

Housekeeping

- Change in evaluation
 - Assignments 25%
 - Presentation 25%
 - Formal exam 50% => two essay questions (but still open book)
- Seminars will happen in 2 groups
 - See updated course schedule (but deadlines remain the same)

MPD in the News “Nepo Babies”, social media ban and protests in Nepal



Night falls in Nepal on second day of anti-corruption protests

As night falls on Kathmandu, black smoke continues to rise from the city after a second day of anti-corruption protests.

Here are just some of the latest pictures from the ongoing unrest.



GETTY IMAGES

Smoke and flames rise from the Singha Durbar, which houses various Nepali ministers' offices

News

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The Guardian

UK UK politics Education Media Society Law Scotland Wales Northern Ireland

The Boris Files
Boris Johnson

**Harry Davies, Henry Dyer
and Pippa Crerar**

Mon 8 Sep 2025 20.11 CEST



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Revealed: how Boris Johnson traded PM contacts for global business deals

Exclusive: Leak exposes how former leader has used publicly subsidised office to manage commercial interests



Most viewed



Discovery of new campsite shows fugitive Tom Phillips had 'outside help,' NZ police say



Live
Tusk warns prospect of military conflict 'closer than at any time since second world war' - follow live



Jeffrey Epstein's 50th birthday book - in pictures



