Conceptual Recap
- State (as apparatus of power and administration)
- Government (as individuals to who rule the state)
- Regime (system for deciding who governs the state and regulating the broad boundaries of state authority)

Institutions

“Institutions are the humanly devised constraints that structure political, economic, and social interaction. They consist of both informal constraints (sanctions, taboos, customs, traditions, and codes of conduct), and formal rules (constitutions, laws, property rights).”


What do institutions do?

- enable and constrain actors
- normative institutions will constrain some political ideas and enable other political ideas
  - e.g., institutions of religious tolerance and disestablishment constrain majority religious groups and enable minority religious groups and secularist groups
- formal institutions will enable some political actors and constrain others
  - e.g. proportional representation systems enables smaller parties and constrains larger parties; first-past-the-post or plurality systems enable larger parties and constrain smaller parties
- institutions matter when they persist and when they are regularly complied with.

Societal Institutions, Actors and Forces
- Society: persons and organizations within the boundaries of the polity but not part of the state
  - Civil society: organized associations independent of the state (usually excluding primarily economic organizations like firms and unions)
    - Usual associations for purposes other than politics (e.g., amateur sports team, social club)
  - Interest groups: an organized groups advancing a political agenda in the (material) interest of the group
- Principled interest groups: an organized groups advancing a political agenda based on a set of principles (beliefs of fact, causation, and rectitude) rather than collective material interest
  - Firms and unions are economic interest groups; human rights and pro- and anti-abortion groups are principled interest groups
    - Social movements: an aggrieved class of persons mobilizing on a widespread basis
    - Political parties

Political Parties
- institutions of democratic regimes

What are parties v. what role do parties perform?
- ‘is’ v. ‘ought’ question
  - are parties essential to democracy?
  - are parties essential to mass democracy or modern representative democracy in polities with near-universal adult suffrage?
- Parties as institutions that enable and constrain citizens
  - Organize political activity, run candidates, provide information
  - Limit independent candidates, structure governments along partisan lines, generate propaganda