



INTRODUCTION TO NORMATIVE THEORY

GRONINGEN UNIVERSITY - RANEP/MSSES 2018



COMMANDMENT

THOU SHALL NOT KILL!



NORMATIVE THEORY IN POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

OUGHT TO

VS

**DESCRIPTIVE THEORY
CRITICAL THEORY**

OR

CAN COMBINE ELEMENTS

NT IS counterfactual

Evolution of the ethical principle(s)

Талион: око за око, зуб за зуб.

Золотое правило: относись к другому так, как хочешь чтобы относились к тебе (не делай другому того, чего не хочешь в отношении себя самого).

Заповедь любви: возлюби ближнего своего как самого себя.

Категорический императив: поступай всегда так, чтобы максима твоего поведения могла стать всеобщим законом (=даже если (фактически, эмпирически) к тебе будут относиться не так, как ты относишься к другим)



NATURE OF THE NORM IN THE NORMATIVE THEORY

**NORM IMPOSED BY TRADITION OR AUTHORITY
(GOD, OFFICIALS)**

Imperatively imposed

Passively interiorized

Contextually conditioned

VS

**NORM ELABORATED BY ETHICALLY ORIENTED
POLITICAL THINKERS**

Rational

Reflexive

Critical

Universal(ly applicable)

Can be redefined if ethically needed



EXAMPLES

Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau's theories of social contract

Kant's normative ethics

Utilitarian normative ethics

John Rawls' theory of justice

Jürgen Habermas' ethics of argumentation



STRUCTURE

KEY VALUE (justice, communication, mutual understanding, social obligations)

OUGHT-TO-PRINCIPLE

JUSTIFICATION

IMPLEMENTATION (infrastructure, institutions, law)

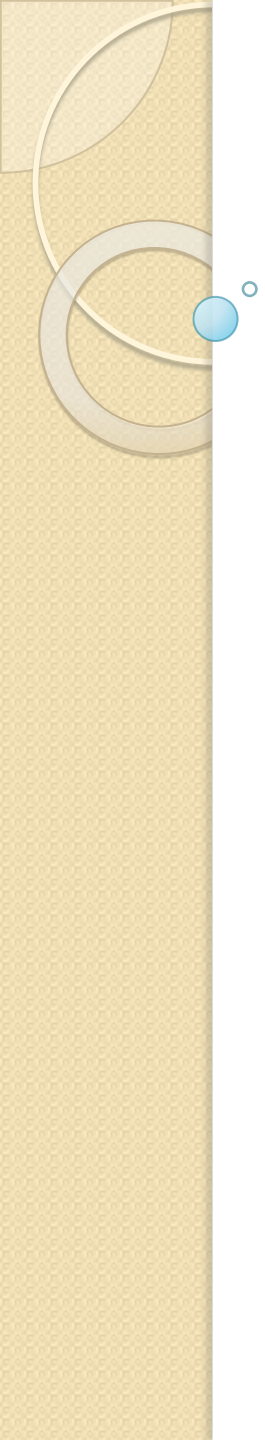
CRITIQUE

◦ **Cultural-historical critics** – there is no abstract formal neutral rationality extracted from cultural-historical contexts (MacIntyre: there is no abstract/neutral justice).

Feminist critics I – normative theory is a theory of a white rational European man (masculinocentrism, male norm, logocentrism); it ignores marginalized groups (women, children, proletarian, colored etc.)

Feminist critics II - ideal normative theory does not derive from experience (Rawls' omission of historical injustice; Habermas' omission of non argumentative communication).

Common: ideal normative theory is exclusive and as such reinforces injustice



Everyone was talking about [ideals], but no one was saying what it is or how it could work under real social conditions. The current theories are primarily procedural, and they base their accounts on ideal rather than actual conditions. On my view, this ideal approach is a mistake, since it makes it difficult to connect normative political theory to the practices of actual democracies and to real possibilities for democratic reform. It also only heightens the increasing skepticism in the social sciences about the practicality of democratic norms and ideals.

James Bohman. Public Deliberation



NON-IDEAL NORMATIVE THEORY

Iris Marion Young, Nancy Fraser and others

GENDER MATTERS (not male-centered, written by women, children and other oppressed groups/ minorities excluded from the classical ideal theory)

DERIVES FROM EXPERIENCES (built from bottom up, not from top down: Elizabeth Anderson *The Imperative of Integration*: (2010) “... to start political philosophy from a diagnosis of injustices of our actual world, rather than from a picture of an ideal world”)

IDEALS FUNCTION AS HYPOTHESES to be tested in experience



STRUCTURE

IDEAL NORMATIVE THEORY:

1. KEY VALUE
2. OUGHT-TO-PRINCIPLE
3. JUSTIFICATION
4. IMPLEMENTATION

NON-IDEAL NORMATIVE THEORY:

1. EXISTING INJUSTICE(S)
2. KEY VALUE
3. OUGHT-TO-PRINCIPLE
4. JUSTIFICATION
5. IMPLEMENTATION