Poland shoots down drones over its territory amid Russian attack on Ukraine

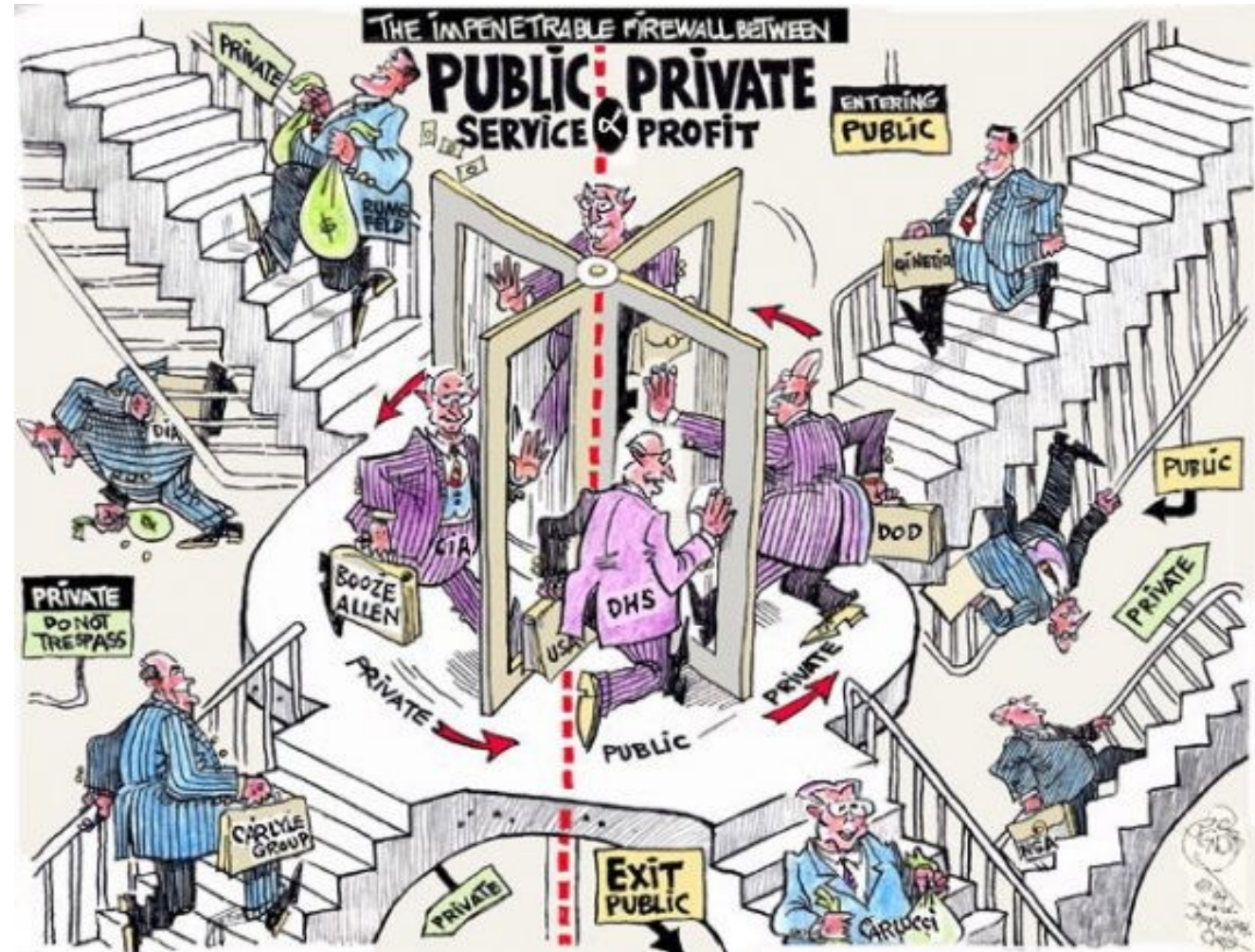


Israel launches airstrikes against top Hamas members in Qatar for Gaza ceasefire talks

Revolving Door

The files reveal:

- Johnson lobbied a senior Saudi official he had met while in office, asking him to share a pitch with the petrostate's autocratic crown prince, Mohammed bin Salman, for a firm he co-chairs.
- The ex-PM received more than £200,000 from a hedge fund after meeting Venezuela's president Nicolás Maduro - contrary to statements he was not paid.
- While in office, Johnson appears to have held a secret meeting with Peter Thiel, the billionaire who founded the controversial US data firm Palantir, months before it was given a role managing NHS data.
- In an apparent breach of Covid pandemic rules, Johnson hosted a dinner for a Tory peer who financed a lavish refurbishment of his Downing Street flat, a day after the second national Covid-19 lockdown came into force.

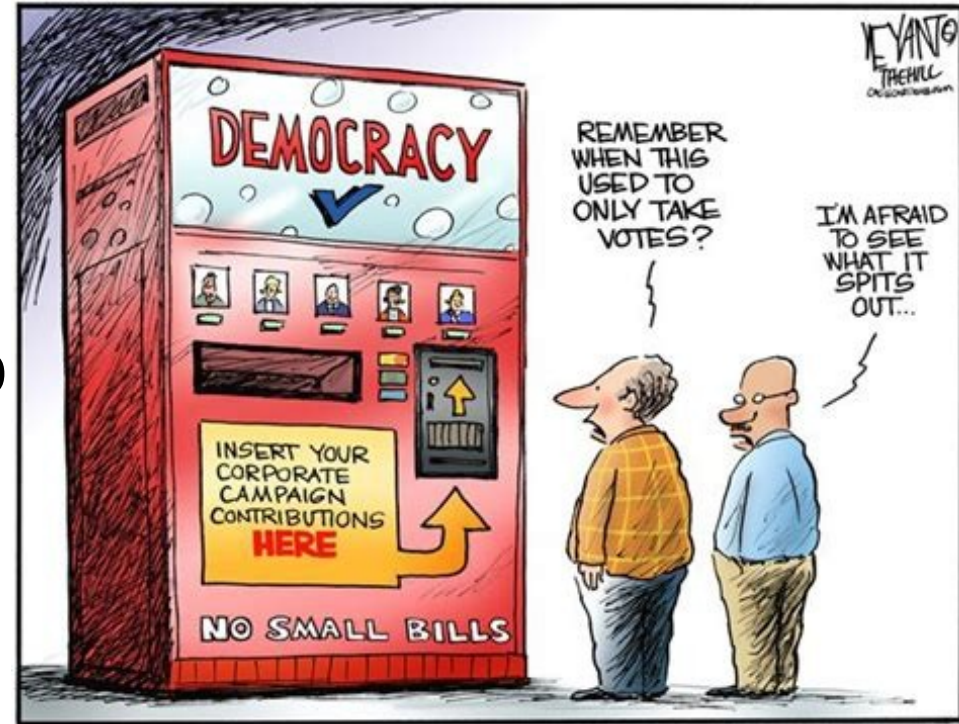


POL1050: Money, Power and Democracy

Class 2: Central Theories and Concepts – 10/9/25

Today

- What is Money?
- What is Power?
- What is Democracy?
- Theories on their relationship



What is money?

- **Political** Finance
- “Money for Electioneering” (Pinto-Duschinsky, 2002)
- “Financial costs of democracy and political competition” (Austin & Tjernstrom, 2003)
 - Organizational vs campaign costs

But: election cycles & permanent campaign? Income?

