

## **GV101 Week 16: Independent Institutions**

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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 Questions:**

- How independent are the supreme court and the central bank in your adopted country?
- How are the judges and central bankers chosen in your adopted country?
- Why do some countries have independent courts or central banks while others do not?
- How should judges be chosen?
- How should central bankers be appointed?

### **Class Questions:**

1. Thatcher and Stone Sweet identify four possible reasons for government to delegate powers to non-majoritarian institutions (NMIs). What are those reasons?
  - a) Can you think of real or hypothetical examples of each?
  - b) Which, if any, do you think are the most important reasons? Why?
  - c) Do you think that a principal might intentionally empower an agent such that agency loss results?
  - d) What are the factors influencing the 'zone of discretion'?
2. Thatcher and Sweet Stone outline some criticisms that have been levelled against the principal-agent (P-A) approach to accounting for delegation to NMIs. What are these criticisms?
  - a) What are some alternative approaches that can address the criticisms levelled against the P-A approach?
  - b) What do you think is the best approach (or combination of approaches) to accounting for the powers delegated to NMIs?
3. Choi, Gulati, and Posner outline the difference between judges who behave like 'professionals' and those who behave like 'politicians'. What is this difference?
  - a) Do you think there is a dichotomy between those two types? Why?
  - b) What type of judge, if either, do you think is better? What is your basis for this preference?
4. There are four systems for selecting judges outlined by Choi, Gulati, and Posner. What are these? And what are the three measures of judicial performance that they use?
  - a) If you were designing a system for selecting judges, what measures of performance would you prioritise? Why?
  - b) And which selection method would you advocate? Why?

Additional Essential Reading Question:

5. What are the implications of Choi, Gulati, and Posner's paper for the idea of judicial independence? Does this raise any problems?

Further Reading Questions:

6. Hix, Høyland, and Vivyan develop a way to categorise the members of the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC). What is this and how is it measured?
  - a) They show that there are some regularities in the types of MPC members that are recruited over time. What are these regularities and what might explain them? Is this a problem?
7. Canes-Wrone, Clark, and Kelly have three hypotheses about the behaviour of judges when reviewing death penalty sentences. What are these?
  - a) What do they find in relation to their hypotheses? Do these findings point towards a system for selecting judges that is different from the system pointed towards by Choi, Gulati, and Posner?
  - b) Based on the above, do you think the increasing politicisation of judicial election campaigns has been good or bad? Why?

Essential Readings for Next Week:

- Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, James D. Morrow, Randolph Siverson, and Alastair Smith, 'Political Competition and Economic Growth', *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (Jan., 2001), pp. 58-72.
- Adam Przeworski and Fernando Limongi, 'Political Regimes and Economic Growth', *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (Summer, 1993), pp. 51-69.

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:

- Michael L. Ross, 'Review: The Political Economy of the Resource Curse', *World Politics*, Vol. 51, No. 2 (Jan., 1999), pp. 297-322.
- George Tsebelis and Eric C. C. Chang, 'Veto players and the structure of budgets in advanced industrialized countries', *European Journal of Political Research*, Vol. 43, No. 3 (May., 2004), pp. 449-476.