

Discussion of the Relationship between Fairness and Efficiency ——Based on Rawls' "A Theory of Justice"

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ABSTRACT

Since China's reform and opening up, from the Third Plenary Session of the 14th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China that put forward "efficiency first and fairness" to the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, "first distribution and redistribution must deal with the relationship between fairness and efficiency, and redistribution pays more attention to fairness" Distribution policy, in 2021, the tenth meeting of the Central Finance and Economics Committee clearly stated that it is necessary to promote common prosperity in stages. The relationship between fairness and efficiency has always been the basic principle and standard for the country to formulate policies, and it is also the core issue discussed by scholars. Both utilitarianism and Rawls' two principles of justice provide us with different perspectives to explore the relationship between fairness and efficiency. This article focuses on Rawls's critique of utilitarianism and the specific content of the two justice principles, and makes a simple discussion on the relationship between fairness and efficiency and its enlightenment on the formulation of distribution policies in our country.

1. Criticism of Utilitarianism

Since Bentham and Mill, utilitarianism has become an independent theoretical system and has been improved and valued. Utilitarianism believes that the concept of justice is to maximize the realization of the goodness of the majority of people. In order to realize this goodness, even the interests of a small number of people can be sacrificed. The utilitarian view of justice is a teleological view of justice. The reason why it is teleology is that it only examines the purpose of the system and behavior, that is, whether the result of the system and behavior maximizes the goodness of the majority of people, and defines justice as a means to increase goodness. Between goodness

and goodness, goodness is given priority and justice is subordinated. Although on the surface the goodness and justice of utilitarianism are independent and separate from each other, in fact justice only exists as a dependency of goodness. "This classical form of utilitarianism offsets the goodness brought by an institutional arrangement. The net increase after the loss of damage or dissatisfaction is used as the basis for judging whether it is moral or justice, which makes utilitarianism always use efficiency as the standard of justice."^[1] Therefore, it is not difficult for us to draw the following conclusion: utilitarian justice. According to the view, efficiency is the priority and fairness is a means to achieve efficiency. In order to achieve efficiency, fairness can even be sacrificed.

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Rawls' critique of utilitarianism starts from the investigation of intuitionism. Intuitionism believes that the determination of any principle is made by intuition. Based on the sum-division dichotomy of intuitionism, Rawls proposes two types of intuitionism. The basic principle of distribution: efficiency principle and equality principle. Since this is an "intuitionist viewpoint", the two principles are adopted in no order. Therefore, Rawls believes that intuitionism can be either deontological or teleological. It is teleology, which also creates the flaws of intuitionism. Based on this defect and the uncertainty of intuition, utilitarianism deeply criticizes intuitionism, and tries to resolve the conflicts between various ideas by establishing a single standard, and give a specific and clear standard for the construction of behavior and system. So as to get rid of the influence of intuition. From this perspective, utilitarianism's stipulation on the priority of the principle of efficiency can make up for the intuition's interference with reason and the deficiencies in the priority of the two principles of distribution. However, in human society, either the establishment of this kind of system and the production of behavior are inseparable from the role of intuition. Rawls believes that the biggest flaw of utilitarianism is that it completely negates the role of intuition, and chooses goodness as the only criterion, putting efficiency principles in the first place. Only pay attention to the investigation of behavioral results, and ignore the consideration of fairness. Rawls said that "the intuitionist view of justice is only half a view of justice."^[2] In order to make up for the theoretical flaws of intuitionism and make it a complete deontology, Rawls introduced the lexicographic sequence as a balance standard. The principle of efficiency and the principle of equality have been stipulated in the order of priority, thus proposing their own two principles of justice: the principle of equality and freedom, the principle of fair opportunity and the principle of difference. If according to the utilitarian view of justice, fairness and efficiency should be the priority of efficiency, then Rawls's view of justice is fairness first, taking into account efficiency^[3]. Rawls criticized utilitarianism by introducing procedural fairness, but did not deny the importance of considering results. "We define deontological theory as a non-teleological theory, not as Regarding the legitimacy of institutions and behaviors as views independent of the nature of their results, all ethical theories worthy of our attention must consider the results when judging the legitimacy. Ethical theories that do not do this are strange and unreasonable. "Following, Rawls tried to amend the utilitarian teleology to deontology, and to transform the relationship of good first to justice first, so that through the ordering of the two justice principles, he can comprehensively give priority

to fairness and justice under the premise of fairness first. Efficiency is cared for and considered.

In summary, from Rawls's investigation of intuitionism and his criticism of utilitarianism, his theory of justice is actually a revision of intuitionism and utilitarianism, and is formed by combining and improving the two to a certain extent. Rather than adopting a stance of totally negating the two theories. Take the essence and remove the dross, so as to form a more complete theoretical system.

