The world, thought the Greek scientists, was not some sacred or impenetrable thing that could never be understood; they sought to explain it without recourse to supernatural forces." An underrated contribution of the Classical Greek Era, influenced by humanism was the development of history. Rather than only chronicle the exploits of the gods, it covered the exploits of the people as key determinants of their destiny. "History as it was first written by the Greeks is not just about listing facts, it is about explaining the human motivations at work in historical events and phenomena," Brooks (2020)

explains. "Likewise, the Greeks were the first to systematically employ the essential historical method of using primary sources written or experienced at the time as the basis of historical research.

The Parthenon At Night, A Key Symbol Of Classical Greece, Is One Of The Most Visited Tourist Sites In The World (Photo by the Author)

That history showed the development of a variety of city-states, from Athens and Sparta to Corinth and Thessaloniki, who would sometimes align themselves when faced with a common external foe, like the mighty Persian Empire (BBC 2023). Victories at Marathon, Salamis and Platea ended the Persian dreams of dominating the Greeks (BBC 2023). Even losses like the heroic struggle against overwhelming odds at

Thermopylae only seemed to embolden the plucky Greeks in fighting the powerful Persians from the East.

Near The Battle Of Thermopylae (Photo by the Author)

On the heels of such triumphs, the members of this loose-knit confederation turned on each other, as Athens and its allies battled Sparta and their friends in the highly divisive Peloponnesian War. The surviving Greeks were no match for the Macedonians, an empire to the North. Macedonia conquered much of the Greek Peninsula under Philip II, thanks to innovative military tactics like the phalanx, a tightly-packed rectangular formation of spears and shields involving hundreds of soldiers.

Tomb Of Philip II of Macedon In Vergina (Photo by the Author)

Upon Philip II's assassination, Alexander the Great introduced "the Hellenistic Era," which included the unification of Greek culture (he was tutored by the Greek philosopher Aristotle and incorporated scientists into his conquests) into the Macedonian Empire. This powerful force conquered the Persian Empire and the spread their rule throughout the Middle East and into Egypt. Macedonians ruled Greece until their defeat by the Roman Empire in a series of wars from 214 B.C. until about 146 B.C. (Davis 2001, Worthington 2020).

Statue Of Alexander The Great In Thessaloniki (Photo by the Author)

During the Second Macedonian War, Greeks actually joined Romans in fighting against the Macedonians after King Philip of Macedon aligned himself with Hannibal of Carthage. In these battles, the more flexible Roman legion style defeated the phalanx in battles such as Cynocephalia and Pydna (Davis 2001). Much is made of Roman General Flamininus declaring the Greeks were now "free" but they were simply shifted from one empire to another (Worthington 2020).

Bust Of Antoninus Pius, Roman Emperor From 138-161 A.D., Considered One Of The "Five Good Roman Emperors," Is Featured In The Athenian Agora. Photo Taken By The Author.

The Greeks became part of the Eastern Roman Empire, ruled from Constantinople, which is the old Greek city of Byzantium. This political entity ended in 1453, when the Byzantine Empire was toppled by the Ottoman Empire led by Sultan Mehmet II (Charanis 1963). It seemed the Greeks would be never free from being dominated by an external power.

Agios Demetrios, The Greek Orthodox Church In Thessalonki, Was Built During The Byzantine Empire, Demonstrating The Architecture And Centrality Of Christianity. Photo By Fotene, Our Greek Guide.

That changed in 1821 when General Alexander Ypsilantis led a revolt in the Danubian Provinces. Unlikely Greek successes continued against the Turks until the rebels formed separate factional governments, enabling the Ottoman Empire to recapture Athens in 1826. International sympathy for the Greeks, coupled with a renewed interest in a renewed interest

in Greek culture, led to strong European support for the Greek independence insurgency. Eventually, the Turks conceded Greek autonomy, and eventual independence in the Treaty of Adrianople (Byington. McClelland and Quint 2021).

The Evzones Uniform Which Came Into Being In The 1800s Harkens Memories Of The Greek War Of Independence. It Is Worn By The Presidential Guard. Photo Taken By The Author.

King Otto I of Bavaria began his rule in 1833 until he was deposed by the Greek National Assembly thirty years later, showing that it was more of a constitutional monarchy, with some checks and balances. That same assembly selected a

Danish prince to be the new ruler. King George I served the country from 1863 to 1913, when he was tragically assassinated by an anarchist as he walked the streets of modern-day Thessaloniki in 1913 (New World Encyclopedia n.d.). During his reign, the popular potentate benefited from acquiring new territory at the expense of European wars against the Ottoman Empire, especially Epirus, Macedonia and Northern Aegean Islands in the First Balkan War of 1912 (New World Encyclopedia n.d.) and Western Thrace the Second Balkan War (BBC 2023).

Site Marking The Assassination Of King George In Thessaloniki. Photo Taken By The Author.

For much of World War I, Greece remained neutral due to infighting, but the country did join the Allies in 1917, and was rewarded with a little territory along the Thracian Coast, land the country lost with the disastrous post-WWI war with Turkey (Petsalis-Diomidis 1978).

Greece recovered some of its military prowess during World War II, when Fascist Italy attacked the country from occupied Albania. In fact, the impressive Greek forces not only repelled Benito Mussolini's invasion but also took some Albanian land in the counterattack (Blytas 2009). This led Nazi Germany to launch an all-out attack on Greece. Greek fighters eventually succumbed to the combined attack of Germany, Italy, and Bulgaria, and the country was partitioned among all three occupiers, effectively delaying the critical attack by the Nazis on the Soviet Union (Blytas 2009).

Greek partisans continued to wage an insurgency against their oppressors, often suffering terrible reprisals, reminiscent of the American movie "Red Dawn" about resistance to a fictional Soviet takeover of America during the Cold War. Thousands of villages suffered this fate, where the men were shot and the villages burned, costing the country roughly 13 percent of its population. Those who suffered the worst were the Salonika Jews, who were massacred when deported from Northern Greece to Auschwitz-Birkenau, as well as Treblinka, according to the Holocaust Encyclopedia (n.d.), killing 80 percent of the pre-WWII Jewish population.

The Karakolithos Memorial, A World War II Monument To Greek Partisans. Near Here, A Village Suspected Of Helping The Partisans Was Massacred By Nazis. Photo By The Author.

No sooner had World War II ended than a new conflict emerged in Greece. The country became an early Cold War battleground, as Greek Communists (with support coming over the Albanian, Yugoslav and Bulgarian border) fought the restored Greek Government, backed by the Western powers (Iatrides and Rizopoulos 2000). The communists were divided into two groups: one that supported Yugoslavia Josip Broz

Tito and the other preferred Josef Stalin of the Soviet Union. This suffered when Tito and Stalin had a falling out. The Greek Communist murder of civilians, including actress Eleni Papdaki, and attacks upon the Greek Orthodox Church, turned much of the population against them (Lengel 2017). Prisoners of the Greek authorities were subject to brutal conditions and deaths (Lengel 2017). But thanks to American support, with a policy known as The Truman Doctrine, the Greek government was able to eliminate Communist forces, as the survivors fled to Albania (Iatrides and Rizopoulos 2000).

A constitutional monarchy with democracy emerged in Greece afterward the civil war; this system persisted until 1967. Fearful of an electoral victory by Centre Union's candidate Georgios Papandreou, a former prime minister who was earlier dismissed by young King Constantine II, a group of Greek military colonels overthrew a caretaker government (Kassimeris 2006). They had been eager to prevent the United Democratic Left from joining an alliance with the Centre Union. Right-wing critics claimed the UDL was a front for the Greek Communists, banned since the Greek Civil War. The military junta, led by Colonel George Papadopoulos (appointed prime minister), conducted many arrests, jailings, tortures, and even deaths of those who disagreed with them (Kassimeris 2006). International condemnation led Greece to withdraw from the European Council. An ineffective counter-coup attempt organized by King Constantine II failed (Kassimeris 2006). After a time, Prime Minister Papadopoulos

sought to liberalize the country somewhat. Papadopoulos was toppled by a hardliner, Brigadier General Dimitrios Ioannidis, in November of 1973; this new general opposed such reforms (Davison 2010). Ioannidis' bellicose policies and support for ousting Greek Cypriot moderate Archbishop Makarios III in favor of a right-wing military coup on the island nation, in 1974. Turkey responded by invading Northern Cyprus, a military move that has divided the Cypriot country even today (Davison 2010).

Greece Now Has A Far More Professionalized Military Than During The Coup, One Which Enjoys More Popular Support Today. Many Greeks Turned Out For This Military March In Downtown Athens. Photo Taken By The Author.

Ioannidis' policies turned even members of the original junta against him and he was deposed. The old junta members

invited a former Prime Minister back to lead a caretaker government until elections could be restored. Ioannidis, Papadopoulos and two other junta leaders were originally sentenced to death, but their penalties were commuted to lengthy prison terms. A referendum rejected the constitutional monarchy by a wide margin, and Greece became a parliamentary republic with some powers given to a president (BBC 2023). Socialist Andreas Papandreou even won the election in 1981, and Greece joined the European Union a decade later (BBC 2023).

Athens Olympic Site for the 1896 Games and The LaGrange College Religion And Politics Class. Photo By The Author.

Athens, the original host of the reborn 1896 Olympics, won the right to host the games again in 2004. Though the athletic events put Greece in the international spotlight, spending on the Olympics and other deficit spending led to an economic

crisis for Greece during the Great Recession (BBC 2023). International bailouts from the EU worked to avoid a Greek default that could spread to other countries, while the country was forced into economically painful austerity measures (BBC 2023). Though Greek leaders have claimed their country has emerged from the crisis, some see that Greece still has some economic and political vulnerabilities (Barber 2024).

Section 2: Ethnic, Religious and Cultural Identity

2.1 Greek Ethnic Origins

[I]t was as an influx of many different tribes, and probably by slow degrees, that the gifted people whom we call the Greeks came to settle in the lands that were to be their own (Burckhardt 1998)." He acknowledges the difficulty of tracking this ethnohistory due to conflicting stories and legends. "In traditional accounts, early Greek times appear as a succession of migrations; one tribe drives out and supplants another until driven out in turn by a third, and this process may have lasted many hundreds of years. Not until the so-called Dorian migration of the eleventh century did the location and distribution of the Greek people begin to take on its final form (Burckhardt 1998)."

Greek Column At Delphi. Photo Taken By The Author.

These Dorian invasions from the Northwest territory of Epirus supplanted the Achaeans, original inhabitants of the Peloponnesus and islands such as Crete in the Mycenaean region, expelling them to an enclave on the giant peninsula (The Latin Library n.d.). Ionians made their way to the Attica region, near modern-day Athens. Some speculate that these many invasions were the inspiration for Homer's Iliad and Odyssey. Greeks began a colonizing movement around the time of the first Olympics (776 B.C.), spreading their kin from

the Italian Peninsula and Western Europe to Asia Minor (The Latin Library n.d.).

2.2 Significant Ethnic Minorities

While 98% of the population of 10.9 million residents known as the Hellenic Republic in modern Greece identify themselves as Greek, there are minorities within the country. Those include several who identify with a neighboring country, and most likely became minorities when borders changed (Chepkemoi 2019). These include the Albanians (445,000), Macedonians of Slavic descent who number about 150,000. There are also Aromanians who speak a Latin dialect, but consider themselves Greeks (who are roughly 200,000 at a recent count), as well as Arvanites, who were originally Albanian, but took pains to adopt the Greek culture; their number is close to 95,000 at last count (Chepkemoi 2019).

There are also Romani (often pejoratively referred to as "gypsies") are nomadic people believed to have come originally from India. Their population, split between Roma Orthodox Christians and Roma Muslims, is a little over 200,000 people (Chepkemoi 2019). In Greece, one might find 90,000 people of Turkish ethnicity, but the Greek government considers them Islamic minorities, not Turks (Chepkemoi 2019). Finally, there are Pomaks, Bulgarian Slavs, often Muslim, who adhere to unique customs, and who consist of about 35,000 (Chepkemoi 2019).

Minority Ethnic Groups In Greece

Rank	Significant Ethnic Minorities In Greece	Estimated Population In Contemporary Greece
1	Albanians	445,000
2	Roma (Romani)	205,000
3	Aromanians	200,000
4	Macedonians	150,000
5	Arvanites	95,000
6	Turkish	90,000
7	Pomaks	35,000

Figure 2.1 – Ethnic Minorities in Greece (https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/minority-ethnic-groups-in-greece.html)

2.3 Official Language

As with most things Greek, the language has evolved over time from ancient traditions, but the extensive age makes the origins harder to trace. What is considered a Greek language has existed for almost 5,000 years, traced back to the 14th and 13th Centuries B.C. during the Mycenaean culture (Encyclopedia Britannica n.d.). This was succeeded by a form of the language which many call "Classical Greek" but is also known as Attic or Ionian. With the spread of Greek culture via Alexander the Great, a Hellenistic Greek variation known as Koine exploded (Kuiper n.d.).

National Kapodistrian University of Athens. Photo Taken By The Author.

Purists rejected this variation and opted for the Attic language. During the Byzantine Empire, Koine returned as the Hellenization of the Eastern Roman Empire occurred. The Ottoman Empire sought to impose a different variation, but Greeks on the Island of Crete, who held out until the mid-1600s, spoke a variation similar to the one from the Byzantine Era (Kuiper n.d.). That version was adopted by Greeks upon independence in the 1820s, which has evolved into what's now known as standard modern Greek (Kuiper n.d.).

Signage For The Prison Of St. Paul In Philippi Shows The Modern Greek Alphabet. Photo Taken By The Author.

2.4 Dominant Religious Denomination

The Greek Orthodox Church story is intertwined with the story of the Orthodox Christianity in general, given the role Constantine played in Christianizing the Eastern Roman Empire in the year 336 (Papadakis 1996). This religion originally spread from Jesus Christ to the Apostles beginning with the Pentecost when the disciples received the Holy Spirit (Papadakis 1996). Pentecost is therefore a key holiday in Orthodox Christianity, whose history is closely paralleled with the New Testament's "Acts of the Apostles." The missionary work of Paul and the other 12 disciples of Jesus throughout the Balkans and Middle East is where many early Orthodox Christian Churches were founded (Papadakis 1996). Its capital

was Constantinople, the site of the impressive Hagia Sophia (Papadakis 1996).

Mural Of The Apostle Paul Preaching At The Bema In Veria, Greece. Photo By The Author.

The destruction of Constantinople by the Ottoman Empire in 1453 did not destroy Orthodox Christianity. Though some key religious sites in Greece and Turkey were converted to Mosques, the faith was still tolerated throughout the region. The religion even spread to Russia and East Europe, as well as Western Europe and even to North America in 1768.

A Rare Minaret Remaining After The Greco-Turkish War, Left Up As A Cultural Site, In Veria, Greece. Photo Taken By The Author.

The Orthodox Church follows the Old and New Testaments and the oral traditions of Christianity (Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America 2023). It emphasizes the importance of four obligatory sacraments: Baptism, Chrismation (Holy Oil), Confession, and Holy Communion, along with three optional ones: Matrimony, Holy Orders (Ordination), and Unction, or the Anointing of the Sick (Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America 2023). Its religious holidays contain some from other Christian traditions, along with some unique

ones, as well as the fundamental importance of the Orthodox Funeral (Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America 2023).

Outside The Greek Orthodox Church Agia Demetrios. Photo Taken By The Author.

2.5 Significant Religious Minorities

According to a 2015 estimate by the CIA World Factbook, the Greek Orthodox Church membership can be as many as 90 percent, or at least 80% of the country, with Muslims making up 2 percent and other religions can be 3-4 percent. Those who identify with no religion may be as few as four percent,

and as many as 15 percent of the population (CIA World Factbook 2015).

https://culturalatlas.sbs.com.au/greek-culture/greek-culture-religion#:~:text=Greece%20is%20officially%20a%20secular,Orthodox%20Christians%20is%20likely%20less.
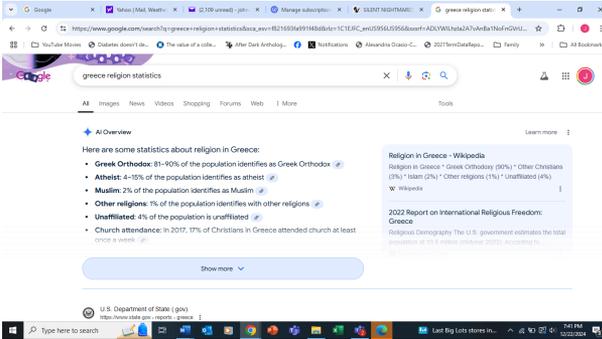
Monastery of the Holy Trinity In Greece. Photo Taken By The Author.

2.6 Historical Ethnic or Religious Conflict

"[T]he struggle for Greek independence begins in 1453 with the fall of Byzantine Constantinople, spans centuries of subjection and assimilation to Ottoman rule, and culminates in the late 18th century with a cultural Greek enlightenment that draws the attention and support of most of Europe," writes David Jenkins (2024). Greece independence was later recognized after the decisive 1827 Naval Battle of Navarino, where a Turkish fleet three times larger than the Greek allies' fleet from Britain, France and Russia lost 70 of 78 ships to superior ship size and cannon power (Abshire 1959).

Replica Of A Sailing Ship In Thessaloniki's Harbor, Which Carries Tourists These Days. Photo Taken By The Author.

The evolution from an autonomous Greece to an independent one in 1832 would not quell the country's hostility toward their former oppressors, coupled with a desire to acquire nearby lands traditionally part of ancient Greece, from Epirus in the Northwest to Thrace in the Northeast. The differences in culture between the Greeks and Turks made this conflict an ethno-religious battle, and not merely one based on political differences or territorial disputes.

Map Of Greece And Turkey Shortly After World War I. Photo Taken By The Author.

Greece won territory from the Ottoman Empire in the First Balkan and Second Balkan Wars, but the Greco-Turkish War from 1919 to 1922 in the wake of World War I was a disastrous setback. The postwar treaty was designed to partition the Ottoman Empire, and enabled Greece to claim the Western Turkish Coastal City of Smyrna (now Izmir) where many ethnic Greeks and Armenians lived. Many stories of Greek atrocities toward Muslims motivated the new Turkish military under Kemal at-a-Turk to repulse the Greek armies. The war delved into brutality by both sides.

Photo Of A Male Descendant Of Pontic Greeks At A Rally, With The Author. Photo Taken By Asher Tures.

After a series of cruel clashes, a new Treaty of Lausanne was signed, forcing up to 1.5 million Greeks to be expelled from Turkey to Greece, and half-a-million Turks to leave Greece for the new Turkish Republic. "The war resulted in the largest compulsory population exchange in history up to that time (2 million people) and helped define the concept of ethnic conflict," Kinley (2019) wrote.

Photo Of A Female Descendant Of Pontic Greeks At A Rally, With The Author. Photo Taken By Asher Tures.

Not only did the country lose territory to the new country of Turkey, but ethnic Greeks in the Ponthic area of Anatolia were subjected to ethnic cleansing, with the massacred numbering over 350,000 (Lefteris 2020). Indeed, while in Athens, I witnessed an extensive political rally with attendees wearing the black costumes of those Greek people whose settlements could be found along the Black Sea.

"The exchange solidified the idea of both Greece and Turkey as homogenous nation-states," Kinley (2019) adds. "Although there were still minority communities left out of the exchange, Greece essentially became an Orthodox Christian nation, whereas Turkey became a Muslim Republic. This war and the concept of religious homogeneity still causes tensions between the two countries today."

A Pontic Greek Massacre Rally Drew Thousands To Athens. Photo Taken By The Author.

Additional clashes between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, the latter backed by Turkish paratroopers in 1974, kept ethnic tensions high. In 1996, only some intense negotiations by the United States could keep the Greeks and Turks from fighting over the island of Imia in the Aegean Sea, known as Kardak by the Turks, off the coast of Turkey, despite the two nations being allies of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

In my travels to Turkey, on the anniversary of World War I, I heard more of their side of those on the other side of the Aegean Sea. They expressed their outrage at what they called anti-Turk propaganda from Greece, and emphasized actions done by those abroad to ethnic Turks. It is clear that the bitterness of the prior conflict will keep tensions in the region simmering, and could boil over until a full effort at addressing the killings of the past takes place. It was clear that this conflict

is more rooted in hatred for past atrocities than the drawing of the borders or old territorial claims.

Photo Of An Athenian Signpost. Taken By The Author.

The attitude of many Greeks and Turks may well be similar to what I experienced at a University in Prilep, Macedonia. I saw an artwork depicting Macedonian men, women and children, hanging from trees. I was told it was a massacre perpetrated by the Turks during the rule by the Ottoman Empire. I pointed out that during that week, there was a large Macedonian cultural festival, with Turkish dancers featured prominently. "We forgive," a university official responded. "But we never forget."

Section 3: Political Culture and Civil Society

3.1: NGO & Civil Society Activity

Ingram (2020) from the Brookings Institute defines civil society as comprising "organizations that are not associated with the government—including schools and universities, advocacy groups, professional associations, churches and cultural institutions (business sometimes is covered by the term civil society and sometimes not)."

A Greek University In Athens. Photo Taken By The Author.

Many actors in civil society are nongovernmental organizations or NGOs. Harvard Law School (2022) defines NGOs as "Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are typically mission-driven advocacy or service organizations in

the nonprofit sector....What began as consultancies with selected NGOs has evolved into a system of governmental and intergovernmental partnerships."

Ingram (2020) sees civil society as the key ingredient for a country's development. "Civil society organizations play multiple roles," he writes. "They are an important source of information for both citizens and government. They monitor government policies and actions and hold government accountable. They engage in advocacy and offer alternative policies for government, the private sector, and other institutions. They deliver services, especially to the poor and underserved. They defend citizen rights and work to change and uphold social norms and behaviors."

When the people mobilized, and united with disaffected elites to bring down the Greek military dictatorship in 1974, civil society and NGOs in the country were considered quite strong. That changed in the 1980s as cynicism and distrust of democratic politicians crept into the mindset of the people (Sotiropoulos 2004). But as Dimitri A. Sotiropoulos observes for The Hellenic Observatory of The European Institute, "First, some formal voluntary associations have been quite strong, and civil society in contemporary Greece is not as uniformly weak as it is generally thought to be. And second, in addition to formal civil society associations, of which there are comparatively fewer in Greece than in other EU countries, there is an informal civil society. This emanates from a flourishing, albeit informal and thus not officially registered,

social mobilization which substitutes for the usual, formal civil society found in modern Western societies."

Speaker At A Greek Rally Outside The Hellenic Parliament. Photo Taken By The Author.

But just as formal Greek political institutions were challenged by cynicism 40 years ago, contemporary civil society and NGOs face pressure on three fronts: (1) the economy, (2) immigration, and (3) the environment.

The financial crisis in Greece not only assaulted the economy of Greece, but also assailed its formal political

institutions. This gave the opportunity for the country's non-governmental organizations to step in and fill the void.

Tzifakis, Petropoulos and Huliaras (2017) contend "A number of empirical studies have shown that a financial crisis can inflict a serious damage on the nonprofit sector—mainly through a sharp decline in revenues. However, the Greek case shows that a crisis can also have some positive effects on NGOs: many nonprofits introduced reforms that increased efficiency, the number of volunteers reached record levels, and there was a spectacular rise in funding by private philanthropic foundations." The authors contend that this can create dependency issues, as such groups are less likely to be citizen-led, or citizen-directed.

Photo Of A Poor Neighborhood On A Hillside In Northern Greece. Photo Taken By The Author.

In Greece, NGOs and civil society seeking economic reform need help from the European Union. The Global Call to Action Against Poverty (n.d.) reports "The Hellenic Platform

for Development, an umbrella-organization that operates as a 'national platform,' leads a network of Greek Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) active in the fields of sustainable development education, humanitarian aid, global citizenship action and developmental social support. Its current members are supported by a large segment of the Greek society and offer their programs nationwide as well as in many developing countries." But the E.U. often has its other issues to contend with, from challenges coming from member states, and external threats from Russia.

Just as the economic crises hit Greece suddenly, so too did the immigration crisis of 2015, as hundreds of desperate migrants from the Middle East began arriving on the Dodecanese Islands in the Aegean Sea, fleeing war and economic poverty. "In 2015, about 500,000 asylum seekers entered the EU through that island alone. This represents about half the overall sea arrivals in the EU," report Skleparis and Armakolas (2016).

Photo of the Aegean Sea From The Thessaloniki Harbor. Photo By The Author.

According to Skleparis and Armakolas (2016). "Greece was unprepared and unable to handle this massive wave of migrants. "The political and financial constraints after five years of austerity measures had severely limited the Greek state's ability to react effectively and on time. Moreover, the new Greek government elected in January 2015 underestimated the severity of the humanitarian crisis and failed to prepare an adequate response despite the clear signs that 2015 would become a year of mass irregular movement of people into the EU. Furthermore, for a month prior to the September 20, 2015, national elections – a key period in terms of the developing situation on the islands – a caretaker government was in place, which was unable to initiate an emergency response."

Moreover, international NGOs faced their own inability to solve the migration problem. Skleparis and Armakolas (2016)

add "International NGOs were also slow to realize that Greece was in need of humanitarian assistance, mainly due to the location of the humanitarian crisis. They assumed that an EU Member State such as Greece would be able to respond on its own. Most international NGOs were not formally registered in Greece, which led to delays in their mobilization. When these organizations arrived on the ground, they faced severe bureaucratic obstacles, such as tight employment and visa regulations, which prevented them from deploying, experienced aid workers. Financial (capital) controls in Greece also hampered their ability initially to mobilize resources. Finally, major Greek NGOs were also slow to respond to the humanitarian crisis, mainly due to their commitments to ongoing aid programs in mainland Greece. Supporting Greek nationals affected by the economic crisis limited their capacity, both in terms of funding and staff, to scale up their operations on the islands."

The environment represents another sector where NGOs have sought to solve problems, only to face challenges from the economic crisis of 2008. An early ENGO (environmental NGO), the Hellenic Society for the Protection of Nature began as early as the 1950s, while the movement joined the global awareness and desire for change in the 1970s, coinciding with the return of democracy. Botetzagias and Koutiva (2015) report that due to a slow drying up of funds from businesses, foundations, businesses and the state, such ENGOs are under greater pressure to seek funds from individual members. And

in times of economic hardship, donations to environmental groups suffer.

Thermoelectric Coal Power Plant Amyntaio in Greece, Which Is Set To Close. Photo By The Author.

