

women were part-time, compared to about one-sixth performed by men.⁵ In addition to broad cultural patterns, the patterns of women's employment in the UK are shaped by the chronic undersupply of affordable child care.

Britain in the Global Economy

foreign direct investment

Ownership of or investment in cross-border enterprises in which the investor plays a direct managerial role.

Foreign direct investment (FDI) favors national systems, like those of Britain (and the United States), that rely mostly on private contractual and market-driven arrangements. Because of low costs, a business-friendly political climate, government-sponsored financial incentives, reduced trade union power, and a large pool of potential nonunionized recruits, the United Kingdom is the most highly regarded location in Europe for FDI.

The UK scores well in international comparisons of microeconomic competitiveness and growth competitiveness. It has also achieved significant competitive success in particular pockets of science-based high technology industries. Even before the Great Recession, the picture of UK global competitiveness was clouded by weak industrial performance.

Gordon Brown's Britain preached a globalization-friendly model of flexible labor markets throughout EU Europe, and its success in boosting Britain's economic performance in comparison with the rest of Europe won some reluctant admirers.

Summary

Until the very end New Labour remained a mystery to many. Blair and Brown chalked up many successes, but people still wondered: How new was New Labour? In governing the economy New Labour tried to go back to the future. That is, the future of global competitiveness rested on traditional economics of tight finance, laissez-faire, and free trade. That approach, which was anchored in business partnerships and arms-length relationships to trade unions, was certainly new for a Labour government. On balance, New Labour was moderately successful in its approach to governing the economy. In addition, the government achieved some success in reducing child poverty and narrowing the **gender gap** in pay—but did less to reduce the unequal chances faced by ethnic minorities.

Under New Labour, Britain achieved an enviable record of growth, low inflation, and low unemployment in part because of its sustained commitment to attract foreign investment and to assume an outward-looking competitive profile. Of course that international market-driven orientation of the British economy, combined with a hands off antiregulatory approach exposed Britain to enormous risk and a very severe downturn, with reverberating political consequences, when the global recession engulfed Britain in 2008. Under the woeful conditions that the coalition government faced from their first days in office, their options for governing the economy are very limited. Rejecting the temptation to stimulate the economy through government spending, budgetary cuts are the first, second, and third priority, and effective economic management will be a daunting challenge. Government leaders are resolute and plain-spoken about the challenges they face and in the early going have impressed many by their willingness to insist on radical cuts and tight budgetary control across the board. This is bitter medicine, but if they can maintain popular support and keep their coalition afloat, they may yet have an opportunity to benefit from the recovery they anticipate around the middle of the decade.

gender gap

Politically significant differences in social attitudes and voting behavior between men and women.

GOVERNANCE AND POLICY-MAKING

3 SECTION

Britain's constitution is notable for two features: its form and its age. Britain lacks a formal written constitution in the usual sense. There is no single unified and authoritative text (like the U.S. Constitution) that has special status above ordinary law and can be amended only by special procedures. Rather, the British constitution is a combination of statutory law (mainly acts of Parliament), common law, convention, and authoritative interpretations. Although it is often said that Britain has an unwritten constitution, this is not accurate. Authoritative legal treatises are written, of course, as are the much more significant acts of Parliament that define crucial elements of the political system. These acts define the powers of Parliament and its relationship with the monarchy, the rights governing the relationship between state and citizen, the relationship of constituent nations to the United Kingdom, the relationship of the United Kingdom to the EU, and many other rights and legal arrangements. In fact, "What distinguishes the British constitution from others is not that it is unwritten, but rather that it is part written and uncodified."⁶

The conventions and acts of Parliament with constitutional implications began at least as early as the seventeenth century, notably with the Bill of Rights of 1689, which helped define the relationship between the monarchy and Parliament. "Britain's constitution presents a paradox," a British scholar of constitutional history has observed. "We live in a modern world but inhabit a pre-modern, indeed, ancient, constitution."⁷

Constitutional authorities have accepted the structure and principles of many areas of government for so long that the very appeal to convention itself has enormous cultural force. Thus, widely agreed-on rules of conduct, rather than law or U.S.-style checks and balances, set the limits of governmental power. Absolute principles of government are few, but those that exist are fundamental to the organization of the state and central to governance, policy-making, and patterns of representation. It will become clear, however, that even the most time-encrusted principles of Britain's ancient constitutional traditions are subject to quick and potentially radical changes.

