Models of Executive Politics: a Framework for the Study of Executive Power Relations in Parliamentary and Semi-presidential Regimes

- The study of power relations within the executive branch of government
  - Do heads of state, heads of government and government ministers have the power to leave a personal imprint on the decision making process or are they able only to influence policy at the margins?
  - Do governments take decisions collegially, or is such policy making impractical?
  - Is policy made by elected and accountable representatives or is it made by unelected and irremovable administrators?
- Traditional approach in internal examination and debate of individual countries
  - UK: Prime ministerial or cabinet government?
  - France: Respective powers of the President and the Prime Minister?
  - Germany: Chancellor democracy or co-ordination democracy?
- Criticisms of this approach
  - Too narrow, now more acceptable to use wider models including different core executive stakeholders
  - Too ethnocentric, in fact has wider implications for other issues in comparative politics
- The distribution of power within the executive branch of government in parliamentary and semi-presidential regimes
  - Dunleavy and Rhodes argued that attention should be switched away from a narrow debate about prime ministerial vs collective cabinet power and focused on a ‘conceptualization of the central policy machinery in British government, namely, the core executive’
    - **Core executive:** ‘All those organizations and structures which primarily serve to pull together and integrate central government policies, or act as final arbiters within the executive of conflicts between different elements of the government machine’ (Dunleavy and Rhodes, ‘Core executive studies in Britain’, Public Administration, 68 (1990) p.4)
  - Officials in co-ordinating departments such as the Treasury and Foreign Office
  - Argued this led to 6 potential models of core executive operations
    - Prime Ministerial (2 variants), Cabinet, Ministerial, Segmented Decision Making and Bureaucratic co-ordination
  - Can include in argument that a simple notion of Prime Ministerial or Presidential is too simplistic and instead a pluralistic approach should be taken
- Models of Government
  - Monocratic Government
    - The exercise of personal leadership