

When analyzing Table A.12, one comes across the expected feature of many VSC having a small number of political parties. Only one third of the chosen VSC have three or more political parties of significance. In six VSC, two parties dominate the political scene, either by distributing all the votes between them or by obtaining an overwhelming majority of votes. Some of the VSC, as can be seen in Table A.12, have only one party of significant size or only a single party. Four countries, namely, Brunei, Micronesia, Nauru and Palau have no parties at all. There is a ban on parties in Brunei, and in the case of the Pacific VSC, their cultural heritage seems to make formal parties unnecessary in the political system. Note that we do not indicate royal houses in Tables A.12 and A.13.

As to the number of parliament chambers and the number of parliament members, it was clearly expected that VSC would normally have only one chamber and, of course, fewer members compared to larger countries. Nevertheless, we could detect seven countries with two chambers of parliament, and the number of members ranges from 15 (St. Kitts and Nevis) to 65 (Malta). In most of the countries, membership in parliament is honorary, and members have full time employment elsewhere.

An astonishing diversity appears in the number of cabinet members in the selected VSC. Monaco and San Marino get by with four cabinet members; Barbados needs 17, including three secretaries of state. On average, the selected countries, notwithstanding, have smaller cabinets than larger countries. The difference is, though, surprisingly small, especially when we consider the ministerial level exclusively. Disregarding countries with traditionally huge cabinets like France, many national cabinets consist of 10 – 15 ministers.

Note that the Commonwealth countries listed in Table A.13 in the Appendix have a Governor General in addition to the Prime Minister. Most other countries have a president, with the exception of Palau, where the President is also Prime Minister. The number of cabinet ministers excludes Attorney Generals when they not have their own minister portfolio.

Looking beyond mere numbers of ministers, there are some notable peculiarities of VSC. Naturally, in those countries with only a few cabinet ministers, there are normally a lot of ministers with more than one assigned department. Furthermore, the Prime Minister sometimes has