

Guideline for Students

Description and Goals:

The course provides an understanding of social studies and modern politics from a Rational Choice perspective. This paradigm gives a mainstream insight into key things we know about politics today including collective actions, hierarchies, political institutions, and representation. In addition, it serves an analytical coherence of discussions in line with the objective that meets the requirements of "social studies." We have two main goals with this course.

First, a general understanding of human actions in the community, and a presentation of the three main research traditions in Socials and their principles by which experts and scientists with different majors make attempts to discuss social phenomena. As promised, Rational Choice will be the chosen paradigm because this is the most natural way of how generally characterise a bunch of people acting together. We study the conditions under which cooperation among individuals for the common interest of a community can emerge and hold up. We also see the most important types of challenges that we need to face and to cope with in collective actions. Several issues are presented in case studies that we have met earlier (by experience) but usually, the origin of these dilemmas was hidden, or at least, was not clear.

Secondly, the course is also an introduction to the fundamentals of political science. Going on the study that we have started in the first part, we try to expand the discussions to a political level. Of course, several examples have been presented from politics in the case studies of the first part; and this is not down to chance. One important task in politics is to provide public goods and to create an environment under which efficient leadership can satisfy the public good. That's the reason why we may continue our investigations in politics, and the two parts of the course eventually constitute an integrated subject matter.

Brief summary of the most important items of the course:

I will give an informal collection of propositions and findings exposed throughout the course. By the end of the course, students ought to be familiar with all the items enumerated in the list. You will be sure to understand the subject if you are able to give a short (at least a 3 or 5 min.) presentation about each item.

1. RATIONAL CHOICE APPROACH

This is the square one of our study. Rational Choice paradigm applies bottom-up method, that is to say, in this paradigm macro phenomena are interpreted as an aggregate of individual actions (the so-called *methodological individualism*). The key ideas that rational choices use up as follows: 1) human actions usually do not happen in a random, unpredictable, or self-destructive manner; that's why 2) we can make the "instrumentalization of actions;" 3) actions are embedded in strategic interactions; 4) people choose among alternatives to act, and it works in a rational way, but not a completely rational manner (there are strong constrains, such as uncertainties, economic coercive conditions and social controls); 5) we can extend individual rationality to collective rationality, however there might be collision between individual and collective interests (C.f. Prisoner's dilemma).

2. STRUCTURAL (HOLISTIC) APPROACH

The different theories of holistic approach cruise from top to down in the structure and in the institutions of society. That's why they are also called as macro-level approaches. We apply this way of thinking when we want to build up a "big picture" about the different systems of society. In this paradigm experts and scientists apply primarily comparative methods to point out similarities and differences.

3. CONSTRUCTIVE APPROACH

This kind of approach is very useful to link and/or to amend rational choices and structural investigations where several subjective motives or cultural attributes are absent or not involved in the discussions enough. However, often just these agents are the main origin of special functioning or interesting customs that are different from that of using in the other parts of the world. An extremely simple but good example is how people welcome each other: the basic phenomenon is the gesture toward the other side (we gave a game-theoretic model for this gesture). However, there are many different forms of this gesture, e.g. shaking hands –and just at first time of acquaintance or day by day if they meet–, bowing welcome, nodding, short kiss on hand, on face, etc. Constructivists do not want to give general explanations; their aim is to explain some specific properties of phenomena rested on cultural patterns.

4. PUBLIC GOODS

In contrast to private goods, public goods are indivisible and cannot be satisfactorily provided by the market or other private initiatives. The provision of public goods requires cooperation or coercion, whether by means of collective action or hierarchy

and effective management. The expected contributions by individuals to the provision of public goods partly depend on the characteristics of the different types of goods.

5. THE PARADOX OF COLLECTIVE ACTIONS

Though all the members of a community long for the successful result of the collective action, they behave as free-rider many times. In other words, these guys want (and are able) to use the public goods without contributing to their provision. However, if the majority of the community opt for being free-rider, the collective action will end with no success.

6. SELECTIVE INCENTIVES, "VOICE", AND "EXIT"

One mechanism to make people contribute to the public goods may be the conditional supply of private goods to the participants in collective actions. These are the selective incentives that may be positive or negative and embodied in material goods or in moral imperatives. The choice to participate in a collective action also depends on the alternatives available. Collective action for the advancement of collective interests, or "voice," weakens and may fail if the rival action of "exit," in search for an alternative provider, is less costly and more likely to give access to public goods.

7. COMMUNITY SIZE

The community's level of organization and effectiveness in promoting its interests will largely depend on the size of the group. However, it is a puzzling question: sometimes "small is more effective than big," that is to say, it is no use enlarging the size of the community; however it is also true (and is known by experience) that "big fish eat small fish."

