Session I
3 oktober
15:30-17:30
Lokal: B317 (Niagara)

Ordf. Björn Badersten

Björn Östbring (Lunds universitet)
Realism, idealism och demokratiteorins demosproblem
Discussant: Peter Hallberg (Malmö universitet)

Mikael Rundqvist (Linköpings universitet)
“Are There Levels of Social Structure? Douglas V. Porpora’s Argument and Some Possible Suggestions for Further Analysis”
Discussant: Rasmus Karlsson (Umeå universitet)

Siri Sylvan (Uppsala universitet)
“What’s the Proper Place for Experts in Democracy? An Analysis of John Dewey”
Discussant: Peter Strandbrink (Södertörns högskola)

Session II
4 oktober
08:30-11:30
Lokal: B317 (Niagara)

Ordf. Peter Hallberg

Jakob Strandgaard (Lunds universitet)
“Teleological Reasoning as the Basis for Normative Evaluation of Just Orders in Habermas and Honneth”
Discussant: Johan Modée (Malmö universitet)

Rasmus Karlsson (Umeå universitet)
“Ecomodernist Citizenship: Rethinking Political Obligations in a Climate-changed World”
Discussant: Per Jansson (Linköpings universitet)

Jana Canavan (Lunds universitet)
“The totality of unfreedom in human-animal relations: renegotiating anthropocentric accounts of freedom”
Discussant: Daniel Drugge (Mälardalens högskola)
ABSTRACTS

Björn Östbring (Lunds universitet)
“Realism, idealism och demokratiteorins demosproblem”

Diskussionerna kring demosproblemet har fått sin aktualitet bland annat å grund av ökad migration, eftersom detta lett till en värld där många invånare inte är medborgare i staten och därmed inte rösterättiga. I den här artikeln analyseras diskussionen om demokratiteorins demosproblem utfärån den metodologiska striden mellan idealism och realism i politisk teori i stort. Hur demosfrågan besvaras avspeglar inte bara en normativ skiljelinje, exempelvis en liberal-nationalistisk kontra en kosmopolitisk eller post-nationell demokratiteori, utan även en central metodologisk fråga präglar diskussioner. Kan och bör demosprinciper härledas från de demokratiska idealen i sig själva, eller bör hänsyn även tas till huruvida de är möjliga att institutionalisera, det vill säga om de är förenliga med behovet av en stabil politisk ordning som åtnjuter legitimitet av de som berörs av besluten. Artikeln visar bland annat på att skilda metodologiska utgångspunkter leder till att förhållandet mellan demokrati och migration diagnosticeras på helt olika sätt.

Mikael Rundqvist (Linköpings universitet)
“Are There Levels of Social Structure? Douglas V. Porpora’s Argument and Some Possible Suggestions for Further Analysis”

Porpora claims that the assumption that there are multiple levels of social structure is not that self-evident as it may seem from the beginning. In his article he puts forward several possible criteria behind the idea that there are social levels: the part-whole relation, encompassment, locality, ontological priority and causal priority. He concludes that none of these criteria gives an exhaustive order of social structure. This paper will first lay down the line of reasoning of Porpora’s argumentation, and secondly put forward some suggestions for further analysis on this matter. One of these possible alternatives for further analysis is to compare the ideas of David Easton on political structure with Porpora’s quite pessimistic perspective.

Siri Sylvan (Uppsala universitet)
“What’s the proper place for experts in democracy? An analysis of John Dewey”

What is the proper place for experts in democracy? This normative question has been brought to the fore by contemporary debates on populism, technocracy and the alleged problem of ‘knowledge resistance’ among citizens. The main trend in political theory has been to discuss the threat of expertise. This perspective has recently been challenged by scholars who emphasize the promise of expertise or argue that it should be seen as a democratic ‘fact’. However, the actual place for expertise in democracy is a question that remains under-explored. This paper revisits the work by the American philosopher John Dewey, and the theory of expertise that he presented in response to Walter Lippmann in the early 20th century. I argue that Dewey’s epistemological approach to the expert problem introduces an insight that has been lost in contemporary discourse: that knowledge needs to be communicated in order to be truly known. While Dewey’s communicative conception of knowledge does not provide a comprehensive answer to the question of expertise in democracy, it should be considered an important piece in the bigger puzzle — and one that challenges current notions of expertise in public political discourse.
This paper will critically examine the role of teleological reasoning in the normative theory of Jürgen Habermas and Axel Honneth. The social critique of both authors rely on the complex idea that meaningful normative evaluations of justice in the current state of affairs can be made on the basis of an anticipated end-state derived from the internal logic of the present. Naturally, a host of critical research has been done over the years on the central concepts explored by Habermas (communicative action and law) and Honneth (recognition and freedom). However, I believe the use of teleological argumentation in their theories can bear being isolated from their arguments and be critically examined in detail.