Groups on the political left understood the role that could be played by a more mobilized civil society translating assistance into political action. Tsakatika and Elftheriou (2013) reveal that the Communist Party of Greece (KKE) and the SYRIZA Party (Coalition of the Radical Left) tried to connect to trade unions and the new social movements, with the latter being more successful in such efforts.

Solar Panels In Central Greece Dot The Landscape. Photo By The Author.

Crises like the ones Greece suffered at the end of the 2000s involve having an informal civil society pick up the slack for the decline of formal organizations, until the latter can be put back together again, just as church soup kitchens played a bigger role during the American Great Depression, until the New Deal could commence. It was the same in Greece, at first. "The developments that have taken place in Greek civil society during the crisis are bound by existing socioeconomic conditions," writes Simiti (2015). "Indeed, the organisational forms and repertoires of collective action that have prevailed in Greek civil society during the crisis correspond to ones that usually emerge in periods of severe economic crises. A shift from formal to informal associational repertoires in Greek civil society has been recorded, while the density of civil society has increased. "

But Simiti (2015) is concerned that something is different,

a problem which could threaten the entire Greek political system. When more join a group, that does not mean group effectiveness. "However, these developments do not signal the growing strength of civil society. During the crisis, the reduced capacity of the state to provide the basic rights of citizens has led to a rapid deterioration in the quality of citizenship. In turn, social inequality and exclusion have undermined the strength of civil society. As the Greek case illustrates, increased associationism is a necessary precondition for a strong civil society, although during periods of severe economic and political crises it may not be sufficient (Simiti 2015)."

3.2: Ethnic and Religious Identities

There is a group that does not seem to be struggling so much in Greek society: the far-right. Such an ideology hypes nationalism with what they consider traditional Greek ethnicity and religion, using patriotic appeals to garner support. This was exacerbated not just during the economic crisis, but also with waves of immigration, used by the right to accuse the government of diluting a "pure" Greece with foreigners.

Some Of Those At The Pontic Greek Massacre Commemoration Gave Some Strong Right-Wing Messages At The Rally. Photo By The Author.

Many assumed that with the demise of the ultra-right "Golden Dawn" Party that those accused of being pro-Fascist would be in decline. Indeed, the organization is banned, and some of its members were jailed (Al-Jazeera 2023). Yet in the 2023 election, three far-right parties won seats, the only country in Europe where this happened, according to Al-Jazeera (2023). Perrier (2024) also reports that the right wing has gone "mainstream," getting plenty of coverage by media sources with deep pockets. Perrier notes that there's a strong anti-fascist element in cities like Athens, but Greeks may not realize how powerful those forces on the right really are.

3.3: Underrepresented Identities

Despite evidence of many emigrations to ancient Greece, the subject of those in Greece different from the dominant ethnic group is often an awkward one. This is partially from the debate over Greek origins, and also over the history of foreign occupation (Ottoman Empire) and clashes emanating from Greek neighbors in Balkan Wars (Turkey, Italy through Albania, Bulgaria, etc.).

"National and ethnic identities have for long been in the core of political tensions and even military conflicts within Greece and between Greece and its neighbours," Myria Georgiou (2004) writes. "The concept of ethnic minority still remains a taboo and unacceptable concept for many policy makers, politicians and for the majority of the mainstream media; it is considered as a threatening political/propaganda concept that challenges, or even threatens the national interests and boundaries of Greece." She notes that there are currently even using phrases like ethnic minorities is a touchy subjection "where the ideology of national homogeneity is still dominant."

The Fulbright Foundation Greece (2024) reports "Foreigners are generally welcome, but the recent and sudden influx of immigrants has sometimes led to resentment. Due to the homogeneity of Greece, there are no big communities that represent diverse ethnic groups, except for immigrants and refugees. People from Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia are concentrated around Omonia and Patission, especially Plateia Victorias. There are numerous expatriate groups on Facebook and a growing Chinatown near Syntagma, as well as a Filipino community in Ambelokipi."

This foundation also reports that in addition to ethnic and religious minorities, there is recognition of a growing LGBTQ+ population. "Greece is the birthplace of Eros and of

the poet Sappho. Members of the Greek LGBT+ community frequently appear on mainstream television and several celebrities have self-identified as members. LGBT+ communities in the larger cities of Athens and Thessaloniki have become quite vocal and active (Fulbright Foundation Greece 2024)."

One Of Many LGBTQ+ Pride Flags In Downtown Athens. Picture Taken By The Author.

3.4: Political Polling

Like many European countries, Greece's political system is extensively polled. The personal preferences of political parties are tracked over time, as Politico (2024) shows, in cases for more than 10 parties before and after the 2023 elections.

https://www.politico.eu/europe-poll-of-polls/greece/
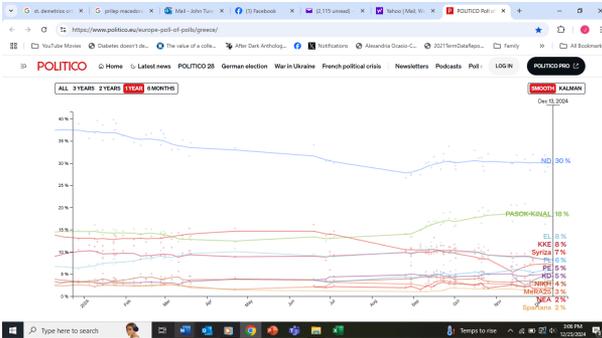
Greece also has the power of referendum, where the people can vote on some high-profile issues, like the 1974 decision of the Greeks to reject the monarchy in favor of a republic by a wide margin (Roberts, 1974) after the military regime fell. Traynor, Hooper and Smith (2015) report on the results of the 2015 referendum, and a big no vote on the country remaining in the Eurozone's single currency, at the expense of tax increases and spending cuts.

3.5: Governance

Freedom House's (2024) report on Greece can be summarized by this quote. "Greece's parliamentary democracy features vigorous competition between political parties, and civil liberties are largely upheld. Ongoing concerns include corruption, government surveillance, discrimination against immigrants and religious and ethnic minority groups, and poor conditions for irregular migrants and asylum seekers." The country's Freedom House score of 85/100 makes it a solid democracy, with positive scores for political rights, 35/40 (the ability to run for office, form political parties, etc.) and civil liberties (freedom of speech, the press, religion, etc.). Their score is a tiny decline from 88/100 in 2020, which is something to note.

https://freedomhouse.org/country/greece/freedom-world/2024
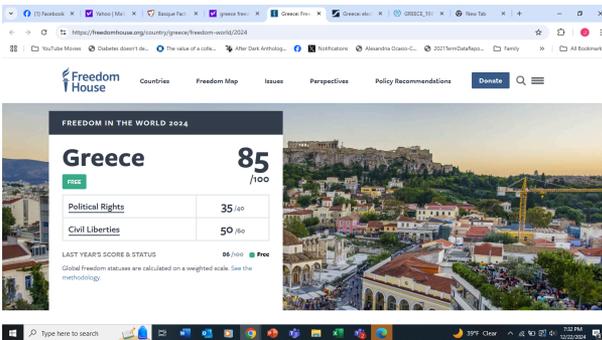
Amnesty International (2024) documents the situation for Greek refugees, including the closure of migrant camps, and challenges to protests by Greek citizens. According to their

report for 2024, "Reports of unlawful use of force in the policing of demonstrations persisted. Survivors of a shipwreck in which more than 600 people died blamed the Greek authorities for causing the incident. Human rights defenders continued to face criminalization for their work with refugees and migrants. An investigation by Greece's data protection authority identified 88 individuals as targets of Predator spyware. Violations of the rights of conscientious objectors to military service persisted. Destructive wildfires resulted in the loss of lives and natural habitat amid concerns at the failure of the firefighting system."

Section 4: Political Participation

In 1981, the left-of-center PASOK (Panhellenic Socialist Movement) party won a landslide, one of the biggest elections since the end of the military dictatorship from 1967-1974 (Clogg 1982). The party boosted its fortunes by nearly doubling its prior election showing (from 25.34 percent to 48.0 percent) and boosting its share of parliament from just under 100 MPs to a strong majority of 172 (to the right-of-center New Democracy (ND) which fell 56 seats to 115 MPs).

The Communist Party of Greece managed 10.94 percent, while no other party got more than two percent of the vote. PASOK succeeded by shedding its class-based rhetoric in favor of more moderate-sounding proposals (Clogg 1982).

http://archive.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/arc/GREECE_1981_E.PDF

This two-party system of the postwar dictatorship persisted for a number of subsequent elections until the Greek financial crisis during the Great Recession. Now new parties have emerged that threaten the two-party system of the 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s (Politico 2024).

The fortunes of parties are not the only change since the end of military rule. Women won the right to vote in 1952 (Efthyvoulou, Kammas, and Sarantides 2020). Papageorge-Limberes (1988) found that after the military dictatorship ended, more opportunities opened up for Greek women. Issues pushed for include civil marriage, an abolition of the dowry system, making divorce easier.

A Sign From An Athens Highway About Women In Politics. Photo By The Author.

Women with more education adopted more modern approaches to politics, which include more political engagement, while women who are older or had more kids hew to a more traditional role for women, reminiscent of pre-democratic Greece (Papageorge-Limberes 1988). Efthyvoulou, Kammas, and Sarantides (2020) find that if there is a gender voting gap, it is only seen in Thessaloniki, and only related to whether women are in the labor force or not; those not working are more likely to vote conservative.

Sophocleous, Anastasiadou, Masouras, and Apostolopoulos (2023) claim that "poll results may tell us that the motives of the Greek voters are mainly result of their personal perceptions, rather than exogenous factors. In this respect, the political parties, could explode the particular fact, by giving emphasis to element such as the Integrity and the

political background of their candidates, which appear to be more influential upon voters' perceptions."

Greeks Line Up At A Political Event In Athens. Photo Taken By The Author.

In fact, dismay with Greek politics has also taken its toll on voter turnout. From those heady days of 1981 with an electoral turnout of more than 80 percent declined to barely above 50 percent in 2024 for the European elections (Efstathiou 2024). Some blamed the heat wave of 2024, but others pointed to electoral fatigue and disaffection with existing political parties (Efstathiou 2024).
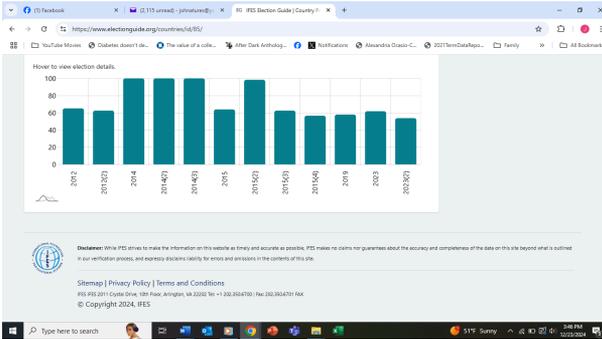
Figure 4.1 – Turnout in Greek elections has declined over the last decade (https://www.electionguide.org/countries/id/85/)

4.1: Political Parties

New Democracy on the right and PASOK on the left have been the two dominant parties since the mid-1970s when the Greek military exited power. The New Democracy Party is a Christian Democratic-style right-of-center party that supports more nationalism, a greater role for the church doctrine in politics, and a private sector with less interference from government regulations.

"In the parliamentary elections of 2023, the ruling New Democracy (ND) party of prime minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis was re-elected triumphantly," Chryssogelos (2024) writes.

"ND's victory marks an unprecedented moment of centre-right dominance in Greece since 1974 and goes against the trend of the so-called 'crisis of the centre-right' elsewhere in Europe.... [The] ND's strategy under Mitsotakis has been typical of the winning formula of other centre-right parties in Europe in previous decades. Yet, that this formula is now so successful in Greece owes much to the country's post-crisis context, out of which the Mitsotakis leadership emerged." The ND was also boosted by economic growth and effective management of the COVID-19 pandemic, while just as many being opposed by a left-wing fragmented among several parties. The party is now down to 30% support, a sizeable drop-off from their 2023 success.

https://www.statista.com/statistics/1395438/greece-election-parliament/

PASOK or the Panhellenic Social Movement, is Greece's center-left party, similar to the Social-Democratic Parties of Germany and Italy of the Socialist Party of France, or the Labour Party of Britain. Formed after the Greek military coup,

the party, PASOK embraced a strong version of socialism which called for strong government regulations and a possible abandonment of Western military alliances like NATO (Britannica n.d.). But to win power as they did in the 1981 elections, and subsequent ballot contests, PASOK, like other European Socialist parties, had to moderate their views. PASOK won several elections until the Greek financial crisis, when they had to capitulate to European Union demands on the bailout package, agreeing to an economic austerity program that raised taxes and cut spending in 2010 (Britannica n.d.). PASOK now struggles to regain its former glory; it is now currently polling at 18% (Politico 2024) good enough for second place in Greece.

SYRIZA, originally wedged itself between PASOK on the Center-Left and the Communist Party of Greece on the extreme left-wing acting as though the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact never collapsed. A good analogy for this party is the American Progressive Party (Dimitrovski 2020), or France's current Left parties, or the Party of Democratic Socialism in Germany. Emboldened by the drop in support for PASOK, SYRIZA prevailed in 2015, led by the bold Alexis Tsipras, who promised an end to austerity packages. Months later, Tsipras was forced to do an about-face, and accept another bailout package. The party was crushed in 2023 election, which led to Tsipras and in-fighting over the future direction of the party. Currently, the party has fallen into single digits for support (Politico 2024).

KKE is the Communist Party of Greece. The party's legacy comes from its resistance to Nazi Germany, and its battles with the post-WWII regime supported by Britain and America. The party has hovered in support between 5% and 10%. When walking about Thessaloniki and Athens, it was the easiest to find their literature and stickers, calling for rallies. Currently the party support is at 8%, one percentage point better than SYRIZA.

Photo of a KKE Leaflet Taken By The Author.

A slew of right-wing parties have emerged in Greece, the result of economic and migration crises, emanating from the Middle East. Parties on the extreme right won 12 percent of the vote, with the newly formed nationalist group "The Spartans," which garnered 12 seats (Smith). They were supported by former members of Golden Dawn, the neo-Nazi organization now banned in Greece. We saw evidence of this

group at the Ponthos Rally in Athens, seeking to whip up nativist support. This group resembles the hard right parties emerging across Europe in Scandinavia, Germany, France, and Spain (Smith 2023). Other parties of the far right, like Greek Solution and the Patriotic Movement, which earned between 3.5 percent and 4.5 percent of the vote (Smith 2023).

Members Of The Sparta Party At A Rally Criticizing Turkey. Photo Taken By The Author.

Other parties exist in Greece, now that the country has fragmented from a relatively stable post-1974 two-party system to a multiparty system. It remains to be seen whether such a system persists, or if these parties can form alliances and morph into stable coalitions.

4.2: Interest Groups

Interest groups, noted in the civil society section, are non-governmental groups that perform vital roles in the economic sector, but also lobby the political system on matters of policy. Of their function and importance, Rossetos Fakiolas (1987) writes "As in other Western European political systems, there are thousands of interest groups in Greece, performing different roles and having varying relationships with the institutional structures of the State. The groups inevitably cover a wide range of the interests, from strictly economic to cultural, educational, ethnic, religious, and conservationist. The negative effects of interest groups in creating rigidities in the economic and social system have been more than offset by their stabilising influence in a society characterised by a succession of the abnormal political, economic and social developments in the last 50 years."

Greek interest groups, like the political parties, were once more centralized, but are becoming more spread across multiple groups. For the business sector, there is the SEV, or Hellenic Federation of Enterprises. SEV (n.d.) lists almost 50 different business associations under their umbrella organization. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Hellenic Republic (2022) lists even more groups. The function of these groups is to advance their businesses, influence government to deregulate their industries, open foreign markets to their products, and provide economic advice to government." The

historic role of the SEV is not without controversy. While under the Greek military junta, the business groups did support liberalization, but it was more about repairing ties with the European Economic Community (EEC) and supporting an authoritarian transition to electoral politics, rather than a push for a strong democracy, according to Tsakas (2018).

As for workers' organizations "Trade unions were officially inactive during the military dictatorship (1967–1974), although many unionists participated actively in the struggles for the restoration of democracy," writes Giorgos Bythimitris (2021). He adds that power to unions did not return until the election of PASOK's Andres Papandreou in 1981, a move that paid dividends for the unions when the Socialists prevailed. "The law on trade unions updated in 1982, which laid the groundwork for proportional representation, marked the beginning of a very active period – by Greek standards – for trade unions, who were involved in policy-making and social dialogue. However, close links between the (governing) parties and trade unions was already evident at that time, subsequently resulting in a system of 'give and take'" Additionally "the enlargement of the Greek public sector was also an outcome of the new roles and responsibilities that the Greek state assumed within a more complex and interconnected international environment in the last quarter of the twentieth century. Suffice to say that, even at its peak,

average employment in the Greek public sector was close to the EU15 average (Bythimitris 2021)."

https://codera.co.za/union-density/

Source: ILO, latest year for each country. Trade union density rate conveys the number of union members who are employees as a percentage of the total number of employees.
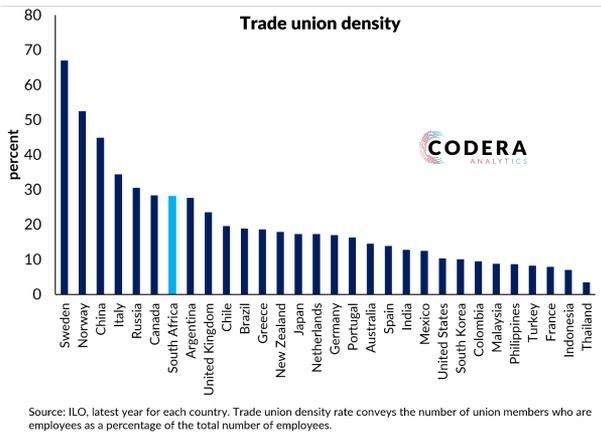
The unions in Greece organized into a hierarchical structure. "In terms of trade union structure, Greek law makes provision for three different levels: a) First-level trade unions: these unions are legally autonomous and their activities are generally limited to a particular region or business. They may be part of a national sectoral trade union or regional trade union confederation (second-level). b) Second-level trade unions: these are either national industrial or occupational confederations (sectoral trade unions such as GENOP-DEI) or regional organisations, such as the Centre of Athens Labour Unions (EKA). c) Third-level trade unions: national trade union confederations, such as GSEE and ADEDY, made up of second-level trade unions (Bythimitris 2021)."

Further advances were made in collective bargaining and flexible employment contracts. But the power of the unions was buffeted by the Great Recession economic crisis, with a downturn that hurt workers, as well as budget cuts that affected public sector employment. Greek unemployment hovers around 15.6 percent, with women facing more problems (19 percent jobless) than even men in Greece (12 percent unemployment), according to Bythimitris (2021). This decline of the unions seems to go hand-in-hand with the troubles facing the parties of the Left.

Economically Hard-Hit Section of Thessaloniki. Photo Taken By The Author.

Many farmers in Greek agriculture have joined Agricultural cooperatives (AC), created to offset some of the challenges from economic (large farm and agribusiness competition, reduced access to credit, downturns that dry up demand) and environmental problems (climate changes and disaster),

covering business functions ranging from distribution, processing, and marketing, as well as manufacturing (Kalogiannidis, Karafolas, and Chatzitheodoridis 2024).

As Patronis and Mavreas (2004) report, the agricultural sector has been the beneficiary of "the large extension of agricultural credit, as well as the constantly increasing involvement of the government and banks in their internal affairs." Like other farmers, there is a desire for protection from international competition; there are also concerns over being co-opted by political parties.

Greek Farms In The Countryside. Photo Taken By The Author.

Currently, the country's agricultural interest group system of cooperatives is struggling. "According to the latest update of the National Register of Agricultural Cooperatives in 2023, there are 1,056 collective entities listed – perhaps more than any other European Union member-state – but they are

estimated to produce the lowest value per cooperative," writes Dimitra Manifava (2024). "Not to mention their outstanding debts, which amounted to around 2.5 billion euros a few years ago. For example, according to the latest data available from Eurostat (referring to the year 2020), only 0.7% of farm owners in Greece had a full agricultural education – in the sense that after compulsory schooling they attended a training program of at least two years and studied a subject related to the primary sector at a higher level. This is the lowest percentage in the EU, with Greece coming at a par with Romania."

Comparative politics professors identified "new social movements" to describe the era beyond World War II, for what they call modernism, based upon traditional economics and "kitchen table issues," due to voter concerns of the time frame after The Great Depression and World War II, where shortages were of paramount concern. Such motiving issues persisted throughout the 1950s and into the early 1960s. But a new generation of voters born after the 1930s and 1940s, did not know such trying economic times. Raised in the era of post-WWII prosperity, such voters became more obsessed with non-economic issues, like environmentalism, feminism, religious concerns, etc. Most scholars identify this era of "post-modern" to emerge in the late 1960s, 1970s and beyond, the very time frame where the military regime was forced from power.

In writing about the new social movements of the post-modern era, Marilena Simitis (2002) contends "[T]he Greek

case studies represent significant variations in regard to the 'ideal type' of new social movements as depicted in the literature. These differences originate to a certain degree from Greek new social movements' different cultural and political environment. The Greek social movements had to face a strong statocratic and partocratic society, where there was lack of an autonomous social movement sector. This led to the formation of semi-autonomous, party-affiliated social movement organisations. Moreover, the Greek political culture has been rooted on two different geopolitical visions. The one has pointed to a more traditionally oriented, inward looking political orientation hostile to Western values and the institutional arrangements of modernity. The other has been a modernising, outward looking orientation, adopting Western institutions and values."
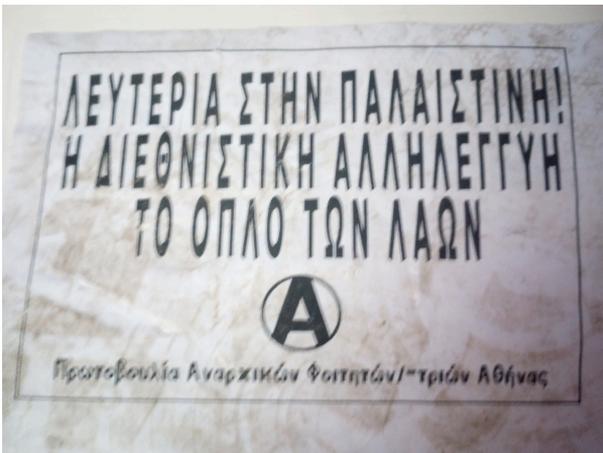
Photo from a Leftist Rally In Greece. Taken By The Author.

Indeed, with the economic collapse of the late 2000s, along with the bailout battles, it seems that modernism of old has returned to Greek politics. Of Greece and new social movements, Themelis (2015) penned this: "In any case, disappointment with politics, brutal austerity and a dysfunctional democracy do not mean lack of hope. By contrast the social movements that have been emerging and solidifying across Greece, the experimentation with new and old forms of politics, such as the squares movement and the rise of Syriza in national and international prominence, these are serious reasons to be optimistic."

Battles over economics were now given an international dimension, as Greeks disagreed over whether to accept international bailouts. The spread of immigrants to the shores of Greece and its islands created a new social movement that added a new front: support of helping these refugees or oppose their entrance on nationalist grounds.

Themelis (2015) adds "The characteristics of the class struggle will be more accentuated the longer the crisis endures and the further it deepens. There are strong class forces that will eventually seek to reconcile the material with the symbolic fields....The plethora of social movements in this small part of Europe are signalling that, at least for now, a new form of politics, which is more imaginative, daring and democratic, is being created. If this politics is to lead to much-needed victories in the material and the symbolic fields, it will have to fight on the terrain of class struggle. This is where hope is

to be found. But this kind of hope is part of the long process of liberation from an exploitative system that urgently needs replacing and not merely re-decorating."

4.3: Electoral Systems

Who gets to vote? According to the Hellenic Parliament (n.d.), the rules show "The electorate consists of all Greek citizens who have the right to vote. This right is granted to individuals who are at least 18 years of age, or shall turn 18 on the year of the election, have the capacity for legal act and are not the subject of an irrevocable criminal conviction for felonies listed under article 51 par. 3 of the Constitution. Eligible electors must be registered in the electoral roll to exercise their voting right." The rules also state that immigrants legally residing in Greece may vote in European Parliament elections (if a member of another EU state) and municipal elections, under certain circumstances.

The Greek Constitution also provides several measures to ensure a more direct form of democracy, according to the Hellenic Parliament (n.d.). This varies from the principle that protects voters from indiscriminate exclusion, a 1 citizen 1 vote principle, secrecy, and compulsory participation. At one point, there were sanctions for not voting, though many of these more severe punishments have been removed in the last two decades. Moreover, the rules for absentee ballots have also changed, allowing more flexibility. The Greek Constitution

also rejects the principle of indirect voting, whereby some unelected "electors" cast the real ballot, or legislators at the local level picking the upper chamber of the national legislature, as you see in other countries.
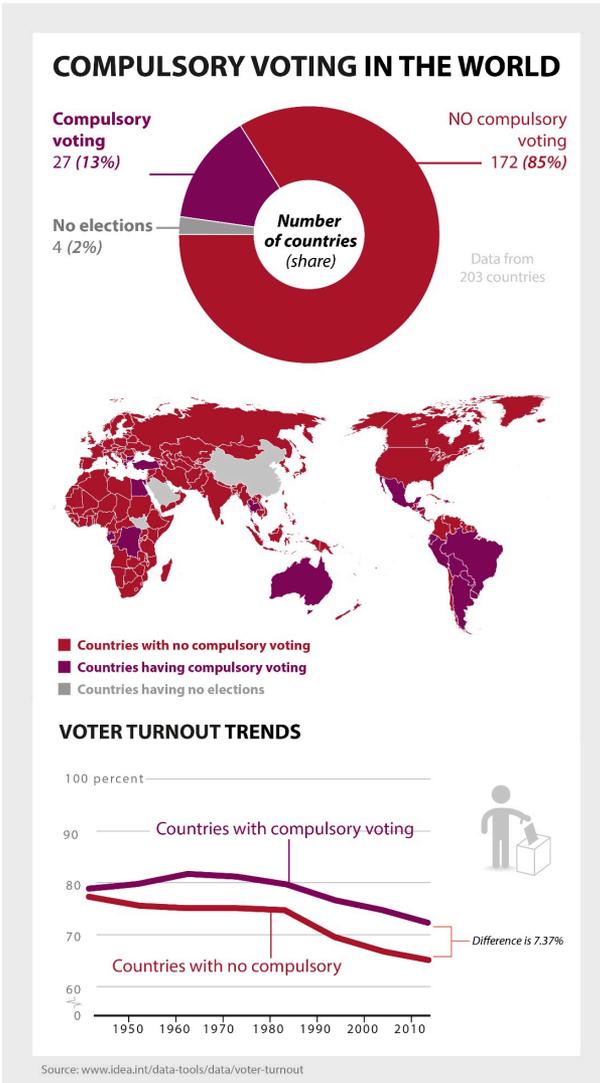
COMPULSORY VOTING IN THE WORLD

Compulsory voting
27 *(13%)*

NO compulsory voting
172 *(85%)*

No elections
4 *(2%)*

Number of countries (share)

Data from 203 countries

■ **Countries with no compulsory voting**
■ **Countries having compulsory voting**
■ **Countries having no elections**

VOTER TURNOUT TRENDS

100 percent

90

Countries with compulsory voting

80

70

Countries with no compulsory

Difference is 7.37%

60

0

1950   1960   1970   1980   1990   2000   2010

Source: www.idea.int/data-tools/data/voter-turnout

Figure 4.2 – Greece Is One Of The Few Countries In The World Where Voting Is Compulsory. (https://www.idea.int/data-tools/data/voter-turnout-database/compulsory-voting)

On the website for the Hellenic Parliament (n.d.), it outlines the power of political rights in Greece.

