2. The Political Organization of Parliament

This chapter discusses the political organization of the UK Parliament, at the heart of which are the political parties. It first considers the internal organization of Parliament, focusing on how political parties are structured. There are two principal parties facing one another in Parliament: the party in government and opposition parties. The opposition comprises frontbench Members (shadow ministers) and backbenchers. Smaller parties may also designate some Members as ‘frontbenchers’ (official spokespersons for the party). The frontbench of each party includes whips. The chapter provides an overview of these whips as well as parliamentary parties before considering legislative-executive relations. In particular, it examines how parties shape the relationship between Parliament and the executive, and how these have changed over time.
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