



WIC Hybrid Colloquium

Democracy between anarchy and dictatorship: A fragile balance

Wednesday, 2 April 2025
16:00 – 17:00 (CEST)



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Abstract:

This paper investigates the situation of liberal democracies using a dynamic model originating from biology, the Holling type III functional response, augmented by negative external effects, between two groups in a society, the elite and civil society. Although we start from observations and basic questions as posed by Acemoglu and Robinson in their work on the "narrow corridor", our approach delivers a greater variety of dynamic behavior and additional insights into challenges for liberal democracy. We analyze the dynamics of an uncontrolled system, a system with one-sided control by the elite, and a game model with strategic interactions between the two groups using dynamic systems theory, bifurcation theory, optimal control theory, and dynamic game theory. A low prevalence of negative effects between groups, a low inequality of initial endowments, and a low discount rate of future events are helpful for establishing a liberal democracy. Somewhat unexpectedly, the competitive dynamic game model seems to grant slightly better chances for democracy, thereby questioning the idea of Thomas Hobbes' "Leviathan".

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About the presenter:

Reinhard Neck, Professor of Economics Emeritus, Alpen-Adria-Universität Klagenfurt, Klagenfurt, Austria; Research Fellow, CESifo, Munich, Germany; Visiting Professor, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia; Vice-President, Karl Popper Foundation Klagenfurt; President, Kärntner Institut für Höhere Studien (KIHS), Klagenfurt.

Publications: (co-)author or editor of 55 books and special issues of international journals; 360 articles in academic journals and collective volumes in economics and related disciplines (operations research, statistics, mathematics, history, philosophy).

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