

## **Justice: Theory and Applications**

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Central European University

Budapest, Hungary

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The problem of justice occupies a special place in contemporary political philosophy. In the words of its most influential figure, Rawls, "justice is the first virtue of social institutions". That view seems to be shared by a majority of authors and theories. However, there is no comparable agreement regarding what justice demands, from whom and to whom. Proponents of different theories disagree about the content of the demands of justice: does it demand equality, priority to the worst off, or merely sufficiency? They also disagree about its currency: in what dimension should people be made equal: in their welfare, capabilities, resources, or something else? Likewise, there is disagreement about the scope of the demands of justice: is it people in general who owe and are owed the duties of justice to one another? Or is it only members of the same politically organized society? Another dispute concerns the kind of actors to which justice primarily applies: is it only social institutions that must discharge the demands of justice, or are the private choices of individuals equally under its application?

These questions have utmost relevance for political philosophers. However, their importance spill over other disciplines. Given that many choices policy makers make are distributive in nature, it is not surprising that issues of justice appear in many other spheres. The course will revise some contexts which raise important questions about justice: Most people agree that educational goods are important in shaping one's life

prospects. But there is disagreement about how these ought to be distributed: How should educational opportunities be distributed? What is equal opportunity of education? What other competing values there are? Another important good that has enduring effects in people's life is health. Is health a special good, or is it one among others? If a person enjoys less health because of her previous actions should health care be sensitive to this fact? How should empirical data and people's attitudes towards their health enter into decisions about just health care?

Perhaps the most urgent problems we face right now have to do with environmental changes. Two different areas address problems towards the future: we will consider whether there is justice between generations. Egalitarians disagree about whether equality between generations is a value worth seeking. They also disagree about the 'span' of justice? Should people be equal their whole life or at different points of their lives? If we think that we have some moral obligations towards future people, then the urgency of mitigating the adverse effects of climatic change becomes clear. Who should bear the costs of mitigating those effects? What is the value of the environment?

Finally, we touch upon a long lasting controversy. Some people argue that some forms of taxation are unfair because they violate people's right to hold private property. We'll explore some controversies about it and different views that address this objection.

These, among others, are the questions that will be discussed in this course.

### **First week:**

Introduction to distributive justice: Zoltan Miklosi, Andres Moles

The concept of justice: Peter Vallentyne

The currency debate: Andrew Williams, Kasper Lippert-Rasmussen

Luck and responsibility: Kasper Lippert-Rasmussen, Andrew Williams

The scope of justice: Janos Kis, Zoltan Miklosi

The site of justice: Janos Kis, Andres Moles

### **Second week:**

Justice in education: Matthew Clayton, (Andres Moles

Justice in health care: Greg Bognar, Zoltan Miklosi

Intergenerational justice: Kasper Lippert-Rasmussen, Andrew Williams

Environmental justice: Greg Bognar, Matthew Clayton

Justice and taxation: Peter Vallentyne

## Bibliography

### Preliminary reading list for the course:

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2. ANDERSON, E. (1999). What is the Point of Equality? *Ethics*, 109, 287-337.
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4. BOGNAR, G. (work in progress). Prioritarianism, Empirical Ethics, and the Separateness of Persons.
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10. COHEN, G. A. (1989). On the Currency of Egalitarian Justice. *Ethics*, 99, 906-944.
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19. MCKERLIE, D. (2006). Egalitarianism and the difference between interpersonal and intrapersonal judgments. In N. Holtug and K. Lippert-Rasmussen (eds.) *Egalitarianism: New Essays on the Nature and Value of Equality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 157-173.

20. MURPHY, L & NAGEL T. (2002) *The Myth of Ownership*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 3-39.
21. NAGEL, T. (2005). The Problem of Global Justice. *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 33, 113-147.
22. NOZICK, R. (1974). Anarchy, State and Utopia. New York: Basic Books, 183-231.
23. POGGE, T. V. (2000). On the Site of Distributive Justice. Reflections on Cohen and Murphy. *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 29.
24. RAWLS, J (1993). The Basic Structure as Subject. In Rawls: *Political Liberalism*. New York: Columbia University Press.
25. RAWLS, J. (2001). Justice as Fairness: A Restatement. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
26. TAYLOR, R. S. (2004). Self-Realization and the Priority of Fair Equality of Opportunity, *Journal of Moral Philosophy*, 1, 333–47.
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