

Franconia Workshop on Political Theory and Formal Modelling

Date: Friday, November 22nd, 2019

Location: University of Bayreuth, GWII building, room S6 (ground floor)

Format: 45 minutes slots (including Q&A); please keep presentation to approx. 25 minutes to leave enough time for discussion.

Programme:

9h00-9h45	Philip Pettit	<i>Democracy—A Republican Primer</i>
9h45-10h30	Leon Schlüter	<i>Envisioning Egalitarian Change</i>
10h30-11h00	<i>coffee break</i>	
11h00-11h45	Philipp Schink	<i>On the relationship between freedom and political order</i>
11h45-12h30	Zoé Christoff	<i>Logical foundations of social influence in networks</i>
12h30-13h30	<i>lunch break at the Mensa</i>	
13h30-14h15	Rudolf Schüssler	<i>The domination of citizens and states: Two views on their relation</i>
14h15-15h00	Johannes Marx & Dominik Klein	<i>Selfish beliefs – On the epistemic quality of collective decision mechanisms</i>
15h00-15h30	<i>coffee break</i>	
15h30-16h15	Erasmus Mayr	<i>Republicanism and Neutrality</i>
16h15-17h00	Stefan Napel	<i>Influence in Weighted Committees</i>
19h00-...	<i>Workshop dinner at Liebesbier</i>	

Abstracts (in alphabetical order)

Dominik Klein (University of Bayreuth, University of Bamberg) and Johannes Marx (University of Bamberg): *Selfish beliefs – On the epistemic quality of collective decision mechanisms.*

Abstract: Democratic regimes have been shown to provide more public goods than their autocratic counterparts. Classically, this fact is explained by differences in the incentive structures faced by democratic and autocratic leaders (de Mesquita et al. 2005; Olson 2000). In this talk, we identify an alternative explanation for variations between regime types. In line with the debate on epistemic justifications of democracy (Estlund & Landemore 2018), we inquire whether democratic procedures have an inherent advantage when it comes to determining the optimal level of public good provisions. We show this to be the case by means of a computer simulation on the epistemic performance of different regime types. We also identify a positive effect of epistemic diversity: Democratic systems do epistemically best if individual citizens prioritize their own needs, rather than assessing the optimal level of public good as seen from the group's perspective.

Zoé Christoff (University of Bayreuth): *Logical foundations of social influence in networks.*

Abstract: I give an introduction to the use of logical tools in understanding social influence and social networks phenomena. Individuals often form their opinions by interpreting the behaviour of others around them, and by reasoning about how those others have formed their opinions. This leads to several well-known herd phenomena, such as informational cascades, bystander effect, pluralistic ignorance, bubbles, and polarization. For instance, in the case of informational cascades, agents in a sequence imitate one another's choices despite having diverging private evidence, sometimes leading the whole community to make the worst possible choice. Similar cascading mechanisms are at the heart of diffusion phenomena in social networks. I first show how an epistemic logic modelling allows to make precise the conditions for such cascades to form, as well as prove their inescapability. I then turn to what logical tools can do for analysing information flow and influence in social networks. I illustrate how extremely simplified models can yield surprising new results, for instance about stabilization conditions of diffusion processes.

Erasmus Mayr (University of Erlangen): *Republicanism and Neutrality.*

Abstract: While contemporary Republicanism seems hard to reconcile with some strong versions of the principle of liberal neutrality, its adherents usually think that it can still accommodate the plausible 'core' of that principle. In my talk, I want to examine whether the latter optimism is well-founded.

Stefan Napel (University of Bayreuth): *Influence in Weighted Committees* (joint work with Sascha Kurz and Alexander Mayer).

Abstract: Committee decisions on more than two alternatives can be very sensitive to the adopted voting rule. So does the distribution of power among committee members. We quantify how different aggregation methods such as pairwise majority votes, plurality with runoff, or Borda rule map asymmetric numbers of seats, shares, voting weights, etc. to influence on outcomes when preferences vary. A generalization of the Penrose-Banzhaf index is proposed. It extends voting power analysis from binary choice to collective decisions on multiple options.

Philip Pettit (Princeton University, Australian National University): *Democracy—A Republican Primer.*

Abstract: Democracy, in the account given here, is 1. a system whereby people control government; 2. on a collaborative and inclusive basis; 3. via electoral and operational constraints; where the rationale—the republican rationale—is 4. to ensure that government does not dominate its citizens. While the formula may sound uncontroversial, it turns out that each of the numbered elements is often opposed, or at least neglected, in established traditions of democratic thought.

Philipp Schink (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt): *On the relationship between freedom and political order.*

Abstract: In political philosophy there is a centuries-old debate about the relationship between freedom and statehood/political order. Does every political order restrict freedom, and the degree of freedom granted is determined in each case by the concrete actions of those in power? Or are certain types of political order per se compatible with freedom, condition or even constitute it? Philip Pettit's Republicanism answers this core question of political philosophy in the sense of the latter alternative. Since the specific conception of freedom that Pettit defends under the label "neo-republican" is quite demanding, a number of authors have cast doubt on the validity of Pettit's claim (e.g. Simpson 2017, Lovett/Pettit 2019). My contribution to the workshop relates to this discussion and critically examines its central theses.

Leon Schlüter (University of Bayreuth): *Envisioning Egalitarian Change.*

Abstract: Egalitarian political theory, according to Elizabeth Anderson (2012), should begin by analysing social hierarchies which prevent people from participating as equals in social and political life. That is, egalitarians should examine situations in which the socio-political arrangements are structured in a way that certain (groups of) persons are entangled in distinctly inegalitarian relationships; viz. relations of oppression and domination. Having identified such situations, egalitarians should proceed by asking what kind of political action is needed in order to overcome domination and oppression.

Evidently, unjust social hierarchies include ableist structures, sexist norms and practices, racist institutions as well as prevailing class divisions. But how can we—as political philosophers and theorists—take the next step and start to think about ways of achieving egalitarian change? In this paper, I develop a new conceptual framework that distinguishes between three different kinds of *transformative politics*, which can generally be defined as political actions that aim to

combat oppression and domination by transforming or reconfiguring the existing socio-political arrangements: *Transgressing politics* aim to dismantle visible or invisible barriers that prevent certain (groups of) persons from accessing existing social and political spaces. *Empowering politics* aim to strengthen the standing and voice of certain (groups of) persons within these spaces. *De-boundaring politics*, finally, aim to alter or re-draw the very division of socio-political space itself. Subsequently, I show how this conceptual framework can help to clarify and structure various claims of the Mad Pride and anti-psychiatry movement. I conclude by explaining why I think that we should turn to such social-movement-claims when thinking about egalitarian change.

Rudolf Schüssler (University of Bayreuth): *The domination of citizens and states: Two views on their relation.*

Abstract: Philip Pettit has linked the freedom of non-domination of the citizens of a state to the non-domination of the state by other states. Yet, how is this connection to be conceived? The presentation will distinguish two approaches, one indirect, the other direct. The indirect approach assumes that state-state domination is instrumental in undermining the freedom of individuals in the dominated state. I take this to be the neo-republican approach. Another possibility is to accept that citizens identify with their states and its non-domination. The domination of a state thus directly infringes the freedom of its citizens. The presentation will show that both approaches have significantly different implications for the management of international relations.