

Association News

Arend Lijphart, A Profile

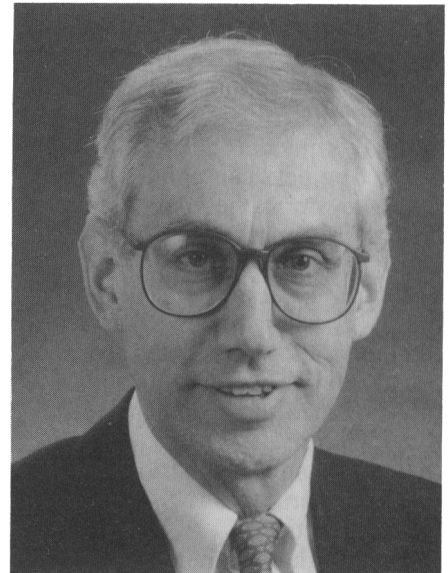
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How did Arend Lijphart come to be the world's leading theorist of democracy in sharply divided societies? Perhaps because he grew up in one. Holland is cleaved by deep religious and political divisions; it makes democracy work by formally incorporating its divisions into its representative institutions. Growing up there exposed Lijphart to processes that political scientists raised in, for example, the United States—a far more splintered and individualistic polity—rarely encounter. So, absorbing the Dutch experience, Lijphart developed ideas about democracy so resonant that they have been published in English, Japanese, Arabic, Spanish, Polish, Turkish, and Portuguese. Or perhaps Lijphart's theories arose out of his university experiences: Berkeley in the sixties, Leiden in the seventies—places that defined the turmoil of those years, ground-zero of student unrest and protest. Lijphart was assistant, then associate professor at Berkeley, and chair at Leiden—time enough to wonder about conflict, choice, democracy, and institutions. Yet millions have grown up in sharply divided societies, and thousands experienced the campus wars of the 1960s and 1970s without distilling their experiences into an original conception of democracy. Lijphart's intellectual acuity, deep commitment to making democracy practical, and astonishing scholarly energy thus deserve at least equal credit. The career record is remarkable. Lijphart's oeuvre includes more than a dozen books and ten times that many scholarly articles, published all over the world. The Klingemann

survey ranks him among the top five most cited comparativists (1989, 258–70).

Perhaps foremost among Lijphart's contributions to understanding how democracies work, and certainly the best known, is his consociational (sometimes labeled "power sharing") model of democracy. He presented the core statement of his consociational theory most fully in *Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration* (1977), though Netherlands specialists and readers of Dutch already knew what was coming. *The Politics of Accommodation: Pluralism and Democracy in the Netherlands* (1968) and *Verzuiling, Pacificatie en kentering in de Nederlandse politiek* (1968, now in its ninth edition, 1992) foreshadowed the larger argument. Lijphart argued that, although deeply divided societies face special challenges in trying to sustain stable democratic polities, they can succeed if they devise institutional mechanisms that induce cooperation and protect minority interests. In Lijphart's own words.

[T]he two principal and complementary characteristics of consociational democracy are grand coalition and segmented autonomy: shared decision making by representatives of all significant segments with regard to matters of common concern and autonomous decision making by and for each separate segment on all other issues. Two additional characteristics are proportionality in political representation, civil service appointments, and the allocation of public funds, and the minority veto for the protection of vital minority interests. A possible variant of strict proportionality is deliberate minority over-representation. In all four re-



Arend Lijphart

spects, consociational democracy contrasts sharply with majority rule democracy (*Oxford Companion to Politics of the World* 1993, 188–89).

Lijphart traces the term "consociationalism" back to Althusius in the early seventeenth century and, more recently, to David Apter, both of whom used it as a reference to federalism. Lijphart gave it its current meaning and its current widespread usage. By doing so, he expanded discussion of democracy beyond the narrow Anglo-American focus on autonomous individual citizens. His analysis reminded us that individuals are often bound politically, sometimes with great intensity, to specific social groups, and that making democracy work therefore requires thinking about how to reconcile conflicts among major social groupings as well as among individuals and more narrowly focused interest groups.

While continuing to refine his analysis of consociationalism, Lijphart went on to explore a variety of other aspects of democratic politics. In *Democracies: Patterns of Majoritarian and Consensus Government in Twenty One Countries* (1984), he showed that while democratic institutions differ in a great many respects, these differences can be reduced to two basic dimensions. First is the distinction between majoritarianism vs. consensus building systems. The former are characterized by majoritarian electoral rules, two-party systems, and single-party governments, the latter by proportional representation, multiparty systems, and coalition governments. Second is the distinction between unitary and federal systems, between centralized polities with unicameral legislatures operating under flexible constitutions and decentralized polities with strong bicameral legislatures operating under rigid constitutional rules. The majoritarian model has remained the dominant normative model of democracy, even though the consensus model depicts democracy as it is much more widely practiced.

The insights Lijphart drew from this analysis inspired his subsequent argument that presidential systems should be seen in terms of the majoritarian-consensus contrast, and, in that context, presidentialism is primarily a majoritarian institution. In his long introduction to *Parliamentary versus Presidential Government* (1992), Lijphart draws precise definitions of presidentialism, semi-presidentialism, and parliamentarism precisely as a basis for evaluating their advantages and disadvantages and assesses the limited systematic empirical evidence currently available. Ultimately, he concludes (in "Constitutional Choices for New Democracies") that parliamentarism and proportional representation are the better options for new democracies.

