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Buchanan J M & Tullock G. *The calculus of consent: logical foundations of constitutional democracy.* Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1962. 361 p.
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The basic tools of economic theory are applied to the structure of political decision rules. The calculus of a utility-maximizing individual in choosing among alternative rules for reaching collective or political decisions is central to the analysis. What are the most preferred rules and how will these rules vary over differing domains? The answer depends on predicted workings of the rules examined. [The *SSCI*® indicates that this book has been cited in over 955 publications since 1966.]

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As early as 1948, when I discovered Knut Wicksell's¹ seminal work in public finance theory, my interest was centered on the relations between the incentive structure of the political order and the patterns of results that could be predicted to emerge. Gordon Tullock, whom I met in 1957 and with whom I commenced to work in 1958, was interested in examining the patterns of outcomes that could be predicted to emerge under differing incentive-rules structures (e.g., majority voting rules, bureaucratic hierarchies) from the presumption that participants seek to maximize identifiable separate interests. Tullock completed an early paper on the workings of simple majority rule in legislative assemblies in which he demonstrated that logrolling among separate coalitions would generate inefficient outcomes.

In 1959 we decided to write a jointly authored book that would combine our closely related research perspectives. The book was largely written during the 1959-1960 academic year. In one sense, the book was easy to write. The critically important step involved the shift in perspective. Once we commenced to look at politics and political process from what was basically the economists' perspective, the components of the analysis itself fell readily into place. In the process of presenting the analysis, we realized that we were able to provide a tight logical structure to what must have been the essential vision of James Madison and the Founding Fathers in their conceptualization of the workings of a political order.

At no stage in the process of writing the book did I feel that we had "invented" or "discovered" a totally new or novel idea or set of ideas (I cannot speak for my coauthor in this respect). My sense was rather that we were filling in an awesome gap in political science, a gap the very existence of which surprised me, then and now. We were, quite simply, taking the basic analytical tools of the economist and applying these tools to the increasingly important political sector of society.

Our analysis was normative in its fundamental individualistic presuppositions but positive in its examination of the workings of alternative rules within these presuppositions. Our purpose was explanatory rather than directly reformist, but, because we did introduce the prospect for varying the basic constitutional structure, the project for constitutional change was implicit in the whole enterprise.

The book was instrumental in the development of "public choice" as an academic subdiscipline between economics and political science, a subdiscipline that has provided the intellectual foundations for examining "politics without romance." Because of its constitutional emphasis, the book provides the starting point for the emerging field of inquiry "constitutional economics," a field that has come increasingly to occupy my own research attention.^{2,3}

1. Wicksell K. A new principle of just taxation. (Musgrav R A & Peacock A T, eds.) *Classics in the theory of public finance.* London: Macmillan, 1958. p. 72-118. (Cited 50 times since 1966.)
2. Buchanan J. *Liberty, market and state.* New York: New York University Press, 1985. 278 p.
3. Brennan G & Buchanan J. *The reason of rules: constitutional political economy.* Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1985. 153 p.

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