

Summer Term 2020

Dr. Jan Sauermann

(14335.5023) Collective Action

Basismodul Seminar Politikwissenschaft I (9 ECTS)

Time: Mondays 10:00 – 11:30

Room: Gottfried-Keller-Str. 6, Hörsaal des Forschungsinstituts

First Session: 6 April 2020

Because of the current coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic the course will take place online via Zoom until further notice. Participants will receive further information via ILIAS.

Course description

Social dilemmas form the core of many societal problems ranging from the international level (e.g. the fight against climate change) to interpersonal relations (e.g. work on a joint student project). In such situations, conflict arises frequently because individual and collective interests collide. In a typical social dilemma, mutual cooperation among all involved actors leads to an efficient collective outcome. However, all actors have an incentive to defect and free-ride on the other actors' cooperation. Thus, if all actors follow their narrow self-interest, the community will not be able to reach their common goal.

In this seminar, we will identify and discuss factors influencing the level of cooperation among actors in a large variety of different social dilemma situations. In doing so, we will take an interdisciplinary approach encompassing theories and methods from political science, sociology, economics, and social psychology.

Prerequisites

Students should have a good knowledge of political science concepts, basic qualitative and quantitative methods, and an interest in current research. Since 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 master students and doctoral students of the WiSo-Faculty with an interest in political science.

Registration

The course will be taught on a weekly basis (first session April 6). Students should register via KLIPS.

Reading assignments

All required texts for the sessions of the seminar can be found on [ILIAS](#).

Most texts can only be accessed from within the UKLAN network of the University of Cologne. If you do not know how to obtain access to UKLAN, please consult the RRZK's websites: <http://rrzk.uni-koeln.de/netzzugang.html?&L=1>

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

Assessment

Your overall grade for this course will consist of two components. Both components are mandatory to pass the course.

- **Completion of Assignment A OR Assignment B** (see Session 12 & 13 below)
 - **25% of final grade**
 - **Deadline: 8 June 2020, 10:00 am**
 - Length: about 1.500 words
 - Submission: pdf-file via email to jan.sauermann@uni-koeln.de
- **Research paper**
 - **75% of final grade**
 - Length: about 4.500 words
 - Submission:
 - Please submit two versions of your research paper:
 - **Electronic version**
(pdf-file) via email to jan.sauermann@uni-koeln.de
Deadline: 10 August 2020, 10:00am
 - **Paper version**
You can hand in the paper version personally at the secretary of the Cologne Center for Comparative Politics (*IBW Gebäude, Herbert-Lewin-Str. 2, 1st floor, Room 1.09*) or send it by mail to:
Jan Sauermann, Universität zu Köln, Cologne Center for Comparative Politics, Postfach 411020, 50870 Köln
The paper version must contain the following signed statement:
http://www.cccp.uni-koeln.de/sites/cccp/Lehre/Erklaerung_fuer_Hausarbeiten.pdf

General readings:

- Olson, Mancur. 1965. *The Logic of Collective Action. Public Goods and the Theory of Groups*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
- Hardin, Russell. 1982. *Collective Action*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Ostrom, Elinor. 1990. *Governing the Commons. The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Schedule and readings

1) 6 April 2020 – Introduction

2) 20 April 2020 – The logic of collective action

Required readings:

- Olson, Mancur. 1965. *The Logic of Collective Action. Public Goods and the Theory of Groups*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1-65.

3) 27 April 2020 – The tragedy of the commons

Required readings:

- Hardin, Garrett. 1968. "The Tragedy of the Commons." *Science* 162 (3859): 1243-48.
- Ostrom, Vincent, and Elinor Ostrom. 1977. "Public Goods and Public Choices." In *Alternatives for Delivering Public Services. Toward Improved Performance*, ed. E. S. Savas. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press. 7-49.

4) 4 May 2020 – Voluntary cooperation in repeated interactions

Required readings:

- Axelrod, Robert. 1984. *The Evolution of Cooperation*. New York: Basic Books, 3-69.

Optional readings:

- Axelrod, Robert. 1984. *The Evolution of Cooperation*. New York: Basic Books, 73-87.

5) 11 May 2020 – Rational choice explanations of collective action: Self-interest, trust, and reciprocity

Required readings:

- Ostrom, Elinor. 1998. "A Behavioral Approach to the Rational Choice Theory of Collective Action." *American Political Science Review* 92 (1): 1-22.
- Opp, Karl-Dieter. 1999. "Contending Conceptions of the Theory of Rational Action." *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 11 (2):171-202.