Organization of the State

The core of the British system is **parliamentary sovereignty**: Parliament can make or overturn any law; the executive, the judiciary, and the throne do not have any authority to restrict, veto, or otherwise overturn parliamentary action. In a classic **parliamentary democracy**, the prime minister is answerable to the House of Commons (the elected element of Parliament) and may be dismissed by it. That said, by joining the European Economic Community in 1973 (now known as the European Union), Parliament accepted significant limitations on its power to act. It acknowledged that European law has force in the United Kingdom without requiring parliamentary assent and that European law overrides British law. Parliament has accepted the authority of the European Court of Justice (ECJ) to resolve jurisdictional disputes. To complete the circle, the ECJ has confirmed its right to suspend acts of Parliament.

Focus Questions

What are the strengths and weaknesses of parliamentary democracy?

How significant are the changes promised in the Coalition agreement?

Is it fair to say that compared to other democracies Britain may be considered an elective dictatorship?

What is the role of the UK Supreme Court? How is it different from the U.S. Supreme Court?

How has the devolution of powers from the UK parliament to Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland changed both the organizing principles of the state and politics in the UK?

parliamentary sovereignty

The doctrine that grants the legislature the power to make or overturn any law and permits no veto or judicial review.

parliamentary democracy

System of government in which the chief executive is answerable to the legislature and may be dismissed by it.

unitary state

In contrast to a federal system, a system of government in which no powers are reserved for subnational units of government.

fusion of powers

A constitutional principle that merges the authority of branches of government, in contrast to the principle of separation of powers.

cabinet government

A system of government in which most executive power is held by the cabinet, headed by a prime minister.

constitutional monarchy

System of government in which the head of state ascends by heredity but is limited in powers and constrained by the provisions of a constitution.

Second, Britain has long been a **unitary state**. By contrast to the United States, where powers not delegated to the national government are reserved for the states, no powers are reserved constitutionally for subcentral units of government in the United Kingdom. However, the Labour government of Tony Blair introduced a far-reaching program of constitutional reform that created a quasi-federal system. Specified powers have been delegated (the British prefer to say *devolved*) to legislative bodies in Scotland and Wales, and to Northern Ireland as well, now that the longstanding conflict there seems settled. In addition, powers have been redistributed from the Westminster Parliament to an authority governing London with a directly elected mayor. As part of New Labour's constitutional reform agenda, regional development agencies (RDAs), which are appointed bodies, were set up in 1999 to enhance development plans for regions throughout the UK.

Third, Britain has a system of **fusion of powers** at the national level: Parliament is the supreme legislative, executive, and judicial authority and includes the monarch as well as the House of Commons and the House of Lords. The fusion of legislature and executive is also expressed in the function and personnel of the cabinet. U.S. presidents can direct or ignore their cabinets, which have no constitutionally mandated function, but the British cabinet bears enormous constitutional responsibility. Through collective decision making, the cabinet—and not an independent prime minister—shapes, directs, and takes responsibility for government. This core principle, **cabinet government**, however, may at critical junctures be observed more in principle than in practice. Particularly with strong prime ministers, such as Thatcher and Blair, who can rally—or bully—the cabinet, power gravitates to the prime minister.

Britain is a **constitutional monarchy**. The Crown passes by hereditary succession, but the government or state officials must exercise nearly all powers of the Crown. Parliamentary sovereignty, parliamentary democracy, and cabinet government form the core of the British or Westminster model of government.

The Executive

The term *cabinet government* emphasizes the key functions that the cabinet exercises: responsibility for policy-making, supreme control of government, and coordination of all government departments. However, the term does not capture the full range of executive institutions nor the scale and complexity of operations. Nor does it capture the realities of a system in which power invariably flows upward to the prime minister. In addition, the executive reaches well beyond the cabinet. It extends from ministries (departments) and ministers to the civil service in one direction, and to Parliament (as we shall see in Section 4) in the other direction.

