# Democracy AC

### Framework

#### There is no one right moral theory that regulates all agents. The subject is thrown into the world and each individual chooses their own meaning and belief system. Thus moral dilemmas are not solutions in search of answers but rather irresolvable conflicts between contrasting premises. In our natural condition, one can act on their own moral code even if others disagree, as there is no overarching force to impose conduct in a uniform way.

Jean-Paul Sartre, Smart French Dude, Existentialism Is a Humanism, pub 1946, <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/sartre/works/exist/sartre.htm> ///AHS PB

Who, then, can prove that I am the proper person to impose, by my own choice, my conception of man upon mankind? I shall never find any proof whatever; there will be no sign to convince me of it. If a voice speaks to me, it is still I myself who must decide whether the voice is or is not that of an angel. If I regard a certain course of action as good, it is only I who choose to say that it is good and not bad. There is nothing to show that I am Abraham: nevertheless I also am obliged at every instant to perform actions which are examples. Everything happens to every man as though the whole human race had its eyes fixed upon what he is doing and regulated its conduct accordingly. So every man ought to say, “Am I really a man who has the right to act in such a manner that humanity regulates itself by what I do.” If a man does not say that, he is dissembling his anguish. Clearly, the anguish with which we are concerned here is not one that could lead to quietism or inaction. It is anguish pure and simple, of the kind well known to all those who have borne responsibilities. When, for instance, a military leader takes upon himself the responsibility for an attack and sends a number of men to their death, he chooses to do it and at bottom he alone chooses. No doubt under a higher command, but its orders, which are more general, require interpretation by him and upon that interpretation depends the life of ten, fourteen or twenty men. In making the decision, he cannot but feel a certain anguish. All leaders know that anguish. It does not prevent their acting, on the contrary it is the very condition of their action, for the action presupposes that there is a plurality of possibilities, and in choosing one of these, they realize that it has value only because it is chosen. Now it is anguish of that kind which existentialism describes, and moreover, as we shall see, makes explicit through direct responsibility towards other men who are concerned. Far from being a screen which could separate us from action, it is a condition of action itself. And when we speak of “abandonment” – a favorite word of Heidegger – we only mean to say that God does not exist, and that it is necessary to draw the consequences of his absence right to the end. The existentialist is strongly opposed to a certain type of secular moralism which seeks to suppress God at the least possible expense. Towards 1880, when the French professors endeavoured to formulate a secular morality, they said something like this: God is a useless and costly hypothesis, so we will do without it. However, if we are to have morality, a society and a law-abiding world, it is essential that certain values should be taken seriously; they must have an a priori existence ascribed to them. It must be considered obligatory a priori to be honest, not to lie, not to beat one’s wife, to bring up children and so forth; so we are going to do a little work on this subject, which will enable us to show that these values exist all the same, inscribed in an intelligible heaven although, of course, there is no God. In other words – and this is, I believe, the purport of all that we in France call radicalism – nothing will be changed if God does not exist; we shall rediscover the same norms of honesty, progress and humanity, and we shall have disposed of God as an out-of-date hypothesis which will die away quietly of itself. The existentialist, on the contrary, finds it extremely embarrassing that God does not exist, for there disappears with Him all possibility of finding values in an intelligible heaven. There can no longer be any good a priori, since there is no infinite and perfect consciousness to think it. It is nowhere written that “the good” exists, that one must be honest or must not lie, since we are now upon the plane where there are only men. Dostoevsky once wrote: “If God did not exist, everything would be permitted”; and that, for existentialism, is the starting point. Everything is indeed permitted if God does not exist, and man is in consequence forlorn, for he cannot find anything to depend upon either within or outside himself. He discovers forthwith, that he is without excuse. For if indeed existence precedes essence, one will never be able to explain one’s action by reference to a given and specific human nature; in other words, there is no determinism – man is free, man is freedom. Nor, on the other hand, if God does not exist, are we provided with any values or commands that could legitimise our behaviour. Thus we have neither behind us, nor before us in a luminous realm of values, any means of justification or excuse. – We are left alone, without excuse. That is what I mean when I say that man is condemned to be free. Condemned, because he did not create himself, yet is nevertheless at liberty, and from the moment that he is thrown into this world he is responsible for everything he does. The existentialist does not believe in the power of passion. He will never regard a grand passion as a destructive torrent upon which a man is swept into certain actions as by fate, and which, therefore, is an excuse for them. He thinks that man is responsible for his passion. Neither will an existentialist think that a man can find help through some sign being vouchsafed upon earth for his orientation: for he thinks that the man himself interprets the sign as he chooses. He thinks that every man, without any support or help whatever, is condemned at every instant to invent man. As Ponge has written in a very fine article, “Man is the future of man.” That is exactly true. Only, if one took this to mean that the future is laid up in Heaven, that God knows what it is, it would be false, for then it would no longer even be a future. If, however, it means that, whatever man may now appear to be, there is a future to be fashioned, a virgin future that awaits him – then it is a true saying. But in the present one is forsaken. As an example by which you may the better understand this state of abandonment, I will refer to the case of a pupil of mine, who sought me out in the following circumstances. His father was quarrelling with his mother and was also inclined to be a “collaborator”; his elder brother had been killed in the German offensive of 1940 and this young man, with a sentiment somewhat primitive