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SOCIAL CHOICE AND THE IDEA OF JUSTICE

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How did the subject of social choice theory originate? The challenges of social decisions involving divergent interests and concerns have been explored for a very long time. For example, Aristotle in ancient Greece and Kautilya in ancient India, both of whom lived in the fourth century before Christ, explored various constructive possibilities in social choice in their books respectively entitled, interestingly enough, Politics and Economics.

However, social choice theory as a systematic discipline first came into its own around the time of the French Revolution. The subject was pioneered by French mathematicians in the late eighteenth century, such as Jean-Charles de Borda and the Marquis de Condorcet, who addressed these problems in the 1780s, in rather mathematical terms and who, in effect, initiated the formal discipline of social choice theory through their investigation of the analytical demands of aggregation over groups. The intellectual climate of the period was much influenced by European Enlightenment, and in particular by French Enlightenment, with its interest in reasoned construction of social order. Indeed, some of the early social choice theorists, most notably Condorcet, were also among the intellectual leaders of the French Revolution.

The French Revolution was, of course, much concerned with the idea of justice. Indeed, even the slogan "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity" can be seen as part of a general demand for the fulfilment of different aspects - different facets - of justice. The Marquis de Condorcet was strongly involved both in the development of social choice theory and in the analysis of demands of justice and fairness. And there is a third source of intellectual engagement here to which I must draw

attention. This concerns the idea of human rights (as they are now called), which received very strong advocacy in the intellectual animation that characterized revolutionary France.

To be sure, the idea of such antecedent rights has had support from the American revolutionaries as well, and this was indeed a part of the American Declaration of Independence in 1776, in which the "inalienable rights" of people were invoked, before the process of making the American constitution would begin. And yet there was reluctance in America to include all human beings, and the visionary American Declaration somehow managed to remain silent on the rights of slaves who had been brought from Africa to America by slave traders. This exclusion generated deep criticism from a number of European revolutionaries, in particular Mary Wollstonecraft, whose first book A Vindication of the Rights of Men, written in 1790, contained a chastisement of the new United States for its failure to include the slaves from the domain of human rights.¹

In contrast the French Declaration of "the Rights of Man" did not have any such exclusion, in its assertion that all people are "born and remain free and equal in rights" (even though the French radicals' neglect of addressing problems of gender inequality was challenged by Mary Wollstonecraft). Treating all human beings as equal, in some basic sense, was one of the commonalities that was an important part of all three of the disciplines I am trying to examine: theory of justice, analyses of human rights, and social choice theory. Equal treatment of different persons is perhaps more obvious in the case of theories of justice and of human rights, but it is also a substantial - if implicit - part of the intellectual framework of social choice theory. Indeed, when the early social choice theorists were presenting their mathematical theorems on voting systems

¹ Mary Wollstonecraft, A Vindication of the Rights of Men, in a Letter to the Right Honourable Edmund Burke; Occasions by His Reflections on the Revolution in France, 1790, and A Vindication of the Rights of Woman: with Strictures on Political and Moral Subjects, 1792; both included in Mary Wollstonecraft, A Vindication of the Rights of Man and A Vindication of the Right of Women, ed. Sylvana Tomaselli (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

and related ideas, there was, underlying the mathematics, a general priority of equal treatment of the people involved. Arrow and modern social choice theory are heirs to that egalitarian tradition in not discriminating between the attention that should be paid to different individuals.

Before I leave this rapid - shockingly brief - intellectual history of the foundational ideas in French Enlightenment that continue to be influential, let me add that there is also an indirect French connection through Adam Smith. I do not want to take anything away from the credit that Scotland should get for the works of Adam Smith, David Hume and others, who did so much to advance the European Enlightenment. However, Smith was especially interested in French political economy and philosophy, and - as people who have right now gathered together here for a conference on Smith know very well - he spent some substantial time in and around Toulouse in what was clearly for him an enormously productive episode of his life. On the other side, Condorcet was much taken by the pioneering nature of Smith's exploration of moral sentiments and political economy, and both he and his wife, Sophie Grouchy, worked quite hard to make Smith's writings available in French translation.

