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**Date: May 24, 2005**

**Comparative Study of Electoral Systems  
Module 2: Macro Report**

August 23, 2004

Country: United States of America

Date of Election: November 2, 2004

NOTE TO COLLABORATORS: The information provided in this report contributes to an important part of the CSES project. Your efforts in providing these data are greatly appreciated! Any supplementary documents that you can provide (e.g., electoral legislation, party manifestos, electoral commission reports, media reports) are also appreciated, and may be made available on the CSES website.

**Part I: Data Pertinent to the Election at which the Module was Administered**

1. Report the number of portfolios (cabinet posts) held by each party in cabinet, *prior* to the most recent election. (If one party holds all cabinet posts, simply write "all".)

Name of Political Party

Number of Portfolios

NA

1a. What was the size of the cabinet before the election?

NA

2. Report the number of portfolios (cabinet posts) held by each party in cabinet, *after* the most recent election. (If one party holds all cabinet posts, simply write "all").

Name of Political Party

Number of Portfolios

NA

2a. What was the size of the cabinet after the election?

NA

3. Political Parties (most active during the election in which the module was administered and receiving at least 3% of the vote):

Party Name/Label	Year Party Founded	Ideological Family	European Parliament Political Group (where applicable)	International Party Organizational Membership
A. Republican	1856	Right liberal		
B. Democratic	1828	Left liberal		
C.				
D.				
E.				
F.				

Ideological Party Families: (These are suggestions only. If a party does not fit well into this classification scheme, please provide an alternative and some explanation).

- |                               |                                  |                      |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| (A) Ecology Parties           | (G) Liberal Parties              | (M) Agrarian Parties |
| (B) Communist Parties         | (H) Right Liberal Parties        | (N) Ethnic Parties   |
| (C) Socialist Parties         | (I) Christian Democratic Parties | (O) Regional Parties |
| (D) Social Democratic Parties | (J) National Parties             | (P) Other Parties    |
| (E) Conservative Parties      | (K) Independents                 |                      |
| (F) Left Liberal Parties      | (L) Single Issue Parties         |                      |

The following lists provide examples of political groups and organizations to which a particular party might belong. Please report any and all international affiliations for each party.

European Parliament Political Groups:

- (1) European People's Party
- (2) European Democrats
- (3) Party of European Socialists
- (4) European Liberal, Democrat and Reform Party
- (5) Confederal Group of European United Left
- (6) Nordic Green Left
- (7) Greens
- (8) European Free Alliance
- (9) Europe for the Nations
- (10) Europe of Democracies and Diversities
- (00) Not Applicable
- (98) Don't Know

International Party Organizations:

- (11) Asia Pacific Socialist Organization
- (12) Caribbean Democratic Union
- (13) Christian Democratic International
- (14) Christian Democratic Organization of America
- (15) Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats
- (16) Democratic Union of Africa
- (17) Eastern European Social Democratic Forum
- (18) Green Movement
- (19) Humanist Party
- (20) International Communist Union
- (21) International Democrat Union
- (22) International League of Democratic Socialists
- (23) Liberal International
- (24) Natural Law Party
- (25) Pacific Democratic Union
- (26) Organization of African Liberal Parties
- (27) Socialist International
- (28) Socialist Inter-Africa
- (00) Not Applicable
- (98) Don't Know



F.												
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4aa. Do you believe there would be general consensus on these placements among informed observers in your country? No, informed observers would have a consensus that the Democratic party including its presidential candidate, John Kerry, is to the left of the Republican party including the incumbent President George W. Bush. There is substantial debate, however, about how liberal the Democrats are and how conservative the Republicans are.

4b. If you have asked respondents to rank political parties on an alternative dimension, other than the left-right dimension, please also provide your own rankings of the parties on this dimension.

Name of dimension:

Label for left hand position: Secularism

Label for right hand position: Moral Traditionalism

Party Name	Left										Right	
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
A. Republican								X				
B. Democratic				X								
C.												
D.												
E.												
F.												

4bb. Do you believe there would be general consensus about these placements among informed observers in your country?

No. First, some informed observers would characterize the second dimension differently—for example, in terms of racial politics. Second, some informed observers would suggest that the parties are further separated on these issues than on economic issues.

5. In your view, what are the five most salient factors that affected the outcome of the election (e.g. major scandals; economic events; the presence of an independent actor; specific issues)?

1. Terrorism, 9/11 and subsequent management of war on terrorism
2. Iraq War
3. Performance of the economy/jobs
4. Issue competition over various moral/cultural issues
5. Issue of health care

5a. Do you believe there would be general consensus about the importance of these factors among informed observers in your country?