6) 18 May 2020 – Experimental evidence on behavior in social dilemma games

Required readings:

- McDermott, Rose. 2002. "Experimental Methods in Political Science." *Annual Review of Political Science* 5 (1): 31-61. **Concentrate on pp. 31-41!**
- Isaac, Mark R., and James M. Walker. 1988. "Group Size Effects in Public Goods Provision: The Voluntary Contributions Mechanism." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 103 (1): 179-99.
- Fischbacher, Urs, Simon Gächter, and Ernst Fehr. 2001. "Are People Conditionally Cooperative? Evidence from a Public Goods Experiment." *Economics Letters* 71: 397-404.

7) 25 May 2020 – Communication and sanctioning

Required readings:

- Balliet, Daniel. 2010. "Communication and Cooperation in Social Dilemmas: A Meta-Analytic Review." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 54 (1): 39-57.
- Fehr, Ernst, and Simon Gächter. 2000. "Cooperation and Punishment in Public Goods Experiments." *American Economic Review* 90 (4): 980-94.

Optional readings:

- Ostrom, Elinor, James Walker, and Roy Gardner. 1992. "Covenants with and without a Sword: Self-Governance Is Possible." *American Political Science Review* 86 (2): 404-17.
- Brosig, Jeannette, Axel Ockenfels, and Joachim Weimann. 2003. "The Effect of Communication Media on Cooperation." *German Economic Review* 4 (2): 217-41.

8) 8 June 2020 – Identity

Required readings:

- Habyarimana, James, Macartan Humphreys, Daniel N. Posner, and Jeremy M. Weinstein. 2007. "Why Does Ethnic Diversity Undermine Public Goods Provision?" *American Political Science Review* 101 (4): 709-25.
- Whitt, Sam, and Rick K. Wilson. 2007. "The Dictator Game, Fairness and Ethnicity in Postwar Bosnia." *American Journal of Political Science* 51 (3):655-68.

9) 15 June 2020 – Governing the commons

Required readings:

- Ostrom, Elinor. 2010. "Beyond Markets and States: Polycentric Governance of Complex Economic Systems." *American Economic Review* 100 (3): 641-72.
- Ostrom, Elinor. 1990. *Governing the Commons. The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 58-102.

10) 22 June 2020 – Institutional change

Required readings:

- Ostrom, Elinor, and Xavier Basurto. 2011. "Crafting Analytical Tools to Study Institutional Change." *Journal of Institutional Economics* 7 (3): 317-43.
- Ostrom, Elinor. 1990. *Governing the Commons. The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 103-142.

11) 29 June 2020 – The voters' paradox: Explaining turnout in mass elections

Required readings:

- Riker, William H., and Peter C. Ordeshook. 1968. "A Theory of the Calculus of Voting." *American Political Science Review* 62 (1): 25-42. (Concentrate on pp. 25-28)
- Lijphart, Arend. 1997. "Unequal Participation: Democracy's Unresolved Dilemma." *American Political Science Review* 91 (1): 1-14.
- Fowler, James H. 2006. "Altruism and Turnout." *Journal of Politics* 68 (3): 674-83.

12) 6 July 2020 – Fighting climate change

Assignment A (Deadline: 8 June 2020, 10:00 am):

Write a report (about 1.500 words) on a political science article (or book chapter) on **climate change** with a focus on collective action theory:

- Summarize the paper: What is the research question, theoretical argument, main empirical findings?
- Criticize the paper: What is the article's contribution to the existing literature? What do you like about the article chapter? What are its shortcomings?
- Why should we read the article in class?

I will select two articles from the submitted reports as required readings for the session.

13) 13 July 2020 – Revolutions / Social movements

Assignment B (Deadline: 8 June 2020, 10:00 am):

Write a report (about 1.500 words) on a political science article (or book chapter) on **the organization of revolutions, protests, or social movements** with a focus on collective action theory:

- Summarize the paper: What is the research question, theoretical argument, main empirical findings?
- Criticize the paper: What is the article's contribution to the existing literature? What do you like about the article chapter? What are its shortcomings?
- Why should we read the article in class?

I will select two articles from the submitted reports as required readings for the session.