

Chapter 1 : Foundations of Social Choice Theory - Google Books

The essays in this volume, first published in , examine the philosophical foundations of social choice theory. This field, a modern and sophisticated outgrowth of welfare economics, is best known for a series of impossibility theorems, of which the first and most crucial was proved by Kenneth Arrow in

He initially enrolled to study chemistry but became interested in sociology and continued his graduate studies at Columbia University. Career[edit] Coleman achieved renown with two studies on problem solving: He taught at Stanford University and the University of Chicago. In , he moved to Johns Hopkins University , where he taught as an associate professor. In he became involved in Project Camelot , an academic research project funded by the United States military through the Special Operations Research Office to train in counter-insurgency techniques. He eventually became a full professor in social relations until , when he returned to Chicago. Upon his return, he became the professor and senior study director at the National Opinion Research Center. A Study of Decline. In the s, he and several other scholars were commissioned by the US Office of Education , to write a report on educational equality in the US. It was one of the largest studies in history, with more than , students in the sample. The result was a massive report of over pages. The report, titled Equality of Educational Opportunity otherwise known as the "Coleman Report" , fueled debate about "school effects" that is still relevant today. The report is commonly presented as evidence that school funding has little effect on student achievement, a key finding of the report and subsequent research. Also, a significant gap in the achievement scores between black and white children already existed in the first grade. Despite the similar conditions of black and white schools, the gap became even wider by the end of elementary school. The only consistent variable explaining the differences in score within each racial group or ethnic group was the educational and economic attainment of the parents. Specifically, the attitudes of parents and caregivers at home and peers at school of students toward education. Additionally, differences in the quality of schools and teachers, has a small positive impact on student outcomes. The report led to extensive further research. Modern research has led to similar conclusions. The study had tested students around the country, and the differences in achievement by race and region were enormous. The average black twelfth grade student in the rural South was achieving at the level of a seventh grade white in the urban Northeast. He found that achievement differences had narrowed, largely from improvements in the South, but that at the pace of the previous half century it would take two and a half centuries to close the math achievement gap. Upon advancements in school desegregation, white parents began to move their children out of integrated schools in large numbers. The mass exodus was termed white flight. In , Coleman wrote an article explaining that black students benefited from integrated schooling only if most of the students were white. In response, efforts sprang up during the mids to revoke his membership. Still, Coleman remained a member and eventually became its president. He discusses three main types of capital: Physical capital, being completely tangible and generally a private good, originates from the creation of tools to facilitate production. According to Coleman, social capital and human capital are often complementary. By having certain skill sets, experiences, and knowledge, an individual can gain social status and so receive more social capital. He describes the situation of doing favors for someone as "credit slips. For an individual to believe that their favor will be reciprocated, Coleman believe there are two vital conditions. There needs to be a level of trustworthiness in a social environment to be able to believe the obligation will be met. Also, the individual needs to take into account the extent of the obligation. Coleman explores the idea of relative capital. With that being the case, the value of human capital and physical capital will change as well. Coleman also explores the idea that social capital is less easy to invest in than human and physical capital. To invest in physical capital is usually a good decision both financially and economically. To invest in human capital is to make oneself more intelligent and experienced, surely a positive thing. When it comes to social capital, the incentive to invest is not always personally appealing. According to Coleman, when individuals invest in social capital, they are not necessarily investing in themselves. Investment in social capital leads to investment in the social structure, which the capital lies, which, in turn, will benefit those individuals and populations part of that particular social

structure. His later treatise, *Foundations of Social Theory*, made major contributions toward a more rigorous form of theorizing in sociology based on rational choice. He also created an educational corporation that developed and marketed "mental games" aimed at improving the abilities of disadvantaged students. Coleman made it a practice to send his most controversial research findings "to his worst critics" prior to their publication, calling it "the best way to ensure validity." Coleman published lasting theories of education, which helped shape the field. With his focus on the allocation of rights, one can understand the conflict between rights. Towards the end of his life, Coleman questioned how to make the education systems more accountable, which caused educators to question their use and interpretation of standardized testing. His theories of integration also contributed. He also raised the issue of narrowing the educational gap between those who had money and others. Selected works[edit] *Community Conflict* *Union Democracy: Research and Theory* *Resources for Social Change: Race in the United States* *Youth:*

First published in , this volume of essays offers an examination of the philosophical foundations of social choice theory.