Cabinet Government

After a general election, the Crown invites the leader of the party that emerges from the election with control of a majority of seats in the House of Commons to form a government and serve as prime minister. The prime minister selects approximately two dozen ministers for the cabinet. Senior cabinet posts include the Foreign Office (equivalent to the U.S. secretary of state), the Home Office (ministry of justice or attorney general), and the chancellor of the exchequer (finance minister). Unlike the French Constitution, which prohibits a cabinet

minister from serving in the legislature, British constitutional tradition *requires* overlapping membership between Parliament and cabinet. A member of the cabinet must be either a member of parliament (MP) or less commonly, a member of the House of Lords.

The cabinet room at 10 Downing Street (the prime minister's official residence) is a place of intrigue as well as deliberation. From the prime minister's viewpoint, the cabinet may appear as loyal followers or as ideological combatants, potential challengers for party leadership, and parochial advocates for pet programs that run counter to the overall objectives of the government. By contrast, the convention of collective responsibility normally unifies the cabinet. In principle, the prime minister must gain the support of a majority of the cabinet for a range of significant decisions, notably the budget and the legislative program.

The only other constitutionally mandated mechanism for checking the prime minister is the government's defeat on a vote of no confidence in the House of Commons (discussed further in Section 4). Since the defeat of a government by parliament is rare and politically dangerous, the cabinet remains the only routine check on the prime minister.

Margaret Thatcher often attempted to galvanize loyalists in the cabinet and either marginalize or expel detractors. In the end, her treatment of the cabinet, which stretched British constitutional conventions, helped inspire the movement to unseat her as party leader. John Major returned to a more consultative approach.

Tony Blair, like Thatcher, narrowed the scope of collective responsibility. The prime minister, a few key cabinet members, and a handful of advisers made many important policy decisions in smaller unofficial gatherings. Under Blair, cabinet meetings were usually less than an hour and could not seriously take up (much less resolve) policy differences.

The decision to go to war in Iraq underscored the cabinet's weakened capacity to exercise constitutional checks and balances. Blair and his close aides seemed sceptical about the effectiveness and centrality of the cabinet as well as cabinet committees. Blair preferred to coordinate strategically important policy areas through highly politicized special units in the Cabinet Office.

How Does David Cameron run his Cabinet? Carefully, no doubt, since he presides over a potentially unstable coalition in which one wrong move could bring down the government. On balance, cabinet government represents a durable and effective formula for governance, although the UK has very little experience with coalition governments. The cabinet operates within a broader cabinet system, or core executive (see Figure 2.5), and the prime minister holds or controls many of the levers of power in the core executive. Because the prime minister is the head of the cabinet, his or her office helps develop policy, coordinates operations, and functions as a liaison with the media, the party, interest groups, and Parliament.

The Cabinet is supported by a set of institutions that help formulate policy, coordinate operations, and facilitate the support for government policy. Acting within a context set by the fusion of legislature and executive, the prime minister enjoys a great opportunity for decisive leadership that is lacking in a system of checks and balances and separation of powers among the branches of government.

Cabinet committees (comprising ministers) and official committees (made up of civil servants) supplement the work of the cabinet. In addition, the treasury plays an important coordinating role through its budgetary control. The cabinet office supports day-to-day operations. Leaders in both the Commons and the Lords, the *whips*, smooth the passage of legislation sponsored by the government. Given that the government always has a working majority (except when the government declares a