No. I think the first four issues would be generally agreed upon by informed observers. The last one might be replaced by either other issue areas like tax cuts and the budget deficit or by competition over candidate character/competence.

## 6. Electoral Alliances:

Sometimes, electoral alliances are made at the constituency level as, for example, in Finland. Documenting who is allied with whom, and how, in each constituency is a large task and we do not expect you to do more than make some general reference to the existence of constituency-level alliances. Sometimes, electoral alliances are made at the national level -- these are the alliances that we would like you to identify. Information is sought on who is allied with whom and on the nature of the electoral alliance.

a) Were electoral alliances permitted during the election campaign? NA

- No
- Yes

If yes, please complete the following:

<u>Alliance Name</u>	<u>Participant Parties (please indicate dominant members with an "*")</u>
Alliance 1:	
Alliance 2:	
Alliance 3:	
Alliance 4:	
Alliance 5:	

7. Party Leaders and Presidential Candidates:

In legislative elections, please report the leader of each party.

In presidential elections, list presidential candidates and their parties. If candidates were endorsed by more than one party, please indicate this below.

<u>Party of Candidate</u>	<u>Name of Party Leader or Presidential Candidate</u>
A. Republican	George W. Bush
B. Democratic	John F. Kerry
C.	
D.	
E.	
F.	

## Part II: Data on Electoral Institutions

If possible, please supplement this section with copies of the electoral law, voters' handbooks, electoral commission reports, and/or any other relevant materials.

### A. QUESTIONS ABOUT ELECTORAL DISTRICTS.

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**Definitions:** An electoral district is defined as a geographic area within which votes are counted and seats allocated. If a district cannot be partitioned into smaller districts within which votes are counted and seats allocated, it is called primary. If it can be partitioned into primary districts, and during the counting process there is some transfer of votes and/or seats from the primary districts to the larger district, then the larger district is called secondary. If a district can be partitioned into secondary districts (again with some transfer of votes and/or seats), it is called tertiary.

In some electoral systems, there are electoral districts that are geographically nested but not otherwise related for purposes of seat allocation. In Lithuania, for example, there are 71 single-member districts that operate under a majority runoff system, and also a single nationwide district that operates under proportional representation (the largest remainders method with the Hare quota). Neither votes nor seats from the single-member districts transfer to the nationwide district, however. The two processes are entirely independent (with voters having one vote in each district). In this case, the nationwide district, although it contains the 71 single-member districts, is not considered to be secondary. It is primary. One might say that there are two segments to the electoral system in such cases.

House of Representatives (lower house)

1. How many segments (as just defined) are there in the electoral system?

- 1 segment
- 2 segments
- more than 2

Please answer the following questions (questions 2 through 11) for each segment of each directly elected house of the legislature:

2. How many primary electoral districts are there? 435

3. For each primary electoral district, how many members are elected from each district?  
(If district variation exists, answer 3a) 1

3a. If districts elect varying number of members, please list the districts, indicating the number of members elected from that district. (Attach separate sheets, as required).

District

Number of Members

4. How many secondary electoral districts are there? 0

5. How many tertiary electoral districts are there? 0

If possible, please summarize the information above for questions 1-3 and 4-5 in the table here:

Chambers/Houses		Lower			Upper		
Segments	Number	1	2	3 or more	1	2	3 or more
Primary Districts	Number No. of members*	435					
Secondary districts	Number No. of members*						
Tertiary districts	Number No. of members*						

\*Please report the total number of members for all districts, per segment.

B. QUESTIONS ABOUT VOTING.

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6. Exactly how are votes cast by voters? Voters mark candidate preference on ballot.

6a. How many votes do they or can they cast? 1

6b. Do they vote for candidates, for lists, or for both? (please explain) Candidates.

7. Are the votes transferable? No

8. If more than one vote can be cast, can they be cumulated?

9. Are there any other features of voting that should be noted?

C. QUESTIONS ABOUT CONVERTING VOTES INTO SEATS.

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10. Exactly how are votes converted into seats? Candidate with simple plurality wins that seat.

10a. Are there legally mandated thresholds that a party must exceed before it is eligible to receive seats? No

If so, what is the threshold?

10b. What electoral formula or formulas are used? Simple plurality

11. If there are lists, are they closed, open, or flexible?

- closed
- flexible, but in practice virtually closed
- flexible
- flexible, but in practice virtually open
- open

**Definitions:** A list is closed if the seats that are awarded to that list are always occupied by the candidates in order of their appearance on the list (i.e., if the list gets x seats then necessarily the top x names on the list get the seats). A list is open if the question of which candidates on the list get the seats that are awarded to the list is determined solely by the votes that each candidate receives. A list is flexible if parties place their candidates in the order they would like to see them elected, but voters can, with varying degrees of ease, change this order through votes they cast for individual candidates.