⇒ *International Institute for Democracy & Electoral Assistance:*

Political finance

The concept encompasses all financial flows to and from political parties and candidates. It includes formal and informal income and expenditure, as well as financial and in-kind contributions. These transactions are not limited to a certain time period.

What is power?

- Central concept for this course
- Main link between money and democracy
 - Both inform who has power
 - Those with power distribute money
 - Those with power affect democratic quality of society
- Generally related to **capacity**: to make decisions, to impact others, ...
 - **Influence** is the exercise of power
 - **Authority** is having a legitimate claim to power (but: legitimacy is not necessary to exercise power)

Boris Johnson wins race to be Tory leader and PM

23 July 2019

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Boris Johnson says he has three priorities, to deliver Brexit, unite the country and beat Jeremy Corbyn

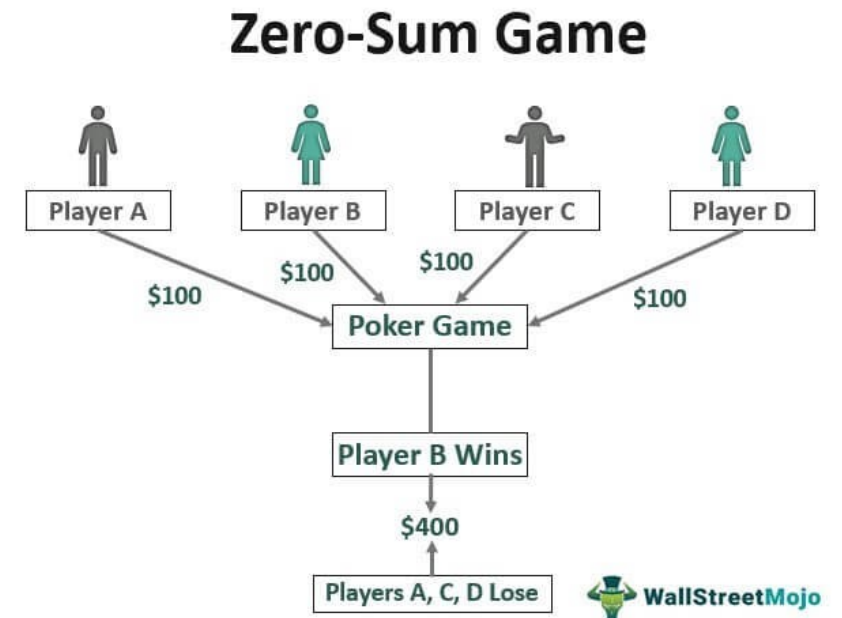
Boris Johnson has been elected new Conservative leader in a ballot of party members and will become the next UK prime minister.

He beat Jeremy Hunt comfortably, winning 92,153 votes to his rival's 46,656.

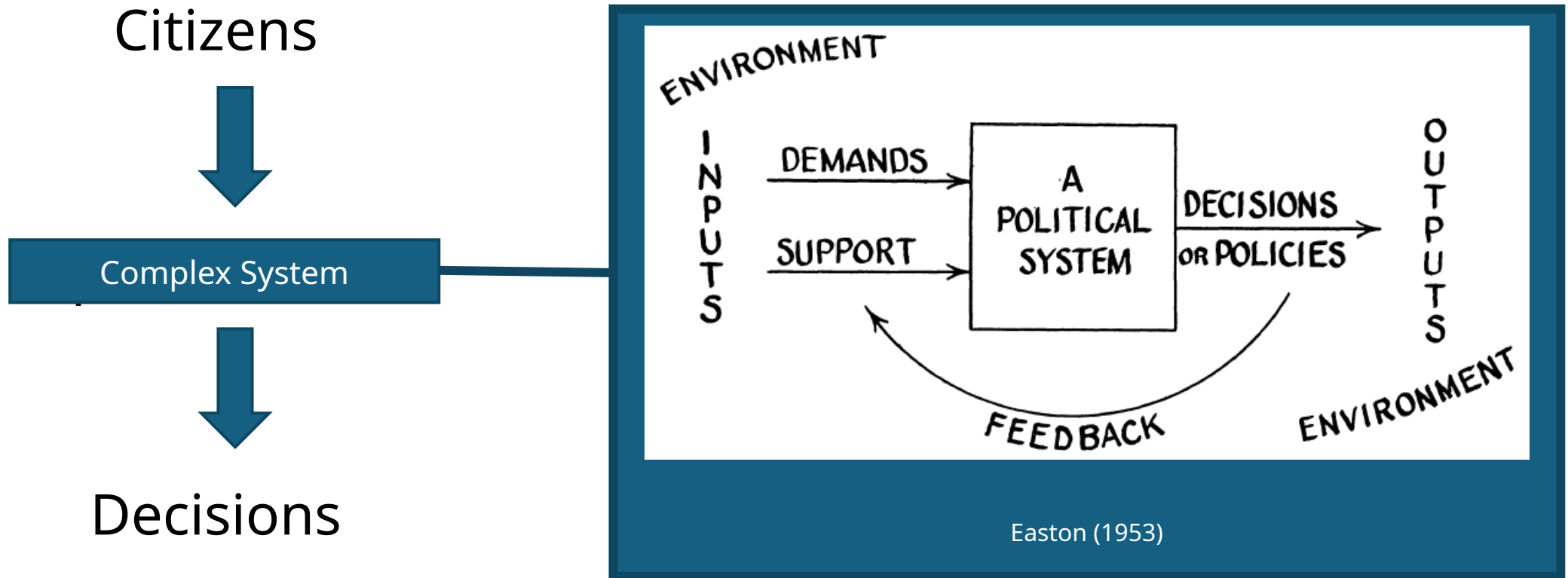
The former London mayor takes over from Theresa May on Wednesday.

