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978-1-107-07003-5 - Choosing in Groups: Analytical Politics Revisited

Michael C. Munger and Kevin M. Munger

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## Choosing in Groups

This book is an introduction to the logic and analytics of group choice. To understand how political institutions work, it is important to isolate what citizens – as individuals and as members of society – actually want. This book develops a means of “representing” the preferences of citizens so that institutions can be studied more carefully. This is the first book to integrate the classical problem of constitutions with modern spatial theory, connecting Aristotle and Montesquieu with Kenneth Arrow and James Buchanan.

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# Choosing in Groups

## *Analytical Politics Revisited*

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with

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*To Melvin J. Hinich (1939–2010)*

*You knew all the smalls, but you were drawn to the big.*

*Partner, mentor, and friend.*

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I remember standing at the polls one day, when the anger of the political contest gave a certain grimness to the faces of the independent electors, and a good man at my side looking on the people, remarked, "I am satisfied that the largest part of these men, on either side, mean to vote right." I suppose, considerate observers looking at the masses of men, in their blameless and in their equivocal actions, will assent, that in spite of selfishness and frivolity, the general purpose in the great number of persons is fidelity. The reason why any one refuses his assent to your opinion, or his aid to your benevolent design, is in you: he refuses to accept you as a bringer of truth, because, though you think you have it, he feels that you have it not. You have not given him the authentic sign.

Ralph Waldo Emerson, "New England Reformers," 1844

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## Preface

In 1997, Melvin Hinich and I coauthored a book, also published by Cambridge University Press, called *Analytical Politics*. It subsequently was translated into Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Spanish. The book used spatial theory to bridge the gap between philosophical and mathematical treatments of politics.

We started to think about a second edition in the late 2000s. I had been a department chair at Duke University for ten years, and I wanted to get back to academic work. After Mel and I had a series of phone conversations, we planned to revise the first edition along the lines that Jeffrey Banks had suggested in an insightful review in the *Journal of Economic Literature*.

On Sunday, September 5, 2010, we talked on the phone. Mel was excited about the example we were planning to use to introduce the new book: the problem of group choice Meriwether Lewis and William Clark faced during their 1805 Corps of Discovery expedition. We hung up pledging to talk again later in the week.

But that never happened. On the morning of Monday, September 6, Melvin fell down the stairs in his home in Austin, Texas. He did not survive the fall.

After that, I put the book aside for more than a year. Mel had participated, over more than three decades, in the creation of many of the spatial models discussed in the 1997 book, and his sense of scientific advances in modeling was invaluable. I couldn't do it without him.

That is why I resolved to write a quite different book, one that in some ways would be less than I could have achieved with Mel, but that at least started from the preliminary plans we had made. I enlisted a new collaborator, my older son Kevin Munger of New York University, to update and expand the topics covered. He also is responsible for Chapter 9, and he did most of the work on the problems at the end of the chapters.

I hope Melvin would have been proud of the result. Though he was not able to participate in the writing of the final version, his intellectual fingerprints are

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on every page. Three of the chapters – 5, 6, and 9 – are adaptations of similar material in the 1997 book, though they are substantially reorganized and updated.

The book is new, however, because the motivation and organization are completely different. In large measure, this is because I tried to respond to Jeff Banks's suggestions. The problem of "choosing in groups" starts several steps earlier in terms of conceptual framework, considering the problem of why voluntary associations exist and how they are constituted. Given the debt owed, it is a shame that Jeff Banks, like Mel, is no longer with us to see the result.

I offer thanks to the many who have made comments and suggestions. The problem with listing people is that we are sure to forget some, and that omission is unintentional. But I want especially to thank John Aldrich, Jonny Anomaly, Geoffrey Brennan, Scott de Marchi, Ricardo Guzman, and Georg Vanberg for their suggestions and criticisms. My teaching assistants, Darren Beattie, Cindy Cheng, Matthew Cole, Clyde Ray, and Guadalupe Rojo, made it possible for me to get some work done while teaching three classes in fall 2013.

Zach Weiner created a remarkably apropos cartoon for *Saturday Morning Breakfast Cereal* and was kind enough to let us use it here. He also made some pointedly useful comments on an earlier draft of the manuscript. William Keech read much of the manuscript and made dozens of useful suggestions. He would still prefer that there were fewer long quotes, I'm sure. Elizabeth Jenke was ruthless about pointing out portions of an early version that made little sense. Carla St. John did a lot of very tedious but important work scanning material from sources and older versions. Laura Satterfield carefully fixed structure and reference formats. Kathrin DePue did a great job of copyediting and fixing infelicities in several chapters, making the manuscript much more coherent. George de Stefano went through the tedious job of preparing the manuscript with final copyediting. Dr. Nitin Gupta made it possible for me to see well enough to finish, though my retina went from aloof to completely detached. And thanks to my dear spouse Donna Gingerella for being uncharacteristically patient. As for my son Brian, I will have more time for baseball now. I can't see well enough to pitch anymore, and besides, you hit too hard. I'll shag those long flies in the outfield, after they hit the ground.

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Durham, NC