

GV100 Week 10 Collective Action Questions

Lecture:

1. What is the free rider problem, and what is an example relating to politics?
2. What did Olson propose as solutions to the collective action problem?
3. What is a second order dilemma, and what is an example relating to politics?
4. If the potential for cooperation makes it possible to manage the commons, and if we know how to design effective institutions, then why do we see so many failures?

Reading:

5. What is Demsetz's basic argument, and do you find it convincing? Why (or why not)?
6. According to Hardin, what do enclosure of farmland, restrictions on hunting and fishing, and limits on waste disposal all represent? Can you think of an alternative explanation, at least in relation to the first of those?
7. According to Hardin, what is it that makes the issue of dealing with collective action problems particularly pertinent, and do you agree with this assessment? Why (or why not)?
8. What basic human capacities does Ostrom argue have been overlooked in classic ('thin') rational choice models of human behaviour? Do you agree or disagree with this assessment, and why?
 - a. What fundamental issue in normative political theory does Ostrom's argument relate to?
9. What are the structural factors that Ostrom argues need to be included in improved rational choice models, and how do they impact on the decision-making process?