What is power?

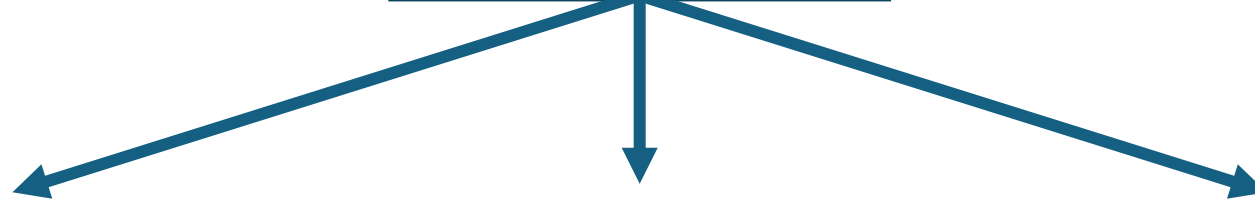
- Resource approaches (Weber, Parsons, Mann, Giddens):
 - Probability of pushing through own will in the face of another's resistance, regardless of basis of probability (*Weber*)
 - Zero-sum game (distributive power)
 - But: Collective power!
- Three faces (Lukes)
 - Decision-making
 - Non-decision making (agenda-setting)
 - Manipulation



What is democracy?



