

Department of Politics and International Relations
Political Theory core lectures
Hilary Term 2003

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Freedom and Equality II

1. Aims of the lecture

- *to take a closer look at freedom*
- *to reprise the argument that in a free society inequality will result*
- *to consider why inequality can be thought to be a bad thing*
- *to consider the nature and consequences of moral and then **political** responses to inequality*

2. Questions about 'freedom'

- is freedom a 'foundational' value?
- where does it fit in structures of values?
- what is the relationship between freedom and political power?

- Under what conditions can we validly say 'a is free'?
 - when a is unconstrained by physical barriers or violence
 - when a is unconstrained by psychological inhibitions and the like
 - when a has the ability to do x
 - when a has the resources to do x

3. Freedom to be or to do...

- a. attribution to agents capacities for
 - envisaging things other than as they are
 - reflexivity
 - pursuit of own goals
- b. metaphysical conditions
2nd order moral conditions
social conditions
..... for these attributions

4. Inequality

- Unequal holdings from an initial position of equality
- Advantage and disadvantage
- Stratification

- **Why is inequality a bad thing?**
 - because an individual's disadvantage is not an upshot of their free choice
 - because individuals' **and their children's** needs are not met

5. A moral response

Treat others with equal concern and respect

6. Some problems

- **Segregation**
- **Exclusion**
- **Oppression**
- **Exploitation**

*These can be seen as **political** outcomes of **moral** action*

7. Politics, freedom and equality

- **Moral principles need political**
 - decision
 - enforcement, or...
 - conditions

References

Alan Carling *Social Division*

Iris Marion Young *Justice and the Politics of Difference*

Ronald Dworkin 'What is equality?'

G A Cohen *Self-Ownership, Freedom and Equality*