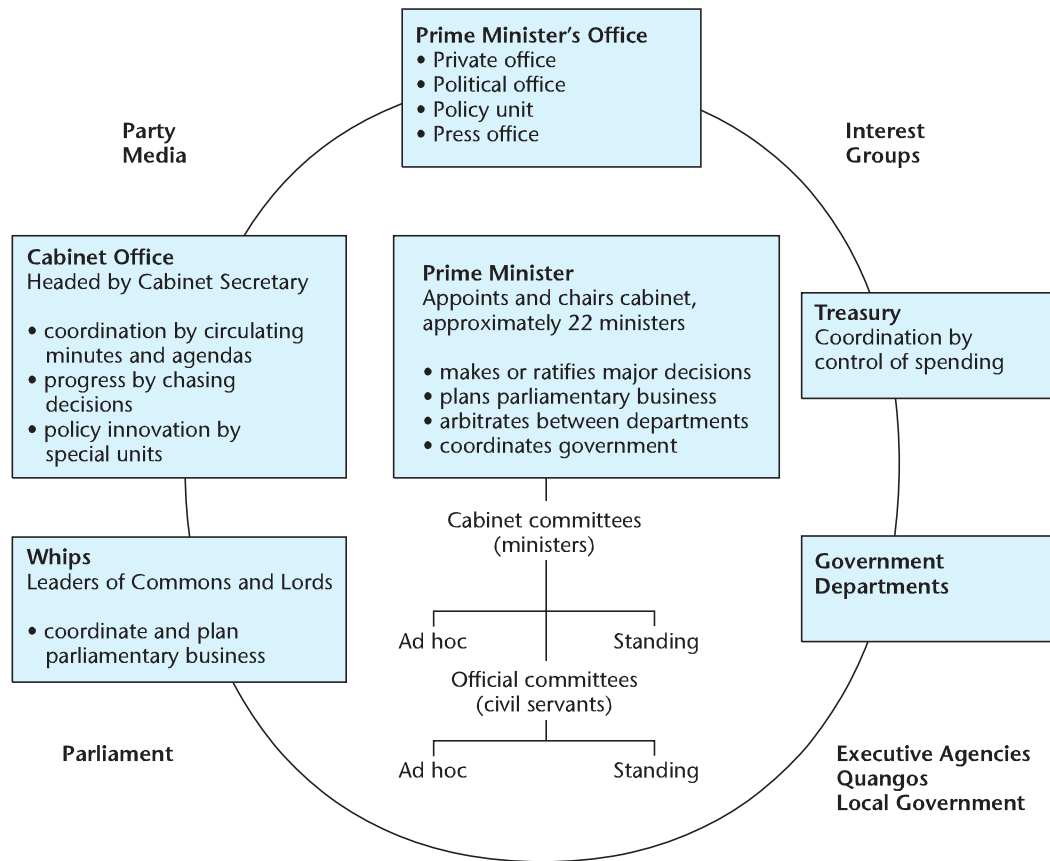


FIGURE 2.5 The Cabinet System

The cabinet is supported by a set of institutions that help formulate policy, coordinate operations, and facilitate the support for government policy. Acting within a context set by the fusion of legislature and executive, the prime minister enjoys a great opportunity for decisive leadership that is lacking in a system of checks and balances and separation of powers among the branches of government.

Source: From *BRITISH POLITICS: CONTINUITIES AND CHANGE, Fourth Edition*, by Dennis Kavanagh, p. 241. © 2000. Data originally from HM Treasury Budget Bulletin. Reprinted with permission from Oxford University Press.

“free vote” which signals that a matter is either too controversial or too inconsequential to be introduced on behalf of the government), the outcome of a vote is seldom in doubt.

Because the cabinet system and the core executive concentrate power at the top, London does not suffer from Washington-style gridlock. The risk in the United Kingdom is the opposite danger of excessive concentration of power by a prime minister who is prepared to manipulate cabinet and flout the conventions of collective responsibility.

Bureaucracy and Civil Service

Policy-making may appear to be increasingly concentrated in the prime minister’s hands. When viewed from Whitehall (the London street where key UK units of government and administration are located), however, the executive may appear

THE U.S. CONNECTION



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Comparing the U.S. Presidential System to the British Parliamentary System

Political scientists—especially those engaged in comparative politics—often discuss how the design of political institutions affects political outcomes.

Among the institutional differences that matter most is the distinction between presidential systems such as the United States and parliamentary systems such as the United Kingdom.

In a presidential system, the legislature and executive are *independent*. Both the legislature and the chief executive have their own fixed schedule for election and their own political mandate. Legislators and presidents have been elected independently of each other. They have different constituencies and often have different political agendas. Each may even gain credibility and support by opposing the other. In presidential systems the agenda and the authority of the president are often compromised when the president and the majority of legislators are from different parties—in fact this is the rule, rather than the exception in the United States and in many other presidential systems. Stalemates on key items of legislation are common. Between presidential elections, it is very difficult to remove a president, even one who has very little popular support or is suspected of acting unconstitutionally. It requires impeachment, which, in turn, requires a finding of extraordinary misconduct and a strong majority vote in the legislature.