Arrow posed the important question: He sought a collective decision-making mechanism so that individual preferences about policy alternatives could be aggregated into a social preference ordering, and thus pave the way for grounding the social evaluation of policy alternatives in democratic values and procedures. Not surprisingly, the implications of this strong and robust result have been overwhelming, not only in economics but also in philosophy and related disciplines. A search in other publications yields little more. And if the utilitarian legacy in social choice theory allows nothing but individual preferences as inputs into social choice and the evaluation of social policies, then debates about the scope and substance of justice and equality are beside the point. With only a narrow interpretation of social choice theory, the silence on gender thus appears not only unfortunate, but structural. Luckily, this situation does not characterize quite all of social choice theory. In a similar vein, to criticize this literature is not the goal of my paper. Instead, I want to ask – constructively – how gender can and should be taken into account. This is a foundational issue, and I shall thus refrain from quarreling with particular axioms. At a general level, two questions can be asked about the relationship between gender issues and social choice theory. I shall pursue both questions. An Arrowian social welfare function is a mechanism that would aggregate individual preference orderings over alternative social states to a social preference ordering over these states, thus enabling rational social choice. A social state stands for a full description of all the economic, political, and social circumstances. A social welfare function should satisfy the following four normative conditions in order to be called minimally democratic. Independence of Irrelevant Alternatives condition I requires that social choice should not be affected by individual preferences over alternatives that are not in the subset from which the choice is to be made; only individual preferences over pairs of alternatives in the subset should determine social choice. According to the weak Pareto principle condition P, if all individuals judge an alternative x to be better than an alternative y , the social preference ordering should also regard x as better than y . Non-Dictatorship condition D rules out dictatorial social choice; social choice should not be determined by the preferences of a single individual. Conditions U, I, and P together imply a variety of what is called welfarism. This privileging of utility information over nonutility information, such as considerations of needs, rights, liberties, etc. Sen has worked on both, but with an emphasis on the former because, for many social problems, collective decision-making mechanisms such as the majority rule do not, by themselves, cut deep enough. Sen illustrates the argument with the classic cake division example. If there are three people, majority rule cannot distinguish between the following two cases: The example shows that an adequate assessment of the situation would require more information than majority rule alone can process: An early theorem showed that cardinal measurability alone does not change anything Sen a. With interpersonal comparisons, we can derive consistent social welfare judgments from information about individual welfare. Moreover, this important result sheds light on the working of the Impossibility Theorem itself: Often, overt preferences may be a result of the situation in which people live. This is especially bothersome if people have adapted their preferences to adverse circumstances. While not denying that there are important differences in individual notions of well-being, he argues that they should not keep us from seeking objective mainstays for social evaluation, since for many exercises of social evaluation, a broad consensus can be expected about the main elements of well-being. Against welfarism in general, whether it refers to subjective preferences or objective measures of utility, Sen argues that for the social evaluation of well-being, nonutility information such as individual rights often matter Sen Finally, Sen rejects the exclusive focus on well-being, no matter how it is measured. Other ends may include furthering the well-being of others, respecting social and moral norms, or acting upon personal commitments and the pursuit of a variety of values Amartya Sen c. In contrast to the outcome-based structure of the received view of individual rational choice and social choice, agency highlights how acts themselves may have value. The notion of freedom Sen invokes is a positive one. It focuses on what a person is actually able to do and achieve. Standard rational choice theory, by contrast, is linked to a negative conception of freedom freedom as

