Centre of Excellence at Åbo Akademi University

D:CE

DEMOCRACY:
A CITIZEN PERSPECTIVE

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International Advisory Board meeting

On November 1-2, five IAB members met with ten D:CE scholars in the historical surroundings of Alcalá de Henares, Spain.

Published and ongoing research projects as well as upcoming research, mainly experiments, were discussed. Research was presented by both IAB members and participating D:CE scholars.

Participating IAB members:
Brigitte Geissel (Goethe Universität Frankfurt)
Rachel Gibson (University of Manchester)
Detlef Jahn (Universität Greifswald)
Henry Milner (University of Montreal)
Poul Erik Mouritzen (Syddansk Universitet*).*

D:CE participants:
Carsten Anckar
Åsa Bengtsson
Kimmo Grönlund
Kaisa Herne
Marko Joas
Lauri Karvonen
Sofie Marien
Kim Strandberg
Maija Setälä
Jutta Ahlbeck

D:CE in Spain (Photo: J. Ahlbeck)

A special emphasis was laid on the upcoming experiments on citizen deliberation. These will be carried out in 2012-2013. Two different experiments are planned. The first one concerns immigration policy in Finland, while the bilingual status of Finland as a society is the topic of the second experiment. These experiments will be funded by D:CE in collaboration with the Academy of Finland.

During the closing session, the IAB members concluded that they were impressed with the research conducted and the methods used in D:CE research. It was noted that the comparative perspective still needs to be strengthened and that the European Union level should be taken into account more. For the next meeting it was agreed that more time will be reserved for discussions at the expense of prepared presentations.

New funding from the Academy of Finland: Deliberation within and across enclaves

Kimmo Grönlund (responsible leader)
Project period: 01.09.2011 - 31.08.2015
Funded sum: 600 000 EUR

People have a tendency to talk with like-minded as they often feel uncomfortable when facing disagreement. When political discussion only happens within enclaves of like-minded people, there is a risk of opinion polarization and an amplification of cognitive errors. At the same time some scholars suggests that enclave deliberation in fact may help to boost the political self-esteem and internal efficacy of those people who are less endowed to take part in political discussion and thus to help the disempowered to enter a broader public sphere. These people are typically less educated or belong to minority groups.

The project studies enclave deliberation in an experimental manner. The project studies the influence of enclave deliberation through deliberative experiments. The main research question is: What are the dynamics and consequences of deliberation in enclaves? The first experiment will be carried out in the spring of 2012. The project is carried out in collaboration with D:CE.

Dr. Sofie Marien was guest researcher at D:CE

Dr. Sofie Marien is a post doc-researcher at the Centre for Citizenship and Democracy at University of Leuven. During autumn 2011, she has been a visiting researcher at D:CE in Åbo.

- What made you decide to be a guest researcher at D:CE?

During my PhD research, I attended several international conferences and summer schools. I really enjoyed the interactions with scholars working on similar topics but at different universities and within research traditions and cultures. Therefore, I decided to look into the possibility of a visiting scholarship after finishing my PhD. I met D:CE's Deputy Director Kimmo Grönlund at the ECPR Joint sessions in Munster 2010 and we had a nice talk about our common research interests and a possible collaboration in the future.

In my postdoc research I am focusing on the development of political trust and the effects of democratic innovations on political trust. Given that there is a lot of expertise on these topics with the D:CE network, Åbo Akademi seemed a good place to spend the semester.

- What have you gained from your stay?

It was definitely a nice environment to conduct research. At the moment of my stay, several researchers within D:CE were planning the upcoming deliberative experiments. It was exciting to talk about these plans and the choices that had to be made. As I am also interested in setting up deliberative experiments in Belgium, this has been a nice learning experience for me.

There are a lot of excellent researchers around who conduct research on topics related to my research interests. I had the opportunity to discuss my past research and future research plans with several members of the network informally and at the Internal seminar at Åbo and the international meeting of the advisory board of D:CE. I received a lot of valuable feedback and ideas from which my future research will benefit and we discussed several avenues for future collaboration.

Sofie Marien (photo H.S. Christensen)

New dissertations

Maria Bäck

Maria Bäck defended her doctoral dissertation "Socialt kapital och politiskt deltagande i Europa" (*Social Capital and Political Participation in Europe*) at Åbo Akademi University in Åbo on 16 September 2011. Professor Bo Rothstein, University of Gothenburg, served as External Examiner.

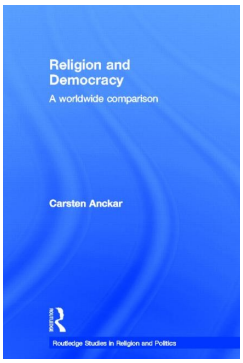
Ari Nykvist

Ari Nykvist defended his doctoral dissertation "Formaterade nyheter. Studier i hur tv-nyheter formatmässigt editeras, gestaltas och tas emot" (*Formated News - Framing, compassing and perceiving television news*) at Åbo Akademi University in Vasa on 6 May 2011. Professor Tom Moring, University of Helsinki, served as External Examiner.

Henrik Serup Christensen defended his doctoral dissertation *Political Participation Beyond the Vote — How the Institutional Context Shapes Patterns of Participation in 18 Western European Democracies* at Åbo Akademi University in Åbo on 3 June 2011. Docent Hanna Bäck, now Lund University, served as External Examiner.