"A) Universal ballot- according to this principle, only citizens that do not fulfill the minimum requirements provided by the Constitution may be excluded from the electorate. The ordinary lawmaker may not provide additional reasons to deprive an individual of the right to vote;

B) Equal ballot- a principle of dual significance, i.e. i) one citizen -one vote and ii) all votes are legally equal;

C) Direct ballot- according to this principle, there should be nothing standing between the voter and the outcome of the electoral process. In other words, it is not possible for voters to choose electors to elect MPs;

D) Secret ballot- a principle to ensure that the intent of the voter shall not be made known to others;

E) Compulsory ballot- according to this principle the exercise of the voting right is compulsory. Let it be noted nonetheless that the Constitutional revision of 2001 removed a clause by virtue of which penal sanctions could possibly have been imposed by law on constituents who failed to take part in the electoral process;

F) Simultaneous conduct of elections throughout Greece- Revised article 51 par. 4 of the Constitution refers to possible exceptions to this rule in case constituents (voters) are abroad, as long as all votes are counted simultaneously and the outcome of the electoral process is publicized at the same time everywhere;

G) The principle of exercising one's voting right in person, making the physical presence of a voter imperative, currently

applies to voters who are on Greek territory. Revised article 51 par. 4 of the Constitution offers Greek voters abroad an option to exercise their right to vote in absentia 'through postal and/or other appropriate means'."
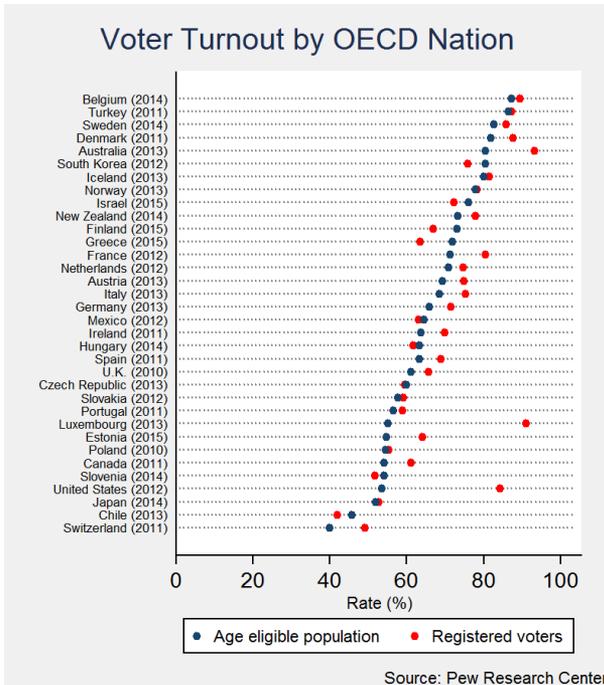

Figure 4.3 – Greek Voter Eligibilty And Registration, Compared To Other Countries. (https://www.shankerinstitute.org/blog/quick-look-us-voter-turnout-international-perspective)

The Hellenic Parliament (n.d.) also documents the fascinating evolution of elections in Greece since the country's

independence from the Ottoman Empire in the 1830s. Over time, the country has adopted some of the classic electoral systems from comparative politics: the majoritarian system as well as the proportional representation system.

[T]here are basically two electoral systems: the majoritarian system (which designates the candidate or political group (i.e. the party) who got the majority of the votes cast in one constituency) and the proportional representation system (which allocates seats per constituency proportionally to the votes each candidate or party received)," the Hellenic Parliament (n.d.) illustrates. "Both electoral systems have actually been used in Greece. In the period between 1844 and 1923 general elections were held on a majority election system (there were actually no ballot papers or lists but rather ballot boxes divided in two sections, one black for 'nays' and one white for 'yeahs', and voters cast little marbles made of iron on either side.) Both systems were also used in rotation from 1926 through 1956 when the proportional representation system was opted for, in its various forms."

500 BC – Pebble Voting

https://dataphys.org/list/visualizing-opinions-with-pebbles/
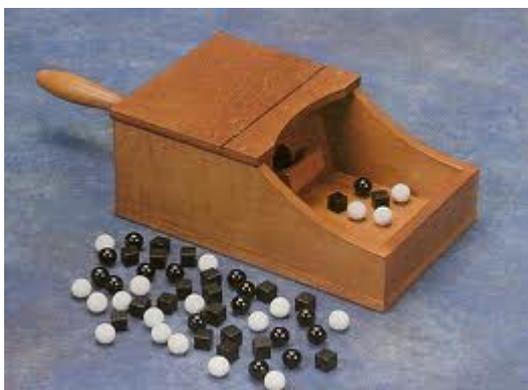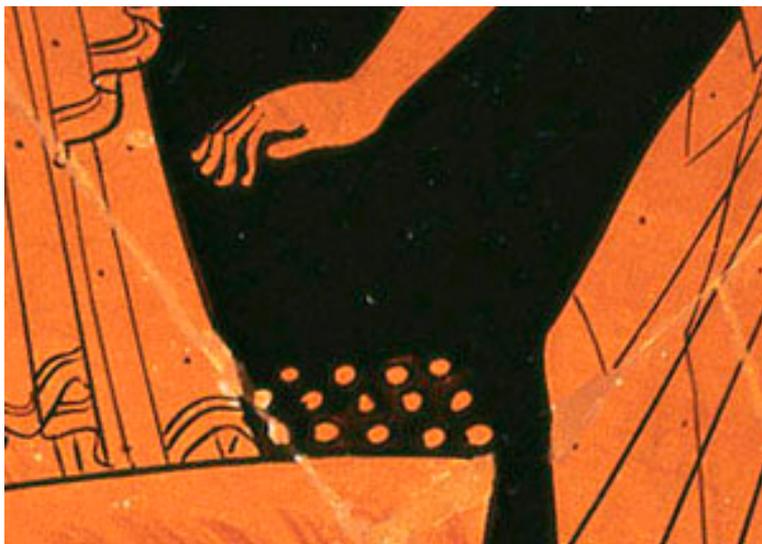
Sometimes, the system can seem a little complicated, not unlike some of the humorous complex electoral systems spoofed by characters in films from the comedic British group Monty Python. As the Hellenic Parliament (n.d.) posts on its site "Let it be noted that by virtue of art. 54 par. 1 of the revised Constitution, the electoral system is determined by law, i.e. a statute which applies only once the next elections have been held, unless provision is made for an immediate enforcement of the electoral law just as long as a 2/3 parliament majority adopts it." But what it means is that it takes a supermajority of parliament to agree to a significant change in how elections are conducted in Greece. Recently, this came into being as Syriza sought to institute a more proportional representation change that they hoped would augment their numbers.

For the most recent elections in 2023, *Reuters* documents how the election system works. "The repeat election will be held under a semi-proportional representation, or reinforced proportionality, with a sliding scale seat bonus." *Reuters* (2023) explains. "Parties need to secure at least 3% of the vote to enter parliament for a four-year term. Under the new system, the winning party is awarded a bonus of 20 to 50 seats. It receives 20 seats outright if it gets at least 25% of the vote, and can get up to 50 seats if it gets about 40% of the vote."

Like many European countries, Greece has a minimum threshold for parties to acquire office, to weed out more

extreme parties more intent on overthrowing the system. Without such a minimum, the once-small Nazi Party could cause havoc in Germany in its early stages. Also, like many EU countries, Greece also has a built-in system to reward winning parties, bonuses that make it easier to reach the threshold for a party to actually govern. When no majority is reached, coalitions must be formed, with the party receiving the largest plurality or share of the vote, getting the first opportunity to build such a coalition. If the 50%+1 threshold is not reached, a minority government typically made of the largest vote-getter runs a caretaker system until new elections can be called.

In conclusion, by studying both the history as well as the modern forms of Greek government, one can see that the country has adopted examples of authoritarianism as well as democracy, in addition to a myriad of forms of democracy. Despite declines in voting participation, the broad range of societal groups and parties reflects a dynamism that shows perhaps the only constancy in Greek politics is change.

Section 5: Greek Formal Political Institutions

For a country credited with inventing the term, and the practice, of democracy, Greece has a lot to celebrate. Emerging from the struggles of the economic collapse, Greece was ranked one of the most democratic countries in the world, earning

the rare distinction of a "full democracy" by *The Economist*. But despite the strong ranking, the measure of "functioning of government" has the country ranked behind many full democracies from Western Europe. In this chapter, we'll examine fully the country's institutions, what works, and what could work better.

5.1 Democracy

In *The Greek City Times*, Bill Kouras (2024) writes In the category of 'full democracy,' Greece has been upgraded by the 'Economist' magazine in its annual report, 'Democracy Index,' for 2023. This marks the first time since 2008 that Greece has achieved this ranking, placing the country one category above the United States and member states of the European Union, such as Italy, Belgium, and Portugal, which are considered 'flawed democracies.'"

2021
- **9+** (Norway, Finland, Sweden, Iceland, Denmark, Ireland)
- **8+** (Switzerland, Netherlands, Luxembourg, Germany, UK, Austria)
- **7+** (France, Spain, Estonia, Portugal, Czechia, Italy, Malta, Greece, Slovenia, Belgium, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia)
- **6+** (Poland, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Romania, Serbia, Albania, Moldova, North Macedonia, Montenegro)
- **5+** (Ukraine, Armenia, Georgia, Bosnia)
- **4+** (Turkey)
- **3+** (Russia)
- **2+** (Azerbaijan, Belarus)
- **No Data** (Kosovo)

https://mapsontheweb.zoom-maps.com/post/681957450674585600/democracy-index-scores-in-european-continent

That is quite an accomplishment for Greece, one of 167 countries examined, one of the eight percent considered a "full democracy." Additionally, nearly every continent experienced cases of setbacks when it came to institutions enabling people to rule. But *The Economist* lauded Greece making "postal voting" possible (Kouras 2024). This backs up what The Freedom House reports.
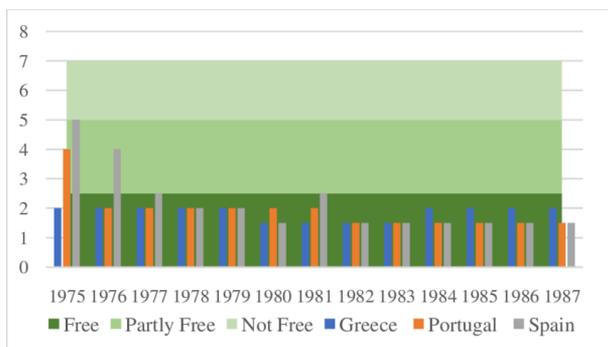
A closer look at that *Economist* ranking shows that Greece scored well on "electoral process and pluralism" as well as political culture and civil liberties. But when it came to "functioning of government," Greece's score left room for improvement, as the country ranked at or behind other European countries considered "flawed democracy" such as Belgium, Malta, Italy, and Portugal (Kouras 2024).

There's a battle among scholars of Ancient Greece about democracy, not about the meaning of the word, but whether it was a positive force or a pejorative term to mean "mob rule," by elites stung by being outvoted or having to deal with unruly subjects. Long before Aristotle wrote, there were already plenty of polities from Southern Europe to the modern

Middle East, some with a form of democracy, and others of a more authoritarian character, not unlike the Greek military rule of the 1960s and 1970s.

The Athenian Agora, The Mainstay Of Greek Democracy. Photo By The Author.

According to the BBC "The origin of the Athenian democracy of the fifth and fourth centuries can be traced back to Solon, who flourished in the years around 600 BC. Solon was a poet and a wise statesman but not – contrary to later myth – a democrat. He did not believe in people-power as such. But it was Solon's constitutional reform package that laid the basis on which democracy could be pioneered almost 100 years later by a progressive aristocrat called Cleisthenes (Cartledge 2011)."

Professor Paul Cartledge (2011) adds "Cleisthenes was the son of an Athenian, but the grandson and namesake of a foreign Greek tyrant, the ruler of Sicyon in the Peloponnese.

For a time he was also the brother-in-law of the Athenian tyrant, Peisistratus, who seized power three times before finally establishing a stable and apparently benevolent dictatorship. It was against the increasingly harsh rule of Peisistratus's eldest son that Cleisthenes championed a radical political reform movement which in 508/7 ushered in the Athenian democratic constitution."

"This *demokratia*, as it became known, was a direct democracy that gave political power to free male Athenian citizens rather than a ruling aristocratic class or dictator, which had largely been the norm in Athens for several hundred years before," Becky Little (2024) with the *History Channel* posts. "Athens' demokratia….lasted until 322 B.C." She also notes some of the scholarly debate about whether it was the first of its kind.

As the BBC reports "Finally, in 322, the kingdom of Macedon which had risen under Philip and his son Alexander the Great to become the suzerain of all Aegean Greece terminated one of the most successful experiments ever in citizen self-government. Democracy continued elsewhere in the Greek world to a limited extent – until the Romans extinguished it for good (Cartledge 2011)."

The question is whether modern Greek democracy can survive. *The Economist* gives the current system high marks, but economic, immigration, and environmental challenges threaten the regime. Parties on the far left and hard right want to take the country in a different direction. Cynicism seems to

be seeping in, given the lower political participation in recent years (a decline of at least ten percentage points (IFES 2024). Greece also had several cases where a dictatorship and a military takeover overthrew the cradle of democracy. The answer to the country's survival comes from the institutional capacity of the Greek political system.

Flier From A KKE Rally. Photo By The Author.

5.2 Legislative System

According to The Hellenic Parliament (2019), "The Parliament is the supreme democratic institution that represents the citizens through an elected body of Members of Parliament (MPs). In the current composition the Parliament consists of 300 MPs."

IFES (2024) provides the results of the 2023 election.

Currently, the right-of-center party New Democracy has 146 seats or 40.79% of the vote, while the leftist party Syriza has 20.07% of the vote, and 71 seats. PASOK (Movement for Change), the left-of-center party has 41 seats, because the party received 11.46% of the vote. The Communist Party of Greece (KKE) netted 26 seats by virtue of getting 7.23% of the vote. Finally, there's the Greek Solution (LE) which has 16 seats, and a vote share of 4.45%. New Democracy expanded their lead into the second round, with enough for a majority in parliament.

The Hellenic Parliament From Syntagma Square. Photo Taken By The Author.

Sometimes, a measure with widespread popular vote is like to pass with very little opposition. For example, the Hellenic Parliament passed a budget that increased defense spending. This is not a surprise for the conservative New Democracy party, but for the parties of the left, it is a surprise. Yet surveys

showed Greeks concerned about their security situation, especially in the Aegean Sea, perceiving a threat from a more bellicose Turkey (Michalopoulos 2024).

In other cases, parliaments face a contentious vote, requiring every vote just to pass. In March of 2024, the New Democracy party introduced a bill that would expand access by foreign private universities to enter the Greek education market, claiming that many Greek students leave the country to study abroad (Reuters 2024). Parties of the left strongly opposed the measure, claiming that such universities would drain the public colleges of students and revenue. But despite student protests, the measure passed on a vote along party lines, 159-141 (Reuters 2024).

Athens University. Photo Taken By The Author.

5.3 Executive System

When determining who is in charge of the executive branch, it is important to note that there are two offices. One is the President of Greece, currently Ekaterini Sakellaropoulou. She's the Chief of State, indirectly voted upon by the Hellenic Parliament. Greek Presidents can serve two five-year terms, and Sakellaropoulou has held office since 2020. A chief of state represents the country on the international stage, and officially confers the head of government position, or prime minister. Having a relatively non-partisan person in this position keeps the job from conferring too many benefits on a single party figure, an advantage that American and French Presidents get, as well as Turkey's new presidential system.

The Greek Prime Minister, the head of government, leads parliament on getting legislation passed. He or she is voted on by a majority of parliament. Currently, the Greek Prime Minister is Kyriakos Mitsotakis of the New Democracy party. Though the Greek President officially declares who the P.M. will be, that office is chosen by a majority of the Hellenic Parliament. If no party has a majority, a caretaker government is appointed until new elections can be called to see if the voters are ready to pick a new majority. As with other parliamentary systems, parties can also form coalitions to provide that majority. It usually involves a distribution of cabinet offices, the ones that run the agencies in the executive branch.

After the initial May 2023 election, no party received a majority (Liakos 2023). The three parties with the most votes (New Democracy, Syriza and PASOK) could not agree upon a coalition, so President Katerina Sakellaropoulou appointed a caretaker government to be led by Judge Ionnis Sarmas, which would last until new elections could be held to see if the voters would pick a party with a majority. Those elections were held in late June (Liakos 2023).

In Greece, like other parliamentary systems, the legislature can remove the prime minister with a vote of no confidence, if economic times are hard, or if a scandal emerges that would discredit the government. Certainly, the opposition has every incentive to see the government fall. Members of parliament who are part of the majority, or the majority party, have a tough decision to make: should they get rid of the prime minister and the cabinet members, knowing that they or their party could lose their majority, or their jobs, if they are in the ministry? On the other hand, without a change, the whole party could go down the drain in the next election, so some political calculations need to be made.

In March of 2024, a rare no-confidence vote was called for Prime Minister Mitsotakis regime, after a deadly February 2023 crash that killed nearly 60 Greeks, many of whom were students on Spring Break (*Associated Press* 2024). Their passenger train was accidentally put on the same track as a freight train, which caused the collision. Normally, a train crash wouldn't be enough to topple a government, but there were rumors of a government coverup into the train

investigation, one that a number of Greeks believe happened, and several parties of the left called for the motion (*Associated Press* 2024). However, the Hellenic Parliament voted 159-141 against removing the Prime Minister from the New Democracy party (*Associated Press* 2024).

Most parliamentary systems allow legislators to occupy the leadership of agencies in the executive branch bureaucracy. For the Greek governing system, there are 22 such agencies, a minister for each ministry. There are also three alternate ministers for three key agencies, and 36 deputy ministers (Newsroom 2024). In Greece, those are the Ministry of Economy and Finance, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of National Defense, Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs and Sports, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transportation, the Ministry of Environment and Energy, the Ministry Development, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Citizen Protection, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Asylum and Migration, Ministry of Social Cohesion and Family, Ministry of Rural Development and Food, the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Insular Policy, the Ministry of Tourism, the Ministry of Digital Governance, Ministry of Climate Crisis and Civil Protection, as well as positions like two Ministers of State, a pair of Deputy Ministers to the Prime Minister, and a government spokesperson (Newsroom 2024).

Each of these agencies is charged with administering the

laws passed by parliament, as well as imposing regulations upon the private sector. The agencies must also answer to parliament if there are investigations into government performance.

5.4 Judiciary

Parliament, as well as the Ministry of Justice, conduct investigations. But most subjects of criminal acts and civil liability between private actors, or a private actor and the state), are handled by the judicial branch.

In Greece, the court system is structured this way: "The constitutionally established Judicial system of Greece consists of two jurisdictions, the administrative and the civil/criminal, which are in turn organized in three instances: the courts of first instance (lower courts), the courts of appeals (higher, appellate courts) and the Supreme Courts (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2024)."

Greece's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2024) further explains how this system works. "The Council of State (Symvoulio tis Epikrateias), which is the Supreme Administrative Court of Greece, the Supreme Civil and Criminal Court (Areios Pagos), and the Court of Audit (Elegktiko Synedrio), which has jurisdiction on the audit of the expenditures of the State, local government agencies and other legal entities, are the country's highest courts. Greek judges belong to one of these two jurisdictions; thus, an administrative judge is not entitled to

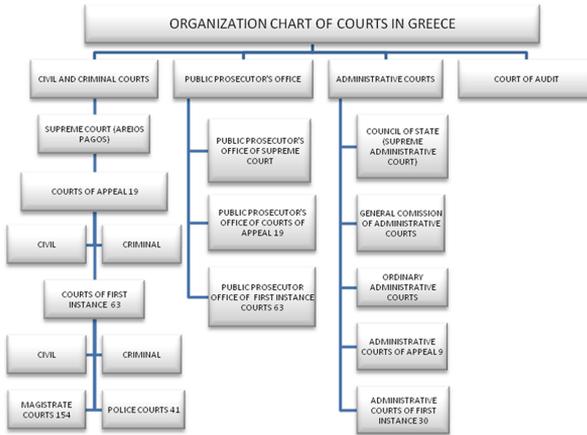judge a penal or civil case, while a civil judge is not entitled to judge an administrative case."

Figure 5.1 – Organization of the Greek Court System (https://iacajournal.org/articles/10.36745/ijca.489)

The Greek court system made international news during the trial of nine Egyptians when their fishing ship, loaded with hundreds of migrants, sank in the Mediterranean Sea (Beake and Kallergis 2024). The Egyptians were charged with human smuggling and could have spent the rest of their lives in prison (Beake and Kallergis 2024). Several survivors blamed the Greek Coast Guard for causing the accident, while the Coast Guard blamed the seaworthiness of the vessel, and evidence that the ship was overcrowded (Beake and Kallergis 2024). However, the Greek Court of the Port City of Kalamata ruled that because the ship sank in international waters, the judges lacked jurisdiction to hear the case (Beake and Kallergis 2024).

Though the ruling was anticlimactic, it shows the power and limits of the Greek court system.

Section 6: Greece's Political Economy

Imagine having layoffs at your company, making you worried that you're going to lose your job. You look into your mailbox, only to find out you've maxed out your credit card limit. That's what Greece experienced in 2009. The country spent a decade and a half trying to climb out of that hole, while juggling multiple crises from an explosion of migration and environmental struggles.

6.1 Greece's Recent Political Economy

As democracy returned to Greece, so did the country's commitment to Europeanization. The country joined the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1981, which facilitated international trade, as it is often referred to as "The Common Market" (Council on Foreign Relations 2024), The country entered the European Union in 1992 with other EEC members (PIIE 2020). As the single currency was adopted in 1999, Greece joined it two years later (Council on Foreign Relations 2024).

After the Great Recession of 2007-2008 with the negative growth and unemployment that struck the global economy, Greece's new PASOK government of George Papandreou came into office, only to learn that the debt was so much higher than previously thought. It turns out that the Greek debt was nearly 12.5 percent of the country's Gross Domestic Product (Sullivan 2018). That figure would be later revised even higher (PIIE 2020), a consequence of rampant spending and hosting the 2004 Olympic Games, one that some feel failed to provide a decent return on the country's cost of putting on the event. There are also charges of rampant corruption in the Greek system, as seen in this graphic.
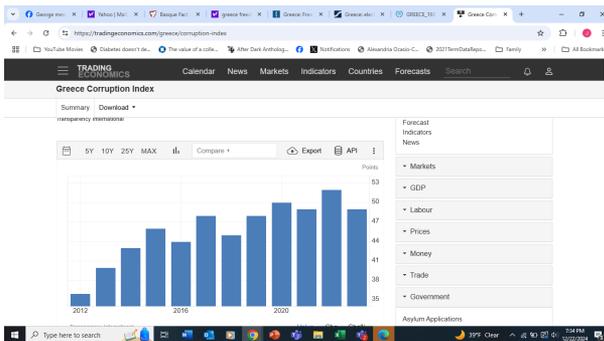
Figure 6.1 – Rising corruption in the Greek economic system (https://tradingeconomics.com/greece/corruption-index)

The economy collapsed and investors downgraded Greek bonds so badly that their value became an international joke (Council on Foreign Relations 2024). Prime Minister

Papandreou had to seek help from the European Union (EU), the European Central Bank (ECB), and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Aid came (126 billion) in 2010, but there was a price to pay for it. The Greek government had to submit to huge spending cuts, and increased taxes to pay back the creditors (Sullivan 2018).

Some Places In Greece Fell On Hard Times During The Economic Downturn. Photo Taken By The Author.

Nor was it enough. The following year, Greece's credit rating fell again, leading Papandreou to resign and a grand coalition (where parties of different ideologies come together in a crisis to form a unity government) accepted a new austerity package, which led to more belt-tightening in 2012 (Sullivan 2018). Two elections took place that year, and the party New Democracy prevailed, while protests across the country increased. A quarter of all Greeks were out of work, wage cuts

were common, and there seemed to be no end in sight to the crisis (Sullivan 2018). Cutting Greek debt gave the country a little breathing room, but not much. Extremist parties like the Golden Dawn, a neo-Nazi, sought to capitalize on the chaos (Sullivan 2018). The response was to outlaw the party and arrest its leaders for their actions.