Prime ministers, in contrast, must enjoy the support of the majority of the legislature to achieve office—and they must preserve that support to stay in office, since prime ministers and their governments can fall if they lose a vote

of no confidence in the legislature. Furthermore, in a parliamentary system the timing of elections is typically not fixed (although the Cameron government has modified this rule). When riding high, the prime minister can call for a new election in an effort to win a new mandate and a deeper majority in parliament. When in trouble, a prime minister can be sent packing in an instant through a vote of no confidence.

In a parliamentary system like Britain's, because the legislators and prime minister sink or swim together, they tend to cooperate and work through differences. In a presidential system like America's, because the legislature and executive are mutually independent—one can swim, while the other sinks—the tendency for finger pointing and stalemate is much greater.

But the distinctions should not be exaggerated. Powerful prime ministers such as Thatcher and Blair were routinely criticized for being too presidential. And in Britain, the threat a prime minister faces of losing office through a vote of no confidence has all but disappeared—it has happened only once in more than 80 years. In fact, if recent history is a good predictor, an American president is more likely to face a bill of impeachment than a British prime minister is to face a serious vote of no confidence.

The analysis draws heavily from Alfred Stepan, with Cindy Skatch, "Constitutional Frameworks and Democratic Consolidation: Parliamentarism versus Presidentialism," in Mark Kesselman and Joel Krieger, eds., *Readings in Comparative Politics: Political Challenges and Changing Agendas* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2006), pp. 284–293.

to be dominated by its vast administrative agencies. The range and complexity of state policy-making mean that the cabinet's authority must be shared with a vast set of unelected officials. Government departments are directed by members of the cabinet. Ministers are assisted by a very senior career civil servant, called a permanent secretary, who has chief administrative responsibility for running a department. Other senior civil servants, including deputy secretaries and under-secretaries, assist the permanent secretaries. In addition, the minister reaches into his or her department to appoint a principal private secretary, an up-and-coming civil servant who assists the minister as gatekeeper and liaison with senior civil servants.

Since nearly all legislation is introduced on behalf of the government and presented as the policy directive of a ministry, civil servants in Britain do much of the work of conceptualizing and refining legislation. (In the United States committee staffers in the Congress often do this work.) Civil servants, more than ministers, assume operational duties.

As a result of the ongoing modernization of Whitehall, the civil service has been downsized and given a new corporate structure. Few at the top of these agencies (agency chief executives) are traditional career civil servants. There is growing concern that the increasing importance of special advisers (who are both political policy advisers and civil servants) is eroding the impartiality of civil servants. Key special advisers played critical roles in making the case in the famous “dodgy dossier” of September 2002 alleging that the threat of weapons of mass destruction justified regime change in Iraq.

Public and Semipublic Institutions

Like other countries, Britain has institutionalized “semipublic” agencies, which are sanctioned by the state but without direct democratic oversight. Examples include nationalized industries and Nondepartmental Public Bodies.

Nationalized Industries The nationalization of basic industries—such as coal, iron and steel, gas and electricity supply—was a central objective of the Labour government’s program during the postwar collectivist era. By the end of the Thatcher era the idea of public ownership had clearly run out of steam and most of these giant state enterprises were privatized, that is sold to private large-scale investors or sold in small units to ordinary citizens, as was the case with British Telecom, the communications giant. More than 50 percent of the BT shares were sold to the public. When thinking of expanding state functions, we can look to a set of semipublic administrative organizations.

Nondepartmental Public Bodies Since the 1970s, an increasing number of administrative functions have been transferred to bodies that are typically part of the state in terms of funding, function, and appointment of staff, but operate at arms length from ministers.

These nondepartmental public bodies (NDPBs) are better known as quasi-nongovernmental organizations or **quangos**. They take responsibility for specific functions and can combine governmental and private sector expertise. At the same time, they enable ministers to distance themselves from controversial areas of policy.

Alongside quangos, in recent years the government has looked for ways to expand the investment of the private sector in capital projects such as hospitals and schools. Thus New Labour continued the private finance initiative (PFI) it inherited from the Conservatives as a key part of its signature modernization program and as a way to revitalize public services. The results are controversial: Critics and supporters disagree about the quality of services provided and about whether taxpayers win or lose by the financial arrangements. In addition, the tendency of PFI initiatives to blur the line between public and private raise important and controversial issues.⁸

quangos

Acronym for **quasi-nongovernmental organizations**, the term used in Britain for nonelected bodies that are outside traditional governmental departments or local authorities.