Democracy can also be direct

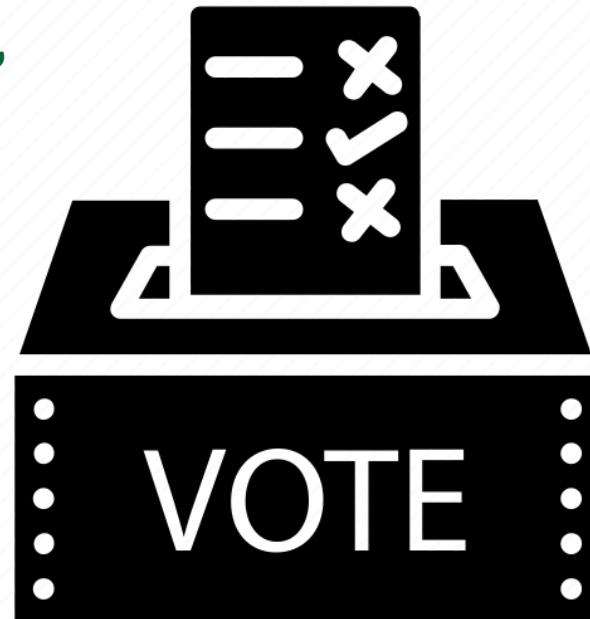


Deliberative Democracy



But still involve
political actors with
interests and goals

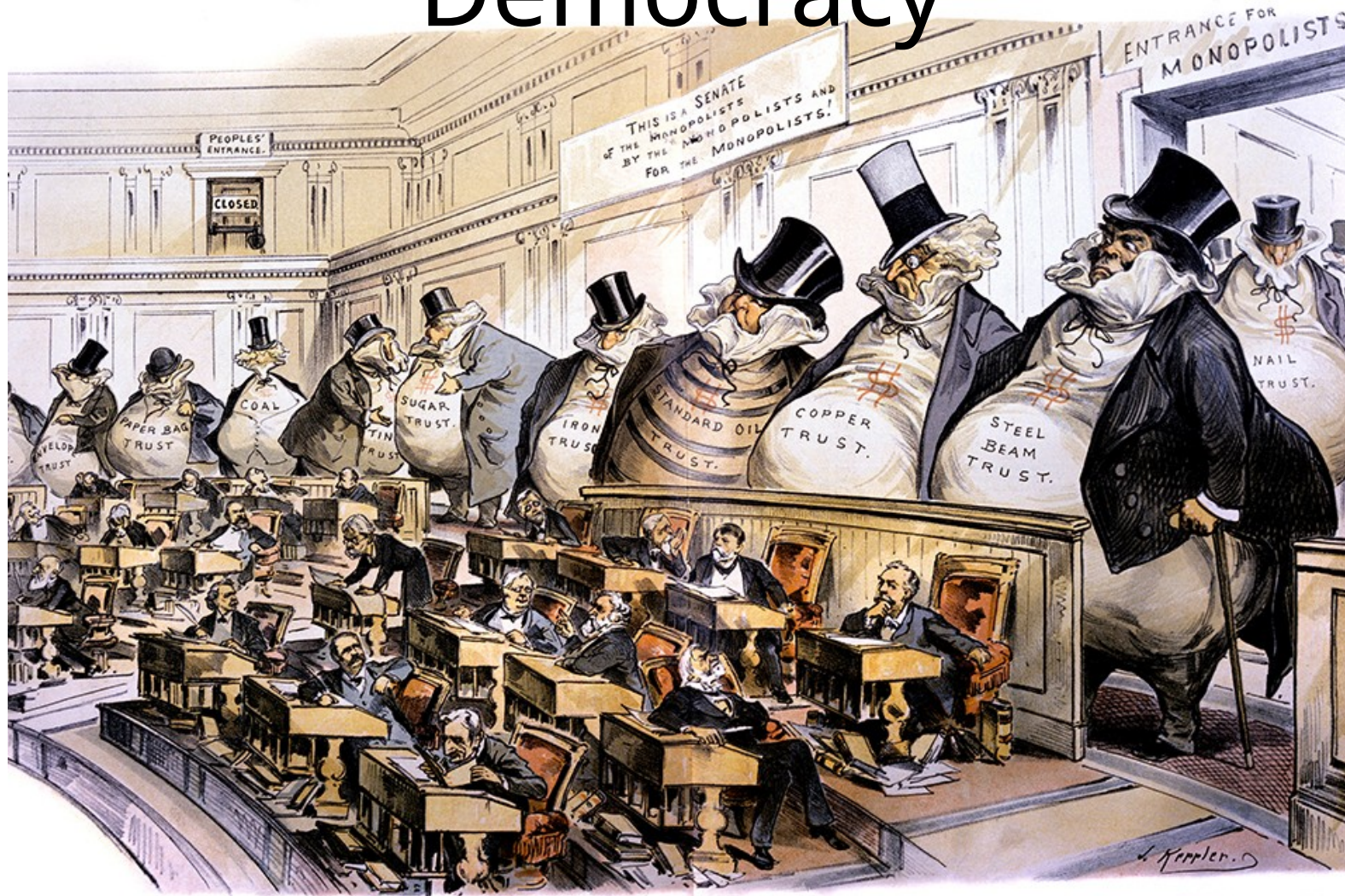
Referendums



Right to petition



Relationship between Money, Power & Democracy



Extreme case: Plutocracy

- A form of **Oligarchy**:
 - **Power** is in the hands of the few
 - Little influence of the people
 - Examples?
- Plutocracy: oligarchy where power = wealth-based (Winter, 2011)
 - The plutocrats then aim to defend personal wealth and exclusive social position (**wealth defense**) using political means
 - Buying off law enforcement, influencing policy, *astroturfing*,...
 - Is the US an oligarchy/plutocracy?

