

Examrace

Contemporary Political Thought-II Communitarians Political Science YouTube Lecture Handouts

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Contemporary Political Thought-II Communitarians

Introduction

- Communitarianism is a social philosophy that, in contrast to theories that emphasize the centrality of the individual, emphasizes the importance of society in articulating the good.
- Communitarianism is often contrasted with liberalism, a theory that holds that each individual should formulate the good on his or her own.
- Communitarians examine the ways shared conceptions of the good are formed, transmitted, justified, and enforced.
- Hence, the focus of communitarians (and moral dialogues within them) revolves around the historical transmission of values, and the societal units that transmit and enforce values – such as the family, schools, and voluntary associations (including places of worship) , which are all parts of communities.

IT is a Reaction to Liberalism

The communitarian theory of the self-emerged largely as a critical reaction to liberalism – especially John Rawls’s seminal liberal text, *A Theory of Justice* (Rawls 1971) . In that work, Rawls formulated a concept of justice based upon the inviolable rights of individuals, declaring that “each person possesses an inviolability founded on justice that even the welfare of society as a whole cannot override” (Rawls 1971: 3) .

Communitarianism as a Perspective

Communitarians argue that this liberal conception, with its heavy emphasis on choice and autonomy, ignores the crucial fact that individuals are “embedded” in societies, finding themselves affected by external forces that influence their ultimate decision.

Individuals While Making Decisions Sometimes Don't Even Realize That the Inputs Are Obtained from the Society, Which Has Further Influence Their Decisions

Responsive Communitarian

Responsive communitarians argue that the preservation of the social bonds is essential for the flourishing of individuals and of societies. This led to their view that states should

“sustain and promote the social attachments crucial to our sense of well-being and respect, many of which have been involuntarily picked up during the course of our upbringing”

Critique to Responsive Communitarians

For liberals, this idea is treated as if it requires the state to determine the good and then direct its laws toward promoting that good, which is considered a grievous error. Liberals argue that citizens may fundamentally disagree about what the good is, and so attempts by the state to pursue a specific good will limit the freedom of those citizens who disagree.

Better, liberals argue, to have the state remain neutral among various competing teleologies.

Important Questions

- How communitarianism is different from libertarianism?
- Communitarianism completely ignores the rights of individuals for common good?
- Communitarians view of constructing a society.

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