Other State Institutions

The Military and the Police

Those involved in security and law enforcement have enjoyed a rare measure of popular support in Britain. Constitutional tradition and professionalism distance the British police and military officers from politics.

In the case of the military, British policy since the Cold War remains focused on a gradually redefined set of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) commitments. Still ranked among the top five military powers in the world, Britain retains a global presence. In 1999, the United Kingdom strongly backed NATO's Kosovo campaign and pressed for ground troops. According to Blair, global interdependence rendered isolationism obsolete and inspired a commitment to a new ethical dimension in foreign policy. Throughout the war in Iraq and its bloody aftermath, Blair persistently sought to characterize Iraq as an extension of Kosovo, an effort to liberate Muslims from brutal dictatorships, whether Serbia's Milosevic or Iraq's Saddam Hussein. Until Blair's decision to support the American plan to shift the main venue of the war on terror from Afghanistan to Iraq, the use of the military in international conflicts generated little opposition. It may be that the Iraq war is the exception that proves the rule that the UK can play an important role in the world of states, including the use of force, when justified, without losing public support. In 2011, the Cameron government played a leading role in the international effort, endorsed by the U.N. Security Council, to protect civilians and enhance the cause of rebels fighting the regime of Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi. In the early stages, Cameron enjoyed strong support for his decision to participate in the international coalition.

The police have traditionally operated as independent local forces throughout the country. Since the 1980s, the police have witnessed growth in government control, centralization, and level of political use. During the coal miners' strike of 1984–1985, the police operated to an unprecedented, perhaps unlawful, degree as a national force coordinated through Scotland Yard (London police headquarters). Police menaced strikers and hindered miners from participating in strike support activities. This partisan use of the police in an industrial dispute flew in the face of constitutional traditions and offended some police officers and officials. During the 1990s, concerns about police conduct focused on police-community relations. These included race relations, corruption, and the interrogation and treatment of people held in custody.

The Judiciary

In Britain, the principle of parliamentary sovereignty has limited the role of the judiciary. Courts have no power to judge the constitutionality of legislative acts (**judicial review**). They can only determine whether policy directives or administrative acts violate common law or an act of Parliament. Hence, the British judiciary is generally less politicized and influential than its U.S. counterpart.

Jurists, however, have participated in the wider political debate outside court. They have headed royal commissions on the conduct of industrial relations, the struggle in Northern Ireland, and riots in Britain's inner cities. In fact, inquiries led by judges with a streak of independence—or lack thereof—can prove highly embarrassing to the government and raise important issues for public debate. Take, for example, the inquiry by Lord Hutton, a senior jurist, into the death of David Kelly, a former UN weapons inspector and whistleblower who challenged the key tenet of Blair's case for the war in Iraq—that Iraq could launch weapons of mass destruction on forty-five minutes' notice. The question of Hutton's independence became very controversial, however, in light of a “finding” that exonerated the prime minister.

In recent years Britain has witnessed dramatic institutional changes in law and the administration of justice, most notably with the 2009 creation of the UK

judicial review

The prerogative of a high court to nullify actions by the executive and legislative branches of government that in its judgment violate the constitution.

Supreme Court, which serves as the highest court of appeal, removing that authority from the House of Lords. Although the UK Supreme Court, unlike the U.S. Supreme Court, cannot rule on the constitutionality of Acts of Parliaments and is therefore less politically influential and controversial, some British observers are concerned that without the traditional connection between parliament and the judiciary, senior judges may become more isolated and subject to political attacks from government ministers.

As a member of the EU, Britain is bound to abide by the European Court of Justice (ECJ), as it applies and develops law as an independent institution within the EU. For example, with the passage of the Human Rights Act in 1998, Britain is required to comply with the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). Also, the adoption of the ECHR forced Britain to curtail discrimination against gays in the military. (The Ministry of Defence confirmed in 2007 that none of its initial fears about gays in the military have been justified.)