2. Rawls' Two Principles of Justice

Aristotle said, "The good in politics is justice, and justice is based on the public interest. According to the general understanding, justice is the concept of "equality" (equal) of certain things."^[4] For the definition of "justice" by J.R. Rawls, we can regard the discussion of justice in Rawls' "A Theory of Justice" as a discussion of fairness to a certain extent. Rawls starts with the research method of contract theory, hypotheses and defines the "primitive state" as the premise of his justice principle. In order to eliminate the influence of accidental factors that cause people's conflicts and prejudices on the principles of justice, Rawls described the "primitive state" as people who are rational and indifferent to others but only care about their own interests. Hobbies, good and evil, and other factors are completely ignorant of the social state, that is, Rawls's so-called "veil of ignorance" concept, only rational and caring about personal interests behind the "veil of ignorance" justice. Only principles can embody fairness and justice to the greatest extent, and abandon the influence of personal interests and world outlook on the principles of justice. In this original state, Rawls chose to prioritize the right to the good as the basic feature of his view of justice.

Aristotle believed that good is justice, that is, public interest, that is, equality. In Aristotle's theory, justice and good are the same concept, but later, many philosophical schools and philosophers divided justice and good into two independent concepts are defined, and the priority relationship between the two is the object of discussion. From this, we can see the teleology of utilitarianism that prioritizes goodness, while Rawls's view of justice is deontology that prioritizes justice. Rawls introduced Kant's procedural justice into his justice principles. What he proposed was a pure procedural justice, rather than "imperfect procedural justice." He concluded: "The basic sign of imperfect procedural justice is: When there is an independent standard for judging the correct result, there is no procedure that can guarantee it." In Rawls's view, a fair procedure not only means that the standard for judging the result is fair, but the process of reaching the result must

also be fair. . However, Rawls also carefully discovered that following a fair procedure may not be able to achieve fair results, such as fair gambling. Therefore, in order to ensure the full realization of fairness, he proposed two principles of justice: "The first principle: Everyone should have an equal right to a similar system of freedom that is compatible with the broadest basic freedom system owned by others. . The second principle: social and economic inequalities should be arranged in such a way that they are reasonably expected to be suitable for everyone's interests; and they are dependent on status and position and are open to everyone." In summary, this The two principles are the principle of equality and freedom, the principle of equality of opportunity and the principle of difference. The first principle of justice means that everyone has equal rights to freedom, and the second principle of justice means that under the condition of fair opportunity, positions and status are open to everyone; social and economic inequality should meet the minimum benefit The best interests of the recipients, that is, the principle of compensatory fairness to compensate the least beneficiaries. The two principles are arranged in a lexicographical sequence to achieve fairness as comprehensively as possible. Simply put, the first principle takes precedence over the second principle, and in the second principle, principle takes precedence over in principle. Rawls tries to eliminate as much as possible the unfairness caused by accidental factors (including physical conditions, family conditions, intellectual conditions and other natural factors) through a feasible way, and perfect the path to fairness by introducing the concept of procedural fairness, and Through investigation and attention to the results, fairness is the criterion, and a compensatory fair method is introduced to compensate the interests of disadvantaged groups. Rawls tried to establish a perfect theoretical system through all-round investigations, thereby establishing an ideal state of fair starting point, fair process and fair result.

3. The Relationship between Fairness and Efficiency: Based on the Interpretation of Rawls' "A Theory of Justice"

The discussion of fairness in the western world has sprouted since ancient Greece. In China, fairness refers to justice, equality, and impartiality. Some scholars believe that fairness is both specific historical and relative, based on relative fairness and equality under certain unfair and unequal natural endowments^[5]. Under this concept of fairness, the principle of distribution according to work, wealth first leads to wealth, and other viewpoints are produced. This view that fairness is not egalitarianism has certain truths, but under this principle, the old and

the weak are sick. How can the disabled and those with poor natural endowments be treated fairly and justly? Therefore, Rawls put forward a fair view of justice on the basis of just prioritizing goodness. In order to minimize the unfairness caused by natural accidental factors, Rawls proposed the principle of difference to provide a compensation for correcting unfairness. Mechanism, to a certain extent, Rawls' view of fairness implies a kind of egalitarian value orientation, but Rawls' egalitarianism is not absolute average, it is a kind of moderate egalitarianism, and it treats all Differences are allowed under the premise that everyone is beneficial. This is different from the two extreme viewpoints of utilitarianism that blindly pursue the maximization of benefits without hurting the interests of a few people, and that everyone is absolutely evenly distributed. Rawls is very smart in choosing In order to improve the principle of justice in a compromised way, the overall interests and individual interests have been increased. Efficiency refers to the use of limited resources to meet the most demand as much as possible. Ding Huang believes that efficiency can be divided into mechanical efficiency and social efficiency. That is to say, efficiency must be combined with value goals such as public interest, personal value, equality and freedom to make sense."^[6] Therefore, a society that only blindly pursues efficiency without the guidance of fair values is like an out-of-control train. Running too fast can easily deviate from the track of normal social development.