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I move now from the eighteenth century to the twentieth. The year - 1950 - in which Kenneth Arrow published his pioneering paper on social choice theory, which brought this young graduate student widespread recognition as a world leader of innovative social thought, saw quite a few developments of interest to practical social choice.² Communist China received widespread diplomatic recognition, the United Nations despatched troops to the Korean war, the Republic of India was established with its new democratic constitution, and Senator Joseph McCarthy went on

² Kenneth J. Arrow, "A Difficulty in the Concept of Social Welfare," Journal of Political Economy, 58 (1950), and Social Choice and Individual Values (New York: Wiley, 1951; 2nd ed. 1963).

a rampage. Social choice theory is relevant to all these highly practical matters. And so it is also to academic intrigues related to group decisions, well portrayed, for example, in C.P. Snow's popular novel, The Masters, and this story of academic intrigues surrounding a social choice at the University of Cambridge was published also in the same year, 1950, as Arrow's pioneering essay.

Despite the relevance of social choice theory to all these practical matters, it would be rather unusual to think of formal social choice theory as being a very practical subject. The development of formal social choice theory has, in fact, tended to be confined to highly theoretical analyses. That apparent remoteness has its advantages, not least in allowing the development of sophisticated techniques of analysis that need formal reasoning and mathematical methods, which would have been hard to sustain if every analytical departure had to be immediately justified in terms of their instantaneous relevance or popular interest. I note the point here since the chastising of mathematical reasoning in economics often comes from critics who are impatient to look only for works that have instant and direct practical application.

There is a close connection between the approach of social choice theory and the devising of various measures of social significance, such as indicators of inequality, poverty, mobility and living standards. I have commented in a series of publications on the connection between the pure theory of social choice and the variety of practical problems that are faced in applied welfare economics, democratic procedures, normative measurement, and the assessment of justice and injustice, and I have drawn on these connections in presenting my arguments in The Idea of Justice.³

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³ The Idea of Justice (London: Penguin, and Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009); French translation, L'Idée de Justice (Paris: Flammarion, 2010).

The motivation that moved the early social choice theorists in the eighteenth century included the avoidance of both instability and arbitrariness in arrangements for social choice. Their work focused on the development of a framework for rational and democratic decisions for a group, paying attention to the preferences and interests of all its members. However, their theoretical investigations typically yielded rather pessimistic results. They noted, for example, that majority rule can be thoroughly inconsistent, with A defeating B by a majority, B defeating C also by a majority, and C in turn defeating A, by a majority as well (a discovery that is sometimes called the Condorcet Paradox). On the nature of these difficulties, a good deal of exploratory work (often, again, with pessimistic results) continued in Europe through the nineteenth century. Indeed, some very creative people worked in this area and wrestled with the difficulties of social choice, for example Lewis Carroll, the author of Alice's Adventures in Wonderland (he wrote on social choice under his real name, C.L. Dodgson).

When the subject of social choice was revived in its modern form in the twentieth century by Kenneth Arrow, he too was very concerned with the difficulties of group decisions and the inconsistencies to which they may lead. While Arrow put the discipline of social choice in a structured - and axiomatic - framework (thereby leading to the birth of social choice theory in its modern form), he deepened the pre-existing gloom by establishing an astonishing - and pessimistic - result of apparently ubiquitous reach, which goes by the name of "the impossibility theorem." This theorem, formally known by the cheerful name of the "General Possibility Theorem," is a result of breathtaking elegance and power, which showed that even some very mild conditions of reasonableness could not be simultaneously satisfied by any social choice procedure that could be described as rational and democratic. Two centuries after the flowering of the ambitions of social rationality in Enlightenment thinking and in the writings of the theorists of the French Revolution, the subject seemed to be inescapably doomed.

