


Chapter 4

It Takes Two to Tango: 2010 British Con–Dem Coalition

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ABSTRACT

British politics has traditionally been identified as a two-party political system throughout the post-war period. Single parties have formed governments in the United Kingdom, with the two major parties squeezing out any third-party challenger. The year 2010 was an anomaly. The result of the general election proved inconclusive, ending in a hung parliament. For the first time in over 60 years, coalition negotiations took place between the three main parties, and the Con-Dem coalition was agreed to. This coalition pushed forward constitutional changes relating to the timing of elections and proposed reforming the electoral system. The coalition endured for its full five-year term, although its effects were short-term. The subsequent conservative government reneged on its previous support for constitutional changes. This chapter focuses on the challenges of coalition politics in a British context.

INTRODUCTION

“If you’re not a liberal at twenty you have no heart, if you’re not a conservative at forty, you have no brain.” ~ Winston Churchill

Man is a social animal, according to Aristotle. As humans have increased over time, they have come to settle in communities, small at first limited to blood relatives, after which in greater numbers in cities such as Alexandria, Babylon, Athens and Samarkand, to name just four. In ancient times, the political system attributed to Athens was quite unusual regarding participation. Their decision-making and lifestyle choices first interested Greek philosophers and, later, the medieval Christian thinkers, culminating with the Enlightenment and contemporary political science.

Ancient Athens is identified as the birth of democracy. Not as we know it today, of course. The modern definition of democracy does not exclude voters based on gender, let alone accept a category

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of enslaved people. Nevertheless, the basic understanding of greater participation in deciding policy remained. Regarding the modern democratic state, decision-making or governance has pursued multiple paths. Some states, such as the United States, have chosen a presidential form of government. Others have opted for parliamentary democracy. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is classified as a Parliamentary-democratic hereditary monarchy. Interestingly and quite uniquely, it has no written constitution. The constitutional order is based on unwritten law and individual statutes, including the Magna Carta of 1215 and the Habeas Corpus Act of 1679 (Wert, 2010). This chapter endeavours to highlight the challenges faced by the Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition of 2010, which was a unique development in terms of British post-war politics as there had never been a formal coalition government since 1945.

METHODOLOGY

When addressing the first elements of the research process, one may define it as the way of accessing knowledge concerning the question, that is, the method. To locate the importance of the method in science, it will suffice for us to recall that any discipline which aims to be autonomous must necessarily define an object - what is the specific object that is studied, and a method - how one proceeds to study this object. The first systematic method stemmed from the work of Descartes, who advocated doubt (Cartesian doubt), which has remained the major concern of all self-respecting positivist researchers.

This is the procedural logic of science, that is, the set of particular practices that are put to logic of science, that is, the set of particular practices that she puts to work so that the progress of its demonstrations and theorisations are either clear, obvious or irrefutable. The method consists of a set of rules which, within the framework of a given science that are relatively independent of particular contents and facts studied as such. It translates, on the ground, into concrete procedures for preparing, organising, and conducting a search.

The approach is considered an intellectual approach that does not involve steps, a systematic path, or particular rigour. A general provision locates the philosophical background or the researcher's metatheory or research. In such a meaning, one refers to Marxist, functionalist, culturalist, structuralist, or systemic approaches.

It is a precise means of achieving a partial result at a specific level and moment of the research. This direct achievement of results concerns the concrete, the observed fact, the practical, and the limited stage. The techniques in this meaning refer to covering the stages of limited operations - while the method is concerned about the overall design coordinating several techniques. These are tools that are momentary, circumstantial, and limited in the research process, such as a survey, interview, sociogram, role-play, and tests.

The methodology can be defined as the study of the proper use of methods and techniques. It is not enough to know them; one still needs to know how to use them properly, that is, how to adapt them as rigorously as possible to the precise object of the research or of the study envisaged and to the objectives pursued. Otherwise, the methods and techniques retained in a given research must be the most capable of considering the subject studied and leading the researcher towards the goals fixed in the work outcome. It is unnecessary to specify that this must be the subject of justifications and arguments on the researcher's part. The researcher must define, formulate, and develop his/her problem, which is referred to as the

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