According to the utilitarian point of view, efficiency should be given priority to fairness and efficiency. There are also some views that fairness and efficiency are two incompatible concepts. Pursuing fairness only leads to low efficiency, and pursuing efficiency only leads to extreme unfairness. To comment on the relationship between fairness and efficiency in Rawls's justice view, I agree with Professor Tong Shijun's statement that "fairness is the priority and efficiency is given consideration". To some extent, Rawls' principle of difference provides a theoretical support for state interventionism. Under the premise of equal freedom and fair opportunity, if the fairness of the results cannot be achieved, the country can only formulate a series of taxation policies and social security policies to ensure compensation for the interests of disadvantaged groups, thereby realizing the fairness of the entire society. According to Liao Shenbai's interpretation, Rawls's view of fairness and justice represents a "democratic, equal and free" distribution system. The transformation into a specific national system can be summarized by the following formula: "free market system + compulsory education + minimum welfare Security and property income tax system". In general, Rawls's concept of fairness and

efficiency is the pursuit of efficiency. It should be carried out on the basis of fairness. Efficiency and fairness should be unified, just like two sides of a coin, indispensable. China's 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China put forward the policy of "giving consideration to efficiency and fairness in both initial distribution and redistribution, and paying more attention to fairness in redistribution". It has a certain commonality with Rawls' view of justice, and both try to pass certain compensation. The mechanism provides relief to socially disadvantaged groups.

4. Criticism of Rawls' View of Justice

Rawls' two principles of justice have positive reference significance for solving the simple relationship between fairness and efficiency, formulating correct economic development and distribution policies, reducing the gap between the rich and the poor in society, and protecting the interests of disadvantaged groups. However, many Western scholars have also put forward different opinions and criticisms on Rawls's view of justice. Among them, Robert Nozick's "Anarchy, State, and Utopia" is the most vivid critique of "A Theory of Justice". Nozick raised his own questions from Rawls's original state to the principle of difference: "Why do individuals in their original state choose a principle that focuses not so much on individuals as they are on groups? Maximum minimum value Isn't the adoption of the standard to make everyone in the original state agree to maximize the status of the worst individual?"^[7] Nozick believes that Rawls's theory of justice is based on nothingness conceived out of thin air. Under the premise of the principle of difference, before the implementation of the principle of difference, it is necessary to create social distributable resources through individuals. Therefore, it is unfair to forcibly distribute the wealth created by individuals through their efforts. In Nozick's view, disadvantaged groups My misfortune is not a kind of unfairness, but is determined by accidental factors, and it is precisely because of society's respect for personal values and the existence of differences that make people feel the satisfaction of self-esteem, thereby reducing jealousy to a minimum. From Nozick's point of view, fairness and efficiency should be the pursuit of efficiency first, fairness will be achieved in the process of pursuing efficiency, and capitalist private ownership and free market economy, private property should be protected and other systems are correct. The state It should be "the country in the weakest sense," and it should not interfere too much in economic, social and personal development, and only act as a night watchman. However, under this view, the gap between the rich and the poor in the capitalist society is becoming

increasingly wide. Exploitation and exploitation have become a matter of course. The lives of the disadvantaged and the people at the bottom cannot be guaranteed. In my opinion, Nozick is the capital. The exploitation of ism provides a legitimate excuse and reason to conceal its true unfair nature. Rawls' view of justice supports a strong view of the state and provides theoretical support for national macro-control to intervene in economic and social development. Only through the means of macro-control can the country apply the principle of difference proposed by Rawls. Practice^[8].

Of course, Rawls's view of justice still has some flaws, such as how to make people as far as possible not to shift their personal interests when formulating justice principles, how can the state of "veil of ignorance" be achieved, and how can they be as far as possible To ensure procedural fairness, how to define which groups should be compensated, how to grasp this degree, and what defects and unreasonable implied under the seemingly comprehensive principles of fairness, fairness in starting point, fairness in procedure, and fairness in results ? These problems all existed with my reading of "A Theory of Justice".

5. Concluding Remarks

The discussion on the relationship between fairness and efficiency has always been the most fundamental starting point for the country to formulate policies. From the "Efficiency Priority and Fairness" proposed by the Third Plenary Session of the 14th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, China will continue to the tenth meeting of the Central Finance and Economics Committee in 2021. The meeting clearly stated that it is necessary to promote common prosperity in stages. It reflects that our country is attaching more and more attention to fair value in the process of rapid economic development. The cake must be bigger, but the distribution must be fair. The economic development must be fast, but also stable. The relationship between fairness and efficiency is unified, and the two cannot be neglected. Regardless of whether it is priority to efficiency or fairness, it is based on the national reality, and the best fits the current situation. Rawls's "A Theory of Justice" provides a more comprehensive and reasonable path for the discussion of the relationship between fairness and efficiency. Only under the guidance of fairness values, efficiency will highlight its significance and role.

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