but generous, burned to avenge him. His mother was living alone with him, deeply afflicted by the semi-treason of his father and by the death of her eldest son, and her one consolation was in this young man. But he, at this moment, had the choice between going to England to join the Free French Forces or of staying near his mother and helping her to live. He fully realised that this woman lived only for him and that his disappearance – or perhaps his death – would plunge her into despair. He also realised that, concretely and in fact, every action he performed on his mother’s behalf would be sure of effect in the sense of aiding her to live, whereas anything he did in order to go and fight would be an ambiguous action which might vanish like water into sand and serve no purpose. For instance, to set out for England he would have to wait indefinitely in a Spanish camp on the way through Spain; or, on arriving in England or in Algiers he might be put into an office to fill up forms. Consequently, he found himself confronted by two very different modes of action; the one concrete, immediate, but directed towards only one individual; and the other an action addressed to an end infinitely greater, a national collectivity, but for that very reason ambiguous – and it might be frustrated on the way. At the same time, he was hesitating between two kinds of morality; on the one side the morality of sympathy, of personal devotion and, on the other side, a morality of wider scope but of more debatable validity. He had to choose between those two. What could help him to choose? Could the Christian doctrine? No. Christian doctrine says: Act with charity, love your neighbour, deny yourself for others, choose the way which is hardest, and so forth. But which is the harder road? To whom does one owe the more brotherly love, the patriot or the mother? Which is the more useful aim, the general one of fighting in and for the whole community, or the precise aim of helping one particular person to live? Who can give an answer to that a priori? No one. Nor is it given in any ethical scripture. The Kantian ethic says, Never regard another as a means, but always as an end. Very well; if I remain with my mother, I shall be regarding her as the end and not as a means: but by the same token I am in danger of treating as means those who are fighting on my behalf; and the converse is also true, that if I go to the aid of the combatants I shall be treating them as the end at the risk of treating my mother as a means. If values are uncertain, if they are still too abstract to determine the particular, concrete case under consideration, nothing remains but to trust in our instincts. That is what this young man tried to do; and when I saw him he said, “In the end, it is feeling that counts; the direction in which it is really pushing me is the one I ought to choose. If I feel that I love my mother enough to sacrifice everything else for her – my will to be avenged, all my longings for action and adventure then I stay with her. If, on the contrary, I feel that my love for her is not enough, I go.” But how does one estimate the strength of a feeling? The value of his feeling for his mother was determined precisely by the fact that he was standing by her. I may say that I love a certain friend enough to sacrifice such or such a sum of money for him, but I cannot prove that unless I have done it. I may say, “I love my mother enough to remain with her,” if actually I have remained with her. I can only estimate the strength of this affection if I have performed an action by which it is defined and ratified. But if I then appeal to this affection to justify my action, I find myself drawn into a vicious circle. Moreover, as Gide has very well said, a sentiment which is play-acting and one which is vital are two things that are hardly distinguishable one from another. To decide that I love my mother by staying beside her, and to play a comedy the upshot of which is that I do so – these are nearly the same thing. In other words, feeling is formed by the deeds that one does; therefore I cannot consult it as a guide to action. And that is to say that I can neither seek within myself for an authentic impulse to action, nor can I expect, from some ethic, formulae that will enable me to act. You may say that the youth did, at least, go to a professor to ask for advice. But if you seek counsel – from a priest, for example you have selected that priest; and at bottom you already knew, more or less, what he would advise. In other words, to choose an adviser is nevertheless to commit oneself by that choice. If you are a Christian, you will say, consult a priest; but there are collaborationists, priests who are resisters and priests who wait for the tide to turn: which will you choose? Had this young man chosen a priest of the resistance, or one of the collaboration, he would have decided beforehand the kind of advice he was to receive. Similarly, in coming to me, he knew what advice I should give him, and I had but one reply to make. You are free, therefore choose, that is to say, invent. No rule of general morality can show you what you ought to do: no signs are vouchsafed in this world. The Catholics will reply, “Oh, but they are!” Very well; still, it is I myself, in every case, who have to interpret the signs. While I was imprisoned, I made the acquaintance of a somewhat remarkable man, a Jesuit, who had become a member of that order in the following manner. In his life he had suffered a succession of rather severe setbacks. His father had died when he was a child, leaving him in poverty, and he had been awarded a free scholarship in a religious institution, where he had been made continually to feel that he was accepted for charity’s sake, and, in consequence, he had been denied several of those distinctions and honours which gratify children. Later, about the age of eighteen, he came to grief in a sentimental affair; and finally, at twenty-two – this was a trifle in itself, but it was the last drop that overflowed his cup – he failed in his military examination. This young man, then, could regard himself as a total failure: it was a sign – but a sign of what? He might have taken refuge in bitterness or despair. But he took it – very cleverly for him – as a sign that he was not intended for secular success, and that only the attainments of religion, those of sanctity and of faith, were accessible to him. He interpreted his record as a message from God, and became a member of the Order. Who can doubt but that this decision as to the meaning of the sign was his, and his alone? One could have drawn quite different conclusions from such a series of reverses – as, for example, that he had better become a carpenter or a revolutionary. For the decipherment of the sign, however, he bears the entire responsibility. That is what “abandonment” implies, that we ourselves decide our being. And with this abandonment goes anguish.