My own work on social choice theory, and those of many others, have been closely linked with the difficult problems that Arrow uncovered - or to put it more exactly, problems that Condorcet and Borda had outlined which were generalized into an immensely far-reaching theorem by Arrow. It emerged that while impossibilities of this kind - the one discussed by Arrow and many other such results (typically inspired by Arrow) - can arise easily enough, they can also be largely resolved by making the social decision procedure more responsive, typically requiring that they be more informationally sensitive. A voting procedure makes use of very little information in itself, and so do economic procedures such as national income aggregation. We need more information and more sensitivity of the procedure of public assessment and decision making to a wider class of information. In fact, the Marquis de Condorcet had already made that point in the 1780s in very general terms. His focus on education (particularly on women's education - Condorcet was one of the first to emphasize the importance of the schooling of girls), on societal statistics, on public discussion brings out the importance he attached to these avenues of social progress, but also, at least indirectly, to making social choice informationally richer and less arbitrary.

There are many people who take an interest in social choice theory who like to pay particular attention to impossibility results. I know that myself, not only because I have done a theorem or two in that direction, but also because one of them - something called "the impossibility of a Paretian liberal" (presented in a 5-page paper) immediately generated about 300 follow up essays. All this does have social relevance, not to mention analytical fun, but I fear I am going to disappoint some people here by not talking any more about impossibility results. Those results are important not because they allow us to throw up our hands in resignation, but because they force us to look at what went wrong and how the gap can be bridged. And in the case of Arrow's impossibility theorem, particularly in its application to the theory of justice, we know very well how the bridges for informational extension can be set up and how they work robustly and

fairly powerfully. It is with the positive possibilities of social choice, rather than impossibilities, with which I am particularly concerned in today's presentation. But before I proceed further with social choice theory, let me say a few words respectively on the idea of justice and on human rights.

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So I come back to the period of European Enlightenment. There are two basic, and divergent, lines of reasoning about justice among leading philosophers associated with the radical thought of that period. The distinction between the two approaches has received far less attention, I argue in my book, The Idea of Justice, than it richly deserves. One approach, led by the work of Thomas Hobbes in the seventeenth century, and followed in different ways by such outstanding leaders of thought as Jean-Jacques Rousseau, concentrated on identifying just institutional arrangements for a society. This approach, which I call "transcendental institutionalism," has two distinct features. First, it concentrates its attention on what it identifies as perfect justice, rather than on relative comparisons of justice and injustice, and it tries to identify social characteristics that cannot be transcended in terms of justice. The inquiry is aimed at identifying the nature of "the just" - rather than finding some criteria for an alternative being "less unjust" than another. Second, in searching for perfection, transcendental institutionalism concentrates primarily on getting the institutions right, and it is not directly focused on the actual societies that would ultimately emerge. The nature of the society that would result from any given set of institutions must, of course, depend also on non-institutional features, such as actual behaviours of people and their social interactions. In elaborating the likely consequences of the institutions, if and when a transcendental institutionalist theory goes into commenting on them, some specific behavioural assumptions - usually of a rather noble and fully compliant kind - are made. However, the search in transcendental institutionalism is primarily aimed at identifying perfect institutions, rather than actual outcomes.

Both these features relate to the "contractarian" mode of thinking that Thomas Hobbes in particular had initiated, and which was further pursued by John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Immanuel Kant. A hypothetical "social contract" that is assumed to be chosen is clearly concerned with an ideal alternative to the chaos that might otherwise characterize a society. The contracts that were prominently discussed by the authors dealt primarily with the choice of institutions. The overall result was to develop theories of justice that focus on transcendental identification of the ideal institutions.

In contrast with transcendental institutionalism, a number of other Enlightenment theorists took a variety of comparative approaches that were concerned with social realizations (resulting from actual institutions, actual behaviour and other influences), and did this in a comparative perspective. Different versions of such comparative thinking can be found, for example, in the works of the Marquis de Condorcet, Adam Smith, Jeremy Bentham, Mary Wollstonecraft, Karl Marx, John Stuart Mill, among a number of other leaders of innovative thought in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These authors had very different ideas of the demands of justice, and they are rarely lumped together, as I am doing. But even though they proposed quite distinct ways of making social comparisons, they were all, in fact, involved in comparisons of societies that exist or could emerge, rather than confining their analyses to transcendental searches for perfectly just institutions. Those focusing on realization-focused comparisons were often primarily interested in the removal of manifest injustice present in the world they saw.

