

The grounding of democratic ideas: Rawls' public reason and Truth in the public debate

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We live in a plural society. Our political forums encompass different and even contradictory ideas of justice, truth, or the meaning of a good life. Nevertheless, to live in a democracy, we must arrange a frame of public comprehension and agreement. To find the best way to do it is our aim.

"Can democracy and comprehensive doctrines, religious or non-religious, be compatible? And if so, how?"



John Rawls

1. Two contradictory comprehensive views cannot be held as **true** in the public arena without collision. This is likely to foster political collision.
2. The **truth** might act as a license to upthrust problematic statements into public reason.
3. Stating "x" **true** in the public arena commits the holder of that view to provide a sound justification, and that justification might, most certainly, be based on no publicly accessible truths.

We must not talk about truth in the public sphere.

Public Reason's aim is to settle a terrain from which public justification and political talk in a plural society are possible, it is not just rhetoric or persuasion, but to "make judgments and draw inferences based on mutually recognized criteria and evidence; and reach agreement by the free exercise of our powers of judgment."

Rebuttals

"We rely on our answer to the question not because it, is our view, but because it is, as we believe, true"

"It is not possible to compare two values and arrange a practical hierarchy (what value practically prevails) without an architectural idea of the human good"



Joseph Raz

1. It is easy to replace the quarrel about what is the true comprehensive view with what is the most reasonable, **the divisiveness caused by truth might persist**, even without the concept of truth.
2. The appeal to truth **is not sufficient** to upthrust an argument to Public Reason.
3. **There may be convergence** despite not endorsing an argument by the same conclusive processes.



Cohen

Our response

We can not get rid of truth in public debate for the sake of collaboration. **Real collaboration in debate must be arranged around the quest for truth.** The political talk that does not aim truth regarding common good is just theatrical. In order to restate and reiterate the importance of seeking truth in the public realm we do think that philosophers and universities have a protagonist role.