
PCRC Workshop “Power, Games, and Institutions”

Mariehamn, Åland

18-21 August, 2008

Martin Gregor*

Public Choice Research Centre (PCRC), a new Turku-based Centre of Excellence promoted by the Finnish Academy of Science, launched its networking activities by holding a summer workshop on advances in public choice in Mariehamn, Finland.

Mariehamn is situated on the Åland islands just in the mid between Helsinki and Stockholm. As a rather little town, it offers calm, sea-side local atmosphere, perfectly fit for a summer event. The workshop as a matter of fact began even before landing in Mariehamn, on a boat trip from Turku to Mariehamn. It lasted for two days on the island, and ended with a return boat trip to Turku. Quite interestingly for the participants, opening and concluding sessions made use of conference facilities on the boat.

The workshop attracted a diverse pool of 28 scholars from 14 countries, mainly fellows in economics and political science, with several speakers discussing also analytical moral and political philosophy issues. The key topics included recent advances in game theory, social choice, voting power analysis, political economy, and the electoral systems analyses.

PCRC as the organiser of the event is a new institute comprising 14 senior scho-

lars and 7 junior researchers. The underlying idea of the Centre is to promote the tools of microeconomics and analytic philosophy in the study of political and social life. The three founding partners of the Centre are University of Turku, Turku School of Economics, and University of Hamburg.

The Centre consists of two large research groups with widely overlapping memberships.

1. Design of decision-making institutions and policy analysis. Specific projects of this group include decision-making procedures and power measurement as well as the relationships of various game-theoretic solution concepts. Particular emphasis is laid on institutions of the European Union.

2. Democratic governance. The methodological approaches resorted to include conceptual analysis, argumentation theory, computer simulations as well as experimental methods. Key subjects under scrutiny in this group are deliberative democracy, referendum institutions and consensus reaching procedures.

For more about PCRC and the workshop, see the web site: <http://www.soc.utu.fi/sivustot/pcrc/>

* Institute of Economic Studies, Charles University, Prague.