noninterference when it views a person as free to choose as long as there is no duress or deceit. With the capability approach, he offers a highly productive alternative informational basis for social evaluation. As is well known, the capability approach has a two-stage structure: The set of functionings a person is able to achieve to a satisfactory degree is her capability. In line with feminist theorists who have argued that gender inequalities in the family are linked to inequalities in the public sphere Susan Moller Okin ; Anne Phillips , Sen thus recognizes that the realm of the family and of gender relations falls within the scope of social choice theory and indeed of justice more generally. It focuses on the bargaining models, which are becoming increasingly common in economic analyses of family behavior and well-being. Sen argues that while conventional bargaining models of the family are an improvement over the earlier single-utility models, they remain unsatisfactory because they are restricted to individual preferences. With regard to beliefs, Sen argues that married women tend to devalue their contribution to the household “to perceive their work as being worth less than it actually is and less than that of the breadwinner husband. Sen suggests that instead of relying on narrow preference-based evaluation, the socially entrenched division of roles in families should be evaluated in terms of an objective measure, such as capability. Sen, by contrast, seems to focus on low well-being and restricted agency, and on the potential of an objective framework of social evaluation such as capability to correct for this situation. While Sen has not, to my knowledge, directly drawn any implications of the paradox for gender and social choice, exploring the Liberal Paradox offers an interesting twist on this issue, as discussed below. The Liberal Paradox requires highly differentiated social states to keep track of the different actions of individuals. Individual liberty, then, becomes the right to determine certain social states irrespective of what others think or want. In the language of social choice theory, such rights make individuals decisive. Sen gives an example to illustrate the paradox. There are three alternatives: Prude reads it x , Lewd reads it y , or no one reads it z . However, he would prefer to read it himself rather than have Lewd read it. His preference ordering is thus z, x, y . Lewd likes the book, but gets even more pleasure from thinking about uptight Prude reading the book. He thus prefers that Prude read it to reading it himself to no one reading it x, y, z . The paradox is the following: Since he prefers z to x , society should also prefer z to x . If the choice is between y and z , similarly, Lewd should be decisive and society should prefer y to z . This leads to the social preference ordering y, z, x . This preference ordering is, however, Pareto inferior, as both Prude and Lewd prefer x to y “hence the paradox. According to Sen, since consequences may matter, it is wrong for social evaluation to focus exclusively on rights, just as it is wrong to insist on outcome-based evaluation irrespective of individual rights. The capability approach offers such an extended consequentialist framework. The Liberal Paradox arises only if there are preferences regarding the choices of others. Take again two people and one possible action, for instance eating the last piece of chocolate. Assume it cannot be divided without creating a mess. There are thus three alternatives: Anthony eats the chocolate x , Gina eats the chocolate y , and no one eats it z . Since he knows how much she likes chocolate, he would not want to eat it either, but would rather throw it away. His most preferred alternative is thus z . If Gina insists that he have the chocolate, he would eat it, however. Gina is unconvinced that chocolate would harm her health. But although Gina likes chocolate very much, she would not want to eat the last piece before making sure that Anthony does not want it. If they both want it, Gina prefers Anthony to have it “she thus ranks x above y . What she would least want is to throw away the chocolate. Her preference ordering is thus x, y, z . If the choice is between x and z , according the perspective of liberal rights would again demand that Anthony be decisive and, since he prefers z to x , that society should also rank z above x . If the choice is between y and z , Gina should be decisive and, since she prefers y to z , society should also rank y above z . This time, the paradox is not the only problem, however. First, look at the rights-based social preference ordering. It makes sense that a rights framework should enable Lewd, who has a taste for it, to read the book and regard this case as better than the case where no one reads the book and better than the case where Prude, who hates the book, has to read it. Should these two states not be regarded as indifferent from a liberal point of view? Abandoning rights-based evaluation and switching to preference-based evaluation would not be an adequate solution either, since the preference-based approach does not contain enough information to properly assess the situation. In particular, it neglects the agency aspect of a person, and with that, the value people assign to their actions above and beyond the outcomes that

result from these actions. To go back to the example, it is important to Anthony that Gina does not harm her health, and he will only eat the chocolate if she insists that he do so. For Gina, it is important to express her care for Anthony by leaving the piece of chocolate to him. Assume that after a dinner together, they decide that Anthony should eat the chocolate. If, instead, a third party were to assign the chocolate to Anthony, we would have the same outcome in terms of who gets to eat the chocolate, but the crucial role of interdependent agency in this example would be neglected. Anthony would not enjoy the chocolate in the same way as if Gina had given it to him, and Gina might feel left out. To illustrate the point further, suppose that the rankings in the example are now the result of a different story. When Anthony does not feel like eating the chocolate, he either saves it for some other day, or he gives it to a friend. It does not occur to him to leave the chocolate for his sister. In this case, we would be skeptical about the result if Anthony were to get the piece of chocolate, even if Gina left it for him. I see several aspects, all related to the problem of interdependence. The examples illustrate how in deciding who gets to eat the chocolate, what matters is not only who actually gets the chocolate but also the nature of their relationship. Our relation to the other, is governed by the norms of equity and complementary reciprocity: The moral categories that accompany such interactions are those of responsibility, bonding, and sharing. Taking people seriously as agents means taking their relationships and commitments to other people seriously, as well.

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Chapter 5 : James Samuel Coleman - Wikipedia

The Marquis de Condorcet () was a founding father of social science. He believed that what he called the moral sciences could be studied by the same exacting methods as the natural sciences, and he developed many of the tools for doing so.

Chapter 6 : Foundations of Social Choice and Political Theory by Nicolas de Condorcet

Amartya Sen defends a rich conception of social choice theory against tendencies to limit social choice theory to the formal investigation of rules of collective decision-making.