And this outlook remains cogent and relevant in the contemporary world as well. The Marquis de Condorcet, Adam Smith or Mary Wollstonecraft may have been, in the eighteenth century, particularly focused on some patent injustices that were then common, such as slavery, or gross subjection of women, but there are similar problems of what may be judged to be manifest injustice even in the world in which we live (quite aside from the fact that slavery and subjection of women have not been entirely eradicated, in all their forms yet). There are, to give just a few

examples, people still dying of hunger and starvation, there are still organized practices of torture on one excuse or another, and many people continue to succumb to illnesses without medical treatment for which cures are known and for which medicines, if they were to be produced in adequate volume, would be both inexpensive and effective. The "comparative realization" approach to justice remains deeply relevant today for much the same reasons for which Condorcet or Smith took it, if only implicitly, to be important. That makes us look to the second approach, rather than the first approach of social contract and transcendental institutionalism.

Unfortunately, it is the first tradition - that of transcendental institutionalism - on which today's mainstream political philosophy largely draws in its exploration of the theory of justice. The most powerful and momentous exposition of this approach to justice can be found in the works of the leading political philosopher of our time, John Rawls. And the other preeminent contemporary theorists of justice (Ronald Dworkin, David Gauthier, Robert Nozick, among others) have all taken, broadly speaking, a transcendental institutional route. Their theories share the common aim of identifying just rules and institutions, even though their identification of these arrangements come in very different forms. The characterization of perfectly just institutions has become the central exercise in the modern theories of justice.

Happily, it is the second approach, which I believe is needed, is ideally cut out for social choice theory. In fact, the comparative approach focusing on social outcomes - narrowly or broadly defined - is the typical subject matter of the analytical discipline of social choice theory. There is a clear connection there, and the axioms to be imposed on social choice would, in this application, relate to the demands of comparative assessment of justice and injustice. There seems to be an easy passage there.

But what about human rights? That can surely be accommodated within a general understanding of ideas of justice, and indeed the French intellectuals like Condorcet, saw their commitment to the so-called "Rights of Man" as a part of their general understanding of the

demands of justice. But can these rights, and the rapidly growing contemporary literature on human rights (the contemporary successor of the eighteenth century rights of man) be comfortably accommodated within the social choice framework? There is, I accept, a more difficult problem here, and that challenge demands a serious examination, to which I now turn.

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Interestingly enough the subject of human rights received a spectacular revival just in the years over which Kenneth Arrow was pursuing his graduate studies and producing his pioneering work on social choice theory. I refer to the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights passed by the General Assembly of the United Nations in December 1948. There was a reasoned vision of lasting importance underlying the declaration, which was momentous at that time, and which remains important today. Invoking human rights has become a major way of challenging inequities and oppression in the contemporary world, and in this development, led by the wonderful Eleanor Roosevelt among others, the Universal Declaration of the newly born United Nations played a powerfully constructive role.

Is there a connection between social choice theory, pioneered in its modern form by Kenneth Arrow, and the perspective of human rights, championed in its modern form by Eleanor Roosevelt? I would argue that there is quite a close connection, and the fact that this relationship is very rarely noticed and that it is not immediately obvious and transparent, makes it all the more important to explore what the connection may be and how it works.

There is, of course, a basic motivational similarity, reflecting the spirit of the time, and in particular the sense of anxiety that, in many ways, characterized the world of the late 1940s. If Arrow motivated his work by pointing to the academic scepticism of systematic welfare economics, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights pointed to the practical understanding that - I quote from the Declaration - the "disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous

acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind." The spirit of pessimism would have been a part of the concerns that fed both the departures, and in this sense, one could even stretch a point to argue that there was a general connection with W.H. Auden's book, Age of Anxiety, which got the Pulitzer Prize also in 1948, and which captured the uncertainty and anxiety in people's mind, and which immediately inspired a symphony for piano and orchestra by Leonard Bernstein, and later to a ballet by Jerome Robbins.

