

| Motion: Justice is nothing but interest. (Pro side) / Justice is nothing more than interest (Con side) |   |
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| Pro side argument  | <p>To begin with, our debate topic today is 'Justice is nothing but interest.' First, we need to <b>clarify some key concepts</b>. According to John Rawls in his seminal work 'A Theory of Justice,' justice is embodied in two principles: First, each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive basic liberty compatible with a similar liberty for others; Second, social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged members of society (Rawls, 1971, p.54). Interest refers to anything that can bring economic, political, or social benefits to an individual or collective.</p> <p><b>Our criterion</b> for judgment is that justice should maximize the overall interests of society, which is the result of reconciling individual and collective interests. This standard is supported by various theories including utilitarianism and social contract theory.</p> <p><b>Firstly</b>, utilitarian theory demonstrates that justice is nothing but the maximization of interests. According to the doctrines of utilitarian representatives Bentham and Mill, the greatest happiness for the greatest number is justice, which is essentially the maximization of interests (theoretical basis). Utilitarianism posits that the most just actions and policies in society should be those that maximize overall happiness. For instance, public health policies that promote vaccination or disease prevention measures can enhance the overall quality of life in society. This is an example of achieving justice by increasing the interests of the entire society. <b>According to The Economist, COVID-19 vaccination reduced transmission rates by 70%, significantly improving public health levels</b> (data support) (1).</p> <p><b>Secondly</b>, economic policies in history and reality show the consistency between justice and interests. Take the U.S. tax system as an example. The U.S. government achieves fair distribution of resources by taxing high-income groups and using this revenue to provide public services and social welfare, such as healthcare and education (case support). This approach not only helps low-income groups improve their quality of life but also narrows the wealth gap in society, demonstrating the realization of so-called social justice through the redistribution of interests. <b>According to The New York Times, the progressive tax system in the U.S. reduced income inequality by 16% and improved social welfare levels</b> (data support) (2). This indicates that the redistribution of economic interests can achieve social justice.</p> <p><b>Finally</b>, in social contract theory, justice is the reconciliation of interests. Rawls proposed in 'A Theory of Justice' that justice is the result of a social contract, i.e., determining fair principles under conditions agreed upon by rational individuals to maximize the overall interests of society. The realization of justice is not purely moral abstraction, but a balance and reconciliation of different interest groups through negotiation and compromise (theoretical basis). For example, Nordic countries have achieved economic development while ensuring the social interests of most citizens through a welfare state system based on the form of a social contract, providing basic living guarantees for everyone. This is a manifestation of fairness after interest reconciliation. <b>According to the Journal of Economic Policy, social security and welfare policies in Nordic countries led to a 30% decrease in poverty rates and a 10% increase in economic growth rates</b> (data support) (3).</p> <p>In conclusion, justice is nothing but interest. Whether in utilitarian theory, real-world economic policies, or social contract theory, justice can be understood as the reconciliation and maximization of different interests. Only by maximizing the overall interests of society can we achieve true justice.</p>   |
| Con side argument  | <p>To begin with, justice is a crucial component of social institutions. It refers to a state where everyone receives what they deserve and is treated fairly according to moral, legal, and ethical standards. Interest, on the other hand, refers to the benefits, advantages, or satisfaction that individuals or groups derive from certain actions or outcomes. The key to judging whether justice is merely interest lies in determining if there exist universal values and principles that transcend individual or group interests and should be pursued and upheld by all. If such values exist, then justice is more than just interest.</p> <p><b>Our criterion</b> for judgment is: whether there exist universal values and principles that transcend individual or group interests and should be pursued and upheld by all.</p> <p><b>Firstly</b>, the realization of justice requires transcending the pursuit of interests to seek universal values. <b>Kant's theory of the categorical imperative posits that the principles of moral behavior are unconditional and do not depend on personal preferences or interests, but stem from reason itself</b> (1). Justice, as a moral principle, should also transcend individual interests and pursue universal values such as fairness, equality, and dignity. For example, to uphold social justice and fairness, many people choose to expose corruption, even though doing so may bring them great risks and losses. This demonstrates that their pursuit of justice transcends self-interest.