Subnational Government

The United Kingdom is a state comprising distinct nations (England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland). Because the British political framework has traditionally been unitary, not federal, for centuries no formal powers devolved to either the nations within the United Kingdom or to subnational (really subcentral or sub-UK) units as in the United States, Germany, or India. Historically, the UK Parliament asserted authority over all political units in the UK. No powers were reserved for any other units of government: There are no states, and no powers were reserved for nations within the UK, or for local government. Even so, nations were an aspect of collective identities in the UK, often exerting a powerful hold on their members. For many, to be Scottish or Welsh or English or Northern Irish was a core source of identity that created a sense of commonality and shared fates among members. Nations were not political units. But that is no longer true.

Recent constitutional reforms have introduced important modifications in the organizing principles of the UK. After referendums in Wales and Scotland in 1997, and in Northern Ireland, which is part of the UK, and in the Republic of Ireland (an independent country) in 1998, Tony Blair's Labour government introduced a set of power-sharing arrangements (what the British call "devolution") to govern the arrangements among the UK Westminster parliament, the Welsh Assembly, the Northern Ireland Assembly, and the Scottish Parliament.

In general, the UK government retains responsibility for all policy areas that have not been devolved, and which are the traditional domain of nation-states. Westminster controls security and foreign policy, economic policy, trade, defense, and social security for the UK as a whole, except where it doesn't, that is where specific powers have been ceded to Scotland, Northern Ireland, or Wales.

Of all the devolved nations and regions within the UK, Scotland and the Scottish government enjoy the most robust powers. Whereas Wales and Northern Ireland have relatively limited independent authority and have legislative arenas called assemblies, Scotland has a parliament, and the Scottish government is responsible for crucial areas of policy, including education, health, and the administration of justice. Clearly, devolution involves both an element of federalism and a carefully crafted compromise. The UK parliament is still the mother of all parliaments, but it has some potentially restive offspring!

It is important to note that every power devolved from the UK Parliament to the Scottish Parliament or the Welsh or Northern Ireland assembly chips away at

the very core of parliamentary sovereignty that lies at the heart of the Westminster model. Devolution has also sparked a controversy that has become known as “the West Lothian Question.”

What right should a Scottish MP have to vote on laws that might relate to England or Wales, while English and Welsh MPs cannot vote on some matters related to Scotland, in areas where policy had been devolved from the Westminster Parliament to the Scottish Parliament? This became a hot-button issue—when Gordon Brown, a Scotsman, was the UK prime minister and Scottish MPs were influential in winning a key vote for the government on tuition fees in England (and we know how politically combustible the issue of university fees has become).

Devolution within England is also part of the reform process. Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) were introduced throughout England in 1999 to facilitate economic development at the regional level. Even though they are unelected bodies with no statutory authority, they have opened the door to popular mobilization in the long term for elected regional assemblies. In addition, the Blair government placed changes in the governance of London on the fast track. The introduction of a directly elected mayor of London in May 2000 marked an important reform, leading to the direct election of mayors in other major cities, such as Birmingham and putting into practice a process of decentralizing power.

The Policy-Making Process

Parliamentary sovereignty is the core constitutional principle of the British political system. But for policy-making and policy implementation, the focus is not on Westminster but rather on Whitehall.

In the UK Parliament has little direct participation in policy-making. Policy-making emerges primarily from within the executive. There, decision-making is strongly influenced by policy communities—informal networks with extensive knowledge, access, and personal connections to those responsible for policy. In this private hothouse environment, civil servants, ministers, and members of the policy communities work through informal ties. A cooperative style develops as the ministry becomes an advocate for key players and as civil servants come perhaps to over-identify the public good with the advancement of policy within their area of responsibility.

This cozy insider-only policy process has been challenged by the delegation of more and more authority to the EU. Both ministers and senior civil servants spend a great deal of time in EU policy deliberations and are constrained both directly and indirectly by the EU agenda and directives. More than 80 percent of the rules governing economic life in Britain are determined by the EU. Decisions by the EU Council of Finance Ministers and the European Central Bank shape British macroeconomic, monetary, and fiscal policies in significant ways. Even foreign and security policy are not immune from EU influences. The increasing Europeanization of policy-making has been and promises to further become one of the most interesting and potentially transformative developments in British politics.

Summary

In almost every institutional dimension of governance and policy-making, recent years have witnessed a significant chipping away at the key organizing principles of government. The first principle of parliamentary sovereignty remains, but in practice