

## **GV101 Week 12: How Government Works**

### **Questions to Consider**

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Office Hours (by appointment via the [Student Hub](#)):

Thursdays, 09:30 – 10:30, CBG.4.13

Thursdays, 14:30 – 15:30, CBG.4.13

#### **Country Question:**

- What are the key political institutions in your adopted country?
  - Presidential, parliamentary or hybrid?
  - Single-party, coalition or minority government?
  - Federal or unitary?
  - Unicameral or bicameral?
  - How common are referendums?
  - Strong or weak courts?
  - Independent central bank?
- How do government institutions work in your adopted country?
  - Who are the agenda-setters, and who has veto power?

#### **Essential Reading Questions:**

1. According to Clark, Golder, and Golder, what is the definition of a veto player?
  - a) What are the two types of veto player and how do they differ from each other?
  - b) Each veto player has an *indifference curve*. What is this?
  - c) What are the *winset of the status quo* and the *unanimity core*?
2. What are the main propositions of (Tsebelis') veto players theory as outlined by Clark, Golder, and Golder, including in relation to the importance of agenda setting?
  - a) Can you provide a diagram (or diagrams) to illustrate these points and help you explain them?
  - b) What is a contemporary example of a veto player in action?
3. Clark, Golder, and Golder note that majoritarian democracies tend to have elected representatives who act as delegates, whilst consensus democracies tend to have elected representatives who act as trustees. What is the difference between these two types of representative?
  - a) Do you agree that they tend to be associated with majoritarian and consensus democracies respectively? Why?
4. What are the institutions that tend to be associated, respectively, with majoritarian and consensus democracies according to Clark, Golder, and Golder?
  - a) There are two sub-sets of the above institutions that are particularly closely related to each other. What are those subsets and why are they related?
  - b) How can the above observations be related to the particular distinction between majoritarian and consensus democracies that is provided by Lijphart?
  - c) Beyond the examples given by Clark, Golder, and Golder, can you think of a particularly good example of a majoritarian democracy and a consensus democracy? Can you describe their institutions?

5. What does Lijphart find in relation to the effects of majoritarian and consensus democracy, and how does he demonstrate this?
  - a) How can this finding be related to another core reading that we have considered in a previous week?
  - b) Do you find the evidence convincing or not? Why?

Additional Essential Reading Questions:

6. What are the four types of representation (as proposed by Pitkin) outlined by Clark, Golder, and Golder, and what are their features?
  - a) Which of the types of representation tends to be associated with majoritarian democracies, and which with consensus democracies?
  - b) Which type of representation do you think is most important? Why?

Further Reading Questions:

7. Huber and Martinez-Gallardo outline three ways of measuring government stability. What are they?
  - a) Which of those measures do you think is most important? Why?
8. What do Huber and Martinez-Gallardo find regarding the measures of stability:
  - b) in relation to the French Fourth Republic and Fifth Republic?
  - c) more generally (using their dataset of multiple countries)?
9. What are the two dimensions of majoritarian and consensus democracies reported by McGann and Latner (from Lijphart's work)?
  - d) How do these relate to the institutions that question 2. (above) asks about?
10. What do McGann and Latner find regarding the relationship between PR-majority systems and flexibility in government spending?
  - e) What is the possible theoretical flaw in Tsebelis' veto players theory that is revealed by their results?

Essential Readings for Next Week:

- Donald L. Horowitz, 'Comparing Democratic Systems', *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (Fall, 1990), pp. 73-79.
- Juan J. Linz, 'The Perils of Presidentialism', *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Winter, 1990), pp. 51-69.
- William Roberts Clark, Matt Golder, and Sona Nadenichek Golder, *Foundations of Comparative Politics* (London, Sage Publications, 2019), pp. 217-221.

Further Reading for Next Week:

The further reading questions for next week will be based on the following two sources, which you may choose to focus on:

- Taeko Hiroi and Sawa Omori, 'Perils of parliamentarism? Political systems and the stability of democracy revisited', *Democratization*, Vol. 16, No. 3 (2009), pp. 485-507.