A new left party, Syriza, was chosen by the Greek voters on promises of not accepting more bailouts and austerity. But Greece continued to struggle with their economy and the country missed a key payment, leading banks to close. Though Prime Minister Tsipras called for a referendum to support his opposition to such bailouts, he was forced to accept a third bailout, rescuing the country's economic situation, but increasing political cynicism in the country (Sullivan 2018). "Facing a run on deposits, the Greek government imposed capital controls and cash withdrawal restrictions. The government also missed a payment to the IMF of €1.5 billion. Had the stalemate continued, Greece would have been forced to introduce its own currency, effectively exiting the euro (PIIE 2020)."
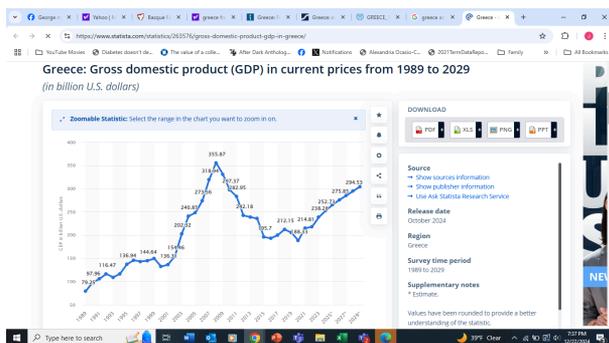
Figure 6.2 – Greece GDP since 1989 (https://www.statista.com/statistics/263576/gross-domestic-product-gdp-in-greece/)

The pandemic also led to a significant sharp slump in economic growth in 2020, but a return to pre-COVID-19 levels occurred by the middle of 2021 (OECD 2024). Though economic growth returned, even surpassing Eurozone averages (OECD 2024), unemployment and debt remained high, despite smaller increases in imbalances. Negative savings rates plague the people of Greece as well. As the OECD (2024) reports, while the inflation rate has climbed down from its post-pandemic height, overall inflation (called "Core Inflation" remains high. The continued presence of small but vocal political parties shows that the economic pain of the last 15 years has not completely abated in Greece.

Greece Has No Shortage Of Propaganda. Photo Taken By The Author.

6.2 Major Trading Partners

Most of Greece's top trading partners are European, with only two (the United States and Turkey) outside of the European continent. A more diverse array of trading partners from the

Middle East and North Africa appear in the 11th-25th ranking range for Greece (Workman 2024).

"Below is a list showcasing 25 of Greece's top trading partners, countries that imported the most Greek shipments by dollar value during 2023. Shown within parenthesis is each import country's percentage of total Greek exports.

- Italy: US$6.4 billion (11.6% of total Greek exports)
- Bulgaria: $3.8 billion (6.9%)
- Germany: $3.7 billion (6.7%)
- Cyprus: $3.6 billion (6.5%)
- Spain: $2.24 billion (4.1%)
- United States of America: $2.17 billion (3.9%)
- United Kingdom: $2.09 billion (3.8%)
- Romania: $1.97 billion (3.6%)
- France: $1.94 billion (3.5%)
- Türkiye: $1.94 billion (3.5%)
- Libya: $1.7 billion (3.1%)
- Lebanon: $1.54 billion (2.8%)
- North Macedonia: $1.49 billion (2.7%)
- Netherlands: $1.4 billion (2.5%)
- Gibraltar: $1.2 billion (2.3%)
- Poland: $1 billion (1.8%)
- Ukraine: $897.8 million (1.6%)
- Belgium: $799.1 million (1.5%
- Albania: $771.7 million (1.4%))
- Israel: $708.1 million (1.3%)

- South Korea: $645.3 million (1.2%)
- Serbia: $564.8 million (1%)
- Austria: $555.8 million (1%)
- Egypt: $547.5 million (1%)
- Hungary: $516.4 million (0.9%)

These results are backed by O'Neill (2024), who adds Statista data to his numbers.

6.3 Monetary Issues.

From their independence in the 1830s until 2001, Greece used the drachma. That also happened to be the name for the coin of the Greek civilization in B.C. days. But in 2001, as a European Union member, Greece adopted the euro (Hayes 2024).

But that's also been a challenge for Greece. In order to be part of the European Union, the country needs to keep its fiscal house in order. When there are multiple currencies in an economic zone, countries like those in Southern European, actually benefitted from having a cheaper currently due to some degree of fiscal instability. On a European trip with my family, we bought a lot more in Italy than Germany because the lira was cheaper to the dollar than the Deutsche mark. But with the euro, there's no comparative advantage to having a less expensive currency.
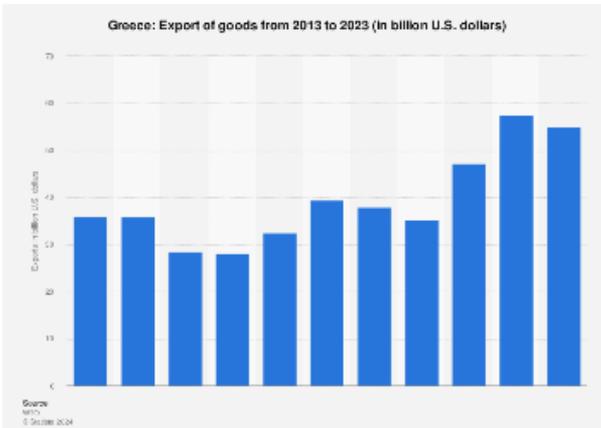
6.4 Imports and Exports

Workman (2024) points out that Greece exported more than $55 billion in product value in 2023, a nearly 50 percent increase compared to pre-pandemic numbers. But it's still a relatively small country in the world economy, according to Workman (2024). But in bad news for Greece, exports fell by nearly 10 percent, as EU countries and third-world countries were buying fewer of the country's products (Trading Economics 2024).

Figure 6.3 – Goods and Service Imports as a percentage of GDP (https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/Greece/imports/)

The Observatory of Economic Complexity, or OEC (2024)

provides plenty of information about what products Greece exports, and imports. Like many developed countries, Greece imports ($94.5 billion) more than they export ($55.7 billion) because they can afford to purchase more. The country ranks between 50th-60th on most trade indices.

Greece: Export of goods from 2013 to 2023 (in billion U.S. dollars)

https://www.statista.com/statistics/263652/export-of-goods-from-greece/

"The top imports of Greece are Crude Petroleum ($13.1B), Petroleum Gas ($8.38B), Refined Petroleum ($6.69B), Packaged Medicaments ($2.57B), and Cars ($2.16B)," The OEC (2024) reports. "The top exports of Greece are Refined Petroleum ($16.4B), Packaged Medicaments ($2.74B), Petroleum Gas ($1.85B), Aluminum Plating ($1.17B), and Pure Olive Oil ($863M)."

Most trade reports focus on products, overlooking services. Here, Greece, like other first world countries, has a net surplus in this category. "The top services exported by Greece in 2020 were Sea transport ($14.3B), Personal travel ($4.57B),

Miscellaneous business, professional, and technical services ($1.92B), Air transport ($887M), and Other transport ($561M)," the OEC (2024) reports. "The top services imported by Greece in 2020 were Sea transport ($7.85B), Other transport ($2.7B), Miscellaneous business, professional, and technical services ($1.45B), Freight insurance ($608M), and Air transport ($596M)." OEC (2024) gathers its data from the United Nations International Trade Statistics Database.

In Athens, the marketplace is now packed again with tourists and shoppers in the shadow of the Acropolis. Photo taken by the author.

6.5 Banks and Institutional Projects.

Within a decade of Greek independence, the National Bank of Greece was created, the country's first financial institution (NBG 2024).

The Bank of Greece (2024), which began operations on May 14, 1928, documents the story of Greek currency, and some of its more unusual history. "During the Axis occupation, banknotes were issued both in occupied Greece and abroad. Between 1941 and 1944, many banknotes of huge denominations were printed by various lithographers in Greece, due to galloping inflation; the last one, that of 100 billion drachmas, was printed on 5 November 1944. Law 18/10 November 1944 introduced the first monetary reform, stipulating that one post-war drachma would equal 50 billion occupation drachmas." This shows evidence that punctures the myth of authoritarian rule as having an advantage in economic stability.

An interview with Christina Papaconstantinou, a member of the Supervisory Board of the ECB, and Deputy Governor of the Bank of Greece, as reported by the ECB, documents the challenges Greek banks faced during the financial crisis (2008-2015), as well as the solutions they developed (European Central Bank 2024).

"The great financial crisis, the euro area sovereign debt crisis and the deep economic recession that ensued in Greece resulted in major challenges for the Greek banking sector.

These included a sharp increase in non-performing loans, a bank run and loss of market access, and the eventual imposition of a bank holiday and temporary capital controls."

The Economic Crisis That Hit Greece Persisted For Years. Photo By The Author.

But as the European Central Bank reveals, not all of the lessons learned were about avoiding bad events. There was also the process of learning positive developments. "Many lessons have been learned on how to prevent another crisis on this scale in the future," Papaconstantinou told the European Central Bank (2024) in the interview. "Those that stand out from a supervisor's perspective are (i) the need to have an effective crisis management framework in place; (ii) the importance of completing the banking union by establishing its third pillar, the European deposit insurance scheme; and (iii) the significance of proactive and effective microprudential and macroprudential supervision. The common denominator is

that we need more Europe. This means pushing forward with the necessary reforms during good times so as to take a proactive approach in the pursuit of our common goals. The Single Supervisory Mechanism (SSM) is an outstanding example of what we can achieve when we take bold steps in this direction."

6.6 Greece: Contemporary Economics

As the OECD (2024) reports "Greece's economy has been outpacing the euro area average since 2021. Support measures protected households and businesses against high inflation, while public debt declined significantly. Growing disbursements of the Recovery and Resilience Funds, continuous employment gains and disinflation, and recent structural reforms are all expected to support growth."

On Our Trip To Athens, We Saw Plenty Of Evidence Of Greece's Economic Comeback. Photo Taken By The Author.

But Greece is not free and clear of its problems, as the OECD (2024) adds in its analysis. "However, significant challenges lie ahead. Sustaining primary surpluses and preserving public investment are essential to maintain the debt-to-GDP ratio on a firmly declining path. This requires shifting the structure of public spending towards investment, lowering tax expenditures and tackling tax evasion further."

Section 7: Greece's Foreign Relations

Overview: Greece's history has been one of vacillating between decades of peace, and sharp conflicts with neighbors. As a result, Greece has both a heightened sense of patriotism manifested in a strong nationalism, yet also a growing recognition that the country needs international allies to avoid repeating the mistakes of the past.

7.1 Greece's Role in International Organizations

After being overrun during World War II by the forces of fascism, despite putting up brave resistance, Greece realized

they could no longer have a "go it alone" strategy when it came to international affairs, the exception being a close affinity for the British for their role in helping secure their independence in the early 1800s, and helping with Greek resistance to the Axis Powers.
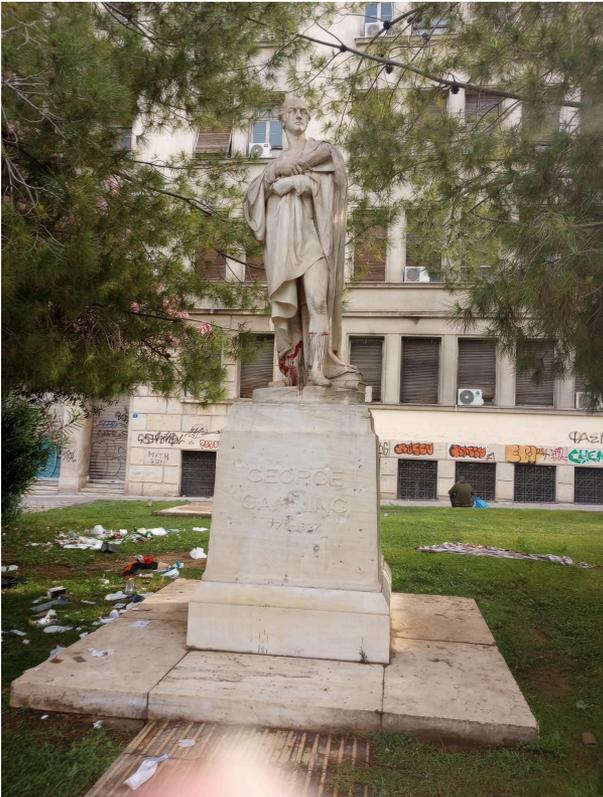
Statue of George Canning (British Foreign Secretary, Later Prime Minister) Who Was A Strong Backer Of Greek Independence In The 1820s. This statue in Athens honors his role in Greek Independence

That's why Greece became one of the 51 founding members of the United Nations. As of the writing of this chapter, Greece was also elected as a nonpermanent member of the United Nations Security Council, the group of 15 states empowered with coordinating international military and political action in defense of peace, a term that will be for 2025-2026. That election became the third time Greece was chosen for this rotating position on the UNSC; the other elections were for 1952-1953 and 2005-2006 (Permanent Mission of Greece to the United Nations 2024). Despite their struggles, Greece does participate in humanitarian assistance and development programs and responses to emergency, just as the country is publicly committed to promoting human rights (Permanent Mission of Greece to the United Nations 2024).

Greece has an even more robust role in the powerful military alliance known as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The country, along with Turkey. Was one of the first to join the expanded pact, becoming a member in 1952, three years after the founding of NATO. Greece is more than just a member; the country contributes several bases to the international security alliance. And the Greeks are one of the countries committing more than two percent of their GDP of their military budget to provide West and South Europe the means of protection.

As NATO documents "At a time when there was a fear of

communist expansion throughout Europe and other parts of the world (for example, Soviet support of the North Korean invasion of South Korea in 1950), extending security to southeastern Europe was strategically important. Not only did NATO membership curb communist influence in Greece – a country recovering from civil war – but it also relieved Türkiye from Soviet pressure for access to key strategic maritime routes."

7.2 Military Assistance from Greece

When North Korea launched an illegal invasion of South Korea, Greece was one of the countries that stepped up, providing troops to help repel the attackers and their Chinese allies, critical assistance from thousands of soldiers. As Michael Rubin (2023) explains "The Greek participation was not simply symbolic. Athens initially offered a brigade, but the United States suggested a smaller deployment so Greece could keep watch on NATO's southern flank. Greek leaders wanted to participate, though, and contributed a battalion of soldiers and the Royal Hellenic Air Force flew seven C-47 Dakota aircraft, conducted almost 3,000 missions, and provided crucial air support during the Battle of Chosin Reservoir. The Greek battalion fought under the American 1st Cavalry Division, one of the US Army's most storied units. All told, 10,255 Greeks fought in Korea, and almost 200 died there.

Many wounded Americans owe their lives to Greek pilots who evacuated them under fire."

Just As U.S. President Harry S. Truman Helped Out Greece During Civil War, Greece Sent Soldiers To Help U.S. Forces In Korea When Truman Was President. Photo By The Author.

Though the participation of the Greek Expeditionary Force in Korea was the most high-profile international conflict participation, it was by no means the only one. The United Nations Peacekeeping branch (2022) recently praised the role

of Greece in the United Nations peacekeeping missions like the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), and others (Greece is among the Top 65 in providing of military and police personnel). Additionally, the U.N. has lauded Greece for the country's role in training, bases, and other means of supporting peacekeeping besides the provision of men and women in uniform (United Nations Peacekeeping 2022).

Though Greece is hardly the largest NATO member, it has, as the British like to say "punched above their weight," meaning the country participates more in NATO than a country its size might be expected to do. "For the Hellenic Republic, the participation in humanitarian assistance and peace support missions is a high priority. Greece has contributed to the ISAF mission, KFOR, and Operation Active Endeavor. The Hellenic Composite Battalion, manned by 120 personnel and 47 vehicles, is responsible for erecting technical support buildings at Kabul International Airport (KAIA), reinforcing camp security, training of Afghan Soldiers, and distributing of humanitarian aid. Greece has decided to increase personnel to the reconstruction of Afghanistan with a new OMLT in October 2009 and two medical teams will contribute to the ISAF operation regarding Afghanistan national elections. Greece has contributed personnel to SEEBRIG Headquarters that undertook command of the Kabul Multinational Brigade and ran the

Hellenic Field Surgery Hospital that functioned operationally from within KAIA (NATO SHAPE n.d.)."

The contributions of the Greeks in operations from Afghanistan to Kosovo show the value of this Southern European country to the NATO mission beyond its borders. As NATO SHAPE (n.d.) touts "The Hellenic contingent in Kosovo conducted hundreds of reconnaissance, escorting, and control missions, but its main achievement was discovering a depot in which plenty of weapons and ammunition were hidden. Since 2001, Greece has been participating in Operation Active Endeavour by protecting high-value units and by conducting surveillance, maritime inspections, and maritime counter-terrorism operations. Greek Armed Forces also perform operations in support of the Greek population and have contributed a significant amount of resources and capabilities in search and rescue operations, disaster relief, bush fire-fighting operations, and mobile military medical units."

Operation Active Endeavour was begun after 9/11, when one member, the United States of America was attacked. There was concern that terrorists could slip through the Mediterranean Sea using smuggling and human trafficking routes, requiring a better defense (Jontz 2006). Being on the front lines, close to Turkey, Syria, and Lebanon, and across the Sea from Egypt, Libya, and Tunisia, Greece was a natural participant in this nautical operation.

Greek Foreign Ministry In Athens. Photo Taken By The Author.

7.3 UN Assistance to Greece

Just as Greece has aided international organizations, those bodies have also come to the rescue of Greece. As noted earlier, Greece needed several bailouts from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to avoid bankruptcy. That organization contributed billions to a rescue fund for this Southern European country. According to the BBC (2018) "Greece asked for a financial rescue by the European Union and International Monetary Fund. Bailouts – emergency loans aimed at saving sinking economies – began in 2010. Greece received three successive packages, totaling €289bn (£259bn; $330bn), but they came with the price of drastic austerity measures."

Those economic problems did take their toll, but the worst is likely past for Greece, despite the unpopularity of these packages. "The economy is 25% smaller than when the crisis began and it will take decades to pay off its debt pile of 180% of GDP. But for the first in almost a decade, Greece is off life support (BBC 2018)."

But that's not the only aid Greece received. The United Nations stepped in when Greece faced an unprecedented number of migrants to its islands and mainland, a lot for a country with a population under 11 million. "At the end of 2019, Greece hosted over 186,000 refugees and asylum-seekers. This included over 5000 unaccompanied children. Most persons of concern were coming from Afghanistan, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Iran. UNHCR's work in Greece focuses on protection needs as well as gradually transitioning the responsibility of large-scale programmes (accommodation, cash-based interventions and programmes for unaccompanied and separated children) to the Greek government. At the end of 2019, Greece was one of UNHCR's largest operations in Europe."

That role transitioned as the Greek government took over for the United Nations High Commission for Refugees in 2021. Yet subsequent visits by the UNHCR led international authorities to call upon Greece to do more for those who migrated to Greece (United Nations News 2023), which now include those fleeing Russia's attacks upon Ukraine.

7.4 Regional Partners

On June 28, 1979, the Hellenic Parliament ratified what was called The Act of Accession, making them a member of the European Community on the first day of 1981 (CVCE.eu 2024). Eleven years later, the country joined The European Union. While there are debates about how well the economic bailouts affected Greece, the country was able to stave off bankruptcy. Moreover, with a common market and a common currency, Greece has closer ties to the continent than when it did the Greek military colonels ruled the country, and the people were isolated due to the regime's behavior. Greece continued the behavior of the country pre-military rule, when the nation signed the Athens Agreement in 1961 to join the Treaty of Rome, joining the European Economic Community. Greek membership in that organization was suspended during that authoritarian rule (CVCE.eu 2024).

In addition to the EU, UN and NATO, Greece is a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) which seeks to coordinate tariff and other trade policies (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2024). It's a member of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which seeks to create closer political ties between West and East Europe (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2024). Among the other groups that Greece has joined, the list includes, but is not limited to, the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), the World Tourism Organization, the International

Maritime Organization (IMO), and the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2024). Greece is also a member of UNESCO.

Greece And UNESCO Near The Acropolis. Photo Taken By The Author.

7.5 Defense

Greece has faced invasions from all of its neighbors: Macedonia before 300 B.C., from the Romans to the West, and Turks from the East. Even Italians attacked from Albania during World War II, and the country was overwhelmed by a combined attack from Adolf Hitler, Benito Mussolini, and Bulgaria, then an ally of the Nazis, from the North. The country faced a communist insurgency during the Cold War

as well. Perhaps that is why the Greeks prefer to beef up their military forces more than many European countries.

Monument To Macedonian Spears And Shields In Thessaloniki. Photo Taken By The Author.

This is even reflected in contemporary defense spending (The Defense Post 2024), though Greece has not fought a war since 1974, a conflict with Turkey that took place over Cyprus. It also accounts for why the country was more willing to join the NATO alliance in standing up to the Soviet Union, Albania and Yugoslavia during the Cold War.

According to The National Interest (Atlamazoglou 2024a) "Although both countries are NATO members, Greece and Turkey share an ancient animosity stretching back to the 10th century, when nomadic Turkic tribes invaded the Byzantine Empire. More than a thousand years later, the animosity is still strong, and the two countries have clashed, directly or indirectly, several times in the past 100 years."

Greece's Presidential Guard Still Wears The Uniform Of The Military When On Parade. Photo Taken By The Author.

According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2024b) "All male Greek citizens, aged between 19 and 45, are required to serve in the Armed Forces. Greek citizens living permanently outside of Greece have the right to postpone their conscription. They are permanently exempted from their military obligations when they reach the age of 45 years old."

A group called "GlobalFirePower.com" (2024) rated Greece as 32 out of 145 for military strength, for a "PwrIndx" score of 0.4349, which is impressive for such a small country. This is probably because Greece has approximately 850 tanks, many of them German-made Leopards (Atlamazoglou 2024a) and over 200 fighter planes. "The Hellenic Air Force, with around 227 fighter jets, boasts one of NATO's largest air fleets, even

surpassing the UK and France individually. Greece operates a robust mix of aircraft: F-16s, including Block 70/72 "Viper" upgrades, Dassault Rafales, Mirage 2000-5s, and F-4E Phantoms (Atlamazoglou 2024b)."
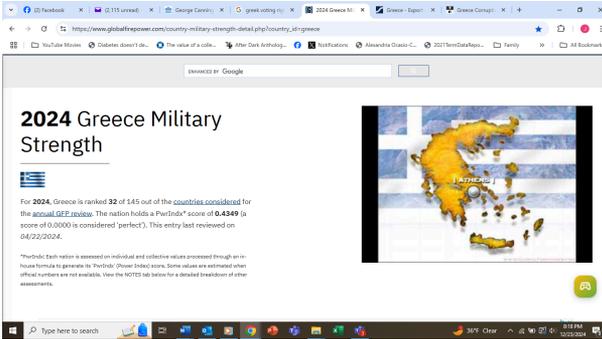
https://www.globalfirepower.com/country-military-strength-detail.php?country_id=greece#google_vignette

Indeed *The Defense Post* (2024) reports that Greece is expected to double its military budget to make up for the shortfall it experienced since the financial crisis, fearing falling behind Turkey. This has occurred, despite only recently getting out of that same economic crisis due to overspending. However, the size of the Greek military has fallen compared to earlier decades.
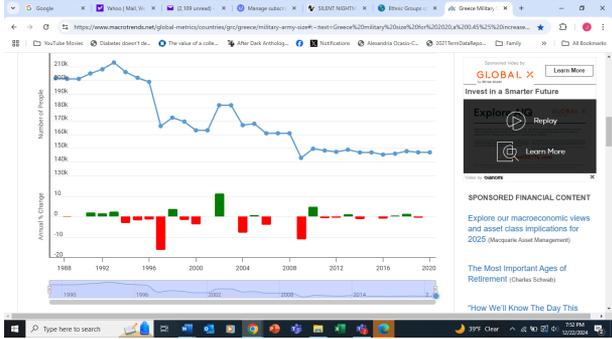
Figure 7.1 – Greece's military force has shrunk in recent decades (https://www.macrotrends.net/global-metrics/countries/grc/greece/military-army-size#:~:text=Greece%20military%20size%20for%202020,a%200.45%25%20increase%20from%202016.)

Conclusion: Poú pas Elláda? (Where Are You Going, Greece?)

In all the time spent researching Greece, I've learned that the Greeks have an amazing history to be proud of, creating a political system far more embraced throughout the world today in it was in their classical era. Their contributions in the arts and sciences, in history and storytelling, and so much more, show the country has influenced more abroad than arguably any other modern nation-state.

At the same time, a Greece has faced its challenges, from invasions on every border throughout their history. Some challenges are internal bordering on the intermestic, just as the post-war military coup, the economic crisis, and the immigration to Greek shores from refugees, as well as domestic clashes over what to do about each challenge. Today, the country faces simmering tensions not just with rivals abroad, but also wrestling with just who the Greeks of today are. Are the Greeks a proud independent people separate from everyone else, or members

of a European community, or even citizens of the world, matching their global influence? Greece is at a pivotal moment in their history: where will the country go? Will their history offer any clues to guide the Greeks and scholars studying their culture? Or will they continue into uncharted territory, adding another unprecedent chapter in the Greek story?

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7.

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

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Chapter Outline

Why Study this Case?

The Republic of Ireland is a medium-income country within the European Union, and not typically studied in many comparative politics courses. While it is not geopolitical player, it's political history is a fascinating study in the confluence of the Catholic Church's influence on society with its domestic politics. Ireland is the only other state in Europe besides Italy, where the Catholic Church still has a strong hold on society. From the early 19th century to the early

20th century, Ireland was part of the United Kingdom, achieving Dominion status in 1922 and independence in 1948. Ireland and its people experience substantial relations with the United States as well as strong economic ties to the European Union. Its fraught history of civil wars and its relationship with the Church make it an important comparative study in nation-building among a divided people.

CIA Worldfactbook (Central Intelligence Agency, 2024)

Section 1: Brief History

From the Act of Union on January 1, 1801 until December 6, 1922, the island of Ireland was part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. During the Great Famine, which lasted from 1845 to 1849, the island's population, exceeding eight million, decreased by 30%. Approximately one million Irish people died from starvation and disease, while another 1.5 million emigrated, predominantly to the United States.

This emigration pattern continued throughout the following century, leading to a steady population decline until the 1960s.

The Irish Free State was established with Dominion status in 1922, following the Anglo-Irish Treaty. In 1937, a new constitution was adopted, renaming the state "Eire" or "Ireland" in English. This effectively transformed it into a republic, featuring an elected non-executive president.

Although the Third Home Rule Act received Royal Assent and was placed on the statute books in 1914, its implementation was postponed until after the First World War, thereby defusing the threat of civil war in Ireland. In hopes of securing the Act's implementation following the war through Ireland's participation, John Redmond and the Irish National Volunteers supported the UK and its Allies. Consequently, 175,000 men joined Irish regiments of the 10th (Irish) and 16th (Irish) divisions of the New British Army, while Unionists joined the 36th (Ulster) division (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2024).

However, a faction of the Irish Volunteers, who opposed any support for the UK, initiated an armed insurrection against British rule during the **1916 Easter Rising** alongside the Irish Citizen Army. This uprising began on April 24, 1916, with the declaration of independence. After a week of intense fighting, primarily in Dublin, the surviving rebels were compelled to surrender. The majority were imprisoned, and fifteen of the prisoners, including most of the leaders, were executed for treason. These events, together with the

Conscription Crisis of 1918, profoundly shifted public opinion in Ireland against the British Government (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2024).

