

Stability of justice, moral sentiments and common life: Envisioning an egalitarian future life

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Abstrak

In A Theory of Justice, John Rawls raises a question which deserves our close attention: How to maintain the stability of the conception of justice in a wellordered society? He insightfully argues that moral sentiments, instead of selfinterest, play a critical role in maintaining that stability. However, the only moral sentiment he endorses is the sense of justice, which is shaped and determined by a rational conception of justice. Its content and forces, once shaped, are beyond the influences of contingencies of social relations. Rawls curiously ignores that other moral sentiments are also significant in maintaining the stability of justice. And he also overlooks that social relations are crucial to reproduce and maintain such moral sentiments. Therefore, this essays purports to answer this question: Suppose we have a consensus on an egalitarian idea of just distribution, what moral sentiments can maintain the stability of such idea in an ideally egalitarian society? We will first clarify our concept of moral sentiments. We then analyze and criticize Rawls's theory of stability of justice. We adapt his theory and develop what we call a theory of relation-dependent moral sentiments. Two discourses will then be evaluated, David Miller's nationalism and our proposal of an egalitarian common life. We argue that an egalitarian common life, brought about by egalitarian public services offered or regulated by the modern state, will provide the proper moral sentiments to support the stability of the egalitarian idea of justice in an egalitarian society