But it is not these psychological connections that I want to explore here, important as they may have been. I want to comment, rather, on the analytical affiliation of the general approach of social choice theory and the widespread domain of human rights, of which the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was an outstanding articulation. Even though Arrow's instant fame related to his "impossibility theorem," his basic intention was also constructive and indeed he did present an analytical structure of great versatility and creative promise. The versatility would allow a broadening of social choice theory from its original form in Arrow's Ph.D. thesis, and we have to examine the ways and means of an appropriately broadened social choice theory to accommodate the intellectual basis of human rights.

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But what is this intellectual basis? In fact, despite the tremendous appeal of the idea of human rights, it is also seen by many as lacking in foundation and perhaps even in reason and cogency. This is partly because the invoking of human rights tends to come mostly from those who are more concerned with changing the world than with interpreting it - a distinction made popular by Karl Marx (of all people), who spent most of his life interpreting the world and pointing, rightly, to the big understanding that an uninterpreted world is of no great help for working out a reasoned programme of change.

I have argued in my book, The Idea of Justice, and also in some other publications, that human rights are best seen as articulations of a commitment in social ethics, comparable to - but very different from - accepting utilitarian reasoning. Like other ethical tenets, human rights can, of course, be disputed, but the claim is that they will survive open and informed scrutiny. Any universality that these claims have is dependent on the opportunity of unobstructed discussion. This view contrasts with seeing human rights in primarily legal terms, either as consequences of particular legislation (as Jeremy Bentham wanted to see it), or as precursors of legal rights (as Herbert Hart did), possibly pointing towards what should ideally be legal rights. Human rights may well be reflected in legislation, may inspire legislation, and may even serve, at least to some extent, as ideals that demand legislative attention. However, I would argue that the fact that human rights can have these roles are - what can be called - "further facts," rather than the defining characteristics of human rights themselves.

And furthermore sometimes human rights are not ideally pursued through the legal route at all. For example, recognizing and defending a wife's moral right to be consulted in family decisions, even in a traditionally sexist society, may well be extremely important for the entire process of development (including the determination of fertility rates, mortality patterns and employment decisions), as I have discussed in my book, Development as Freedom.⁴ It can indeed be, quite plausibly, seen as an important human right. And yet the advocates of this type of human right involving relations with a strongly private dimension would quite possibly agree that it is not sensible to make this human right into a "coercive legal rule" (perhaps requiring that a husband would be taken in custody if he were to fail to consult his wife).

However, if a social ethics that can be defended in public reasoning is the way to understand the intellectual basis of human rights, two questions would seem to arise rather

⁴ Development as Freedom (New York: Knopf, and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); French translation by Odile Jacob, 2000.

immediately. The first of these concerns the way the identification of those views is to be included in actual or imagined public reasoning. Note that the invitation to public reasoning is not based, in this approach, on the entitlement of legal citizens - as citizens - to express their views on a reasonable social contract - an alternative view that is very dominant in contemporary political philosophy. The need for reach - and even of global reach - comes in the alternative approach not only from citizens' rights, but also from the importance of considering distinct points of view - an exercise that is necessary for the objectivity of the approach (as I have discussed in some detail in my book, The Idea of Justice).

My approach links closely, and is much influenced by, Adam Smith's investigation of moral sentiments and jurisprudence. Smith was very concerned about avoiding the biases of local confinement and ethical myopia. Rather than trying to cater only to the dominant views of ruling groups, Smith saw the need to bring in perspectives from other groups, sects and classes. This was, for him, a principal way for transcending, among other barriers, the limitations of class-based thinking (Smith was as firm on that subject as Marx would later be), but Smith also used it to assert the necessity of seeking global argumentative encounters - actual or visualized - in checking the plausibility of normative claims.

One of Smith's illustrations of parochial values that needed confrontation with views from elsewhere refers to the tendency of all political commentators in ancient Greece, including sophisticated Athenians, to regard infanticide as perfectly acceptable social behaviour. Smith pointed out that even Plato and Aristotle did not depart from expressing approval of this extraordinary practice which "uninterrupted custom had by this time....thoroughly authorized" in ancient Greece.