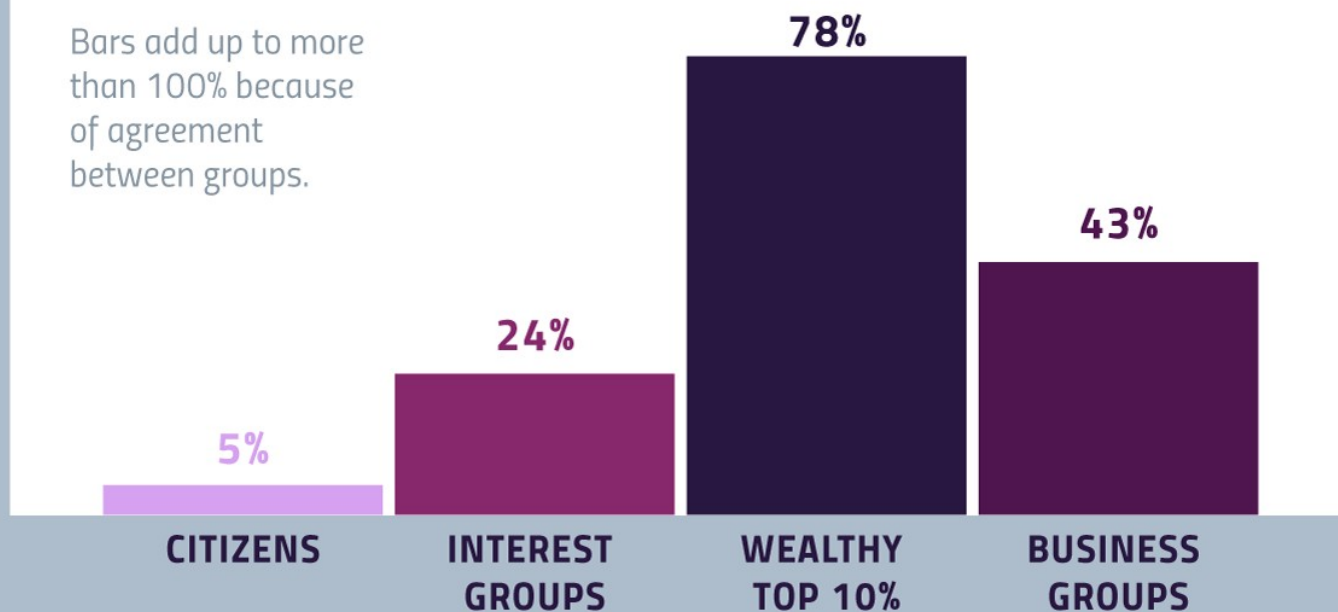


THE U.S. IS AN OLIGARCHY? THE RESEARCH, EXPLAINED

WHO HOLDS THE REINS OF DEMOCRACY?

Bars show how much each group's preferences on public policy are actually represented in Congress's decisions.

Bars add up to more than 100% because of agreement between groups.



THEORETICAL TYPES OF GOVERNMENT BASED ON WHO HAS INFLUENCE

DEMOCRACY



OLIGARCHY



INTEREST GROUP DOMINATED



BUSINESS DOMINATED



INFLUENCE IN CURRENT U.S. SYSTEM



CITIZENS INTEREST GROUPS WEALTHY TOP 10% BUSINESS GROUPS

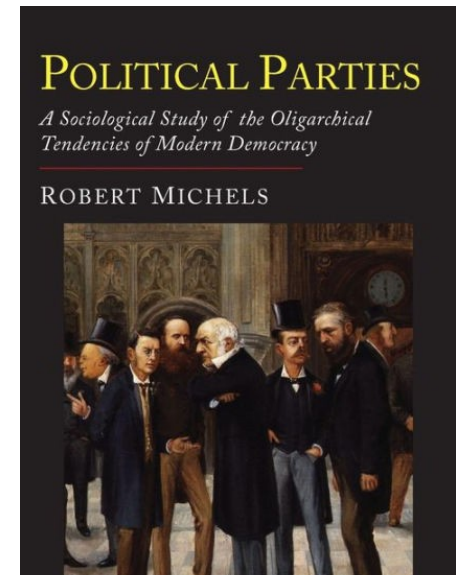
Is oligarchy/plutocracy a bad thing, or inevitable?

Elite Theory:

- Should relative power of any group exceed its relative size? **YES**
- Or should it be left to “ordinary people” (i.e. democracy)? **NO**

Italian School of elitism: Iron Law of Oligarchy (Michels, 1911)

- Oligarchy is inevitable in any organization
- Executive efficiency over democratic participation



Elite control vs. pluralism

- **Elite control is bad...**

- Power is best dispersed among multiple competing groups instead of centralized with a single elite
- Prevents total dominance by a single group
- Is beneficial to society (more egalitarian, more equality, ...)

- **...but likely inevitable, in part because of money**

- Business interest (neo-pluralism) and other elites (elite pluralism) still have disproportionate influence in representative democracy and policy int