Specifically, the paper will examine the theoretical methodology of ‘reconstruction’ in Habermas and ‘normative reconstruction’ in Honneth. By employing the reconstructive method, both Habermas and Honneth claim to be able to arrive at evaluative standards that transcend the initial fabric of reality, from which they were derived. Crucially, this transcendence relies on the teleological argument that this underpinning reality intimates a normative direction—a direction that can be hypothetically anticipated by the skillful theorist and thus employed as a critical yardstick in evaluations concerning the justice of the present.

This paper will examine the soundness of this reliance on teleology as hypothetical anticipations for their arguments. Specifically, this question will be examined through the lens of contextualism and the debate on ideal versus non-ideal theory in political theory. Drawing on contextualism, the paper will assert that this type of teleological argument can be understood as a plausible attempt of reaching ‘critical distance’, such that evaluative standards thusly arrived at truly do transcend their contextual grounding. Following, the paper asserts that if this is accepted, the teleological reasoning in the reconstructive method goes a long way to dissolve the often assumed tension between ideal and non-ideal theory in normative political theory. Here, the reconstructive method renders this distinction meaningless, since reconstructive ideals retain a firm connection to the murky non-ideal non-fully compliant reality from which they were derived.

The paper will first examine the normative foundation of Habermas, namely his theory of universal pragmatics. That is, the idea that universal validity claims underpin all rational and competent communication—and that these validity claims, once realized, can function as a formal basis for normative evaluations of human relations across all contexts (time and space). Here, it is the hypothetical anticipation of a state of unhindered, true, truthful, and appropriate communication that is the teleological element in Habermas.

The paper then examines the use of hypothetical anticipations in Honneth’s theory of recognition and the later work on freedom. Here the just nature of struggles for recognition is evaluated from a hypothetical anticipation of unhindered intersubjective recognition, brought back as a yardstick for the present. Focusing on Honneth’s later work on freedom, the paper explores how Honneth uses normative reconstruction as a “post-metaphysical equivalent of what Hegel calls the ‘logic of the concept’, as applied to the sphere of ‘objective spirit’. “ (Honneth, 2013: 38). That is to say, how Honneth goes about discerning a pure form of institutionalized social freedom as a hypothetical future, intimated from our current institutions and brought back to bear as an evaluative standard for the here and now.

Rasmus Karlsson (Umeå universitet)
"Ecomodernist citizenship: rethinking political obligations in a climate-changed world"

Green accounts of environmental citizenship typically seek to promote environmental sustainability and justice. However, some green theorists have argued that liberal freedoms are incompatible with preserving a planetary environment capable of meeting basic human needs and must be wound back. More recently, ‘ecomodernists’ have proposed that liberalism might be reconciled with environmental challenges through state-directed innovation focused on the provision of global public goods. Yet, they have not articulated an account of ecomodernist citizenship. This article seeks to advance the normative theory of ecomodernism by specifying an account of ecomodernist citizenship and subjecting the theory’s core claims to sympathetic critique. We argue
that state-directed innovation has the potential to reconcile ambitious mitigation with liberal freedoms. However, full implementation of ecomodernist ideals would require widespread embrace of ecophilic values, high-trust societies and acceptance of thick political obligations within both national and global communities. Ecomodernism’s wider commitments to cosmopolitan egalitarianism and separation from nature thus amount to a non-liberal comprehensive public conception of the good. Furthermore, ecomodernism currently lacks an adequate account of how a society that successfully ‘separates’ from nature can nurture green values, or how vulnerable people’s substantive freedoms will be protected during an era of worsening climate harms.

Jana Canavan (Lunds universitet)  
“The totality of unfreedom in human-animal relations: renegotiating anthropocentric accounts of freedom”

The concept of freedom is politically and judicially understood to first and foremost generate political privilege and rights to human beings. This paper aims to challenge anthropocentric views about the purview of freedom. While the human rational subject is thought of as placed above all other animals, the latter are thought of as subordinate beings that are politically and practically expendable. Rationales about such animal expendability are often sought to be legitimised with claims about human ‘freedom of choice’, reflecting how human dominance and privilege are generated upon inherent claims of moral and political standing. Conceptualising freedom through justifications of subordinating Others thus results in a normalisation of violence and self-rule based upon a sense of entitlement. I put forth the argument that we are wrong to exempt other animals from being viewed and treated as legitimately free beings. Not only is doing so committing an injustice to fellow living beings capable of living their own lives as they see fit, it moreover alienates us from ourselves by upholding the separation of “us” and “them,” which strengthens dominant logics of power that underlie and justify mutually reinforcing types of oppression. The implied unfreedom of other animals is therefore better understood as a totality of unfreedom that affects all conscious animals, humans included. Treating anthropocentric ideas about freedom as euphemism of domination, the paper represents part of my initial efforts to formulate a theory of freedom that is based on notions of nonviolence and interdependency.