Lijphart's enduring concern with electoral systems culminated recently in *Electoral Systems and Party Systems: A Study of Twenty Seven Democracies, 1945-1990* (1994), a comprehensive examina-

tion of the impact of electoral systems on the disproportionality of electoral outcomes and on the party systems. The book is based on analyses of all elections in the 1945-1990 period in all 24 democracies that have been continuously democratic since or shortly after 1945 plus Spain, Portugal, and Greece. Lijphart finds that electoral systems have a very strong influence on electoral disproportionality and a moderately strong influence on party systems (the number of parties and the creation of majority parties). The most influential characteristic of electoral systems is the combination of district magnitude (the average number of representatives elected per district) and electoral threshold. The electoral formula (plurality, majority, or the various forms of proportional representation) comprises the second most influential dimension. Four additional factors also have significant explanatory power: the size of the legislature, ballot structure (whether or not voters can split their votes among two or more parties), presidentialism (whether or not presidential elections are conducted simultaneously with legislative elections) and the formation of formal interparty electoral alliances, technically called "appearments."

This monumental work now stands as the most fully developed and important statement on its subject. The process by which the data were assembled also made an innovative contribution to the method of comparative politics. Lijphart recruited a team of experts on each of the 27 countries who provided essential data, interpretations, and feedback on the rules and operation of the electoral systems in their countries. Lijphart's strategy for the comparative study of a relatively large number of countries thus steered a middle course between the inevitably diffuse many-author project and the more cohesive, but necessarily more superficial, single-author project. It stands as a model for future large-scale comparative research. His ideas are central to the ongoing debates about how to design successful democratic institutions. He has

served as an advisor on constitutional and electoral law matters to four governments on three continents: Israel, Lebanon, Chile, and South Africa) and to the U.S. State Department, which has sought his advice on South Africa, Angola, voting rules in Fiji, and voting patterns in the UN General Assembly. None of this activity has slowed Lijphart's research. He is currently working on a project on constitutional design and government performance that includes more than 30 democracies in its data set.

We have only sampled the highlights of Lijphart's remarkable body of work; numerous articles and volumes deepen, elaborate, and extend the writings we have mentioned here. There is one final three-star article that deserves special acknowledgement, however: the classic "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method" (1971), which has taught a generation of comparativists how to design research projects.

Lijphart's contribution to political science extend far beyond his scholarship. He has served as vice president of both the American Political Science Association and the International Political Science Association. He helped found the APSA Section on Representation and Electoral Systems. He has served on the editorial boards of the *American Political Science Review*, the *British Journal of Political Science*, *Comparative Political Studies*, *Electoral Studies*, the *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, *Government and Opposition*, and the *Review of Politics*. He has advised the National Science Foundation, the German Marshall Fund, the Fulbright program, the Guggenheim Foundation, the Social Science Research Council, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, and the Social Research Council of the United Kingdom. He has, in short, been an exemplary citizen of the profession throughout his career.

Lijphart's accomplishments have been acknowledged by a variety of awards and honors. He is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the Netherlands Academy of Sciences and has

been both a Guggenheim Fellow and a German Marshall Fund Fellow. He was the first recipient of the Hendrick Muller Prize in the Social Behavioral Sciences, the Netherlands' highest award in the social sciences in 1992, and was awarded the Stein Rokkan Lectureship, the highest honor in European political science, by the European Consortium for Political Research in 1993.

Lijphart is a wonderful colleague—generous with his time to his department and the University of California, San Diego, committed to his students, and a voice of fairness and reason in department and university deliberations. The concern with democratic practice that permeates Lijphart's scholarship carries over into the way he conducts his life.

Arend Lijphart has devoted his career to the study of democracy. He has recast the way we think about it and the way we study it. His work will endure as long as democracies endure, for it addresses the continuing challenges that they must continually overcome to survive and prosper.

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The Windy City Favors the 1995 Annual Meeting

At its new location in the Chicago Hilton and Towers, the 1995 Annual Meeting drew record-setting crowds second only to the exceptional 1994 New York meeting. With 5,559 attendees in 1995, the meeting surpassed the 1993 Washington meeting [5,151] and outshone the 1992 meeting [4,998], the last held in Chicago.

Credit for the attractiveness of the meeting to APSA members is due to the Program Committee chairs, Mary Fainsod Katzenstein of Cornell University and Peter J. Katzenstein of Cornell University, and the 46 division chairs of the Program Committee, as well as the 46 Related Group organizers. Panels and roundtables organized by the Program Committee, Related Groups, and APSA generated a meeting of 650 panels. It is possible to appreciate the size and complexity of the APSA meeting by comparing it to the numbers of panels offered at the annual meetings of our sister associations. Using 1994 data, and an APSA meeting of 620 panels over the course of 3.5 days, Anthropology's meeting offered 372

panels spread over 4.5 days; Geography, 560 panels over 4 days; History, 148 panels over 3 days; and Sociology, 386 panels over 5 days.

Mary Katzenstein and Peter Katzenstein selected *Liberalism at Century's End* as the meeting's theme. Its relevance is attested to by the fact that 8 of the 10 most highly attended panels were organized around the theme. The largest single session being the roundtable, *The End of Liberalism? Presidential Leadership and the 1994 Midterm Elections* organized by Stanley Renshon of the City University of New York in the program division on presidency research chaired by Lyn Ragsdale of the University of Arizona.

Among the other program highlights were Sidney Verba's Presidential Address, *The Citizen as Respondent: Surveys, Representation, and American Democracy*, to be featured in the March issue of the *American Political Science Review*. Other notable addresses include the first Ithiel de Sola Pool Lecture by Robert D. Putnam of Harvard University, *Tuning In, Tuning Out: The Strange Disappearance of Social Capital in America* [featured in this issue of *PS*], and the John Gaus Lecture by Charles E. Lindblom of Yale University, *Market*



APSA Book Exhibit—the largest such exhibit in the world