



MASARYKOVA UNIVERZITA

# Pluralism and Disagreement

Liberty, Liberalism, and  
Perfectionism

**Jiří Baroš**

# Liberty, Liberalism and Perfectionism

- What is Liberty?
- Contemporary Liberalism v. Perfectionism

# Liberty, Liberalism and Perfectionism

- What is Liberty?
- Contemporary Liberalism v. Perfectionism

# Liberty

- Introduction
- Negative Liberty
- Positive Liberty
- Freedom as Civic Standing

# Liberty: Introduction

- **Liberty Tradition**
  - Fundamental Liberal Principle: Freedom is Normatively Basic
  
- **Metaphysical Conception: Freedom of Will**
  - Determinism and Responsibility
  
- **Political Conception: Slavery as Paradigmatic Case of Unfreedom**

# Negative Liberty

- Paradigmatic Case of Its Lack: Prisoner
- Absence of Constraints Imposed by Others
- Advantages/Disadvantages
- Two Interpretations:
  - **Non-obstruction** (Ability to Act as One Chooses)
  - **Opportunity** (A Range of Opportunities for Action)

# Positive Liberty

- Paradigmatic Case of Its Lack: Addict
- Self-Control, Self-Directedness, Self-Mastery
- Two Selves Metaphor
- Liberty and Submission

# Freedom as Civic Standing

- Paradigmatic Case of Its Lack: Slave, Traditional Wife
- Lack of Social Status
  
- Two Interpretations:
  - **Communitarian**
  - **Neo-Roman**
  
- Middle Way Strategy/Objections: Old News, Who Cares?



# Liberty, Liberalism and Perfectionism

- What is Liberty?
- Contemporary Liberalism v. Perfectionism

# Liberty, Liberalism and Perfectionism

- What is Liberty?
- Contemporary Liberalism v. Perfectionism

# Contemporary Liberalism

- Liberal Moral Neutrality
- Liberal Political Neutrality
- Political Implications of Liberalism

# Liberal Moral Neutrality

- What are **Free and Equal Moral Persons**?
  - makes, and can act upon moral demands...
  - freedom from moral authority
  - moral claims validated by their addressees
  
- What is **Morality**? Giving other reasons to comply when addressing moral claims to them...
  
- The **Idea of Public Justification**: a moral principle validated from the perspective of each moral person.

# Liberal Political Neutrality

- **The Non-coercion Principle:**
  - Unjustified Coercion is Wrong.
  - **Consensus Justification** (same evaluative standards)
  - **Convergence Justification** (different evaluative standards but everyone has grounds to endorse the same moral principle)
  
- The Challenge of Political Realism
- The Coercive Nature of the State:

# Political Implications of LPN

- Disagreements not about Values, but about the Relative Importance of our Evaluative Standards
- Often, No Public Justification Can be Advanced...
- Liberal Political Neutrality Drastically Limits the Scope of Government...

# Contemporary Perfectionism

- What is Perfectionism?
- Justificatory Liberalism v. Perfectionism
- Justification according to Perfectionism

# Perfectionism

- **Objective Good Component (v. Subjectivism):**
  - Human Nature Perfectionism
  - Objective List Perfectionism
  
- **The Rejection of State Neutrality**



## ...and Justificatory Liberalism

- JL overstates the **values** served by public justification (i.e. stability and reciprocity) v. more comprehensive account of political morality
- JL grounds the condition of PJ on an implausible account of **moral reasons**; internalism v. externalism (deficiencies can prevent people from recognizing the reasons that apply to them)

## ... and Justification

- **relational** justification (must proceed from what all parties hold in common)
- justification **simpliciter** (one must present valid reasons overriding competing reasons)
- **holistic** nature of justification (against the **bracketing** strategy)

# Further Reading

- Berlin, Two Concepts of Liberty
- Gaus, Justificatory Liberalism
- Gaus, The Order of Public Reason
- George, Making Men Moral
- Larmore, The Autonomy of Morality
- Pettit, Republicanism
- Quong, Liberalism Without Perfection
- Rawls, Political Liberalism
- Raz, The Morality of Freedom
- Wall, Liberalism, Perfectionism, and the Restraint
- Wolterstorff, Understanding Liberal Democracy