

Rational Analysis of Political Behavior

Social Welfare - Its meaning

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Write down in your own words short answers to the following questions. We are going to talk about those answers later.

Mandatory questions:

1. What is your understanding of the term “social welfare” in the context of political science? How would you describe it in your own words?
2. Can you recall any examples from previous courses where social welfare was a key focus? How was it addressed or analyzed in those contexts?
3. In terms of collective action problems, how does the ability or inability of a group to act together impact social welfare? Can you provide an example where collective action improved or worsened social welfare?

Optional questions (if we have enough time):

1. Considering the concept of Pareto efficiency, how do you think it relates to social welfare in political settings? Can you give an example where a policy decision is Pareto efficient but may not be considered equitable?
2. How do concepts like the Nash Equilibrium or the Prisoner’s Dilemma relate to social welfare? Can these concepts help us understand how social welfare might be optimized or compromised?
3. Reflecting on public goods and the Tragedy of the Commons, how do these scenarios affect social welfare? Can you think of real-life political examples where these concepts apply?
4. how do you think political decisions and policies should be evaluated with respect to social welfare? What criteria would you use to judge whether a policy is beneficial to social welfare?