

A Comparative Institutional Analysis of Bicameral Legislatures: The Second Chamber in the Westminster Model of Democracy

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Bicameralism developed across Europe during medieval times. The bicameral legislature continues to be the standard model in use by large democratic countries.

The composition and functions of six bicameral legislatures are analyzed in this article: the British Parliament, the United States Congress, the French Parlement, the German Bundestag & Bundesrat, the Italian Parlamento, and the Japanese National Diet.

Arend Lijphart offers an important analysis of worldwide democratic institutions. According to his study, the pure or almost pure Westminster models of democracies are actually limited to the United Kingdom, New Zealand (until 1996) and other countries.

The British House of Lords has undergone significant change since the twentieth-century. The present House is widely recognized as making a substantial contribution to the overall work of parliament.

In New Zealand, several proposals for a reconstituted second chamber have been laid before Parliament, since the Legislative Council was abolished in January 1951.

Through utilizing a comparative institutional approach on the basis of Lijphart's theory, this article examines the composition, democratic legitimacy and powers of the second chamber in the Westminster model of democracy.