Winter Term 2013/14
Dr. Jan Sauermann
(1388) The Limits of Democracy: Social Choice Theory and its Critics
Time: Thursdays 8:00 – 9:30 *Room:* Gottfried-Keller-Str. 6, Hörsaal des Forschungsinstituts *First Session:* 17 October 2013

Course description

Is there a public good? Can it be revealed by democratic procedures? The course will focus on these fundamental questions through the lens of social choice theory. In his highly influential book *'Liberalism against Populism'* William Riker argues that democratic decisions are chaotic, meaningless, and arbitrary. The seminar consists of two parts. In the first part of the seminar we will examine Riker's line of argumentation in detail. In the second part we will analyse alternatives from democratic theory trying to defend democracy against Riker's pessimistic interpretation of social choice theory.

Prerequisites

Students should have a good knowledge of political science concepts, basic qualitative and quantitative methods, some math skills, and an interest in current research. Since nearly all reading assignments are in English, this will be the general classroom language as well. Participants therefore must know enough English to be able to participate actively. Perfection is not required – you just need to understand and make yourself understood.

Relevance for study programmes

The course is open to all doctoral students and advanced master/diploma students of the WiSo-Faculty with an interest in political science.

Registration

The course will be taught on a weekly basis (first session October 17). Students should register via KLIPS. Students unable to use KLIPS can register via Email (jan.sauermann@uni-koeln.de).

Reading assignments

At the beginning of October a reader with the required texts for the sessions of the seminar can be bought at Copy-Star (Zülpicher Straße 184, 50937 Köln).

Working requirements and assessment method

All participants are expected to:
- attend the seminar on a regular basis
- complete assigned readings according to schedule
- actively contribute to class discussions
- give a 10 to 15 minutes presentation in the seminar

Depending on the "Prüfungsordnung"
- EITHER write a research paper of 15-20 pages in length (**Deadline: 17 March 2014, 12:00**)
- OR sit a written exam

General readings:

- Hinich, Melvin J., and Michael C. Munger. 1997. *Analytical Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mueller, Dennis C. 2003. *Public Choice III*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Shepsle, Kenneth A., and Mark S. Bonchek. 1997. *Analyzing Politics. Rationality, Behavior, and Institutions*. New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company.

Schedule

17 October 2013   Introduction

Required readings:
- Shapiro, Ian. 2003. *The State of Democratic Theory*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1-34.

24 October 2013   Rational choice theory

Required readings:
- Opp, Karl-Dieter. 1999. "Contending Conceptions of the Theory of Rational Action." *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 11 (2): 171-202.

Optional readings:
- Frohlich, Norman, and Joe A. Oppenheimer. 2006. "Skating on Thin Ice. Cracks in the Public Choice Foundation." *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 18 (3): 235-266.

31 October 2013   Riker I

Required readings:
- Riker, William H. 1982. *Liberalism against Populism. A Confrontation between the Theory of Democracy and the Theory of Social Choice*. Long Grove: Waveland Press, 1-64.

7 November 2013   Riker II: The Arrow-problem

Required readings:
- Riker, William H. 1982. *Liberalism against Populism. A Confrontation between the Theory of Democracy and the Theory of Social Choice*. Long Grove: Waveland Press, 65-136.

Optional readings:
- Mueller, Dennis C. 2003. *Public Choice III*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 582-596.

14 November 2013   Riker III: Strategic voting and agenda control

Required readings:
- Riker, William H. 1982. *Liberalism against Populism. A Confrontation between the Theory of Democracy and the Theory of Social Choice*. Long Grove: Waveland Press, 137-195.

Optional readings:
Mueller, Dennis C. 2003. *Public Choice III*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 79-127.

21 November 2013   Riker IV: Political disequilibrium

Required readings:
- Riker, William H. 1982. *Liberalism against Populism. A Confrontation between the Theory of Democracy and the Theory of Social Choice*. Long Grove: Waveland Press, 197-232.
- Riker, William H. 1980. "Implications from the Disequilibrium of Majority Rule for the Study of Institutions." *American Political Science Review* 74: 432-446.

28 November 2013   Riker's conception of democracy

Required readings:
- Riker, William H. 1982. *Liberalism against Populism. A Confrontation between the Theory of Democracy and the Theory of Social Choice*. Long Grove: Waveland Press, 233-253.
- Radcliff, Benjamin. 1993. "Liberalism, Populism, and Collective Choice." *Political Science Quarterly* 46 (1): 127-42.

5 December 2013   Mackie I: Defending democracy from social choice

Required readings:
- Mackie, Gerry. 2003. *Democracy Defended*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1-71.

12 December 2013   Mackie II: Unrestricted domain of preferences

Required readings:
- Mackie, Gerry. 2003. *Democracy Defended*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 95-122.
- Sauermann, Jan, and André Kaiser. 2010. "Taking Others into Account: Self-Interest and Fairness in Majority Decision Making." *American Journal of Political Science* 54 (3): 667-685.

Optional readings:
- Frohlich, Norman, and Joe A. Oppenheimer. 2007. "Justice Preferences and the Arrow Problem." *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 19 (4): 363-390.

19 December 2013   Mackie III: Strategic voting

Required readings:
- Mackie, Gerry. 2003. *Democracy Defended*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 158-172.
- Dowding, Keith, and Martin van Hees. 2007. "In Praise of Manipulation." *British Journal of Political Science* 38 (1): 1-15.

9 January 2014 Mackie IV: Multidimensional chaos

Required readings:
- Mackie, Gerry. 2003. *Democracy Defended*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 173-196.
- Fiorina, Morris P., and Charles R. Plott. 1978. "Committee Decisions under Majority Rule: An Experimental Study." American Political Science Review 72 (2): 575-598.

Optional readings:

▪ Miller, Gary J. 2011. "Legislative Voting and Cycling." In *Cambridge Handbook of Experimental Political Science*, eds. James N. Druckman, Donald P. Green, James H. Kuklinski and Arthur Lupia. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 353-368.

▪ Bianco, William T., Michael S. Lynch, Gary J. Miller, and Itai Sened. 2006. ""A Theory Waiting to Be Discoverd and Used": A Reanalysis of Canonical Experiments on Majority Rule Decision-Making." *Journal of Politics* 68 (4): 838-51.

16 January 2014   Mackie vs. Riker

Required readings:

▪ Mackie, Gerry. 2003. *Democracy Defended*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 378-431.

Optional readings:

▪ Dowding, Keith. 2006. "Can Populism Be Defended? William Riker, Gerry Mackie and the Interpretation of Democracy." *Government and Opposition* 41 (3): 327-46.

23 January 2014   Social choice and deliberation

Required readings:

▪ Goodin, Robert E. 1986. "Laundering Preferences." In *Foundations of Social Choice Theory*, eds. Jon Elster and Aanund Hylland. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 75-101.

▪ Dryzek, John S., and Christian List. 2003. "Social Choice Theory and Deliberative Democracy: A Reconciliation." *British Journal of Political Science* 33 (1): 1-28.

30 January 2014   Social choice and pluralism

Required readings:

▪ Miller, Nicholas. 1983. "Pluralism and Social Choice." *American Political Science Review* 77 (3): 734-747.

▪ McGann, Anthony J. 2004. "The Tyranny of the Supermajority. How Majority Rule Protects Minorities." *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 16 (1): 53-77.

6 February 2014   Final discussion