

POL 102

REGIME DESIGN PROJECT

This project focuses on the foundational work of regime design, setting up the structures and institutions critical for governing society. These institutions represent the operational backbone of political life, facilitating the transition from anarchy to order, enabling the pursuit of collective goods, and ensuring citizens can influence their country's politics. Your challenge is to design the institutional framework of your new state, incorporating a detailed constitution that reflects your vision for your newly established state.

Setting the Stage

Political institutions are the pillars of governance, shaping how political power is exercised and maintained over time. They lay the groundwork for agenda-setting and decision-making based on a set of processes, knowledge, and precedents.

A society's basic view of human nature is a reasonable place to start working on a general understanding of political institutions. Does the society view people as generally selfish, or cooperative, rebellious or submissive, active, or passive? This perspective is vital because an institution ideal for a cooperative society may fail disastrously in managing selfish or rebellious behaviors.

Choosing the Basic Form

Given the opportunity to craft ideal government institutions from scratch, we would all choose the types of institutions that we believe support the values and traditions most important to us. Values such as democracy, individual rights, religious freedom, strict regulation of TikTok and so forth can all be supported & protected or weakened & undermined by the types of institutions a country uses.

- Your task is to envision and select the governmental structures that embody the values and traditions you deem most significant.
- Consider the historical and contextual factors that influence the evolution of institutions in your states. Even in the case of establishing a new state within Furman boundaries, the weight of Furman history and entrenched traditions of the school cannot be overlooked.
- Aim to construct a political regime that promises stability and justice, addressing societal issues like governance, participation, and rights. (e.g. Who rules? Who participates in the system? What rights, if any, do people have?). Your proposals should be well-defended with references to course materials and discussions, ensuring consistency with the overall institutional framework of your state.

There is not a single right or wrong answer here, but the ideas you present need to be consistent with your state institutions as well as the other institutions you envision in your presentation and policy memorandum. Insisting on a PR electoral system in a presidential election, for instance,

will demonstrate that you haven't paid attention to the material or thought about how these institutions would work together.

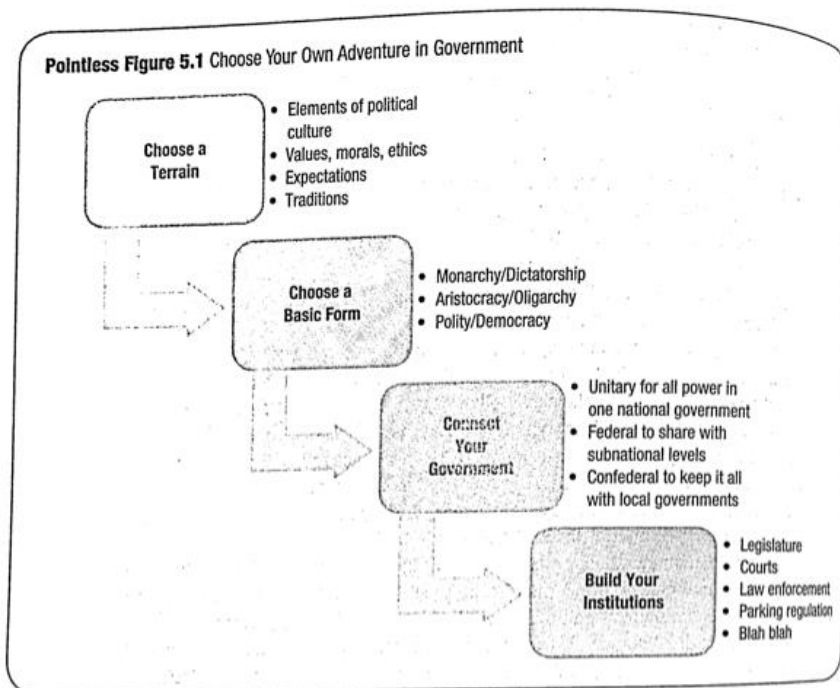
Integrating State and Regime, Building Institutions

A successful state is interconnected across geographical spaces and governance levels. Based on the characteristics of your country, decide whether a unitary or federal system best suits your vision.

Having put the basics in place, you can start designing the specific mechanisms that you will use to accomplish you need or want from the government. How are you going to police your country, create your laws, or enact policy? Consider these critical questions as you develop your regime:

1. What are the key institutions and characteristics of your designed regime?
2. In a democratic setup, how do the legislative, executive, and judiciary branches interact? What are the electoral rules, and what party system results from these structures?
3. If opting for an authoritarian model, how does the ruling authority cement its control over the population? Through promises of a better future, repression, or patronage?
4. Will your state hold elections, even in a non-democratic context? Explain why.
5. What is the rationale behind your chosen regime or institutional framework?
6. How has the collapse of the state influenced your choice of institutions or control mechanisms?

Over the long term, legitimacy tends to be an important factor in the success of political institutions, so as you dream up your perfect institution for making laws, you may want to keep that in mind.



The acceptance of these mechanisms is crucial for the government's cohesion and effectiveness. In the idealized game of SimCity, you must keep your people happy to win -the same holds true for governments in the real world.

Image Source: Van Belle, D. A. (2020). *A novel approach to politics: Introducing political science through books, movies, and popular culture*. CQ Press.