#### However, the resolution is a question of politics – normative claims are subject to the problem of self-justification and cannot address action to subjects with conflicting views. Thus democracy must emerge as a deliberative space of mutual tolerance where problems and multiple systems of meaning are reconciled to produce collective action without taking an authoritative stance.

TPB Summarizes Rawls Theory of Justice, Introductory blog about philosophy, gives cited summary of Rawl’s Book Political Liberalism (2016). Democracy and the Unreasonable: Lessons from John Rawls. [online] Available at: https://thephilosopher.blog/democracy-and-the-unreasonable-lessons-from-john-rawls-2ea8a1ec93b1 [Accessed 2 Jan. 2019] ///AHS PB

Rawls argument on Political Liberalism starts with the observation that the cultural environment of modern democratic societies is marked by a diversity of religious, philosophical and moral doctrines. He argues that this diversity is not a surprising fact since the protection of personal freedom that democratic societies facilitate naturally leads over time to an increasing diversity at the level of what he calls “the background culture” i.e., the civil society — the space where we all freely cultivate our personal goals and pursue diverse associations. Highlighting that the background culture of modern democratic societies is marked by diversity is really nothing new or particularly illuminating. This is a fairly common phenomenon we are all quite familiar with in most large westernized cities. What is new, and what Rawls appreciated with incredible insight, is that this mounting diversity introduces a particularly puzzling justificatory problem for democracy. This justificatory problem can be stated as follows: if the diverse beliefs that we all hold are irreconcilable and conflicting, which beliefs can be used to justify the democratic system itself? Put differently, if I am not willing to endorse a political system based on your beliefs — which I disagree with — but you are not willing to accept one based on mine either, is there any common ground left to serve as the basis for public justification that a democracy requires? This problem is known by political philosophers as the paradox of democratic justification. Let me elaborate a bit further so that the paradox comes into sharper focus. Any political system, including a democracy, prescribes the use of state power — through its corresponding system of justice — and sets the rules of the game as to what counts as legitimate coercion. In simple terms, the political decides what is lawful and what is not and empowers the government to use force (through the courts, the police, the military) to coerce you when you step out of line. But in a democracy, by definition, all citizens have an equal share of ultimate political power, meaning that no one is authorized to coerce others without the previous free consent of its fellow citizens. What this means is that for the exercise of political power to be legitimate in a democratic setting, the reasons we would offer one another to justify coercion have to be stated in reciprocal terms everyone can endorse. This justificatory requirement is known as the principle of democratic legitimacy. And here lies the paradox: if democratic freedoms allow for our beliefs to grow so diverse that they seem now irreconcilable, how can we possibly find terms that are acceptable to all? What could those terms be? To put this intuitively, think of democracy as a system justified by principles that intercept in a Venn diagram where each sphere represents a set of different world views. If each sphere becomes more and more distinct — pulling away from other spheres as diversity increases — , the overlapping section of the diagram becomes smaller and smaller and democracy is on thin ice. Divisive political controversies are recurrent in a democratic society, particularly when it grows ever more diverse, but the shared reasons we can appeal to in order to settle the disputes seem to have been vacated by the rise of diversity. In a paradoxical way, it seems as if too much democracy cannibalizes itself. Are we then condemned to a tense and fragile democracy that has lost its shared justifiability and is constantly abused or at risk of destruction by those able to get away with advancing their own case? Is there a way out of this conundrum? Freestanding Politics Since the demanding justificatory requirements of a democracy make it impossible to ground its laws on beliefs that some citizens won’t find acceptable, we need to toss away the old idea that politics derives from a particular comprehensive doctrine. As Rawls explains, “beginning with Greek thought the dominant tradition seems to have been that there is but one reasonable and rational conception of the good. The aim of political philosophy — always viewed as part of moral philosophy, together with theology and metaphysics — was then to determine its nature and content.” But as he immediately counters “the question the dominant tradition has tried to answer has no answer: no comprehensive doctrine is appropriate as a political conception for a constitutional regime”. Under a world of extreme diversity, we can no longer favor a particular conception of how we should all live and which goals we should all pursue without trumping over the legitimate liberty of others. The old paradigm of politics where institutions and laws were justifiable to the extent that they effectively promoted a certain vision of the good can no longer be applied in a world where we fundamentally disagree about what counts as the good. Rawls