</p> <p><b>Secondly</b>, the importance of procedural justice surpasses that of outcome justice. Procedural justice emphasizes fairness, transparency, and impartiality in decision-making processes, which goes beyond mere result-orientation. Even if the final outcome benefits certain individuals or groups, if the procedure is unjust, then the result cannot be considered just. <b>Rawls argued that when establishing social rules, people should assume they don't know their position in society, thus ensuring the fairness of the rules. This is known as the 'veil of ignorance' theory</b> (2). For instance, in a fair judicial trial, even if the final verdict is unfavorable to the defendant, as long as the trial process is just and the defendant's legal rights are protected, the verdict can be considered just.</p> <p>In conclusion, the realization of justice requires not only consideration of interest factors but also the pursuit of universal values and procedural justice. Therefore, justice is more than mere interest.</p>  |
| Pro side rebuttal  | <p>Thank you, Mr./Madam Chair. Good day, everyone. Today, we continue our debate on the topic "Justice is nothing but interest." We maintain that justice is indeed nothing but interest, achieved through the maximization of benefits for society as a whole.</p> <p>Firstly, the opposition mentioned that the realization of justice requires transcending interests to pursue universal values. They cited Kant's categorical imperative theory, which posits that morality should transcend personal interests. However, this argument contains a logical fallacy: universal values and interest maximization are not mutually exclusive. <b>According to John Stuart Mill in his work "Utilitarianism," justice is closely related to utility (or interest)</b>. Mill argued that the main criterion for justice is the maximization of overall happiness, which is essentially the maximization of interests (Mill, Chapter 5, "On the Connection between Justice and Utility"). Therefore, by pursuing the maximization of overall interests, justice inherently encompasses the realization of universal values. This demonstrates that the opposition's separation of universal values from interests is flawed. One of the goals of realizing justice is the embodiment of universal values, making our perspective more universally applicable.</p> <p>Secondly, the opposition asserted that procedural justice is more important than outcome justice. <b>This point needs clarification: the ultimate goal of procedural justice is to ensure fair distribution of interests.</b> In both legal and economic domains, procedural justice aims to guarantee the fairness of final outcomes. For instance, Rawls' "veil of ignorance" theory in "A Theory of Justice" fundamentally seeks to establish rules through fair procedures to ensure everyone benefits (Rawls, Justice as Fairness). If we overlook this point, procedural justice cannot achieve its fundamental goal of justice. Therefore, procedural justice and ultimate interest maximization are not in opposition but are interdependent. By guaranteeing procedural justice, we better realize the fair distribution of interests, ensuring that everyone's basic rights are protected. Thus, procedural justice serves the ultimate maximization of interests, making our viewpoint more practical and effective.</p> <p>Lastly, from a practical perspective, the realization of justice indeed manifests as the reconciliation and maximization of interests. As we previously mentioned, <b>the U.S. progressive tax system achieves social equity through the redistribution of interests; Nordic countries reduce poverty and improve overall quality of life through social welfare policies</b>. These cases demonstrate that justice is not an abstract moral concept but a concrete manifestation in the actual distribution of interests. Social contract theory also emphasizes that different groups reach consensus through compromise of interests, thereby achieving fairness and justice (Rawls, Justice as Fairness). In reality, maximizing overall interests can significantly improve the quality of life for each individual, which is an indisputable fact. Our viewpoint is closer to reality and better equipped to solve practical problems.</p> <p>In conclusion, whether from philosophical theories or practical cases, the realization of justice is nothing but the maximization and reconciliation of interests. Justice is achieved through the redistribution of interests, the implementation of fair procedures, and the enhancement of overall happiness. Justice and interests are inextricably linked; we cannot discuss justice without considering interests.</p>   |