8. CLASSIFICATIONS OF INTERACTIONS IN GAME THEORY

The situation of collective actions has specific structural-logical framework, and we can characterise it by Game Theory. There are three main camps of games: 1) zero-sum games that always describe intensive conflicts: the competition between the players is full; my gain is what I could get from you is the though policy of all the players; 2) coordination games that imply easy cooperation among people, so this kind of games displays collaborations, such as Adam Smith's "Invisible Hand Game"; 3) non-zero-sum (or non-constant-sum) games that are intermediate between the previous two camps: they may be the basis for cooperation (positive-sum games or win-win situations) or may be the basis for conflicts, different dilemmas (negative-sum games or lose-lose situations) such as Prisoner's Dilemma or the Game of Chicken.

9. PRISONER'S DILEMMA

The "*Prisoner's Dilemma*," which is the most famous model in game theory, can represent the basic structure of collective action problems for the provision of public goods. In this game, each actor has incentives not to cooperate, which may lead to an inefficient outcome in which all the participants are worse off than if all cooperated. This is nothing else than "the paradox of collective actions" reformulated in the terms of game theory. We use Prisoner's Dilemma model in very different ways to display social phenomena (e.g. social loafing) or economic-social traps (e.g. overfishing). That's why it is important to understand the point of this model, and to keep in mind to recognise and to apply it in a practical way.

10. THE HORIZON OF TIME: SUSTAINED COOPERATION

In Prisoner's Dilemma model each actor has incentives not to cooperate, which may lead to an inefficient outcome in which all the participants are worse off than if all cooperated. In interactions of the Prisoner's Dilemma type, sustained cooperation can emerge if actors apply the strategy of cooperating and doing unto others as they do unto yourself – also called TFT ("*Tit for Tat*"). This was proved first by experiments (Axelrod's Tournament), then mathematically in game theory. It turned out that it mattered if a game was repeated fixed number times (a finite horizon of time); or it was repeated unspecified times (an infinite horizon of time). Mutual cooperation is more likely in games repeated unspecified times. There are two options in interactions when we are in games repeated unspecified times: so, mutual cooperation is more likely 1) the greater the uncertainty as to the length of the collective relationship and 2) the higher the number of interactions you may be involved in.

11. SOCIAL LOAFING AND HIERARCHY

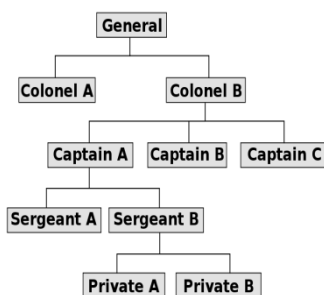
The idea of social loafing goes back to the so-called *team shirking* that has been documented firstly by social psychologists in 1979. Social loafing is one possible explanation for the existence of hierarchy. Social loafing is actually a managerial dilemma: how can we motivate people to act for the common interest to achieve in a community if we have no a monitoring system to control or measure their achievements (the three possible reasons for that are 1) asymmetric information, 2) externalities, or 3) monopoly power). It turns out that social loafing is nothing else than a Prisoner's Dilemma again. And if we want to promote efficiency in a community, we need a hierarchy of competence, we have to organise the community in which the members act together for a collective goal.

12. SBC SYNDROME

What is SBC syndrome? Briefly, there is a pair of actors: one is in permanent or temporary fiscal trouble with some amount of deficit, and the other one which is ready to bear the costs of deficit partly or completely. The origins of the expectation that the actor in trouble will be bailed out could be for several reasons, usually they are rested on moral or political considerations. These considerations could sometimes be fair enough but, especially in case of permanent bailout, we should rethink the functioning of the hierarchy and the collective goal (interest). SBC syndrome is an interesting phenomenon that demonstrates two facts we have learnt so far: 1) Smaller economic or political actors might exploit a larger unit of the community, indeed; 2) Social loafing at institutional level in economics and politics.

13. SCALE-FREE NETWORK AND HIERARCHY

Social Loafing as Prisoner's Dilemma gives a social explanation of how hierarchies are appearing in both horizontally and vertically. The other interesting interpretation for the existence of hierarchies is from Network Theory. Scientists working on this discipline pointed out that social networks, such as communication lines, personal relations in the world or in the digital world (social media), are evolving in a very specific way: networks are not increasing randomly but by preferential attachment – that means that heavily linked nodes ("Hubs", see green nodes) in the network tend to accumulate even more links. In other words, local centres are appearing with their several satellites in these, so-called *scale-free networks*. These are horizontal hierarchies where nodes linked through a path by travelling in the hierarchy to find a common direct or indirect superior (one instance of the Hubs).