insists then that in this new diverse world which democracy has facilitated, the justification of political power cannot come from religion, philosophical schools nor shared moral traditions. If the justification for certain laws (which always entail a coercive use of government’s power) comes from religion, it will violate the principle of democratic justification, since not all citizens are expected to accept religious reasons as the source of laws that will ultimately curtail their liberty. And the same goes for philosophical and moral traditions (including even secular ones): if for instance the justification of certain laws is derived from an enlightened idea of human beings as sharing universal reason — as Kant did — or from utilitarian calculus of the greater good — as Mill recommended — , religious members of society can in turn object to what they see as an unacceptable secular imposition. If our priced religious, moral and philosophical beliefs cannot serve as the basis for public justification of the political in a plural society, then how do we proceed? Rawls key first step for a solution lies in the introduction of the idea of a “freestanding” politics, that is, a politics that is not derived nor sustained by any of our conflicting comprehensive doctrines. To start grasping the distinction between a freestanding conception of the political and our regular comprehensive doctrines (containing our religious, moral and philosophical beliefs), Rawls asks us to think of the principles of justice “as designed to form the social world in which our character and our conception of ourselves as persons, as well as our comprehensive views and their conceptions of the good, are first acquired.” In other words, he asks us to think about the political as the framework under which we pursue our diverse set of goals and personal ends. The framework is freestanding in the sense that it has primacy over whatever goods we pursue within its boundaries, and consequently has to stand alone even before any religious, moral or philosophical ideas are introduced. To bring this point home, Rawls asks us to think about what happens when any of our cherished conceptions of the good changes either over time or abruptly. When these changes in religious, moral and philosophical beliefs happen we often go as far as to say that we are no longer the same person. But despite these changes, our political self and institutional identity and rights remain intact. It is precisely in this sense that the political is freestanding. As Rawls puts it beautifully, “on the road to Damascus Saul of Tarsus becomes Paul the Apostle. Yet such a conversion implies no change in public or institutional identity.” Summing up, a freestanding conception of political justice stands apart from our beliefs in the sense that it constitutes the institutional framework that enables us to become autonomous citizens with the capacity to pursue our own ends. But even if we accept Rawls’ proposal that political philosophy needs to present itself in its own freestanding terms and apart from our loaded religious, moral and philosophical beliefs, the question of how do we exactly achieve this remains. To flesh out how a freestanding political conception of justice would actually work, Rawls introduces what is probably his most powerful idea: the concept of the reasonable. Reasonableness and Neutrality In the politics of a modern democracy, with its abundant diversity of world-views, what citizens regard as the full truth (the complete scope of their beliefs) is contested to the point of being irreconcilable. If politics is then really aiming at being freestanding as to avoid taking sides, it needs to stand outside the disputed realm of truth. Any claim of truthfulness would immediately put the political in competition with other beliefs and would insert it back into a particular philosophical, religious or moral tradition. So instead of making any truth claims, Rawls’ political liberalism refers to its political conception of justice as reasonable. As Rawls defines it, for an idea or for someone to be reasonable it has to exhibit two main characteristics: 1) it has to respect the principle of democratic justification — meaning that it has to propose terms of social cooperation that others as free and equal might also endorse — and 2) it has to recognize what Rawls calls “the burdens of judgement” — the fact that other citizens in their honest search for truth can arrive at different religious, moral and philosophical beliefs. When you put these two elements together, you can say that a reasonable politics or a reasonable person is one that offers terms of cooperation that are reciprocal and that refrains from using political power to favor their own worldview or to repress that of other reasonable fellows. Essentially, a reasonable person recognizes that the full truth is divisive and unlikely to be attained, and as such accepts the limits that this fact places on what can be brought into the political. This requirement of the political virtue of reasonableness so defined allows Rawls to arrive at one of the central theses of his political liberalism: in a diverse world like ours, for a conception of justice to be reasonable, it has to be neutral amongst irreconcilable religious, moral and philosophical doctrines. By neutral Rawls means that the political should not express preferences nor promote any particular set of beliefs nor try to sway individuals into embracing a specific worldview. A politics that sides with a particular comprehensive doctrine — be it religious or secular — is unreasonable and hence illegitimate.