**Please repeat questions 2 through 11 of this section for each segment of each directly elected house of the legislature.**

Senate (upper house)

1. How many segments (as just defined) are there in the electoral system?

- X 1 segment
- 2 segments
- more than 2

Please answer the following questions (questions 2 through 11) for each segment of each directly elected house of the legislature:

2. How many primary electoral districts are there? 50

3. For each primary electoral district, how many members are elected from each district?  
(If district variation exists, answer 3a) 2

3a. If districts elect varying number of members, please list the districts, indicating the number of members elected from that district. (Attach separate sheets, as required).

District

Number of Members

4. How many secondary electoral districts are there? 0

5. How many tertiary electoral districts are there? 0

If possible, please summarize the information above for questions 1-3 and 4-5 in the table here:

Chambers/Houses		Lower			Upper																			
Segments	Number	1	2	3 or more	1	2	3 or more																	
Primary districts	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black;">Number</td> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; width: 10%;"></td> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; width: 10%; text-align: center;">50</td> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; width: 10%;"></td> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; width: 10%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black;">No. of members*</td> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black;"></td> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; text-align: center;">100</td> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black;"></td> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black;"></td> </tr> </table>	Number					50			No. of members*					100									
Number					50																			
No. of members*					100																			
Secondary districts	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black;">Number</td> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; width: 10%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black;">No. of members*</td> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black;"></td> </tr> </table>	Number								No. of members*														
Number																								
No. of members*																								
Tertiary districts	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black;">Number</td> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; width: 10%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black;">No. of members*</td> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black;"></td> </tr> </table>	Number								No. of members*														
Number																								
No. of members*																								

\*Please report the total number of members for all districts, per segment.

B. QUESTIONS ABOUT VOTING.

---

6. Exactly how are votes cast by voters? Voters mark candidate preference on ballot.

6a. How many votes do they or can they cast? A single vote for each Senate seat.

6b. Do they vote for candidates, for lists, or for both? (please explain) Candidates

7. Are the votes transferable? No

8. If more than one vote can be cast, can they be cumulated?

9. Are there any other features of voting that should be noted?

C. QUESTIONS ABOUT CONVERTING VOTES INTO SEATS.

---

10. Exactly how are votes converted into seats? In most states, candidate with simple plurality wins that seat.

10a. Are there legally mandated thresholds that a party must exceed before it is eligible to receive seats? No

If so, what is the threshold?

10b. What electoral formula or formulas are used? In most states, simple plurality.

11. If there are lists, are they closed, open, or flexible?

- closed
- flexible, but in practice virtually closed
- flexible
- flexible, but in practice virtually open
- open

**Definitions:** A list is closed if the seats that are awarded to that list are always occupied by the candidates in order of their appearance on the list (i.e., if the list gets x seats then necessarily the top x names on the list get the seats). A list is open if the question of which candidates on the list get the seats that are awarded to the list is determined solely by the votes that each candidate receives. A list is flexible if parties place their candidates in the order they would like to see them elected, but voters can, with varying degrees of ease, change this order through votes they cast for individual candidates.

D. QUESTIONS ABOUT THE POSSIBILITIES OF ELECTORAL ALLIANCE.

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**Definitions:** A joint list refers to one on which candidates of different parties run together.

Apparentement refers to a legal agreement between two or more lists to pool their votes for the purposes of an initial seat allocation, with seats initially allocated to the alliance then reallocated to the lists in the alliance.

12. What are the possibilities of forming alliances in the system?

Candidates can be endorsed by more than one party. Multiple party endorsement are generally rare but do occur in states like New York with active third parties.

Theoretically parties could withdraw candidates to optimize joint performance. However, this is rare to non-existent in practice due to the weakness of third parties.

12a. Can parties run joint lists?

Yes

No

12b. Is there apparentement or linking of lists

Yes

No

12c. Can candidates run with the endorsement of more than one party?

Yes

No

12d. Do parties withdraw their lists or candidates in some constituencies, urging their supporters there to vote for an ally's list or candidate?

Yes

No

12e. Other?

13. Are joint lists possible? No

13a. If joint lists are possible, are they subject to different regulations than single-party lists? For example, higher thresholds, different numbers of candidates that may appear on the list, etc.