Vertical Hierarchy

Scale-Free Networks or Horizontal Hierarchies

14. PUBLIC CHOICE AND HIERARCHY

Public choices imply the necessity of appearing vertical hierarchies. Without authority it is impossible to make the "final choice" in a world of incoherent ambitions, interests, values, and tastes. However, voting mechanisms that we apply to make public choices in community seem to have several deficiencies. We give two theoretical examples (Condorcet Paradox and Ostrogorski Paradox) and two related political examples (a pool on Brexit and the U.S. Presidential Election of 2000) to demonstrate the challenges that we have to face with. One of them is the limits of the fair usage of "majority rule," the other is the fact that voting systems are not "neutral" way of making choices, they are always "biased" in some way.

15. POLITY 1: THE DIVERSE FORMS OF POLITY

To simply say, polity is the organization of political communities, having a specific form of government. We investigate three main forms of polity: -city, -state, and -empire, and discuss the significance of the Westphalian World Order (WWO). The governing principles of WWO (such as sovereignty, territoriality, autonomy, and the secularization of international relations) give the postulates of international law and modern international relations.

16. POLITY 2: DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL REGIMES

Democracy is ultimately defined by free (i.e. unrestricted) competition for power and popular choice of the ruling few, usually by means of free and popular election. At the end of the discussions of hierarchies we pointed out that "smart leadership" might be driven to use up the advantages due to either "the wisdom of common knowledge" or "the wisdom of independent experts", or both. And for long-run, as history has proven many times, this works more often and much better in democracy than in autocracy. In this spirit, the modern-day conception of democracy goes beyond mere procedures of political competition: democracies also impose legal limits on the government's authority by guaranteeing certain rights and freedoms to their citizens. There are four attributes that political scientists consider as the definitive features of democracy which are of vital importance. This subtype of democracy is also called as *liberal democracy*. (Important! Liberal Democracy ≠ Liberalism.) A political regime lacking any of these four pillars can be considered only partially democratic (the so-called *hybrid regimes*) with the dangerous opportunities of deteriorating "smart leadership" and/or a regime transition to either of *authoritarian rules*.

17. MULTILEVEL GOVERNANCE

Governing always has a territorial dimension. Small and large political units have advantages and disadvantages. Multiple levels of government, including local, state, and global, seem to be necessary for an efficient provision of public goods at diverse territorial scales. Local democratic self-government and large-scale provision of public goods can be compatible by means of federalism. For historical reasons, most states are unitary, meaning that sovereignty lies exclusively with the central government. However, unitary government is often decentralized in its operation. (So, in either way –federalism or unitary state–, we can see the challenge of harmony between collective level and individual level of the political units.)

18. GOVERNMENTS OPERATE UNDER THE RULE OF LAW

Traditionally the academic study of politics began as a branch of law. Law and politics are closely linked, and especially in modern democracy, law is growing in political significance as more governments come to operate under the rule of law. The core of this operation is constitutionalism. We can look at constitutionalism in two ways: 1) the constitution sets out the formal structure of the state, specifying the powers and institutions of central government; 2) the constitution expresses the rights of citizens (The Bill of Rights). To prevent any government –and especially elected ones– from acquiring too much power, the constitution disperses power among three branches of government (*the separation of power*) and set up an elaborate *system of checks and balances* between the institutions of government. Because power is so fragmented, the danger of any particular faction manipulating public authority for private ends is much reduced (this is nothing else than the challenge of the clash between collective goal and individual interest again).

19. GOVERNMENTAL SYSTEMS IN DEMOCRACY

Scholars typically identify three “versions” of the separation of powers between legislative and executive branches: parliamentarism, pure presidentialism, and semi-presidentialism. To practice, put the country that you are from into the appropriate governmental system. Specify the assembly (the structure of legislature, how many members are there as representatives in the institutions), name the President/PM of your country, and structure the cabinet (the main departures of the cabinet).

20. CLEAVAGE THEORY

Ballot analysis assumes that voters opt for a certain party or decide for the solution or option that comes closest to their own position. In political science the term “cleavage” denotes a specific type of conflict in democratic politics that is rooted in the social structural transformations that have been triggered by large-scale

processes such as nation building, industrialization, and the consequences of post-industrialization. Cleavage separates the voters into advocates and adversaries on a certain issue and frames partisan expression. Cleavage theory may be interested from two points of view: 1) The sociological agents of the differences in the political beliefs of the people; 2) To understand the role of political parties as the intermediate structures between citizens and governmental institutions.

21. PARTY SYSTEMS AND POLITICAL STABILITY

Party systems are sets of parties that compete and cooperate with the aim of increasing their power in controlling government. There are two issues to see: 1) The different types of party systems; and 2) the logic of political stability rested on party systems.