| Con side rebuttal  | <p>Thank you, Mr./Madam Chair. Good day, everyone. While our opponents have passionately attempted to frame justice within the context of interest maximization, we maintain that this view overlooks the universal values and principles inherent in justice that transcend mere interests. We firmly believe that justice is more than just interest, and its pursuit cannot be limited to a mere balancing of interests but requires upholding universal moral principles and procedural justice.</p> <p>Firstly, our opponents have narrowly defined justice as "the maximization of interests," reducing it to a purely utilitarian calculation and neglecting its moral dimension. We contend that justice means everyone receives what they deserve and is treated fairly according to moral, legal, and ethical standards. Justice must consider not only the outcome of interest distribution but also whether the process of distribution adheres to moral and legal standards. For instance, even if wealth is relatively evenly distributed in a society, if this distribution is achieved through exploitation, oppression, or unfair competition, such a society cannot be deemed just.</p> <p>Our opponents use "maximizing overall societal interest" as their criterion, which is seriously flawed as it may lead to the neglect and harm of minority group interests, or even sacrifice individual basic rights for the benefit of the majority. This contradicts our standard of "whether there exist universal values and principles that transcend individual or group interests." For example, a country might sacrifice environmental protection for economic development, harming future generations' interests, or restrict freedom of speech to maintain social stability, suppressing minority voices. These actions might meet the "maximizing overall societal interest" standard but violate the essence of justice.</p> <p>Now, let us address our opponents' specific arguments:</p> <p><b>Firstly</b>, our opponents attempt to conflate "universal values" with a form of "interest," arguing that pursuing universal values does not contradict interest maximization. This confuses the essential nature of justice. The realization of justice often requires transcending individual or group interests to uphold universal moral principles such as fairness, equality, and dignity. Incorporating these universal values into interest calculations inherently diminishes their significance.</p> <p><b>Consider a poor artist who, even in his most difficult times, persists in creating art not for fame or profit, but for his artistic ideals. How can we measure this pursuit of art and beauty in terms of interest?</b> As Kant's categorical imperative states, the motive for moral behavior should be pure, without any consideration of interest. This is the foundation for the realization of justice. Our opponents' attempt to measure all moral behaviors with a utilitarian yardstick represents a narrow view of justice that cannot explain the great sacrifices made throughout human history for ideals, beliefs, and moral obligations.</p> <p><b>Secondly</b>, our opponents try to subsume procedural justice under outcome justice, arguing that the ultimate goal of procedural justice is also the fair distribution of interests. This is essentially putting the cart before the horse. Procedural justice is important because it embodies the pursuit of fairness and impartiality principles, ensuring that everyone has equal opportunities and rights in the process of social cooperation, free from arbitrariness and bias. Procedural justice is a necessary but not sufficient condition for outcome justice. <b>Logically, a necessary condition cannot be included within the framework of a sufficient condition.</b></p> <p>For example, to improve efficiency, a government might deprive citizens of their property without due process. While this might promote economic development in the short term, in the long run, such a violation of procedural justice would inevitably lead to social instability and distrust. Procedural justice ensures that justice is seen to be done, while our opponents attempt to obscure its importance with a vague concept of "outcome justice," which we cannot agree with.</p> <p><b>Thirdly</b>, our opponents try to use real-world examples to argue that the realization of justice is the reconciliation and maximization of interests. This commits the fallacy of hasty generalization and ignores countless great practices in human history where individuals sacrificed personal interests in pursuit of justice. From Socrates drinking hemlock for truth, to Bruno being burned at the stake for defending heliocentrism, to countless righteous individuals sacrificing their lives to resist tyranny and fight for democracy and freedom, these examples all prove that the pursuit of justice cannot be limited to balancing interests. It requires adherence to universal values and moral principles, and the courage and conviction to stand up against power without considering personal gain or loss!</p> <p>In conclusion, the essence of justice is far richer than interest maximization; it encompasses the pursuit of universal values and the maintenance of procedural justice. We emphasize once again: justice is more than just interest!</p> |