14. If appurement is possible, what lists can participate in such agreements:

- lists of the same party in the same constituency
- lists of the same party from different constituencies
- lists of different parties in the same constituency

15. If candidates can run with the endorsement of more than one party, is this reflected on the ballot?

- No
- No party endorsements are indicated on the ballot paper
- Yes, candidate's name appears once, together with the names of all supporting parties
- Yes, candidate's name appears as many times as there are different parties endorsing him/her, each time with the name of the endorsing party

Yes, other (please explain):

### Part III: Data on Regime Type

Below are various questions about the type of regime--presidential, parliamentary, semi-presidential--in your country. There are two potential problems with these questions that should be noted at the outset. First, in some countries there may be a discrepancy between the *de jure* (or legal) situation and the *de facto* (or practical) situation. For example, in Great Britain the Queen still possesses a legal right to veto legislation, but this right has not been exercised since 1707. In the case of such obviously obsolete powers, please answer according to the *de facto* situation. Otherwise, describe the *de jure* situation. A second potential problem is that the questions may not be phrased optimally for the situation in your particular country. In such cases, please answer as best you can, providing some indication of the difficulties as you see them.

#### A. QUESTIONS REGARDING THE HEAD OF STATE.

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**Definitions:** The Head of State is typically the highest ranking official in the executive branch of government. Often, this position is held by a president or a monarch, and may be more ceremonial than effective. The Head of Government is usually the highest ranking official in the legislative branch of government. In some systems, this may be someone other than the Head of State (i.e. the prime minister in the Westminster systems), while in other cases, the roles of the Head of State and Head of Government are combined (i.e. in the United States, the president serves as both the Head of State and the Head of Government).

1. Who is the Head of State?

- President
- Monarch
- Prime Minister serves as ceremonial head of state
- Other (please specify)

2. How is the head of state selected?

- Direct election
- Indirect election
- Birth right
- Divine right
- Other (Explain)

2a. If by direct election, by what process?

- Plurality election
- Run-off or two-ballot system
- Other (Explain)

2a1. If by run-off system, how are the candidates selected for the final round?

- The \_\_\_\_\_(##) candidates with the highest vote totals advance to the second round
- Any candidate with at least \_\_\_\_\_% of the popular vote advances to the second round

2b. If by indirect election, by what process?

- Electoral college
- Selection by the legislature
- Other (Explain)

2b1. If by electoral college, how are electors chosen? Voters cast their vote for President and Vice-President by selecting a pair of candidates listed on a single Presidential/Vice Presidential ticket. This vote selects slates of electors to serve in the Electoral College. In forty-eight of the fifty states and the District of Columbia, the list of electors that gets a majority of all votes wins the state and all the electors are from the winning ticket. Maine and Nebraska allow the possibility for the state electors to be split.

2b2. Does the electoral college deliberate?

- Yes
- No

2b3. What is the voting procedure used by the electoral college? Absolute majority. If a majority is not reached then the election is decided by the House of Representatives.

2b4. If by the legislature, by which chamber(s) of the legislature? What is the voting procedure used?

If no candidate receives an absolute majority then the House of Representatives chooses between the candidates with the top three vote totals in the Electoral College. Each state has one vote in the House and the president is chosen by absolute majority.

3. Does the Head of State have the following powers? Please check all that apply:

3a. Introduce legislation?

- Yes
- No

*De facto* yes and the US Constitution specifies that the President may propose that Congress consider specific pieces of legislation. However, legislation must officially be introduced to Congress by a member of Congress.

3b. Require expedited action on specific legislation? (i.e., set a deadline by which the legislature is required to act on the bill)?

- Yes
- No

**Definitions:** A Head of State possesses a partial veto when he or she can target specific clauses of a piece of legislation for veto, while promulgating the rest. In the U.S., such vetoes are sometimes called line item vetoes. A Head of State possesses a package veto when he or she can veto the entire piece of legislation submitted by the legislature, but cannot veto some parts and accept others.

3c. Package veto?

- No
- Yes, and the requirement to override the veto is: Two thirds majority in both the House and Senate

3d. Partial veto?

- No
- Yes, and the requirement to override the veto is:

3e. Issue decrees with the power of law?

- Yes
- No

3f. Emergency powers?

- Yes
- No

3g. Negotiate treaties and international agreements?

- No
- Yes, provided the following additional requirements are met: Two thirds approval of the Senate

3h. Commander of the armed forces?

- Yes
- No

3i. Initiate referenda or plebiscites?

- Yes
- No

3j. Refer legislation to the judicial branch for review of constitutionality?

- Yes
- No

3k. Convene special legislative sessions?