The relevance of distant perspectives has clear relevance not only to easily recognised nasty practices, such as the stoning of adulterous women under the Taliban rule in Afghanistan, but also to some current debates in the U.S.A., including in the U.S. Supreme Court (for example about

capital punishment for murders committed by minors). What is relevant here is Smith's insistence that "the eyes of the rest of mankind" must be invoked to understand whether "a punishment appears equitable."⁵ The necessity of this arises, Smith argued, for the avoidance of bias related to either individual or sectional interest, or local parochialism:

The second problem concerns the possibility of a lack of agreement on what could be reasonably expected to emerge from open public discussion at the global level, or even within a particular locality. How much of an embarrassment is this lack of unanimity for this way of understanding the debates on human rights? I would argue that it is not an embarrassment at all. A claim of human right is only a claim, and unlike a legal right that is backed by a law that everyone within the system is meant to accept, there is no corresponding claim to monism in the human rights approach that I am trying to present.

The usefulness of the approach lies in the dialogic contribution of the idea of human rights, and for that contribution a human rights claim has to be plausible to others, when public reasoning is allowed, but there is no necessity that everyone must always agree to the same view of the exact specification of human rights. There will be, the hope is, enough agreement to generate agreed pursuit based on human rights in many cases, including perhaps freedom from torture, freedom from starvation, freedom from dying of illnesses for which cures are known, and so on, and the reach of such consensus could be enormously important. Formally, what we expect to get from this permissive view of human rights are incompletely specified rankings - effectively partial orderings based on the intersection of different people's not fully congruent rankings. These partial resolutions can be hugely useful for practical action. It is on such reasoned partial agreements that Condorcet and Smith and Wollstonecraft tended to rely - rather than on any presumption of unanimity, and we have reason to follow that route.

⁵ Adam Smith, Lectures on Jurisprudence, edited by R.L. Meek, D.D. Raphael and P.G. Stein (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978; reprinted, Indianapolis: Liberty Press, 1982), p. 104.

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I turn now to the final part of this lecture. Can social choice theory accommodate all these demands that come from the theory of human rights, in addition to the theories of justice? I have already discussed the possibility of widening the informational basis of social choice theory to allow greater informational intake, including interpersonal comparisons of well-being, and this subject has been extensively studied since the early 1970s. But in addition to reminding ourselves of that, I want to point to four specific features of social choice theory that make it potentially adaptable to accommodating the idea of human rights in its most capacious form.

First, even though in the original Arrow formulation the social choice function is meant to determine a complete social ordering, or a complete choice function, the formulation can be easily altered to allow the determination to include instead a partial ordering of social assessments.⁶ This relaxation would be, for reasons already discussed, particularly important for social valuation to emerge from open public reasoning.

Second, in his formulation, Arrow made social choice a function of the set - strictly speaking, n-tuple - of individual values, rather than focusing narrowly on individual interests. This allows the framework to be sensitive to individual concerns about issues that go beyond personal interests, such as the importance of human values and their fulfilment and violation. Furthermore, Arrow encouraged engagement in reasoning by insisting that the individual values must not be confused with instinctive "tastes," and in this Arrow was broadly in line with Adam Smith's accommodation of the role of reasoning within the formulation of what he called "moral sentiments."

⁶ I have discussed this issue in my Collective Choice and Social Welfare (San Francisco: Holden-Day, 1970; Amsterdam: North Holland, 1979).

Third, reasoning in social contexts is much enriched by public discussion and interchange of ideas, concerns and beliefs. The connections between individual values, public reasoning and open discussion with others cannot but be central to the art of social choice, broadly understood - an issue that has received illuminating exposition not only from Condorcet, Smith and Arrow, but also from the exponents of the public choice school, led by James Buchanan.⁷ Indeed, Frank Knight, the great economist who inspired the public choice theorists, commented on that necessary connection with much clarity: "Values are established or validated or recognized through discussion, which is at once social, intellectual, and creative."⁸