Henrik Serup Christensen

New book by C. Anckar — Religion and Democracy



Carsten Anckar *Religion and Democracy—A Worldwide Comparison.* London: Routledge, 224 pages

This important new study empirically assesses the relationship between religion and democracy, looking at the global, regional and individual country picture.

Using a wide range of quantitative data, Anckar tests the validity of Huntington's claim that democracy and religion are tightly connected, and that western Christianity is the only religion capable of supporting democratic institutions. Anckar evaluates both the broader assumptions that the introduction and the stability of a democratic form of government is dependent on the dominating religion in the country at the macro level and the suggestion that at the individual level, religious adherence is related to pro-democratic values.

The volume discusses how whilst at first sight Huntington's theory appears to receive widespread support, on closer evaluation; there data reveals anomalies that merit further discussion. Whilst it appears that Christianity does seem to provide the most supportive environment democracy, Buddhist countries appear to have results similar to those where Islam is the predominant religion.

The relationship between Islam and democracy is also subjected to an extensive discussion; key findings such as the fact that democracy seems to have the greatest chances of success in Muslim countries situated far from Mecca and Medina are developed and examined with important new conclusions reached.

Examining religions including Christianity, Islam Buddhism, Hinduism, Chinese folk religion, Confucianism, Taoism and Judaism, Anckar finds that the political context is more important than religious affiliation for explaining attitudes towards democracy. Thus, at least from the individual perspective, religion is unimportant as an explanation for democratic values. In contrast to Huntington's predictions, the results of this study will show that the future of democracy does not look so gloomy after all.

Upcoming conference

Deliberative Democracy in Action: Theory, Practice and Evidence, 5-7 June 2012
The conference will bring together scholars working on different aspects of deliberative democracy. The two main themes are deliberative capacity and the idea of 'scaling up' democratic deliberation.

Two keynote speakers will deliver their views on deliberative democracy. John Dryzek will talk on 'Deliberative Capacity' and Mark E. Warren will give his talk on 'Deliberative Democracy and the Corruption of Language'.

General research seminar

The General Research Seminar at the Department of Political Science has become a recurring feature in the work of D:CE.

In the seminars, researchers have the chance to present their research to their colleagues. Since the participants are found in both Åbo and Vasa, the seminars are linked together via video transmission. In addition to our guest researchers as well as several researchers, other contributors during the last year have included Professor Detlef Jahn, Professor Eric Uslaner and Professor Marc Hooghe.

Seminar room (Photo: H.S. Christensen)

Visiting addresses

ASA-huset, Fänriksgatan 3 A
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The ASA building (photo: H.S. Christensen)

Steering group

Director

Lauri Karvonen
Professor of Political Science

Associate director

Kimmo Grönlund
Director of Research (Social Science Research Institute)

Members

Carsten Anckar
Professor of Comparative Politics

Åsa Bengtsson
Adjoint Professor of Political Science

Göran Djupsund
Professor of Political Science and Political Communication

Marko Joas
Professor of Public Administration

Associated institutions

BIDS
Bern Interdisciplinary Center for Deliberative Studies
Universität Bern

DCERN
Democracy, Citizens and Elections Research Network
University of Manchester

NED
Nordic Elections and Democracy Research Consortium

Recent Publications

Carsten Anckar (2011) *Religion and Democracy. A Worldwide Comparison*. London: Routledge.

Åsa Bengtsson & Hanna Wass (2011), 'The Representative Roles of MPs: A Citizen Perspective'. *Scandinavian Political Studies*, 34(2), 143-167.

Maria Bäck (2011) *Socialt kapital och politiskt deltagande i Europa*. Åbo: Abo Akademis förlag.

Henrik S. Christensen & Åsa Bengtsson (2011), 'The Political Competence of Internet Participants – Evidence from Finland'. *Information Communication and Society*, 14(3), 1-21.

Andreas Fagerholm (2011), Väljarstöd och ideologi inom västeuropeisk yttervänster: En jämförande översikt, *Politiikka* 53:1, 47-54.

Kimmo Grönlund (ed.) (2011) *Språk och politisk mobilisering - Finlandssvenskar i publikdemokrati*. Helsingfors: SLS.

Guy-Erik Isaksson (2011), 'Presidentialisation of Parliamentary Systems: Reality or Illusion?', in Persson, T. & Wiberg, M. (eds.), *Parliamentary Government in the Nordic Countries at a Crossroads, Coping with Challenges from Europeanisation and Presidentialisation*. Stockholm: Santérus Förlag, 223-243.

Lauri Karvonen (2011), Multiple Facets of Democratization, *International Studies Review* 13, 174-179.

Lauri Karvonen (2011) 'Party System Fragmentation', in Bertrand Badie, Dirk Berg-Schlosser and Leonardo Morlino, eds., *International Encyclopedia of Political Science*, Vol. 6, London: SAGE, 1822 - 1824.

Krister Lundell (2011), Accountability and Patterns of Alternation in Pluralitarian, Majoritarian and Consensus Democracies, *Government and Opposition*, 46(2), 145-167.

Maija Setälä (2011): The role of deliberative mini-publics in democratic systems. Lessons from the experience of referendums. *Representation*, 47:2, 201-213.

Peter Söderlund, Hanna Wass och Bernard Grofman (2011), The Effect of Institutional and Party System Factors on Turnout in Finnish Parliamentary Elections, 1962-2007: A District-level Analysis, *Homo Oeconomicus* 28(1/2), 91-109.

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