In January 1919, following the December 1918 general election, seventy-three of Ireland's 105 Members of Parliament (MPs) elected were Sinn Féin members, who had run on a platform of abstentionism from the British House of Commons. These members convened an Irish parliament called Dáil Éireann. The first Dáil issued a declaration of independence and proclaimed the Irish Republic, largely reiterating the 1916 Proclamation with the added provision that Ireland was no longer part of the United Kingdom.

After the War of Independence and the truce in July 1921, representatives of the British government and five Irish treaty delegates, including Arthur Griffith, Robert Barton, and Michael Collins, negotiated the Anglo-Irish Treaty in London from October 11th to December 6, 1921. The Irish delegates privately decided on December 5th to recommend the treaty to Dáil Éireann. On 7 January 1922, the Second Dáil ratified the Treaty by sixty-four votes to 57.

In accordance with the Treaty, on December 6, 1922, the entire island of Ireland became self-governing, called the Irish Free State (Saorstát Éireann). Under the new constitution, the Parliament of Northern Ireland could leave the Irish Free State and rejoin the United Kingdom one month later. During this interim period, the powers of the Parliament and the Executive Council did not extend to Northern Ireland. Northern Ireland

exercised its treaty right and rejoined the United Kingdom on December 8, 1922.

The signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty led to the Irish Republican Army splitting into two factions. One side supported the treaty, and the other believed that it required an oath to the King of England. Civil war broke out between the factions. The English government supplied the pro-treaty forces with the assistance of the Black and Tans, and with the support of WWI veterans, they overcame the anti-treaty faction. See [The Signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty](#), 1921 (Malone).

Officially, Ireland was declared a republic in 1949, following the enactment of the Republic of Ireland Act of 1948. Ireland became a member of the United Nations in 1955 and joined the European Communities (EC), the predecessor to the European Union (EU), in 1973.

For most of the 20th century, Ireland had no formal relations with Northern Ireland. However, during the 1980s and 1990s, the British and Irish governments, alongside Northern Irish parties, engaged in efforts to resolve the conflict known as the Troubles. Since the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998, the Irish government and the Northern Irish government have collaborated on various policy areas through the North/South Ministerial Council established by the Agreement (Contributors, 2024).

Ireland and the United States celebrated their 100-year relationship in October 2024. On October 7, 1924, Professor

Timothy Smiddy presented his credentials to President Calvin Coolidge. The U.S. was the first country to formally recognize Ireland's independence. Today, over thirty million Americans, roughly 6% of the population, claim Irish descent. The strength of the relationship exists through common ancestral bonds, shared values, and strong economic ties. The majority of multinational corporations producing in Ireland are based in the United States (Ireland.ie, 2024).

Section 2: Ethnic, Religious, and Cultural Identity

Population

total: 5,233,461
male: 2,590,542
female: 2,642,919 (2024 est.)

Nationality

noun: Irishman(men), Irishwoman(women), Irish (collective plural)
adjective: Irish

Ethnic groups

Irish 76.6%, Irish travelers 0.6%, other White 9.9%, Asian 3.3%, Black 1.5%, other (includes Arab, Roma, and persons of mixed backgrounds) 2%, unspecified 2.6% (2022 est.)

Celtic tribes arrived in Ireland between 600 and 150 B.C. Norse invasions that began in the late eighth century finally ended when King Brian BORU defeated the Danes in 1014. Norman invasions began in the 12th century and set off more than seven centuries of Anglo-Irish struggle marked by fierce rebellions and harsh repressions. The Irish famine of the mid-19th century caused an almost 25-percent decline in the island's population through starvation, disease, and emigration. The population of the island continued to fall until the 1960s, but over the last 50 years, Ireland's high birthrate has made it demographically one of the youngest populations in the EU.

Languages

English (The official language), Irish (Gaelic or Gaeilge) (official, spoken by approximately 37.7% of the population as of 2022; spoken in areas along Ireland's western coast known as gaeltachtai, which are officially recognized regions where Irish is the predominant language)

Religions

Roman Catholic 69.2% (includes lapsed), Protestant 3.7% (Church of Ireland/England/Anglican/Episcopalian 2.5%, other Protestant 1.2%), Orthodox 2%, other Christian 0.9%, Muslim 1.6%, other 1.4%, agnostic/atheist 0.1%, none 14.5%, unspecified 6.7% (2022 est.)

Age structure

0-14 years: 18.6% (male 498,124/female 477,848)
15-64 years: 65.5% (male 1,701,680/female 1,728,041)
65 years and over: 15.8% (2024 est.) (male 390,738/female 437,030)
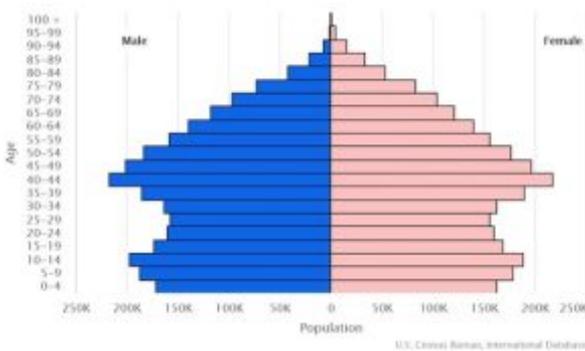
Figure 2.1 – 2023 population pyramid (U.S. Census Bureau, 2024)

Section 3: Political Culture and Civil Society

3.1 – Colonialism and Activism

As a result of colonialism, Irish political culture is defined by its institutionalized nature and civil society control maintained by the Catholic Church. Rather than inculcating a strong notion of citizenship in the Irish state within primary and secondary education, schooling is primarily controlled by the Church, causing the formation of a "religious-ethnic conceptualization of the state (Murphy, 2011)." As a result, the Church maintained authoritarian social controls at the parish level, "promoting deference, victimhood, and internalization of blame and anger (Murphy, 2011)." This social control has had the effect of limiting the development and growth of progressivism. For a full explanation of Irish Civil Society, read the article Civil Society in the Shadow of the Irish State by Mary P. Murphy.

In the early 20th century, Ireland experienced uprisings from the socialist labor and trade union movement. Despite those occurrences, the political left in Ireland has been fragmented and marginalized. The presence of the Church in politics, the conservative electoral environment, the lack of industrialization, the weakness of the Labor Party and Fianna

Fail, and a social focus on individualism over collectivism have all been inhibiting factors.

However, in the 1970s and 1980s, Ireland was rife with progressive activism, one of the largest being the women's movement. Other active movements in that era included environmentalism, anti-capitalism, gender and sexual orientation activism, equality and antipoverty activism, and trade unionism. Overall, Ireland's level of civil society activism in the 2020s is on par with that of the mainstream European Union.

The Taskforce on Active Citizenship (2007) shows that Ireland's civil society participates in about 24,000 organizations, and only 18.25% participate in political activism. Ireland also has one of the lowest membership rates in political parties and voting participation in the European Union. The Taskforce found that 38% report being either 'definitely or somewhat' interested in politics, 54% thought they can influence local decision-making, and 76% of adults ages 20-29 are registered to vote. Yet many feel that local governments and developers do not listen to citizens' concerns and needs and refer to the population as "customers" rather than "citizens." Thus, the population expresses cynicism about democracy and consultative services (Government of Ireland, 2016).

3.2 – Abortion and the Repeal of the Eighth Amendment

Access to abortion in Ireland has long been illegal, with minor exceptions. Initially, the British Offenses Against the Persons Act in 1861 made it illegal to "seek a miscarriage." That remained in place until Independence in 1922. The Eight Amendment to the Constitution was adopted in 1983, stating that "the right to life of the unborn … equal [to the] right to life of the mother." It stood until the Supreme Court ruled in 1992 that an abortion is allowed when a pregnancy threatens a woman's life, including suicide. Yet legislation was not passed until the Protection of Life During Pregnancy Act of 2013, repealing the 1861 Act. The UK's 1967 Abortion Act permitted Irish women to come to the UK for abortions. Irish women seeking an abortion were at a high in 2001 with 6673 but declined to 3265 in 2016. The decline was due to the increase in the illegal use of abortion drugs.

Civic action over the abortion issue increased over the first decade-plus of the 21st Century. The Abortion Rights Campaign was formed in 2012, holding an annual March for Choice, which was countered by the "Rally for Life." As the 2016 election campaign gained momentum, many political parties committed to a referendum to repeal the Eighth Amendment. These included Labor, the Green Party, the Social Democrats, Sinn Fein, and the Workers Party. Fianna Fail and Fine Gael were opposed. The Fine Gael party

government, elected in 2016 led by Taoiseach Enda Kenny agreed to a Citizens Assembly to study the abortion issue. Leo Varadkar succeeded Kenny, promising to hold a referendum in 2018. Citizen groups lined the downtown main street in Dublin, passing out flyers and stopping passersby to support their position on the issue (Van Den Handel, 2018). A heightened sense of history permeated the Dublin population and the countryside. Social media was a significant tool for organizing the pro-choice position.

The Citizens Assembly issued its report in April 2017, which then went to a special Oireachtas committee. The committee voted to support repealing the Eighth Amendment and permitting the Oireachtas to legislate on abortion. The Oireachtas committee recommended that abortion be legal up to the first 12 weeks, given the difficulty of legislation for rape and incest, and did not recommend abortion due to a mother's economic condition. A Supreme Court ruling on March 7, 2018, set aside an earlier lower court ruling, stating that a fetus is not a child and had no rights. This opened the door for the Department of Health to publish a paper, "Regulation of Termination of Pregnancy" on March 9th. That paper comprised the body of the legislation. It passed the Dial on March 21st and the Seanad on March 27th. Fine Gail and Fianna Fail permitted their MPs to vote their conscience. They voted overwhelmingly for YES. These two major parties supported the YES campaign. While most abortions were still illegal, the Eighth Amendment was repealed and abortions

before the 12th week became legal. A public referendum was scheduled for May 25th.

An American anti-abortion group arrived to assist with the NO movement in early May. This caused controversy because it was promulgated that they had lied to border control about their reasons for coming to Ireland. Irish expatriates began arriving across May to vote in the referendum. Any Irish citizen abroad for no more than 18 months were permitted to vote. For lists of YES and NO organizations, religious groups, and votes in the Oireachtas, see "The Thirty-sixth Amendment to the Constitution (Wikipedia Contributors, 2024)." YES, won 66.4% of the vote to 33.6% of the NO, adding the Thirty-Sixth Amendment to the Constitution. This was a resounding defeat to the Catholic Church, which issued a statement that anyone who had voted yes must come to confession.

Section 4: Political Participation

Read the following research article by Donal O'Brolchain, Direct Political Participation in the Republic of Ireland - 20 November 2013 (O'Brolchain, 2013), about broadening democracy by instituting direct democracy to a greater degree. Direct

democracy was written into the 1921 Constitution but never implemented. The Oireachtas is permitted to change the Constitution without a public referendum.

Section 5: Formal Political Institutions

(Central Intelligence Agency, 2024)

5.1 – Executive Branch

Chief of State: President Michael D. HIGGINS (since 11 November 2011)

Head of government: Taoiseach (Prime Minister) Simon HARRIS (since 9 April 2024)

Cabinet: Cabinet nominated by the prime minister, appointed by the president, and approved by the Dail Eireann (The House of Representatives, the lower house of Parliament).

Ireland operates as a constitutional republic with a parliamentary system of governance. The Oireachtas is the bicameral national parliament and comprises the President of Ireland and the two Houses: Dáil Éireann (House of Representatives) and Seanad Éireann (Senate). The President's

official residence is Áras an Uachtaráin, while the sessions of the Oireachtas are held at Leinster House in Dublin.

The President, who functions as the head of state, is elected for a seven-year term and may be re-elected once. Although the role is primarily ceremonial, the President possesses certain constitutional powers, exercised with the counsel of the Council of State, and holds absolute discretion in specific areas, such as referring a bill to the Supreme Court to assess its constitutionality. Michael D. Higgins assumed office as the ninth President of Ireland on November 11, 2011.

The Taoiseach (Prime Minister) is the head of government, appointed by the President following nomination by the Dáil. Typically, the Taoiseach is the leader of the political party that secures the majority of seats in national elections. Coalition governments have become the norm since 1989, as no single party has achieved an outright majority.

The Dáil consists of 160 members (Teachtaí Dála) elected from multi-seat constituencies through proportional representation using the single transferable vote system. The Seanad comprises sixty members: eleven nominated by the Taoiseach, six elected by two university constituencies, and forty-three elected by public representatives from vocational panels.

Constitutionally, the government is restricted to fifteen members, with no more than two drawn from the Seanad. The Taoiseach, Tánaiste (Deputy Prime Minister), and Minister for Finance must be Dáil members. The Dáil must be dissolved

within five years of its initial meeting following an election, with general elections held within thirty days of dissolution. According to the Constitution, parliamentary elections must occur at least every seven years, though statutory law may impose a shorter interval. The current government is a coalition of Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael, and the Green Party, with Simon Harris of Fine Gael as Taoiseach and Micheál Martin of Fianna Fáil as Tánaiste. The opposition includes Sinn Féin, the Labor Party, People Before Profit–Solidarity, Social Democrats, Aontú, and several independents.

Elections/appointments: The president is directly elected by majority popular vote for a 7-year term and is eligible for a second term. The last election was held on October 26, 2018 (next to be held no later than November 2025). The Taoiseach (prime minister) is nominated by the Dail Eireann (House of Representatives) and appointed by the president.

Election results:

2024: Simon HARRIS was elected Taoiseach by the parliament, 88 votes to 69, and was appointed Taoiseach by the president.

2018: Michael D. HIGGINS, an Independent, was reelected president in first round of voting with 55.8% of the vote;

2011: Michael D. HIGGINS (Labor Party) was elected president in second round with 39.6% of the vote.

5.2 – Legislative branch

The Oireachtas is the bicameral Parliament, which consists of the Senate or Seanad Eireann, which has 60 seats, 49 of which are indirectly elected from 5 vocational panels of nominees by an electoral college and 11 appointed by the prime minister. The House of Representatives or Dail Eireann has 160 seats, with members directly elected in multi-seat constituencies by proportional representation vote. All Parliament members serve 5-year terms.

Seanad Eireann **elections were** last held early on May 21-30, 2020 (next to be held in March 2025). The number of men is 36, and the number of women is 24; and the percentage of women was 40%.

Dail Eireann Representatives elections were last held on 8 February 2020 (next to be held no later than March 2025). The number of men is 123, and the number of women is 37. The percentage of women is 23.1%. The total percentage of women in the Oireachtas is 27.7%. (https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/field/legislative-branch/)

**Seats in the Oireachtas
2020 Elections**

Seanad Eireann

Party	Percentage	Seats
Fianna Fail	35	21
Fine Gail	26.7	16
Green	6.7	4
Labor	6.7	4
Sinn Fein	4	4
Independent	16.6	10
Other	1	1
Total Seats		60

Dail Eireann

Party	Percentage	Seats
Fianna Fail	23.8	38
Fine Gail	21.9	35
Green	7.5	12
Labor	3	6
Sinn Fein	23.1	37
Social Democrats	3	6
PBPS	3	5
Independent	11.9	19

Other	1	2
Total Seats		160

5.3 – Judicial branch

Ireland's courts include the Highest court, the Supreme Court of Ireland consisting of the chief justice, 9 judges, and 2 ex-officio members. The presidents of the High Court and Court of Appeal are organized in 3-, 5-, or 7-judge panels, depending on the importance or complexity of an issue of law. **The Taoiseach and Cabinet nominate judges**, who are then appointed by the President. The chief justice serves in the position for 7 years and judges can serve until age 70. **Subordinate courts include the** High Court, the Court of Appeal, circuit and district courts, and criminal courts. (https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/field/judicial-branch)

5.4 – Political Parties

Ireland hosts a variety of political parties, and coalition governments are a common feature of its political landscape. The two historically dominant parties, Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael, originated from a split within the original Sinn Féin. Fine Gael is the successor of Cumann na nGaedheal, the faction

that supported the 1921 Anglo-Irish Treaty, while Fianna Fáil was established by members of the anti-Treaty faction who opposed Sinn Féin's abstentionism. This division over the Treaty also led to the Irish Civil War (1922–23), and the enduring distinction between the parties has been characterized as "Civil War politics," contrasting with a more typical left-right political spectrum. Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael are sometimes derogatorily referred to collectively as "FFG."

As of 2023, Fianna Fáil and Sinn Féin share the highest representation in Dáil Éireann, with Fine Gael following closely in third place. The Green Party overtook the Labor Party in 2020. The Labor Party, founded in 1912, had traditionally been the third-largest party but currently ranks fifth in the Dáil, closely followed by the Social Democrats.

The Electoral Commission, established under the Electoral Reform Act 2022, maintains the Register of Political Parties. Prior to the Commission's formation in 2023, the Houses of the Oireachtas managed this register. To register for national elections, a party must have at least one member in Dáil Éireann or the European Parliament or 300 recorded members aged 18 or over. Parties registering solely for elections in a specific part of the state or for local elections need only 100 recorded members aged 18 or over. In either case, at least half of the recorded members must be on the register of electors.

Section 6: Political Economy

The Republic of Ireland has a mixed economy, meaning private initiatives are preferred to operate in the free market. Still, the government heavily regulates the market, intervening to ensure the best benefit for the state.

In the post-Cold War period, Ireland's economy grew rapidly from the 1990s to 2007 due to investment by U.S. technology companies. With high growth came high inflation, and the housing market became overpriced in Dublin compared to the rest of the country. Heavy investment by technology companies means Ireland's GDP (gross domestic product) is skewed in that direction, masking the country's gross national income. At the same time, Ireland became one of the wealthiest countries in the OECD, ranking 4th in gross national income. GNI is a better measure of Ireland's economy than its GDP, as it excludes the results of U.S. tech investment. The Economist found that Ireland ranks as having one of the best quality of life ratings in the OECD.

The imbalance between the technology sector and other sectors of the economy led to a downturn in housing purchases due to inflation, causing residential property construction to drop and unemployment to begin rising due to the recessionary ripple effect. Upwards of 6.8% of the population was living below the poverty line, and more were at risk of becoming impoverished.

In 2008, Ireland's economy tanked. It suffered through a

bank crisis followed by a housing crisis, which mirrored the United States's recessionary spiral. Ireland had an over-supply of housing stock and too few buyers. Yet, the banks financed Irish land speculators, adding up to some 28% of bank lending, three percent larger than Japan's construction lending before its 1989 bank crash. This equaled the total of all public deposits at the time. If loans had been called in, Ireland would not have been able to pay its debts. (Wikipedia Contributors 2024: CCbyNC, SA, revised, remixed, and reused by Cheryl Van Den Handel)

The Irish government instituted the National Recovery Plan in November 2010 to bring its debts down and its deficits aligned with the European Union's 3% ceiling. An overall reorganization of the tax structure, increasing taxes, and reducing government spending brought the budget deficit from 35.2% of GDP in 2010 to 5.7% of GDP in 2013. Government debt had risen to 120% of GDP in 2013, but by 2023, the debt load had decreased to 42.8%. Beginning in 2014, housing stock in Dublin started to increase in price as demand exceeded supply. That year, Ireland's economic growth rate was 4.2%, better than the rest of the E.U (Ihle, 2008).

Corporate tax rates were reduced to almost zero to encourage investment during the crisis, leading to 80% of the economic recovery due to multinational technology companies' growth. This prompted U.S. investors to use Ireland as a tax haven. The Obama Administration countered

the tax-inversion scheme to prohibit U.S. companies from hiding their income in Ireland from U.S. taxes (Carswell, 2016). Other countries followed suit. Ireland's recovery from the crisis proceeded in a positive direction from 2014 to 2023 and is projected to continue steadily.

Exports are a large part of Ireland's economy after the tech sector. It is one of the world's largest exporters of pharmaceuticals, medical equipment, and related software. Because pharmaceuticals are multinational companies, any slight upturn or downturn in exports distorts GDP (McCall, 2024). Significant discoveries of some base metals, such as zinc-lead ores, have led Ireland to become the seventh-largest exporter of zinc in the world and the twelfth-largest exporter of lead concentrates. It is the largest producer of zinc in Europe and the second largest producer of lead concentrates (Irish National Resources, 2008).

Section 7: Foreign Relations

In the comparative view of foreign affairs, foreign policies can be studied within a country over time, at a specific time in history, or comparatively between countries. Unlike international relations, the purpose is not to study the relationship between countries, but to compare policies and actions through most similar systems or most different systems of analysis (Government of Ireland).

Ireland's foreign affairs are conducted through the Office of the Taoiseach. It has been a member of the European Union for 50 years, joining the European Economic Community (ECC) in 1973. The Irish mission to the EU is in Brussels and encourages representatives from across the social, political, and economic spectrum to participate. Ireland's foreign policies are the same as those in the European Union. For example, Ireland does not levy sanctions on other countries but joins E.U. and U.N. sanctions regimes. Penalties for breaches of sanctions are statutory. The Department of Foreign Affairs is responsible for maintaining communications with the E.U. and the U.N., representing Ireland in numerous committees and working groups. The department also communicates regularly with individuals who are on the restricted list. Those individuals can appeal their restricted status to the Council of the E.U. Within the E.U. sanctions regimes, states must have a set of three competent authorities. Ireland's three authorities handling areas of the sanctions regimes are The Department of Foreign Affairs, The Department of Enterprise, Trade, and Employment, and the Central Bank of Ireland (Government of Ireland, 2004).

The Joint Committee on European Union Affairs conducts the Oireachtas' oversight function in this regard. It considers EU-related bills and motions, conducts various council meetings, invites witnesses and experts on important issues, and oversees cross-sectional policy matters, among other oversights. The committee regularly updates the Oireachtas,

as EU matters are a permanent action item on the houses' agendas (Government of Ireland, 2004).

Section 8:Irish Political Data

This website contains a wide range of data on Irish politics (Muller, Republic of Ireland). It includes national election studies, public opinion, party politics, and legislative texts. "The Irish Politics Data project collects links to datasets, text corpora, and dashboards on Irish politics. The website features polling results, national and cross-national surveys, election results, legislative data, party manifestos, parliamentary speeches, policy agendas, annual reports, and relevant literature from both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. The project aims to guide researchers, policymakers, journalists, and citizens to data and empirical literature on politics on the island of Ireland. Created by Stefan Müller, contributions of data or literature are welcomed (Muller, Stefan Muller)."

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8.

NIGERIA

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Chapter Outline

Why Study this Case?

Nigeria is not a wealthy country, like the United States. It is not a country willing to use its

military and/or economic power to exert its will on others in the way Russia does. Nigeria has not been historically influential, like Great Britain. Even if we compare Nigeria to its African, or even west African counterparts, Nigeria is not the wealthiest country, the most powerful country, or the most democratic country. But Nigeria is, in many ways, a typical African country that is both interesting and important. It is interesting and important because of its size and rate of growth, resources and poverty, history and potential future, and its diverse people and culture. As a continent, Africa is home to 54 distinct and diverse nations. West Africa, as defined by the United Nations, is home to 16 distinct and diverse nations. Nigeria is home to hundreds of different cultures and a quarter of a billion distinct and diverse people. Nigeria is important to study because of both the similarities and differences it shares with other nations in West Africa, Africa, and around the world.

Section 1: Geography and History

Nigeria is in west Africa along the Gulf of Guinea. It borders Benin to the west, Niger to the north, Chad along its northeast corner, and Cameroon along its eastern border. The capital city, Abuja, is located near the center of Nigeria. Lagos, in the southwestern corner, is Nigeria's largest city. It has two major rivers that enter along its western border and eastern border, converge in the south-central part of the country, and exit at a delta in the Gulf of Guinea. Nigeria is rich in natural gas, petroleum, tin, iron ore, coal, limestone, niobium, lead, zinc, and arable land.

Figure 1.1 – Map of Nigeria (https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/nigeria/summaries/)

Figure 1.2 – Administrative Divisions of Nigeria (https://www.cia.gov/static/a390ee3483813d3c95545e73f35e5e2b/Nigeria_Administrative.jpg)

The Nigeria we know today started taking shape in the mid to late 1800s. Yet, the history of the people and cultures that currently live in modern-day Nigeria began long before that. One of the earliest known civilizations in what is now Nigeria was the Nok civilization starting around 1500 B.C.E. The Nok had developed metallurgy by around 200 B.C.E. but are perhaps most known for their large terracotta statutes that date to the early days of their civilization. The Hausa have a recorded history in northern Nigeria dating to about the

9th century C.E. and the Igbo consolidated during the 10th century.

Figure 1.3 – Nok Terracotta Sculpture (https://worldhistorycommons.org/nok-terracotta-sculptures)

Nok Terracotta Sculpture (https://worldhistorycommons.org/nok-terracotta-sculptures)

In the 7th and 8th centuries, Islam spread through the Saraha region of Africa. By the 11th century, Muslim traders were establishing trade routes in the northern part of modern-day Nigeria. Today, Islam is the dominant religion in the northern part of the country.

In the 1500s, the Portuguese were the first Europeans to enter and trade with Nigeria. It was also during this time that the first Nigerians were enslaved as part of the Atlantic slave trade. While slavery was not new to the people of the region, it should be noted that the slavery that existed prior to European enslavement was not race-based nor intergenerational. It was usually based on conquest or was used to punish prisoners. In most cases, too, it was not permanent.

From the 1500s to the 1800s, various groups tried to control different parts of what is now Nigeria. These included both European and African groups. From the mid-1800s until 1903, Great Britain worked to gain sole political control over Nigeria. In 1884, Great Britain officially colonized Nigeria at the Berlin Conference. Great Britain was, eventually, able to garner control by establishing a federal system that granted limited autonomy within various regions.

After World War II, the European countries began to give up their colonial control over most of the countries they had colonized in Africa and Asia. Nigeria gained political independence from Great Britain and the First Republic was established in October of 1960. Between 1960 and 1999, Nigeria experienced civil wars, military coups, and rise and

fall of three republican governments. In 1999, the fourth and current republic was established and has been maintained to this day. It has even seen the peaceful transition of power from one party to another in 2015.

1500s B.C.E.	Nok empire forms.
1100s B.C.E.	The Hausa kingdom forms in the north; Oyo kingdom forms in the southwest.
1000s	Muslims traders establish trade routes in the north.
1472	Portuguese arrived in the south.
1861-1914	Britain establishes control.
1960	Nigerian independence and the First Republic.
1967-1970	Civil War.
1976	Olusegun Obasanjo comes to power and begins transition to civil rule.
1979	The Second Republic is established.
1983-1993	Military rule regains power.
1993	Transition to civilian rule; Third Republic fails; Sani Abaca seizes power.
1995	Ken Saro-Wiwa is executed.