Fourth, even though the values to be considered in the narrowly defined format of social choice theory are those of the members of a polity for which decisions are being made, there is no bar in a broadly defined social choice approach against introducing and considering other perspectives that may come from outside the polity. Adam Smith made systematic use of these broader perspectives through his device of the "impartial spectator." Smith's strategy of invoking impartial spectators makes room for taking note of perspectives that are not overwhelmed by the biases of one's own groups. Given the powerful influence, which can be implicit and not always clearly perceived, of one's situation and group affiliations, it is necessary to examine the perspectives of differently situated spectators - from far and near - to overcome partiality in general.⁹ There is no insistence here that outsiders, or imagined individuals from far as well as near, must be given the same role in the decision-making process as insiders, and Smith's

⁷ James Buchanan, "Social Choice, Democracy, and Free Markets," Journal of Political Economy, 62 (1954); and Liberty, Market and the State (Brighton; Wheatsheaf, 1986).

⁸ Frank Knight, Freedom and Reform: Essays in Economic and Social Philosophy (New York: Harper, 1947; republished, Indianapolis: Liberty, 1982), p. 280.

⁹ See Smith, The Theory of Moral Sentiments (1759; republished, New York: Penguin, 2009), Book III.

commitment here is to allow neglected perspectives to be aired and heard, rather than any kind of voting mechanism. This broadening also allows us to include the likely perspectives of future people in today's decisions, which can be extremely important to extend social choice to environmental issues.

I end with recollecting how Mary Wollstonecraft's book on the human rights of women, A Vindication of the Rights of Woman, ends. She begins with much angry rhetoric on the terrible neglect of women's interests and freedoms in society, but ultimately the book appeals to reasoned agreement among people on what all human beings are entitled to get - the basis of a theory of human rights. The book, which takes the form of a long letter to M. Talleyrand-Perigord, concludes by reaffirming her strong confidence in relying on reason with open participation:

I wish, Sir, to set some investigations of this kind afloat in France; and should they lead to a confirmation of my principles, when your [French] constitution is revised the Rights of Woman may be respected, if it be fully proved that reason calls for this respect, and loudly demands JUSTICE for one half of the human race.¹⁰

This is, in fact, a broad social choice reasoning, and I would argue that it is that broad reasoning that makes the social choice approach a good basis for considering the idea of human rights and its contingent reach in the world in which we live. There are indeed strong linkages between the idea of justice, the demands of human rights and the discipline of social choice theory. Those connections demand more attention than they have received in the theory of practical reasoning.

¹⁰ Mary Wollstonecraft, A Vindication of the Rights of Woman (1792), in Tomaselli, ed. (1995), p. 70.

. The Idea of Justice amartya sen. The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press Cambridge, Massachusetts. 2009. In memory of. John Rawls. ©2009 by Amartya Sen All rights reserved. Printed and bound in the United States of America Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data. Sen, Amartya, 1933-The idea of justice / Amartya Sen. 1 Reason and Objectivity 2 Rawls and Beyond 3 Institutions and Persons 4 Voice and Social Choice 5 Impartiality and Objectivity 6 Closed and Open Impartiality. 31 52 75 87 114 124. part ii. Forms of Reasoning. 7 Position, Relevance and Illusion 8 Rationality and Other People 9 Plurality of Impartial Reasons 10 Realizations, Consequences and Agency. 155 174 194 208. v. The Second Principle of social justice concerns social and economic institutions: Social and economic inequalities are to satisfy two conditions. In the example above, the best choice under the "maximin" rule would be SOCIETY A, which has the highest minimum wage. Those earning the average wage and above are doing pretty well as well. The most controversial part of Rawls' theory of justice centered on his Difference Principle, the idea that the greatest benefit should go to the least advantaged. Conservative and free-market critics argued that it is unfair to take from the most advantaged people what they have earned and redistribute it for the benefit of the less fortunate. Social justice is the idea that justice should take place on a group level, rather than on an individual basis. When there are disparities in for example income between two religious, racial, or ethical groups, this must be because of some fundamental injustice in society. The individual case does not matter. A desire to see all choices as equally valid and to remain so on a superficial level along with a refusal to do a deep dive into the consequences of such equal weighting of isms and tribal/identity politics. In short cultural marxism. Best term for it.