- Yes
- No

## B. QUESTIONS ABOUT THE HEAD OF GOVERNMENT.

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**Definitions:** In some countries, the Head of Government is directly elected, in elections that may or may not occur concurrently with legislative elections. In these cases, the Head of Government is said to be elected independently of the legislature. In others, the Head of Government is the leader of the governing party or governing coalition in the legislature, and so, the selection of the Head of Government depends upon the distribution of seats in the legislature. In these cases, the Head of Government is not elected independently of the legislature.

4. Is the Head of Government elected independently of the legislature?

- Yes
- No

4a. Is the Head of Government also the Head of State?

- Yes
- No

4b. If the Head of Government is not elected independently of the legislature, how is the Head of Government selected?

- Appointed by the head of state alone
- Appointed by the legislature alone
- Nominated by the head of state, and approved by the legislature
- Nominated by the legislature, and approved by the head of state
- Other (Please explain):

5. What authorities does the Head of Government have over the composition of the cabinet?

Please check all that apply.

- Names ministers and assigns portfolios alone
- Nominates ministers for approval by the president
- Reviews and approves ministerial nominations made by the president
- Dismisses ministers and reassigns portfolios at own discretion
- Other (Please explain):  
Presidential appointments require the majority consent of the Senate.

6. What authorities does the Head of Government have over the policy making process?

Please check all that apply:

- Chairs cabinet meetings
- Determines schedule of issues to be considered by the legislature
- Determines which alternatives will be voted on by the legislature, and in which order
- Refers legislative proposals to party or legislative committees
- Calls votes of confidence in government
- Other (Please explain):  
The US Constitution specifies that the President may propose that Congress consider specific pieces of legislation (legislation however must be officially introduced to Congress by a member of Congress). The President can also veto Congressional legislation. Congress can override Presidential vetoes with two thirds majority in both the House and the Senate.

### C. QUESTIONS REGARDING THE CABINET

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7. By what method(s) can the cabinet be dismissed? Please check all that apply:

- By the head of state acting alone
- By the prime minister acting alone
- By majority vote of the legislature where a majority of all legislators is required
- By majority vote of the legislature where a majority of those legislators voting is required
- By some combination of the above, acting in concert (Please explain):
- Other (Please explain):

D. QUESTIONS REGARDING THE LEGISLATURE

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8. Can the legislature be dissolved prior to regularly scheduled elections? \_\_\_X\_\_\_No

\_\_\_\_\_Yes:

- By the head of state acting alone
- By the prime minister acting alone
- By majority vote of the legislature
- By some combination of the above, acting in concert (Please explain):
- Other (Please explain):

9. If the legislature can be dissolved prior to regularly scheduled elections, are there restrictions on when and how the legislature can be dissolve? Please check all that apply:

- On the timing of dissolution (e.g. not within one year after a legislative election) (Please explain):
  
- As a response to action/inaction by the legislature (e.g. only when the legislature has censured the cabinet; only if the legislature fails to pass the budget) (Please explain):
  
- Other (Explain):

10. Is there a second chamber of the legislature? No \_\_\_\_\_ Yes , it is:  
 directly elected  
 indirectly elected through the following process:

- 10a. If there is a second chamber and it is indirectly elected, are those who choose its members:  
 wholly regional and/or local officials?  
 partly regional and/or local officials?  
 not necessarily regional and/or local officials?

- 10b. If there is a second chamber, does it have specific and exclusive legislative powers (i.e. the power to reject the executive's proposed budget)?  
 No  
 Yes (Please explain):

The Senate has sole power to try impeachments. Two thirds of the Senate must consent to any treaties made by the executive. A majority of the Senate must consent to executive appointments to the cabinet, judiciary, and other officers of the United States unless Congress by law has vested those appointments in the executive or other bodies.

- 10c. If there is a second chamber, does it have the power to remove the cabinet or censure its ministers?  
 Yes  
 No

However, cabinet members can be impeached by the House of Representatives and the Senate has sole power to try impeachments. Impeached officials found guilty are removed from office.

## E. FEDERALISM

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11. Is there a constitutionally guaranteed division of power between the central government and regional and/or local governments?  
 Yes  
 No
12. Does the central government have the power to remove elected officials of regional and/or local governments?  
 Yes  
 No

## F. REFERENCES

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Please list any resources that were consulted in the preparation of this report, or that the CSES community may find especially helpful in understanding the political system described here.

There is a vast array of material available describing electoral law in the United States. A few easy to access sources in addition to the US Constitution include:

<http://www.loc.gov/law/guide/elections.html>

[http://www.archives.gov/federal\\_register/electoral\\_college/index.html](http://www.archives.gov/federal_register/electoral_college/index.html)

<http://www.fec.gov/>