1998	Abacha dies and is succeeded by Abdulsalami Abubakar.
1999	Fourth Republic established; Obasanjo is elected president.
2007	Obasanjo steps down; Umaru Yar'Adua comes to power through a fraudulent election.
2009	Boko Haram begins insurgency in the north.
2010	Vice President Goodluck Jonathan becomes president after Yar'Adua dies.
2014	Boko Haram kidnaps 200 schoolgirls.
2014-2016	The Nigerian government works with neighboring nations to greatly decrease Boko Haram's power and influence.
2015	Muhammadu Buhari is elected president in a peaceful transition from one party to another.
2023	Bola Tinubu is elected president.

Table 1.1 – Nigeria Timeline (created by Matthew Schuster)

Section 2: Ethnic, Religious, and Cultural Identity

Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa and is the world's sixth largest country by population behind India, China, the United States, Indonesia, and Pakistan. Current estimates are that Nigeria's population will surpass Pakistan and Indonesia by 2050 when its population is projected to reach 392 million people. This growth is expected in part due to the age demographics within Nigeria and its high birth rate. The median age in Nigeria is 19 years old. Nigeria has one of the top twenty birth rates in the world with approximately 38 births per year per 1,000 people. Life expectancy at birth is 60 for males and 64 for females. This ranks Nigeria near the bottom of countries in the world in terms of life expectancy.
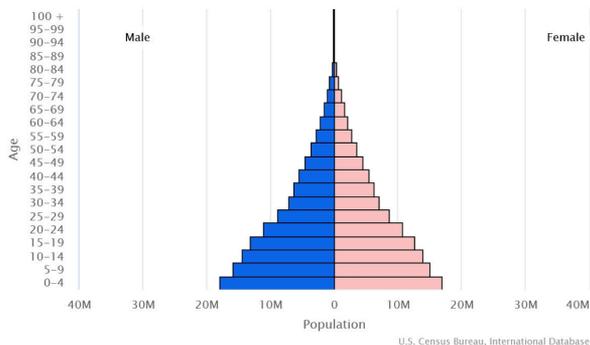
Figure 2.1: Population Pyramid for Nigeria – 2022 (https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Population-Pyramid-of-Nigeria-Source-US-Census-Bureau-International-Data-Base_fig2_366622586).

Like most African countries, Nigeria is composed of diverse ethnic, religious, and linguist groups. About 30% of Nigerians identify ethnically as **Hausa**; about 16% identify as **Yoruba**; about 15% identify as **Igbo** (Ibo); about 6% identify as **Fulani**; about one-third of the population come from a group that make up less than 3% of the overall population. These ethnic divisions are
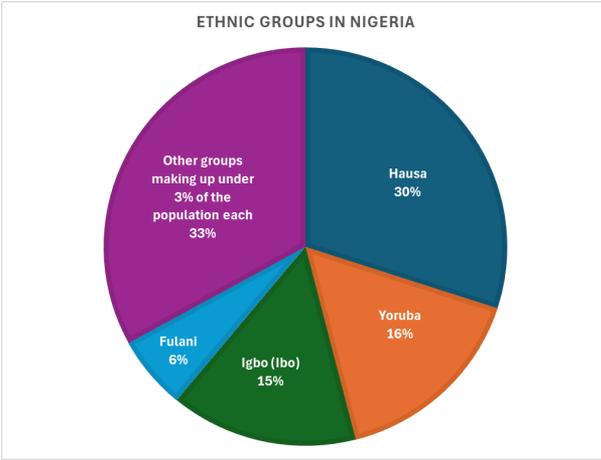
Figure 2.2 – Ethnic Groups in Nigeria (created by Matthew Schuster)

Figure 2.3 – Ethnic Map of Nigeria (Central Intelligence Agency, CIA *Source: Univ of Texas Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection)

Like most formerly colonized nations, Nigeria's borders do not neatly or logically align with its ethnic divisions. Colonizing nations frequently drew borders to place people of the same ethnic groups in multiple countries and to group people of diverse ethnic groups into the same country to make them easier to control. This is easy to see by looking at the three largest ethnic groups in Nigeria. The Hausan are located predominantly in Northeastern Nigeria as well as neighboring Niger. The Yoruba are located predominantly in the southwest as well as in neighboring Benin and Togo. The Igbo (Ibo) are located predominantly in the southeastern part of Nigeria as well as in neighboring Cameroon. While the British colonized Nigeria, France colonized neighboring Niger, Chad, and Benin. Germany colonized Cameroon until after WWI when France and Great Britain controlled it. While France and Great Britain competed and had different styles of colonization, they also worked together to draw borders of the countries of west Africa to make resistance to their colonization more difficult.

Religious divisions are also prominent in Nigeria. Approximately 53.5% of Nigerians are Muslim, 10.6% are Roman Catholic, 35.3% are some other Christian denominations, and about 0.6% follow various indigenous beliefs. The Muslim population is found primarily in the northern part of Nigeria with the Christian population living predominantly in the southern part of the country.

English is the official language in Nigeria and is used

by over 50% of the population. English is used in official documents and is the primary language used in mass communication. Despite this, it is not the most common language spoken in Nigerian households. Approximately 31% of the population speaks Hausan as their primary language, 17% use Yoruba, 13% use Igbo, and only 7% speak English as their primary language in the home. Over 500 other languages are also used as people's dominant languages. The map below shows the historic dominant linguistic/cultural groups by region.

The ethnic, religious, and linguistic diversity in Nigeria have often created sources of tension but could also serve as a source of strength in several different ways. With diversity, comes diverse ideas and values. If properly encouraged and supported, this could enable a marketplace of ideas where the best ideas rise to the top to serve the good of all. With diversity can also come a natural system of checks and balances. Historically, Nigeria has often struggled to maximize the benefits of this diversity but has at times been able to do so to various degrees.

Section 3: Political Culture and Civil Society

Nigerian political culture and civil society are shaped by Nigeria's size, geographic diversity, ethnic and religious diversity, resources, as well as its colonial and post-colonial history. All these factors have come together to create a country with a history full of strife but also potential.

Nigeria's diversity is both deep and broad. The northern half of Nigeria is predominantly Muslim. It is also predominantly Hausa and Fulani ethnically. The southern half is predominantly Christian and animist religiously. Ethnically, the south is divided ethnically. The southeast is predominantly Igbo while the southwest is predominantly Yoruba. While these divisions are generally true, they are also imperfect and a vast oversimplification–especially given the existence of over 250 other ethnic groups in Nigeria.

Geographic differences also continue to shape Nigeria's political culture and civil society. The Niger delta is along the southern coast of Nigeria. The Niger delta is where most of Nigeria's oil is concentrated. From east to west, the central swath of Nigeria is predominantly savanna/farmable land. The northern strip of Nigeria is steppe/desert. The northeastern corner, mostly desert, contains land that formerly bordered Lake Chad which is disappearing due to climate change and population pressures.

The largest city in Nigeria, Lagos, is in the southwestern part of the country. Lagos is not only the most populous city in Nigeria, it is also the most populous city in Africa and one of the most densely populated cities in the world. It is projected to be the sixth most populous city in the world by 2050. Lagos is divided religiously and ethnically. While predominantly Christian, it also contains a large Muslim population. While predominantly Yoruba, Lagos is like most large metropolitan areas; it is a cosmopolitan city with hundreds of other ethnic groups.

Politically, Nigeria is a federal republic made up of 36 states–none of which align neatly with any specific geographic regions, religious groups, or ethnic groups. Historically different regions in Nigeria have had different sets of rules and levels of power. Under British rule, for example, the northern region was granted relative autonomy and allowed to practice Sharia in non-criminal law. This enabled Great Britain to maintain some control but created divisions among different ethnic groups.

Nigerian diversity is not just broad and deep, it is also dynamic. The breadth and depth can be seen simply by considering how religious, ethnic, and economic regions are not aligned. The dynamism is evident by considering the growth of large cities, especially Lagos, the changing role of oil in the world, and the climate and population stresses throughout Nigeria, especially near Lake Chad. As these changes have occurred, people have migrated throughout

Nigeria making any generalizations about Nigeria's diversity incredibly difficult if not impossible.

This diversity within Nigeria has been both a source of conflict but also an opportunity for potential. Nigeria is home to hundreds, if not thousands, of NGOs ranging from human rights organizations, religious missions, transnational corporations, and terrorist groups, most famously **Boko Haram**, all looking to have influence on a growing nation.

With its history of political instability, at least until the establishment of the Fourth Republic, including military dictators, religious and economic divisions, economic struggles despite vast resources, and the socially conservative role both Islam and Christianity have played, it should not be overly surprising that Nigeria ranks in the bottom half of countries in the world regarding individual freedom and respect for human rights. Freedom House gives Nigeria a score of 44 out of 100 in terms of individual freedom and a rating of "partly free." The Human Rights Index, which measures if "people are free from government torture, political killings, and forced labor; they have property rights; and enjoy the freedoms of movement, religion, expression, and association" gives Nigeria a score of .65 on a zero to one scale. The application of human rights is far from universal within Nigeria. Women do not have the same sexual freedom as men with abortion being a criminal act. Members of the LGBT community also lack the same sexual and identity rights as straight and cisgendered Nigerians. Even though freedom of

speech, the press, and religion are all constitutionally protected in Nigeria, there has been a history of government control of the press and limitations on what people are able to post online within Nigeria.

Despite these problems, Nigeria has had relative political stability under the current democratic constitution since 1999. While diversity can bring conflict, it can also bring political stability. Since 1999, Nigeria has witnessed five peaceful elections including in 2015 when it saw a peaceful transition of presidential control from one political party to an opposition party. Peacefully transitioning power from one political party to another is always a major test for the strength and stability of a young republic.

Section 4: Political Participation

Nigeria currently has a multi-party system with members from eight different parties making up the current (2024) congress. Despite this, there are two dominant political parties: the All Progressives Congress (APC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP). These parties do not fit nicely along a traditional left-right ideological spectrum. Instead, they are more consistent with regional, ethnic, and religious divisions. The

APC draws most of its support from the southern Christian population while the PDP draws most of its support from the northern Muslim population. While these divisions are still generally true, they have become less salient in recent years. Historically, more than two parties were dominant and they were often more organized around ethnic divisions than regional or religious divisions.

Political parties organized primarily along ethnic lines began to form during the colonial era and continued during the First Republic (1960 to 1966). Political parties were banned under the military rule until 1976 at which point the military leader General Olusegun Obasanjo legalized political parties and around 150 parties quickly formed. During the Second Republic (1979 to 1983) the constitution required successful presidential candidates to win 25% of the votes in at least two-thirds of the states. This was an attempt to help create national political parties at the expense of regional parties. From 1983 to 1993, Nigeria experienced military rule once again and during the first two years of that rule, political parties were banned. In 1985, Babangida established a two-party system–one to be slightly left of center and one slightly right of center. He then called for an election to hand power over to a democratically-elected, puppet leader. The winner of the 1993 election, a southern Christian was victorious. This marked the beginning, and end of the Third Republic. The northern military rulers declared the election void and would maintain power until another election could happen in 1996. The

military leader at the time, General Sani Abacha, called for new elections in 1996. Abachi was nominated by all five of the newly created political parties and, unsurprisingly, Abache won the election. Abacha's successor, Abdulsalami Abubakar, called for new elections in 1999 creating the Fourth (and current) Republic. Nine parties with national support were allowed to participate but only the three with the most support were able to participate in national legislative and presidential elections. The three parties represented the three largest ethnic/regional groups: The People's Democratic Party represented the northern Hausa, the All People's Party represented the eastern Ibo population, and the Alliance for Democracy represented the western Yoruba population. Throughout the Fourth Republic, the parties have evolved in name, number, and platforms. They have also evolved to be less based on ethnic grounds and more along religious/regional grounds.

Nigeria utilizes a presidential system where the president is elected separately from the legislature, the National Assembly. The National Assembly is composed of two bodies: the House of Representative and the Senate. Both the president and members of both chambers are elected on the same four-year cycle. To ensure the president has national support, the winner of the election must receive a majority of the votes as well as one-fourth of the votes in at least two-thirds of the 36 states. If no candidate meets the requirements on the first ballot, a second election is held one week later with only the top two

candidates from the first election appearing on the ballot. To ensure that no region would dominate presidential elections, every two terms parties must rotate regions from which they nominate candidates. In other words, the northern-dominant PDP cannot nominate northern candidates for more than two terms in a row and the southern-dominant APC cannot nominate southern candidates for more than two terms in a row. This process is known as **zoning**. The 360 seats in the House of Representatives are elected by single-member districts. The 109 seats in the Senate are elected by single-member districts with each state getting three districts.

Partly due to its strong regional and ethnic divisions, Nigeria has a long history and tradition of political activism forming along specific interest/identity political lines. Interest groups in Nigeria range from national groups that work with NGOs and IGOs to regional groups centered around the protection of ethnic minorities. Perhaps the most famous of these was the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP). In the 1990s, under the leadership of **Ken Saro-Wiwa**, MOSOP fought for the interests of the Ogoni in the Niger Delta as foreign interests, especially the Royal Dutch Shell company, profited from the region's rich oil reserves. Shell worked with the military government at the time to have Saro-Wiwa and eight others arrested, tortured, and hanged.

While regional interests and violent interests still exist in Nigeria, so too do national interests and peaceful interests. Even before the Fourth Republic, but increasing since its

formation, these groups have worked independently and with IGOs to promote economic development, democracy, and human rights.

Section 5: Political Institutions

The current Nigerian constitution, adopted in 1999 which established the Fourth Republic, created a presidential system with power shared between the National Assembly, the presidency, and courts. Executive power is vested in the presidency, legislative power rests with the National Assembly, and judicial power resides in the court system. These three divisions of power serve as checks on each other to balance power. Power is further divided between the national government and 36 state governments in a federal system of power that is common in large, diverse nations.

5.1: Federalism

Part one of the constitution creates the federal system with 36 states as well as 768 local government areas. As is common in federal systems, the power between states as well as the power between the states collectively and the national government has varied over time in Nigeria. These variations have been exacerbated because of highly unequal resource distributions,

such as large oil reserves in the Niger Delta region, as well as the religious and ethnic differences that have long defined Nigeria's history and culture. While the national government has supremacy power over the states in Nigeria, the role of the 36 states is fundamental in shaping the National Assembly, the presidency, and the court system. All three branches of the national government take their shape by the actions within the 36 states.

5.2: National Assembly

Part two of the constitution defines the powers of the national government. The National Assembly is the legislative branch of government charged with writing the laws for the nation. The National Assembly is a bicameral legislature containing the Senate (the upper house) and the House of Representatives (the lower house). All members in both chambers are elected to four-year terms with elections taking place for all members on the same day as the presidential election. The Senate is composed of 109 seats. Each of the states gets three senators with one additional senator representing the federal district of Abuja, the capital of Nigeria. The House of Representatives is composed of 360 members drawn from 360 districts based on population. With National Assembly elections coinciding with presidential elections, single-party rule is common in Nigeria. Historically,

this has meant that the National Assembly generally supports the president's agenda.

5.3: The Presidency

Throughout Nigeria's history, most of the political power has been vested in the executive branch. Since independence in 1960, sixteen men have held power and served as Nigeria's head of state. Some of these men have come to power as a result of a military coup, some have been appointed by outgoing military dictators, some have been indirectly elected, some have been directly elected by the people, and one was a Vice President who came to power after the president's death. The First Republic established a parliamentary system with an indirectly elected head of state, Prime Minister Abubakar Rafawa Balewa, in 1960. Most heads of state to follow, from 1966 to 1999, came to power as the result of military coups with the exceptions of Shehu Shagari in 1979 who was elected during the Second Republic and Ernest Shonekan who was appointed during the short-lived Third Republic in 1993.

Nigeria has had five presidents during the Fourth Republic (See table 1). Of these five, they have come from four different ethnic groups. Three have been Muslim while two were Christian. The first three were from the People's Democratic Party while the last two, including the current president, have come from the All Progressives Caucus. Three of the presidents won reelections to second terms and one, Umaru

Yar-Adua, died in office. Along with being the head of state, the president nominates his running mate who becomes the vice president. The vice president assumes office if the president dies–as happened in 2010 when President Yar-Adua died and then Vice President Goodluck Jonathan became president. The President also appoints the ministers of the Federal Executive Council, or cabinet. The Federal Executive Council oversees the implementation of the laws of the national government and is composed of 46 different agencies. The constitution requires at least one minister be appointed from each of Nigeria's 36 states to help avoid regional favoritism.

President	Years in Office	Ethnicity	Religion	P
Olusegun Obasanjo	1999-2007	Yoruba	Christian	P
Umaru Yar'Adua	2007-2010	Fulani	Muslim	P
Goodluck Jonathan	2010-2015	Ijaw	Christian	P
Muhammadu Buhari	2015-2023	Hausa	Muslim	A
Bola Ahmed Tinubu	2023-present	Yoruba	Muslim	A

Table 5.1 – Presidents of Nigeria since 1999 (Created by the Author)

5.4: The Courts

For most of Nigerian history, the courts have had strong ties to those in political power. Perhaps the most corrupt example of this was the trial and execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa and other activists in 1994 which was discussed earlier in this chapter. Since 1999, though, with the creation of the Fourth Republic, the courts have become more independent and have helped keep some political corruption in check. Since the beginning of the Fourth Republic, the court system has utilized a combination of British common law which is used primarily for its criminal code, customary law which helps preserve the values of its diverse ethnic groups, and Sharia law, predominantly in the northern part of Nigeria, for personal and family matters.

The court system in Nigeria is composed of four tiers. The top tier is the Supreme Court, The Supreme Court is composed of one chief justice and up to 21 other justices as determined by the National Assembly. Justices are appointed by the president and confirmed by the Senate. They must be qualified to practice law in Nigeria for 15 years before being appointed to the Supreme Court and must retire at age 70. The second tier is a court of appeals. The third tier is the lowest level of federal courts. The fourth tier are all the state courts

that are not part of the federal court system. Court cases can be appealed from lower courts to higher courts.

Section 6: Political Economy

Like many emerging economies, Nigeria's political economy is complex and not easily classified. Nigeria has a mixed economy with certain sectors being heavily privatized, but it also includes numerous public sector activities. With its large, young, and diverse population, diverse geographic regions, and diverse resources, the economy has also proven to be, and will likely continue to be, in a state of relative flux.

The one constant throughout Nigeria's history over the past 100 years has been how it has experienced a **resource curse**, i.e., the economic underperformance of a country despite having large quantities of natural resources. Nigeria is rich in oil, natural gas, tin, iron ore, coal, timber, agricultural land, and the potential for tourist destinations. Despite these riches, Nigeria has remained a relatively poor nation. What wealth and economic growth it has experienced has been poorly distributed among the population.

Like many nations which have experienced a resource curse, Nigeria's experiences go back to the days of colonization under British rule. British interest in Nigerian oil began in 1914 with the declaration that all oil in Nigeria belonged to the British crown. In 1938, Great Britain granted a monopoly

to Shell D'Arcy — renamed Shell-BP in the 1950s. Under that monopoly, the company kept 50% of its profits with the British government getting the other 50%. By the early 1960s, other companies, Gulf, Mobile, and Texaco, also began purchasing concessions to profit from Nigeria's oil reserves.

This colonial history of oil wealth as a source of power has limited Nigeria's potential to this day. It limited economic growth under British colonization as well as under military dictatorship and all four eras of democratic republics. With most of Nigeria's oil reserves in just a few south-western states, in and around the Niger Delta region, federalism has never been able to be leveraged to benefit most Nigerians. Military dictators who controlled oil, generally used it for their own benefit. It has only been under the current republic that this has started to change — though that change has been slow to materialize.

Due to Nigeria's oil reserves, Nigeria was invited to join the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and become its eleventh member-state, and first in sub-Saharan Africa, in 1971. It has been an influential member since then despite Nigeria's internal political changes.

While oil exports have been a driving force for economic expansion throughout Nigerian history, even if that expansion has not benefited all Nigerians, Nigeria has also worked, with mixed results, on following an **import-substitution** model of development. That is, Nigeria has restricted global competition to favor local industries. Even before

independence in 1960, several local colonial governments worked to develop economically using their own resources. Throughout the 1970s, cement, oil, steel, iron, and a few other industries were the focus of this economic approach. Cement was the only industry that was truly successful at achieving the goals of the import-substitution model. From 2012 to the present, the government has encouraged more industrial production within Nigeria with, again, mixed success.

There have been three major political contexts/time periods that have shaped Nigeria's economy: colonization, instability between the end of colonization and rise of the Fourth Republic, and the Fourth Republic. During the Fourth Republic, Nigeria experienced broad economic growth (about 7% annually) from 2000 to 20014. This was due primarily to favorable global conditions. From 2014 to 2023, however, due to monetary and exchange rate policy distortions, increased deficits, increased protectionism, and the COVID-19 pandemic, Nigeria has experienced a sluggish economy and increased poverty. In May 2023, the Tinumu administration enacted several changes that have been designed to help improve economic growth. While these changes seem to be working, how sustainable they will be is still to be determined.

Section 7: Foreign Relations

While Nigeria gained independence from Great Britain in 1960, it has remained part of the commonwealth. This link to Great Britain shaped Nigeria's role in the world during the first half of the Cold War aligning it with the United States and the west. Nigeria moved toward **nonalignment** during the 1967-1970 Nigerian civil war. During that war, Biafra, in the southeastern part of Nigeria, tried to gain independence. The western allies sympathized with Biarfan independence and did not provide arms to the rest of Nigeria. Despite the lack of support, Nigeria was able to maintain the Biafra region. Throughout the 1970s, Nigeria provided material and diplomatic support to a number of anti-colonial, pro-Communists movements throughout Africa without fully breaking from its western ties.

Nigeria's role in the rest of the world can best be understood as a series of concentric circles. With Nigeria itself as the innermost circle and West Africa the next largest circle represented by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). ECOWAS was established in 1975 and consists of 16 member states. While the ECOWAS was created to integrate and grow the economies of the 16 member states, perhaps its most evident function has been helping to limit conflict when it occurs. Nigeria is by far the largest member of ECOWAS in terms of population and wealth. With its size and wealth, Nigeria has played an outsized role in supporting peace

in the region. Nigeria has dispatched peacekeeping troops to Liberia, Sierra Leone, Côte d' Ivoire, Togo, and Mali.

Globally, Nigeria has sent peacekeeping forces to Lebanon and along the India-Pakistan border. Much of Nigeria's political and moral authority was harmed in the mid-1990s with the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa. Nigeria was suspended from the Commonwealth for three years. Nigeria's future role in the world, Africa, and West Africa will depend on several key variables including its own political stability, the influence oil and wealth from oil will have on Nigeria, Nigeria's population, and climate change.

While Nigeria has now experienced over a quarter of a century of political stability under the Fourth Republic, including the secession from one political party to another, the future is far from certain. According to Transparency International, Nigeria ranks 145th out of 180 nations in terms of political corruption as of 2023. Like many African countries, this corruption dates to and is a result of colonization. Regardless of the cause, Nigeria will need to overcome political corruption to reach its full potential.

Related to political corruption, and a common theme throughout Nigerian politics and history, is oil. Nigeria's oil reserves make it the leading oil producer in Africa. Nigeria's future will depend in part on how, if at all, it is able to overcome the resource curse and utilize oil for the good of its people. While Nigeria receives the benefits of being an OPEC

nation, those benefits, like its oil reserves in general, are not equitably enjoyed by the Nigerian people.

Nigeria's large and growing population could also have positive and negative effects on Nigeria's future. A large population, if properly empowered, could prove to be a productive asset for Nigeria. On the other hand, a large population, if not nurtured could create financial and ecological strains on the country. Like many, if not most, emerging countries, Nigeria has faced problems related to climate change even though the people of Nigeria have contributed relatively little to creating the problems associated with climate change. The drying up of Lake Chad and changes to farming patterns have already made life in Nigeria more difficult. As the world transitions away from oil and other fossil fuels, Nigeria will have to deal with the potential decline in a source of its revenue, even if that revenue has rarely been the benefit it could have been.

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9.

CUBA

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Chapter Outline

Why Study this Case?

Located between the U.S. and Latin America, Cuba has a colorful, yet misunderstood history. Since gaining independence in 1902, Cuba experimented with different types of political systems, from presidential democracy, to semi-presidential democracy, interspersed with episodes of revolution and authoritarianism. In 1959, Cuba became the focal point of the Cold War in the Western Hemisphere, providing the U.S. with a Soviet satellite 90 miles from its coasts.

Over three decades after the fall of communism in Central and Eastern Europe, Cuba's

dictatorship persists. Today, 65 years later, it remains the longest dictatorship in Latin America, and one of the longest in world history. Some scholars of comparative politics omit it as a case study, preferring to see it as an outlier. Meanwhile, debates over Cuba's future government fuel hope and uncertainty. The answer to these debates will prove invaluable to the Cuban people, the U.S., Latin America, and the world.

Section 1: Brief History

1.1: Indigenous Groups and Spanish Colonialism

Cuba's early history was defined by three main indigenous groups, the Taino, the Siboney, and the Guanahatabey (Suchlicki 4). While their populations largely dwindled following Spanish colonization, their linguistic, culinary, and other cultural contributions remain today.

Christopher Columbus landed in what became known as

Cuba on October 27, 1492 and declared it "the most beautiful land that human eyes have ever seen." Over the next centuries, Cuba became a focal point of the Spanish Empire's possessions in the Americas. Given its geographic location between the Atlantic Ocean, the Gulf of Mexico, and the Americas, Cuba became a strategic base for Spanish ships traveling to and from Spain from the Americas. In 1562, Spain's King Phillip II declared: "whoever owns the island of Cuba has the key to the New World."

The early 1500s saw the introduction of sugar into Cuba. The crop required extensive labor for its cultivation, and in 1522 the first enslaved Africans were brought to harvest the sugar "zafra," or crop.

As the centuries progressed, Spain faced several challenges for control of Cuba. The island became increasingly coveted by other European powers. In 1762, the English captured Havana and remained there until the following year, when Britain traded Cuba back to Spain for Florida.

As the 18th century came to an end, some scholars began to look at Cuba as a place of its own that was different from Spain. Between 1792-1793, the Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País was founded to study Cuban affairs (Masó 104). By the end of the following century, Spain would lose its Cuban gem.