| Con side summary   | <p>Thank you, Mr./Madam Chair. Good day, everyone. What is justice? This is an eternal question that transcends time and propels human civilization forward. In today's debate, we are not arguing about the quantity of interests, but about the essence of justice. We firmly believe that justice is more than just interest; it is an inviolable moral bottom line, the cornerstone of social order, and the beacon guiding the progress of human civilization!</p> <p>Our opponents equate justice with "interest maximization," attempting to measure all moral behaviors with a utilitarian yardstick. This is tantamount to putting a price tag on all values in the world, which will ultimately lead to "moral decay and the loss of traditional virtues." If we were to replace "universal values" with a form of "interest," where would we place the lofty values of fairness, justice, and dignity for which we have fought and sacrificed? Indeed, conflicts of interest are inevitable in the real world, but if we sacrifice fairness and justice in pursuit of so-called "maximum interest," even the beneficiaries will live in fear and insecurity. For if one can trample on morality for personal gain today, others can do the same tomorrow, harming their interests. As social contract theory suggests, people are willing to give up part of their personal interests and obey common rules to pursue a higher value. This value is the foundation for the long-term existence of the social community and the guarantee that everyone can be treated fairly. This value is justice, not merely the maximization of interests!</p> <p>Throughout the debate, our opponents have been trying to blur the boundaries between "procedural justice" and "outcome justice," misinterpreting the maintenance of procedural justice as a means to achieve fair distribution of interests. This is undoubtedly putting the cart before the horse. Procedural justice is important because it embodies the pursuit of fairness and impartiality principles. It ensures that everyone has equal opportunities and rights in the process of social cooperation, free from arbitrariness and bias. Procedural justice is the last line of defense for fairness. Once this line is breached, even if the outcome appears fair, it cannot conceal the underlying injustice, nor can it convince people to accept it wholeheartedly.</p> <p><b>In the long river of history</b>, countless righteous individuals have fought for justice, even at the cost of their lives. From Socrates drinking hemlock for truth, to Bruno being burned at the stake for defending heliocentrism, to the numerous martyrs who sacrificed their lives for national liberation and people's happiness - were they pursuing merely personal interests? No! They were pursuing truth, fairness, justice, and the moral light that illuminates humanity!</p>  |
| Pro side summary   | <p>Justice is not just about interests; it is the pursuit of universal values and moral principles, the pursuit of a fair and just social order, and a firm belief in the direction of human civilization's progress!</p> <p>Thank you, Mr./Madam Chair. Good day, everyone. In today's debate, we have engaged in an in-depth discussion about the essence of justice.</p> <p><b>First</b>, addressing the opposition's view that justice should transcend individual interests and pursue universal values. The opposition cited Kant's theory of categorical imperative, arguing that justice should not be limited to considerations of interest. However, we must clarify that both utilitarianism and social contract theory emphasize the close relationship between justice and interests. John Stuart Mill, in his work "Utilitarianism," points out that maximizing overall happiness is justice, which embodies universal moral values. Universal values are realized in practice through interest maximization, such as improving overall quality of life through public health policies or achieving social justice through fair taxation systems. Thus, universal values and interest maximization are not contradictory but complementary. Therefore, the opposition's view of separating universal values from interests is one-sided.</p> <p><b>Second</b>, the opposition emphasizes the importance of procedural justice, arguing that it should supersede outcome justice. We need to clarify that the ultimate goal of procedural justice is to ensure fair distribution of results. John Rawls' "veil of ignorance" theory in "A Theory of Justice" fundamentally aims to ensure benefits for everyone through fair procedures, thereby achieving equitable distribution of interests. Procedural justice and outcome justice are not opposing concepts but mutually supportive. Through the guarantee of procedural justice, we can better achieve fair distribution of interests, which is key to realizing justice.</p> <p><b>Lastly</b>, the opposition cites historical examples of justice to demonstrate that the pursuit of justice can transcend interests. However, we cannot ignore that these examples are still related to the realization of broad interests. For instance, public health policies promoting vaccination improved the quality of social life; the U.S. progressive tax system achieved social equity through wealth redistribution; welfare policies in Nordic countries ensure basic living security for all. These real-world cases demonstrate that justice is realized through the pursuit of maximizing overall interests.</p> <p>Through the above arguments, we can see that the realization of justice requires the maximization of interests to achieve overall social happiness and fairness. Whether it's utilitarianism or social contract theory, or real-world cases, they all show that we can achieve social justice through fair procedures and reasonable distribution of interests. We emphasize that justice is nothing but the maximization and harmonization of interests.</p>  |