

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS (PS 387)

Term: Fall 2019

Meeting: Mon, Wed 2:30PM – 4:00PM

Place: G040 TISCH

Instructor: G. Tsebelis

Office hours: Mon, Wed 1 – 2.30 PM, 6759 Haven Hall

Phone number: 734 647-7974

This course compares major institutional structures such as presidentialism vs. parliamentarism, unicameralism vs. bicameralism, two vs. multiparty systems, plurality vs. proportional electoral systems etc.

The method of analysis is rational choice: we will assume that political actors are rational, and that each one of them tries to do the best possible given existing institutional constraints, and the behavior of other actors. We will see that this assumption leads to the conclusion that institutions affect political outcomes in systematic ways. We will focus on what political outcomes will be produced by different institutions. An example will help: In a presidential system (like the US) the Congress proposes legislation to the President who may or may not veto it. As a result, Presidents in the US would love to have line item veto (which has been judged by the Supreme Court as unconstitutional). In a parliamentary system (like the UK) the government proposes legislation to the Parliament (who may or may not veto it or modify it slightly). As a result, the Parliament complains that it just rubber-stumps the decisions of the Government. The situation is reverse from the expectations of the names “Presidential” and “Parliamentary” since the actor that “names” the system is the weaker one of the two in terms of policies.

The reading load is expected to be around 100 pp./week (50 pp./ session).

Textbooks:

1. Lijphart, A.. 1999. *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries*. Yale University Press.
2. Tsebelis, G.. 2002. *Veto Players: How Political Institutions Work*. Princeton University Press.
3. Tsebelis, G. and Money, J.. 1997. *Bicameralism*. Cambridge University Press.

Each student will “adopt” two countries (one presidential and one parliamentary (selection of one’s own country is not permitted)), and will write two 8 page reports, (instead of midterm and final) comparing the two countries in terms of their institutional features and their consequences. Country selection has to be discussed with the instructor during the first 2 weeks (no more than 3 persons will be allowed to select the same country on a first come first served basis). The first report compares Presidentialism with Parliamentarism and is due on Wednesday October 18 (immediately after study break). The second compares electoral systems parliaments and policymaking. It is due the last day of class (12/11). The subjects are on purpose vague, because available information differs by country. The first paper compares the general features of the countries you adopt (how the different institutions interact with each other), while the second focuses more on the features of the electoral system, the resulting party system, and the interactions among parties to produce policies. Specific examples of important policy reforms (actual or aborted) will be very welcome.

The final grade will take into account:

- Participation in class (20%).
- Papers (40% each).

NOTE: Students are not encouraged to bring laptops to class. A closed laptop rule during lecture will be enforced and other communication devices will need to be on 'silent' during lecture.

COURSE OUTLINE

The numbers in [] refer to the corresponding book in the list.

WEEKS 1 and 2 (September 4-11): INTRODUCTION. WHY STUDY INSTITUTIONS?

-Tsebelis: Nested Games ch. 2, 4

WEEK 3 (September 16-18): GENERAL OVERVIEW OF INSTITUTIONAL SETTINGS...

-Tsebelis: Veto Players: Intro, Chapters 1, 2.

WEEK 4 (September 23-25): ... AND SOME EFFECTS

-Bawn: "Money and Majorities in the Federal Republic of Germany: Evidence for a Veto Players Model of Government Spending" American Journal of Political Science, 43(3), pp. 707-736

-Tsebelis: Veto Players Chapters 7, and 8

WEEK 5 (September 30 - October 2): PARLIAMENTARY AND PRESIDENTIAL SYSTEMS: SEPARATION AND COLLABORATION OF POWERS

-Lijphart, Ch. 1,2,3,4

-Tsebelis: Veto Players ch. 3

- Robert Elgie: "From Linz to Tsebelis: three waves of presidential/parliamentary studies?" Democratization: Volume 12, Number 1 / February 2005 Pages: 106 - 122

WEEK 6 (October 7-9): PARLIAMENTARY AND PRESIDENTIAL SYSTEMS: AGENDA SETTING

-Doering, Herbert 1995b "Time as a Scarce Resource: Government Control of the Agenda" in H. Doering (ed) Parliaments and Majority Rule in Western Europe N. York: St. Martin's Press

- Shepsle, Kenneth, A. and Barry R. Weingast. 1987. "The Institutional Foundations of Committee Power." American Political Science Review 81: 85-104.

-Tsebelis Veto players: ch 4

Tsebelis and Aleman: "Presidential Conditional Agenda Setting in Latin America" World Politics 57 (3): 396-420

FIRST PAPER DUE ON WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 16

WEEK 7 AND 8 (October 16-23): A POLITY UNLIKE ANY OTHER: THE INSTITUTIONS OF THE EU

-Tsebelis: Veto Players ch. 11

-Tsebelis: "The Power of the European Parliament as a Conditional Agenda-Setter" (March 1994) American Political Science Review 88:128-42

-Tsebelis and Yataganas: "Veto Players and Decisionmaking in the EU after Nice: Policy Stability and Judicial/Bureaucratic Discretion" Journal of Common Market Studies 40 (2): 283-308

-Tsebelis: Chapter 1 from Reforming the EU: Realizing the Impossible

WEEK 9 (October 28-30): ELECTORAL SYSTEMS

-Lijphart, Ch. 5,8.

-WEEKS 10-11 (November 4-13): ELECTORAL SYSTEMS, PARTY SYSTEMS, AND COALITIONS.

-Laver and Schofield Multiparty Government ch 5 and 6

-Strom, "Minority Governments in Parliamentary Democracies" Comparative Political Studies 1984, 17: 199-228.

-Lijphart: Ch. 6,7

-Tsebelis Veto Players Chapter 9

WEEK 12 (November 18-20): BUREAUCRATS AND JUDGES

-Tsebelis Veto Players: Chapter 10

-Andrews and Monitola: "Veto Players and the Rule of Law in Emerging Democracies" Comparative Political Studies Vol. 37, No. 1, 55-87 (2004)

-Santoni and Zucchini. 2004. "Does Policy Stability Increase the Constitutional Court's Independence? The Case of Italy During the First Republic (1956-1992)." Public Choice 120 (3) <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/02/us/politics/judge-kavanaugh-supreme-court-justices.html?action=click&module=Top%20Stories&pgtype=Homepage>

WEEKS 13 and 14 (November 25- December 4): BICAMERALISM AND FEDERALISM

-Tsebelis and Money : Bicameralism

-Tsebelis Veto Players: chapter 6

-Lijphart: Ch. 10

WEEK 15 (December 9-11): REFERENDUMS AND RECAPITULATION

-Tsebelis Veto Players: chapter 5 and Conclusions

SECOND PAPER DUE MONDAY DECEMBER 11