1.2: Struggle for Independence

The road to independence was highly dependent of political events in Spain and began with a series of conspiracies against Spanish rule (1810, 1811, 1823, 1844). As these conspiracies were harshly and swiftly suppressed by Spanish authorities, many of those who began to identify with a Cuban identity separate of Spain went into exile. Father Félix Varela, a Roman Catholic born in Havana in 1788, went into exile in New York City and St. Augustine. Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda published her antislavery novel, *Sab*, in Madrid in 1841.

On October 10, 1868, Cuban landowner Carlos Manuel de Céspedes freed his slaves and called on Cubans to take up arms, beginning the Ten Years' War (1868-1878) (Estenger 178-179). In 1869, Cuba's first constitution, the Guáimaro Constitution, was drafted and ratified by Cuban rebels and entered into force. During this decade, Cuban exiles moved to cities like New York, Key West, and Tampa, setting up a robust cigar industry in the latter two cities. The War ended with the signing of the Pact of Zanjón between Spain and the Cuban rebels (Márquez Sterling 241). While the War was over, some veterans of the Ten Years' War refused to subscribe to the Pact of Zanjón and continued to fight from 1878 to 1879 in what became known as The Little War.

Cuba's War of Independence began on February 24, 1895 (Portell Vilá 29). While its key leaders José Martí and Antonio Maceo were killed early in the conflict, Cuban rebel forces

continued to fight and set the basis for a future independent republic by drafting various constitutions.

The explosion of the U.S.S. Maine in Havana Harbor on February 15, 1898 signaled American intervention in Cuba. The Spanish-American War begins on April 21st and ended on December 10th with the signing of the Treaty of Paris between the U.S. and Spain. Spain transferred sovereignty of Cuba to the U.S., effectively ending the Spanish Empire. During a short U.S. intervention, Cuba drafted a new Constitution in 1901 and held elections in preparation for the establishment of an independent Cuban republic.

1.3: The Republic of Cuba

The new Cuban republic inaugurated on May 20, 1902 underwent regular elections often marred by political violence and electoral irregularities. Cuba's first political leaders were veterans of Cuba's Wars of Independence. In 1930, professors and students led a rebellion against President Gerardo Machado and his attempts to extend his term in office. Once the students replaced Machado, they were joined by lower-ranking military officers, led by Sergeant Fulgencio Batista (Aguilar 102). The civilian-military struggle would see Batista's influence grow during the 1930s. In 1940, a new Constitution took effect, and the country benefitted from democratic leadership for the next twelve years. However, Batista's 1952 overthrow of President Carlos Prío Socarrás

1952 led to the opposition of different armed groups that waged war against the government throughout the 1950s. In 1959, Batista left office and Fidel Castro, leader of a guerilla movement, took over, establishing a communist-inspired military dictatorship that remains in power.

Section 2: Ethnic, Religious, and Cultural Identity

2.1: Ethnicity

Unlike most other Latin American countries, Spain's conquerors did not establish interethnic relationships with Cuba's native inhabitants. While this type of mestizaje was exceedingly rare, it was much more common for interethnic relationships to emerge between Spaniards and African slaves. This produced a racial hierarchy based not only on race, but also on a person's physical features and skin tone. Racial differences helped establish a racial hierarchy that placed Spanish whites at the top, with lighter skinned Afro-Cubans closer to the top than darker skinned ones.

In the late-19th century, writers like José Martí promoted the idea of a raceless Cuba nation. Yet views on race have continued to prove challenging for Cuba's elites.

2.2: Language

Cuba's official language is Spanish. Yet native and African languages have significantly influenced Cuba's vernacular parlance. Cuba itself, derived from the native *Cubanacan*, joined *huracán*, *bohio*, *caiman*, *tiburon*, *guataca*, *batey*, *ajiaco*, and town names like *Habana*, *Guanajay*, and *Baracoa*.

Additionally, Spanish in Cuba developed to incorporate words of African heritage. *Titingo*, *fufú*, and *cañengo*, are used frequently, as musical terms like *conga*, *guaguancó*, and *timba* became an integral part of an authentic Cuban vernacular form of Spanish.

2.3: Religion

The Catholic Church shaped part of Cuba's religious identity. In the early 1600s, the image of the Virgin of Charity appeared before fishermen at sea, marking the beginning of an unbreakable link between religion and Cuban nationalism. In the 19th century, Father Felix Varela's writings greatly contributed to conceptualizing Cuban nationalism while tying it to a Catholic foundation.

The presence of African slaves and their own polytheistic religious practices gave rise to the syncretism of different religious traditions with Catholicism. These practices are collectively referred to as Santería.

Protestantism made its way to Cuba in the 19th century,

when missionaries from different denominations in the U.S. sought to establish missions on the island. According to Guillermo Cabrera Leiva, "Cuba…became a focus of American religious forces during the last two decades of the nineteenth century. (Cabrera Leiva 46)"

After Cuban independence, "Sephardic Jews from Curaçao, Türkiye, Syria, and other Levantine countries came to Havana, attracted by Cuba's opportunities and common language" (Ezratty 96). The number of Jews in Cuba increased during the 1920s and 1930s, when "a wave of Ashkenazic Jews, escaping European anti-semitism and persecution, enlarged the community, bringing with them religious as well as linguistic and other cultural characteristics" (Ibid.). By 1959, Cuba's Jewish community numbered between 12,000 and 15,000 people (Ibid.).

The first Chinese migrants arrived on June 3, 1847 as "manual laborers hired for eight years to replace black slaves" following the end of the Slave Trade" (Seuc VII). In the 20th century, Cubans of Chinese descent were an integral part of Cuban society.

Traditionally, Cuba has also had a significant Middle Eastern population. Many Middle Eastern migrants arrived in Cuba in the late 19th century, with another significant wave arriving after World War I. These early migrants were referred to as Turks, given that they came from territories formerly under Ottoman control. According to Christian Jimenez, "The result of this modern migration of Arabs resulted in

a population numbering around 50,000 people who created many organizations, businesses, and places of worship in Cuba" (Jimenez para. 8).

2.4: Conflict

Racial conflicts have existed in Cuba since the early colonial period, especially among Cubans of Spanish and African descent. While racial discrimination was not institutionalized in Cuba, and Afro-Cuban independence heroes like Antonio Maceo are celebrated for their bravery and patriotism, it was (and arguably remains) a common occurrence. This racial tension exploded following the creation of the Independent Party of Color (PIC), a political party created by and for Afro-Cubans. The Cuban Congress' subsequent banning of political parties based on race and the PIC's resulting rebellion left between 3,000 and 6,000 Afro-Cubans dead in what became known as the Race War of 1912.

Cuba's dictatorship has historically challenged religious practices. Roman Catholics, Jehovah's Witnesses, and members of other religious denominations were persecuted. Between 1965 and 1968, ministers, seminarians, and laypeople were among those sent to the Military Units to Aid Production (UMAPs) (Ramos 76). Christmas was officially banned from 1969 to 1998. While Pope John Paul II's visit to Cuba was seen as a new era in relations between church and state, religious discrimination persists. Hundreds of priests,

nuns, pastors, rabbis, and laypeople alike have been exiled (D.R.E. 27). This persecution is compounded by the Cuban Communist Party's regulation of religious practices through its Office of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Justice (U.S. Department of State para. 1).

Section 3: Civil Society and Participation

3.1: Political Culture

Despite differences in political systems, Cuba's political culture has been defined by several key characteristics. Ambassador Mauricio Solaún (1998) presented the essence of Cuban political culture through a set of three matrices. It is important to note that, while Solaún studied Cuba's political culture as three different matrices, they are all interconnected and cannot be studied separately from each other.

The first of Solaún's matrices is "the personalismo/machismo/ familismoamiguismo/clientelismo syndrome or matrix" (Solaún 346). Here, Solaún directly linked the role of the individual and his familial and other personal connections in granting him (usually a male given the *machista* component) political power and opportunities. Defining the core element of this matrix, the "personal," Solaún explained: "Personal" means one's own; private interest

or domain. Also, it refers (especially in a hostile way) to an individual's private character, as in the phrase "no need to be personal" (Ibid. 347).

Solaún's "second syndrome or matrix, grounded in folk religiosity, can be called the miraculous/manicheanism/salvationism/messianism" (Ibid. 346).

The third of Solaún's matrices centers around the concept of *choteo*, explaining that "the carnivalistic-*choteo* cultural subethos was relatively very prominent in Cuba" (Ibid. 345-346). Cuban writer Jorge Mañach Robato (1969) defined *choteo* as "Not taking anything seriously (Mañach 17)," "Poking fun at everything" (Ibid.)," "A habit of disrespect (Ibid. 19)," and "A repugnance to all authority (Ibid.)." "The subject of *choteo* is, on the other hand," Mañach concluded, "that which has a precarious or false reputation: that which is discredited (Ibid. 35)." In Cuba, Mañach considerd the development of systematic *choteo* as centered around envy and resentment (Ibid. 76).

3.2: Civil Society

Prior to 1959, Cuba had a flourishing civil society that included independent political parties, religious communities, trade and professional organizations, labor unions, and other nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). The Communist Party of Cuba (PCC) controls the country's political, economic, and social spheres, making an independent civil

society virtually inexistent. According to scholars Lennier López and Armando Chaguaceda, "Since 1997 the Ministry of Justice has blocked the establishment of new civil society organisations (CSOs) with very few exceptions while regulating those that already exist" (López and Chaguaceda para. 1)."

Since the 1960s, mass organizations were created under the ideological and political tutelage of the PCC. Founded in 1948, the Federation of Cuban Women was reorganized in 1960 as the leading forum for women in communist Cuba. Similarly, the Union of Communist Youth (UJC) was founded in 1962 to unite Cuba's youth under the Marxist-Leninist doctrine. Cuba's communist regime also established the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDRs) in 1960. This institutional network of neighborhood committees was established to report on activities considered "counterrevolutionary" while tamping down on dissent. The country's trade unions, the Cuba Workers Federation (CTC) and the Association of Small Farmers (ANAP) also serve to organize workers under a communist structure.

The press is state run, with all media outlets under government and Communist Party Control. *Granma* is the official newspaper of the PCC and was established in 1965. Smaller newspapers cater to specific sectors of society. For example, *Juventud Rebelde* was also established in 1965 as the official newspaper of the UJC, or Union of Communist

Youth, while *Trabajadores*, founded in 1970, is the official newspaper of the CTC.

While the PCC controls the country's "official" and legal civil society institutions, independent civil society organizations have developed in an attempt to provide Cuban citizens with a democratic alternative to the PCC's monopoly on power.

3.3: The Roman Catholic Church

The Catholic Church has been an influential and constant actor in Cuba's civil society since the colonial period. While religion was officially outlawed between 1969 and 1998, the role of the Catholic Church never disappeared. Parish churches, missions, and international faith-based organizations like Caritas Internationalis and Catholic Charities provide much-needed social services like meals, and elderly and child care. In essence, "across the island, bishops, priests, nuns, and lay workers operate Cuba's de-facto social safety net" (Berry para. 5). At the national level, the Conference of Catholic Bishops of Cuba, led by the country's Catholic hierarchy, plays an important role as a mediator between the Cuban government and Cuban citizens.

Protestant denominations also exist in Cuba and carry out activities like those of the Catholic Church. In recent decades, evangelical churches have been established in Cuba. As many of these do not conform with the regime's regulations, several

have been bulldozed, while their pastors and congregations have been harassed, detained, and exiled.

Cuba's religious authorities work closely with religious leaders and laypeople living in exile. Religious orders like the Catholic Sisters of Charity and faith-based aid organizations like the protestant-led Outreach Aid to the Americas (OAA) receive monetary and in-kind donations, which are then sent to Cuba and distributed directly to those in need without government interference.

3.4: Journalism

As freedom of expression and freedom of the press are nonexistent in Cuba, journalists who do not report the PCC's official line are often threatened, harassed, jailed, and exiled. The late-1999s and early-2000s saw the development of independent journalism. Independent journalists would report on international, national, and local events and provided a different news perspective. Benefiting from the development of online news outlets, Cuban independent journalists generally publish their stories abroad on news sites like *Cubanet*, based out of Miami, Florida, and *Diario de Cuba*, based out of Spain. In 2014, Cuban dissident Yoani Sánchez founded *14yMedio*, an online newspaper edited and produced in Cuba. Other independent journalists produce local newspapers and newsletters in different provinces under

the umbrella of the Cuban Institute of Freedom of Expression and the Press (ICLEP).

3.5: Struggling Civil Society

Each year, global index scores indicate the severe weakness of Cuba's civil society. Freedom House classifies Cuba as "not free" and gives it a Global Freedom score of 12/100 and an Internet Freedom score of 20/100 (Freedom House para. 1). According to Transparency International, Cuba had a score of 42 in 2023, with a change of -3 since the previous year, "meaning it ranks 76 out of 180 countries (Transparency International 2023)." Civicus Monitor identifies Cuba's civil society as "Closed," giving it a ranking of 14 out of 100 (Civicus para. 1).

3.6: Underrepresented identities

Several groups have been underrepresented in Cuban civil society throughout the country's history.

3.6.1: Women

Women's systematic and ongoing exclusion from top employment and governmental positions highlights the difficulties that exist in breaking Cuba's glass ceiling. In Cuban society, the heads of the neighborhood Committees for the

Defense of the Revolution were typically women, reinforcing gender stereotypes of women as snitches and nosy neighbors. More prominent women in Cuban politics, like Vilma Espin or her daughter, Mariela Castro, cannot help escaping their family ties to Cuba's ruling clan. Politically, only women who demonstrate party loyalty can hold top offices, which are limited to some ministerial posts, provincial governorships, and membership in the Council of State and the National Assembly.

In recent years, there has been a wave of gender-based violence in Cuba. As of November 2024, 46 women had been killed in the country because of gender-based violence. This number is the sixth highest in Latin America and the Caribbean (Cubanet para. 11).

Interestingly, women have played a central and critical role in antigovernment protests and organizations. In 2003, the Damas de Blanco, or Ladies in White, organized to protest the arrests of their male relatives. Each Sunday, they would attend mass and proceed to march peacefully in Havana while holding flowers. Their activities met with severe police repression. One of their leaders, Bertha Soler, has been detained several times, while another, Laura Pollán, died unexpectedly under mysterious circumstances. In 2005, the European Parliament awarded the Ladies in White the prestigious Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought. Following the nationwide protests on July 11, 2021, Sayli Navarro was arrested and imprisoned for her activism. Other women, like

economist Marta Beatriz Roque, have been released from prison, only to be "regulated," or prevented from leaving the country (Reuters para. 13).

Women artists have also been at the forefront of recent pro-democracy demonstrations. Artists and writers such as Tania Bruguera, Carolina Barrero, Katherine Bisquet, Marialina García Ramos, Omara I. Ruiz Urquiola, and Lia Villares have produced artwork that is deemed "counterrevolutionary" by the Cuban regime and, as such, were subject to persecution and eventually exiled. Other women artists, like poet María Cristina Garrido Hernández, and visual artist Jessica Lisbeth Torres Calvo, were imprisoned.

3.6.2: Afro Cubans

Afro Cuban leaders have also played a central role in promoting human rights and an independent civil society in Cuba. Aside from Berta Soler, who joined the Ladies in White following her husband Angel Moya's arrest, many Afro Cuban men and women have been at the forefront of Cuba's opposition movement. Dr. Oscar Elias Biscet has been a leading human rights activist and received the Presidential Medal of Freedom and a Nobel Peace Prize nomination for his efforts. Among the leading Afro-Cuban activists since 1959, several stand out, including Guillermo Fariñas, Luis García Pérez (Antúnez), Ernesto Díaz Rodríguez, Ignacio Cuesta Valle, Ángel Pardo Mazorra, and Orlando Zapata Tamayo. All

were jailed for their activism and served long prison sentences. Zapata Tamayo died in prison during a hunger strike in 2010.

Young Afro Cuban artists and musicians have also been at the forefront of Cuba's most recent protests. In 2021, Luis Manuel Otero Alcantara, Maykel Castillo Perez (a.k.a. Maykel Osorbo), Denis Solis, Eliecer Márquez Duany (a.k.a. El Funky) performed the song "Patria y Vida" ("Fatherland and Life"), which represents a positive response to Fidel Castro's slogan of "Patria o Muerte" ("Fatherland or Death"). Otero Alcantara, Castillo Perez, and Solis were arrested and are currently serving prison sentences for their activism, while Márquez Duany went into exile.

3.6.3: LGBTQ+

Traditionally, members of the LGBTQ+ community have been ostracized and persecuted in Cuba. Machismo has contributed to the development of a stereotypical Cuban male image, with anything countering it or deviating from it being characterized as "weak," "effeminate," or "gay."

Homosexuals were among the main groups of people sent to the Military Units to Aid Production (UMAPs) between 1965 and 1968. The Cuban regime did not see the LGBTQ+ population as living up to the spirit of the "New Man" that Fidel Castro sought to create following the Revolution. As a result, individuals from this and other communities were sent to these work camps in an attempt to "reform" them.

In 2022, Cuba approved a new Family Code, which

legalized same-sex unions (Asamblea Nacional del Poder Popular 2932). The debate over this issue in the leadup to its passage demonstrated tensions in Cuban society over the issue of LGBTQ+ rights.

3.6.4: Youth

One of Cuba's ongoing challenges is its aging population. With a median age of 39.5 years, Cuba has one of the oldest populations in the Americas. According to Sergio Díaz-Briquets and Elaine Acosta González (2023), "The political and economic developments of the 1960s precipitated several demographic developments with immediate and long-term consequences. The first was the 1960s short-lasting baby boom, when the total fertility rate (TFR), defined as the number of children the average woman will have during her reproductive lifetime, rose by one child per woman (from 3.8 in 1955–60 to 4.7 in 1960–65). This period coincided with the initial postrevolutionary emigration outflows, which would become prominent once again in recent decades. The third would be the post-baby-boom rapid and sustained—although fluctuating—fertility decline, leading to the establishment of a long-term below-replacement fertility regime. Cuba's current TFR stands at 1.4 children per woman, the ultra-low fertility level, and the annual number of births has declined from 125,000 in 2015 to a 2022 historical low of 95,000 births (Díaz-Briquets and Acosta González 3)." The often-stated goal of many young people in Cuba today is to leave the country.

3.6.5: Cuban Civil Society in Exile

When Cubans began leaving the Island in 1959, they brought with them the leadership skills and institutional knowhow to establish a thriving civil society in the Cuban community in the United States and elsewhere. Since then, these civic organizations have been responsible for maintaining Cuban culture and traditions alive while aiding Cubans on the Island and to Cuban immigrants around the world. "The sheer number of civic organizations to be found in the community...suggests that the community's civic organizations have something to do with the considerable vibrancy and civic capacity of the community (Ceresa 4)."

Section 4: Formal Political Institutions

Cuba has been a unitary republic since obtaining independence in 1902. Since 1959, Cuba's government has been characterized as a single-party dictatorship. While it has been driven by a Marxist-Leninist ideology, it was subjected to the personal rule of Fidel Castro for much of its history. At the same time, Castro set up the Revolutionary Armed Forces, headed by his brother Raul Castro from 1959 to 2008, as the backbone of a militarized dictatorship.

The government is divided into two distinct yet overlapping

spheres: the Cuban Communist Party (PCC) and the Government of the Republic of Cuba. The PCC was established on October 3, 1965 and traces its origins to the creation of the first Cuban Communist Party in 1925.

Cuba's single-party system, with the PCC at its head, is constitutionally recognized as the "leading force of society and of the state," and holds significant influence over national policy and governance (Republic of Cuba 1992). The party's leading role was reaffirmed in Cuba's Constitution of 2019, an amalgamation of the ideals of Cuban nationalism inspired by independence hero José Martí, the revolutionary project of Fidel Castro, and the theoretical framework of Marxism-Leninism.

As a single-party state, the Cuban government does not allow for the formation or operation of other political parties. As a result, viable candidates for public office are either members of the PCC or are closely aligned with its ideology. The very few independent candidates who have run for office have been defeated. In 2015, opposition candidates Hildebrando Chaviano and Yuniel López, dissident candidates in that year's municipal council elections, handily lost the elections to PCC candidates (Weissenstein and García para. 3).

4.1: Communist Party of Cuba (PCC)

The PCC's dominance extends to various mass organizations,

such as the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, which play a crucial role in maintaining vigilance against ideological dissent and ensuring societal conformity, the Federation of Cuban Women, which mobilizes Cuban women within the confines of the PCC, and the Union of Young Communists, responsible for molding Cuba's future leaders with the guiding principles of Marxism-Leninism.

The structure of the PCC resembles a pyramid, with the Central Committee, Political Bureau, and the Secretariat at the top. At the apex of the PCC's hierarchy is the Central Committee, which is the highest governing body. The Central Committee includes two crucial sub-entities: the Political Bureau and the Secretariat. The Political Bureau is responsible for making major policy decisions and setting the strategic direction of the party. It is composed of the most senior leaders within the PCC, who are tasked with ensuring that the party's ideology and objectives are upheld.

The Secretariat, on the other hand, manages the day-to-day operations of the party. This body ensures that the decisions made by the Political Bureau are implemented effectively. It oversees various departments and ensures that the party's activities are coordinated across different regions and sectors.

Each province (15) has a provincial committee, and each municipality (168) has a municipal committee, all of which exert control and ensure that local governments meet their obligations. The Congress of the PCC, held every five years, is the most dominant political event in Cuba, setting national

strategic guidelines and programs and selecting the country's executive and legislative leadership.

Constitutionally, Cuba is classified as a Marxist-Leninist socialist republic with semi-presidential powers. The government structure includes the President, who is the head of state, and the Prime Minister, who heads the Council of Ministers. The National Assembly of People's Power, a unicameral legislature, holds the highest authority in the state and is responsible for enacting laws and policies. The President, the Prime Minister, and Ministers serve simultaneously as members of the National Assembly.

4.2: Executive Branch

The government is characterized by its authoritarian nature, where political opposition is not permitted, and the PCC maintains strict control over all aspects of governance. The President, as head of the executive branch, wields significant power by also serving as Chairman of the PCC. While this dual responsibility is not explicit in the Constitution, Fidel Castro established the tradition of joint governmental and party executive leadership. The legislative branch primarily functions to ratify decisions made by the executive. The judiciary, while *de jure* independent, operates *de facto* under the overarching influence of the PCC.

4.3: Legislative Branch

The National Assembly is only in session twice per year, with the Council of State exercising legislative authority throughout the rest of the year. The 21 members of the Council of State are elected by the Assembly.

The 605-member National Assembly of People's Power is the unicameral legislative body in Cuba and holds significant authority. Members of the National Assembly, known as deputies, are elected by the public in general elections. These elections are held every five years, and all Cuban citizens over the age of 16 are eligible to vote. The candidates for the National Assembly are nominated by local assemblies and mass organizations, ensuring that they represent a broad spectrum of Cuban society as defined by the PCC.

Once elected, the deputies of the National Assembly have the responsibility of selecting the President and other key officials. This body also enacts laws, approves the state budget, and oversees the work of the government. The National Assembly meets twice a year in regular sessions, but it can also convene in special sessions if necessary.

4.4: Judicial Branch

Since independence, Cuba's judicial system has been based on the Roman, or civil, legal tradition. The judicial branch in Cuba is headed by the People's Supreme Court (*Tribunal*

Supremo Popular), which is the highest judicial authority in the country. The court system includes various specialized courts such as criminal, civil, administrative, labor, and military courts. The People's Supreme Court is responsible for ensuring the uniform application of the law and serves as the final appellate court.

Judges in Cuba are selected by the National Assembly of People's Power and are not subject to specific term limits. The judiciary includes both professional judges and lay judges, and PCC membership is key to the promotion of both. Professional judges are also required to pass an examination and meet specific criteria, including legal experience and citizenship. Lay judges, who serve alongside professional judges, are nominated by workplace collectives and neighborhood associations and serve five-year terms.

Despite the formal structure, the judiciary in Cuba lacks independence and is subordinate to the executive branch. The influence of the PCC extends into the judicial system, affecting the impartiality and fairness of legal proceedings. This subordination is evident in politically sensitive cases, where judicial decisions tend to align with the interests of the state.

Section 5: Political Economy

Cuba's economy is characterized by its communist, state-run, and centralized structures.

In 2020, Cuba's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was estimated at \$107.35 billion, with a GDP per capita of \$9,499.6. In 2022, the GDP growth rate was 1.8% in 2022. The unemployment rate in Cuba is at 1.2% as of 2023. This low unemployment rate can be attributed to the state's dominant role in the economy, providing employment in most sectors.

The Gross National Product (GNP) of Cuba was reported at \$100.93 billion in 2019. GNP includes the value of all goods and services produced by the residents of a country, both domestically and abroad. This indicator provides a broader perspective on the economic activities of Cuban residents.

The Gini coefficient, which measures income inequality, was estimated to be over 0.40 in recent years. This indicates a relatively high level of income inequality within the country, despite its socialist economic structure. Addressing income inequality remains a significant challenge for Cuba's government.

The average monthly income in Cuba varies significantly. In 2023, around 36% of the population had a monthly income lower than \$104, while only 18% earned more than \$417. The average salary is approximately 1,050 Cuban Pesos per month, equivalent to around \$525. These figures highlight the economic disparities within the population.

Remittances to Cuba are estimated to represent about 25% of the country's GDP (Morales para. 6). When including remittances in goods, this figure rises to approximately one-

third of the GDP. This substantial contribution underscores the importance of remittances in supporting the Cuban economy. The inflow of funds from Cuban expatriates, particularly those residing in the United States, provides a vital source of income for many Cuban households. These funds help cover basic needs, improve living standards, and support private sector activities and small businesses.

5.1: Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)

Despite Cuba's centralized economy, the country's leaders have actively sought to promote foreign direct investment (FDI) from different countries, who usually establish joint ventures with Cuban state enterprises. Today, Cuba's main investors are Spain, Canada, Venezuela, Italy and France (Standard Bank Group para. 1).

In 2009, Cuba and Brazil reached an agreement to establish the Mariel Special Development Zone to promote foreign trade and investment. Brazil's Grupo Odebrecht built a new port there, located 45 kilometers west of Havana. In 2023, Cuba saw the creation of 52 foreign businesses, the highest number of foreign investments since the Law of Foreign Investment was passed in 2014 (Xinhua para. 6). These businesses were located at the Mariel Special Development Zone.

5.2: Economic Crisis

Cuba faces a severe economic downturn, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, U.S. sanctions, and internal inefficiencies. The collapse of tourism, inflation, blackouts, and shortages of food, medicine, and basic goods have significantly impacted daily life (Lima para. 5).

Cuba's economic crisis is multifaceted, stemming from both internal influences and external pressures. Cuba's state run political, economic, and social system has stunted its potential for growth, leading to food rationing, inflation, and mass migration.

The U.S. embargo, in place since the early 1960s, continues to be an external factor, restricting trade and investment. Additionally, the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s deprived Cuba of its primary economic supporter, leading to a period known as the "Special Period" that was marked by severe shortages and economic hardship. Yet aid and investment from the European Union and other allies has ensured that the Cuban government reaps the benefits of foreign trade and commerce.

In recent years, the situation has worsened due to several factors. The COVID-19 pandemic severely impacted Cuba's tourism industry, a crucial source of foreign currency. With borders closed and travel restrictions in place, the flow of tourists dwindled, exacerbating the economic downturn.

The first administration of U.S. President Donald Trump

administration tightened sanctions on Cuba, targeting its oil supply and remittances from Cubans abroad. These measures continued under President Joe Biden's administration, further straining the economy. While Venezuela stepped in to Cuba's economic aid following Hugo Chavez's election in 1999, that lifeline has decreased in recent years.

Cuba's centrally planned economy struggles with inefficiencies and corruption. State-owned enterprises dominate the market, often leading to mismanagement and lack of innovation. The dual currency system, with the Cuban peso (CUP) and the convertible peso (CUC), also created economic distortions. The elimination of this dual currency system in 2021 contributed to rising inflation and the further rationing of basic products (Associated Press para. 1).

Section 6: Foreign Relations

For many around the world, Cuba remains a symbol of revolutionary defiance to U.S. hegemony and imperialism." Given that perception, Cuba has fostered relations around the world based on ideology and common animosity to the U.S.

Cuba's foreign policy since 1959 has focused on countering U.S. influence, particularly in Latin America and the Caribbean. Its active opposition to U.S. allies is clear today with its support of Russia in the invasion of Ukraine and with Palestine in the war against Israel (Aljazeera para. 1).

A significant driver of Cuban Foreign Relations is its opposition to the U.S. Cuba's efforts to end the decades-long U.S. embargo has long played a central role in Cuba's foreign policy, extending beyond its relations with the U.S. and involving countries in Latin America, Europe, and other parts of the world.

Ideology has served as a key determinant in Cuba's foreign policy. The Cuban regime tends to establish much stronger relations with countries where like-minded leaders are in office. In Latin America, this was evident in the country's relationship with Venezuela under Hugo Chavez and Nicolas Maduro, Argentina under Néstor Kirchner, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, and Alberto Fernández, Ecuador under Rafael Correa, Brazil under Luiz Ignacio "Lula" da Silva and Dilma Rousseff, Honduras under Manuel Zelaya and Xiomara Castro, Nicaragua under Daniel Ortega, and Bolivia under Evo Morales and Luis Arce. These ideological alliances have allowed it to influence and play a role in regional international organizations.

6.1: International Organizations

As a founding member of the United Nations (UN), Cuba has participated as a member state since 1945. On three occasions, Cuba has been a member of the Security Council, which it has presided six times. At different times, Cuba has actively

participated as a member of the UN's Human Rights Council (formerly the Human Rights Commission).

6.2: Regional Intergovernmental Associations

Cuba is also a founding member of the Organization of American States (OAS). However, Cuba's current government has been denied the right of representation and attendance at meetings and of participation in activities since 1962. The OAS cited that the Cuban regime was "incompatible with the principles and objectives of the inter-American system" (Organization of American States 611).

Cuba is also a member of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) as well as the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA), which it co-founded with Venezuela in 2004. Cuba's involvement in these regional organizations seeks to challenge the U.S.' role in the region while elevating its own standing in the region and in the world.

6.3: Regional and Multilateral Defense Alliances

Cuba has maintained its strategic and military alliance with Russia after the end of the Cold War. In December 2016, Cuba signed military cooperation agreements with Russia,

through which the island nation would receive assistance in modernizing its armed forces (Defensa.com para. 1). In 2017, Cuba and China agreed to reinforce military cooperation among both countries.

In 2023, Cuba and Belarus signed a military cooperation agreement, through which Cuban soldiers were sent to train in Belarus to fight as Russian proxies in the country's invasion of Ukraine (Diario de Cuba para. 1).

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10.

CANADA

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Chapter Outline

Political Map of Canada (MapGrid, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons)

Why Study Canada?

Canada has gained renewed attention recently but there is far more to be studied than the location of the country. Canada is a diverse country that has confronted divisions in areas such as language, migration and economic development. The role of the French language in Canada has generated debate with movements in the province of Quebec periodically seeking Independence. It is a federal nation with provincial conflict over issues of language and energy becoming particular concerns. Internationally it has often been a keen participant in international organizations and been very active in international trade. Studying this federal nation that grapples with complex issues can provide a variety of insights.

Section 1: A Brief History

Canada has a rich and diverse history. The indigenous First Nations people provided the first settlement and French and English people journeyed to the country. Canada gradually gained control over its own affairs with key events such as Confederation in 1867 and the Canadian Charter of Rights in 1982. After Confederation included several initial provinces, new provinces such as Manitoba joined the Dominion of Canada. Newfoundland joined Canada in 1949 after an often tense debate over what direction to take since it had previously had Dominion status. Future Newfoundland Premier Joseph Smallwood waged a tireless campaign for Newfoundland to join Canada As the 1960s began Quebec went through a "Quiet Revolution" and Francophone Quebecois began to advocate for an enhanced role for their language and themselves in society. Conflicts over region and language have impacted and influenced Canadian politics. Recently international trade has taken center stage. Today Canada is a diverse nation with a complex political system.

Canada was initially settled by a variety of first nation groups, many of whom continue to be a presence in the country today. As noted on the Discover Canada website "the Huron-Wendat of the Great Lakes region, like the Iroquois, were farmers and hunters. The Cree and Dene of the Northwest were hunter-gatherers. The Sioux were nomadic, following the bison (buffalo) herd. The Inuit lived off Arctic

wildlife. West Coast natives preserved fish by drying and smoking." (https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/discover-canada/read-online/canadas-history.html). Contact with Europeans would create a difficult and challenging history.

In 1497 the explorer John Cabot began a process of exploration. As noted on the Discover Canada website, "John Cabot, an Italian immigrant to England, was the first to map Canada's Atlantic shore, setting foot on Newfoundland or Cape Breton Island in 1497 and claiming the New Founde Land for England. English settlement did not begin until 1610." (https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/discover-canada/read-online/canadas-history.html). French and British colonization occurred during the 17th and 18th century. The 1763 Treaty of Paris following the French and Indian War put French territories under British control.

The unique role of the future province of Quebec was enshrined in the law. As noted on the Discover Canada website, "To better govern the French Roman Catholic majority, the British Parliament passed the *Quebec Act* of 1774. One of the constitutional foundations of Canada, the *Quebec Act* accommodated the principles of British institutions to the reality of the province. It allowed religious freedom for Catholics and permitted them to hold public office, a practice not then allowed in Britain. The *Quebec Act* restored French civil law while maintaining British criminal law."

(https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/discover-canada/read-online/canadas-history.html).

The Constitution Act of 1791 created the provinces of Upper Canada (later the Province of Ontario) and Lower Canada (later the Province of Quebec. Key events in the early twentieth century includes the War of 1812 which occupies a unique place in Canadian history and a revolt in 1837 and 1838.

The modern Canadian political system largely dates from the Confederation of 1867. The British North America Act created the Dominion of Canada which initially included Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. The Dominion quickly expanded with the additional provinces of Manitoba, British Columbia and Prince Edward Island being added in 1870. In 1905 Alberta and Saskatchewan became provinces of Canada. Newfoundland joined in 1949 as a province as will be explained in more detail below.

Sir John McDonald became the first Prime Minister of Canada in 1867. Late in the twentieth century Sir Wilfred Laurier emerged as a significant Canadian leader and Prime Minister that tried to bridge cultural differences.

In 1931 the British parliament passed the Statute of Westminster which provided dominions such as Australia, Canada and New Zealand "complete autonomy." (https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-16841165). Arrangements were finalized in 1947 although the Canadian

Constitution would not be patriated until 1982 along with the creation of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The center left Liberal Party was dominant in Canadian politics from 1935 to 1957 with Mackenzie King and Louis St. Laurent serving long terms as Prime Minister. During that period Canada began to form an independent foreign policy separate from the United Kingdom.

Canada gained a new province in 1949 with the addition of Newfoundland. Joey Smallwood, who would go to spend more than two decades as the Premier of Newfoundland, spearheaded a move for the crown dependency to join Canada. After contentious debate Newfoundland became part of Canada and Joey Smallwood would go on to dominate provincial politics in Newfoundland as Premier for more than two decades.

The 1957 election of John Diefenbaker brought the center right Progressive Conservative party back to power. Diefenbaker, a rural lawyer from Saskatchewan, was a striking figure in Canadian politics. Perhaps his premier accomplishment was the Canadian Bill of Rights, legislation that helped lay the foundation for the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Diefenbaker had a charismatic personality and won a resounding election victory in 1958 but struggled to implement his agenda.

Taking office with a minority government in 1963 Prime Minister Lester Pearson would prove to be enormously influential during his time in office with measures such as the

creation of the new Canadian flag in 1965 and the Canadian health care system.

During this period tensions between the Francophone Quebecoise and the English speaking population began to increase in Quebec and beyond. This conflict would shape Canadian politics for several decades. The French language and unique culture of Quebec would become subject to a great deal of debate and controversy.

The 1968 election of Liberal Party leader Pierre Trudeau as Prime Minister gave Canada a leader who would have a strong global profile. Trudeau would work to maintain the nation of Canada amidst growing Quebec separatism. Trudeau also worked to patriate the Canadian Constitution from the British parliament.

The creation of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the patriation of the Canadian Constitution represented a significant achievement for Canada in 1982. As Canada worked to articulate an identity and governing structure of its own Prime Minister Trudeau also dealt with the Francophone Quebecoise and the continued rise of Quebec separatism. In 1976 the province of Quebec passed Bill 101 which enshrined the role of the French language. There was a failed independence referendum in Quebec in 1980.

Pierre Trudeau was defeated in 1979 by the Progressive Conservatives led by Joe Clark but regained the office of Prime Minister in 1980 and ultimately retired in 1984 to be briefly

replaced by John Turner. John Turner and the Liberal Party suffered a large defeat in 1984 with the election of a Progressive Conservative government led by Brian Mulroney.

Prime Minister Brian Mulroney's tenure from 1984 to 1993 was dominated by efforts to resolve conflict between Canada and the province of Quebec and to expand trade ties with the United States. In the area of trade he was relatively successful with free trade agreements being signed that culminated in the North American Free Trade Agreement between Canada, the United States and Mexico. Efforts to better incorporate Quebec into the constitution order were less successful with the 1990 failure of the Meech Lake Accord that called for Quebec to be considered a distinct society. Suffering from growing unpopularity amidst a weak economy Brian Mulroney stepped down as Prime Minister in 1993 and was replaced by Canada's first female prime minister Kim Campbell.

Veteran politician and Liberal Party member.Jean Chretien became Prime Minister in 1993 in an election where the governing Progressive Conservative Party was reduced to two seats. Early efforts in the administration to balance the budget by Minister of Finance Paul Martin led to large spending cuts but the budget was brought into balance. The 1995 referendum on independence in Quebec failed narrowly. The North American Free Trade Agreement was implemented.

Conservative Stephen Harper became Prime Minister in 2006. A native of the conservative oil producing Western

province of Alberta, he was seen as more conservative than Progressive Conservative Prime Ministers such as Brian Mulroney. Harper made a concerted effort to master the French language

A political dynasty of sorts occurred in Canada with the 2015 election of Justin Trudeau as Prime Minister. Evoking Sir Wilfried Laurier and his idea of Sunny Ways, Trudeau ascended to the office formerly occupied by his father and quickly gained global stature and attention on issues such as refugees. The election of Donald Trump as President of the United States in 2016 created new challenges for the Center left government in areas such as refugees and trade.

The 2025 resignation of Justin Trudeau as Prime Minister combined with the return of Donald Trump as President of the United States helped lead to the somewhat improbable victory of the Liberal Party in the April 28, 2025 Canadian election. Mark Carney, who had only recently taken over from Justin Trudeau, led a campaign that observers even four months earlier when the Liberal Party badly trailed in the polls would have found improbable. Pierre Poilievre, the Conservative leader many thought would bring populism to Canadian national politics lost his own riding in the 2025 election. Early in his tenure, Carney traveled to Washington DC to meet with President Trump where he clarified the sovereignty of Canada.

Another recent development is a movement in the conservative province of Alberta to secede. A referendum may

be held but actual secession would be a long process. (https://www.nytimes.com/2025/05/22/world/canada/ alberta-separatism-referendum.html)

Canada continues to grow as a nation. The 2021 Canadian census found a population of 36,991,981. (https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/ page.cfm?Lang=E&DGUIDList=2021A000011124&GENDERList=1,2,3&STATISTICList=1,4&HEADERList=0&SearchText=Canada). The estimated population of Canada according to the real time statistical tracker was 41,658,618 as of May 21, 2025. (https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/ 71-607-x/71-607-x2018005-eng.htm)

Section 2: Ethnic, Religious, and Cultural Identity

Canada has a unique combination of different identities. An officially bi-lingual society, Canada has a prominent first nation presence and has experienced a great deal of immigration. The place of the French language in Canada has occupied a great deal of debate

Section 2.1: Ethnic Identity

French, English and First Nation peoples have long been

present in Quebec augmented by large numbers of new immigrants during the twentieth and twenty first centuries. Similar to other Commonwealth nations such as Australia and New Zealand, Canada has both settlers and indigenous people. First Nation people experienced a complicated history with features such as residential schools designed to force assimilation that have not yet been reconciled today. Immigration was restricted in Canada for several decades but in recent decades Canada has had a great deal of immigration in the twentieth century including from countries such as the United Kingdom, Ukraine, India and China.

Ethnic groups

Canadian 15.6%, English 14.7%, Scottish 12.1%, French 11%, Irish 12.1%, German 8.1%, Chinese 4.7%, Italian 4.3%, First Nations 1.7%, Indian 3.7%, Ukrainian 3.5%, Metis 1.5% (2021 est.)

(https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/canada/)

Section 2.2: Religious Identity

Like many developed countries religious practice and observance has declined in recent decades.

The United Church of Canada, which includes four Protestant denominations, for several decades played a major role in Canada. Quebecois and Francophone Canadians have traditionally been closely identified with the Roman Catholic

Church. The Quiet Revolution of the 1960s in Quebec weakened the power of the previously dominant Catholic Church. More recently Muslims and Sikhs among other groups have played a prominent role in Canadian society.

Religions

Christian 53.3%, Muslim 4.9%, Hindu 2.3%, Sikh 2.1%, Buddhist 1%, Jewish 0.9%, Traditional (North American Indigenous) 0.2%, other religions and traditional spirituality 0.6%, none 34.6% (2021 est.)

(https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/canada/)

Section 2.3: Cultural Identity

Several salient cultural identities have emerged in Canada. As a large and diverse nation spread over a very large geographical area, crafting an identity unique to Canada has been a challenge. During the 1960s Canada adopted a unique flag and increased the role of the French language. Regional differences between central and Western provinces, the large and populous Ontario province and the Francophone province of Quebec have occurred. Canada has also experienced a large amount of immigration in the past several decades.

Section 2.4: The Role of the French Language

The role of the French language and of Francophone France in particular

The changing role of the French Language in Quebec. As one reporter notes, "Bill 101, or the Charter of the French Language as it's also known, was introduced by the first-ever Parti Quebecois government, led by then-Premier René Lévesque. It was passed into law on August 26, 1977."

([Fact file: What is Bill 101? – Montreal | Globalnews.ca](#))

French language has become an important part of Canadian politics with Prime Ministers expected to be proficient in both languages. During federal election campaigns debates are conducted in both English and French. Mark Carney was able to win support in Quebec despite lacking the strong French language skills of some other Prime Ministers. (https://www.nytimes.com/2025/04/19/world/americas/canada-carney-quebec-french.html_)

Languages

English (official) 87.1%, French (official) 29.1%, Chinese languages 4.2%, Spanish 3.2%, Punjabi 2.6%, Arabic 2.4%, Tagalog 2.3%, Italian 1.5% (2022 est.)

(https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/canada/)

Section 3: Political Culture and Civil Society

Section 3.1: Political Culture

Several factors influence political culture in Canada including language, traditions from the United Kingdom and the British empire, and geopolitical relations. As a consolidated and enduring democracy free and fair elections are held at every level. The province of Quebec has a unique political culture where the French language and a strong interest in culture are evident. Different provinces such as Quebec and Alberta have some variance in political culture based on a variety of issues

Section 3.2 Civil Society

Despite scoring very high on measurements of democracy and civil rights and liberties, problems remain. As Freedom House notes, "Canada has a strong history of respect for political rights and civil liberties, though in recent years citizens have been concerned about laws relating to the administration of elections, government transparency, the treatment of inmates in prisons, and restrictions on public sector employees wearing religious symbols. While Black, Indigenous, and other marginalized Canadians still face discrimination and economic, social, and political challenges, the federal

government has acknowledged these problems and made some moves to address them." (www.freedomhouse.org). Canada has traditionally had robust institutions and civil society in Quebec has traditionally valued culture institutions.

Section 4: Political Participation

Canada has active political participation. At the national levels political parties such as the Liberal Party, the Conservative Party and the New Democratic Party compete for seats in parliamentary ridings. At the provincial level political parties also compete for seats in provincial parliaments. There are also other opportunities to biome involved politically although there continue to be some concerns.

Section 4.1: Political Parties

Canada has several political parties at both the national and the provincial level. Major parties include the Conservative

Party, the Liberal Party, the left leaning New Democratic Party (NDP) The national Liberal Party has often dominated national politics. Different provinces such as New Brunswick and British Columbia have their own political party systems.

Specific parties have also emerged at the provincial level and each province has a slightly different party system. This is a marked contrast from the United States where the two main political parties play a similar role in virtually every state with one party dominating an increasing number of states on both sides of the political spectrum.

Section 4.2: Political Participation, Civil Rights and Civil Liberties

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms "sets out those rights and freedoms that Canadians believe are necessary in a free and democratic society." (https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/how-rights-protected/guide-canadian-charter-rights-freedoms.html). The patriation of the Canadian Constitution in

Several groups have attempted to gain rights in Canada. The French language minority, particularly in Quebec, has striven for language rights and protections. First nation groups have attempted to gain greater recognition and autonomy. Early in the twentieth century there was a movement for greater political participation for women. A group of women known

as the Famous Five petitioned in 1927 for women to be able to serve in the Canadian Senate.

Section 5: Formal Political Institutions

As Discover Canada notes, "There are three key facts about Canada's system of government: our country is a federal state, a parliamentary democracy and a constitutional monarchy" (https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/discover-canada/read-online/how-canadians-govern-themselves.html). Below we will explore each of these concepts.

Section 5.1: Federal Government

Canada is a constitutional monarchy and a member of the Commonwealth. The King or Queen of Canada is the Head of State. The Governor General served as the King's representative and the Head of State. The Governor General is appointed by the King or Queen on the advice of the Prime Minister. The Governor General is a largely ceremonial position with real executive power residing with the Prime Minister and the Cabinet.

There is currently a 343 member House of Representatives elected through individual ridings (single member districts)

and an appointed 105 member Senate. Senators are appointed by the Governor General on the advice of the Prime Minister. The appointed Senators may serve until the age of 75. The Canadian House and Senate work to pass laws which are then given royal assent by the Governor General.

The Prime Minister is generally the leader of the largest political party in the House of Representatives. The Prime Minister leads the government and the cabinet. Elections must occur at least once every five years.

(https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/canada/)

The Supreme Court of Canada is the highest court in Canada. It consists of a Chief Justice and 8 additional judges. There are also several levels of lower courts. Here is an image of Canada's complete judicial system:

Source:https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/csj-sjc/just/07.html
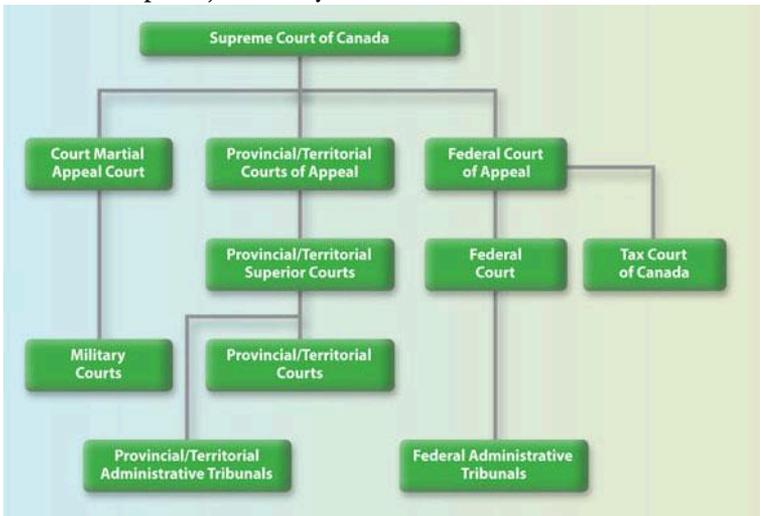
Canada also has provinces and municipalities with their own governance structure. The province of Quebec in particular is known for seeking autonomy but the energy rich province of Alberta has also changed at federal intervention.

Section 5.2: Provincial Government

As noted above, Canada is a federal state where provinces have their own political systems and set policy in a wide variety of areas. Canada has a lively mix of provincial governments and political systems. The province of Quebec has often been animated by questions of the role of the French Language. Provinces vary widely in population ranging from Prince Edward Island with a small population of to the large and populous Ontario. Provinces often have slightly different party systems than that of the national level.

Section 5.3: Municipal Government

Municipal government is the third level of government in Canada. Throughout the provinces there are a variety of local governments. Some large city mayors such as Mayor Jean Drapeau of Montreal and Rob Ford of Toronto have become prominent political figures. Drapeau developed the City of Montreal including facilities for the 1976 Olympics and Ford had a unique appeal and colorful reputation.

Section 5.4: Constitutional Infrastructure

The Canadian Constitution was patriated in 1982 and the Canadian Constitution includes the Constitution Acts 1867 to 1982. (https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/Const/index.html). The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms provides protections in the area of civil liberties and has served as an international model.

Section 6: Political Economy

Section 6.1: Economy of Canada

The Canadian economy has a basis in commodities such as oil, manufacturing in areas such the auto industry and a wide variety of services. International trade has often been a hallmark of the Canadian economy with a large amount of trade going to the United States.

There are regional conflicts regarding the economy. The oil producing province of Alberta has often chafed at federal intervention and control. Different parts of the country have different economic bases with some regions dominated by agriculture and energy while others depend on manufacturing and services.

Section 6.2: Trade

The United States has long been the largest trading partner of Canada's, currently accounting for 71% of Canadian exports. (https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/canada/) Free trade agreements including most recently the USMCA (United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement) that was an update of the sometimes controversial North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The 2024 election of Donald Trump created new challenges in the area of trade.

Canada has pursued a variety of trading relationships with other countries as well. Like many other countries it has pursued a trade relationship with China. Canada has 15 free trade agreements (https://www.investcanada.ca/market-access?creative=722167492511&keyword=fta%20canada&matchtype=p&network=g&device=c&gad_source=1&gad_campaignid=11930519181&gbraid=0AAAAABv7vzYnD7c0GAANGjyuODszMlNGe&gclid=Cj0KCQjwlrvBBhDnARIsAHEQgOS69HNw8NAL8KaEc2lB__U9l2XIRYZV3yZ4r53S5Ddl2zS4jlm6ccAaAkKDEALw_wcB) with countries such as Colombia, Israel, Korea and Peru. The focus on international trade has long been a hallmark of the Canadian economy.

Section 7: Foreign Relations

Section 7.1: Foreign Relations

As Canada evolved from a Dominion of the United Kingdom, the nation began to develop a unique foreign policy. Relations with the United Kingdom and countries in the Commonwealth, the United States and developing nations have all played a role. Canada has played a prominent role in the development of international institutions such as the United Nations.

Section 7.2: Relations with the United States

One author described the history of Canada-Relations as"reconcilable differences" (Azzi 2014) although recent conflicts over trade have developed. Canada has often been one of the closest allies of the United States. One way in which Canada has stood out is the maintenance of ties with the nation of Cuba after the 1959 revolution that led to the leadership of Fidel Castro. This is in strong contrast with the hard line generally taken by the United States. More recently relations with the United States have changed with the election of Donald Trump to a second term in 2024. Trump criticized what he saw as the imbalance in US-Canada relations with a particular focus on trading conditions.

Section 7.3: Relations with the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth

Like similar nations such as Australia, Canada began to develop an independent foreign policy especially in the years after World War II. Prime Minister John Diefenbaker, who served from 1957 to 1963, put a particular emphasis on relations with the United Kingdom but future leaders pursued a broader strategy. Canada continues to be an active participant in the Commonwealth and to maintain close relations with the United Kingdom.

Section 7.4: Relations with Other Nations

Canada has developed a variety of foreign relations with nations around the world and as noted above has often focused a great deal of attention on international trade. One area of foreign policy where Canada has only recently become involved is the Western Hemisphere. Canada did not join the Organization of American States until 1990. Canada has also had increased relations and sometimes conflict with India and China.

Section 7.5: Canada and International Institutions

Canada has played an important role in international institutions such as the League of Nations and the United Nations. Canada is also a founding member of NATO. (https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-16841165)

Future Prime Minister Lester Pearson received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1957 and Canada has long played a central role in the international community. Canada joined the Organization of American States in 1990, showing an enhanced involvement in the affairs of the Western Hemisphere.

Key Terms/Glossary

Bilingualism: Bilingualism refers to being fluent in two languages and also refers to the official policy of Canada regarding the English and French languages.

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms: This document adopted in 1982 is part of the Constitution of Canada and includes the civil liberties and civil rights that Canadians have.

First Nation: First Nations people are the indigenous people of Canada.

NAFTA: The North American Free Trade Agreement is

a trade agreement between Canada, Mexico and the United States that was replaced by the USMCA.

USMCA: The United States Mexico Canada Agreement replaced NAFTA.

Suggestions for Further Study

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