#### Thus, the standard is consistency with Reasonable Democracy: This entails that political actions promote a system where all agents are treated with mutual respect, and moral problems are reconciled through democratic institutions without regressing to one specific theory.

#### Prefer on K solvency: We endorse a democratic subject who is universal, ideal, and equal.

#### [A] Abstraction demands that in the middle of our concrete differences we see ourselves in the other and the other in ourselves by viewing each other as connected. Absent this we see the world solely through dividing lines, such as black v White, which constitute the root cause of oppression in trying to securitize boundaries. This also controls the root cause to coalition building which link turns the K, by viewing people as fundamentally the same we allow bonding and the destruction of hierarchies through mutual action to occur.

#### [B] Even if ideal-theory is bad, the alternatives are far worse because they don’t rely on fixed principles and devolve into relativism at a particular space and time—you can’t measure something with a ruler constantly changing length, which means we need a standard to hold people to.

#### [C] Ideal systems mandate that individuals leave the personal interests behind when they approach situations, this key to any successful movements, which require that we only strive for the general good

#### [D] Only ideal theory allows us to make progress on issues of oppression. By basing our conceptions of ethics on what should be, we 1) have set goals to work for and 2) can produce a obligation to work towards them instead of being endlessly stuck describing the present without solutions.

#### [E] Abstraction demands that we evaluate scenarios from a wholistic rather than particular point of view. This key in being able to accurately describe all parts of the system instead of just the ones we are close too. Having full knowledge is a side constraint on determining the right solution.

#### [F] Ideal theory is a side constraint on non ideal theory. Before we can understand specific instances and actions within the world, we must first understand the broader structures which give those context and provide the laws that regulate them.

### Offense

#### I affirm that Military aid to Authoritarian regimes violates the procedural rules of Reasonable Democracy:

#### When a system of government fails to be reasonable and impartial to moral belief, it becomes authoritarian as it tries to impose one system of meaning above all others. Authoritarianism is the greatest bad under the framework.

Gerald Gaus, The Order of Public Reason: A Theory of Freedom and Morality in a Diverse and Bounded World, Cambridge University Press, 2011 ///AHS PB

Perhaps I am a bit of a hedgehog too, for this book is motivated by one central concern: can the authority of social morality be reconciled with our status as free and equal moral persons in a world characterized by deep and pervasive yet reasonable disagreements about the standards by which to evaluate the justifiability of claims to moral authority? My worry, which I try to show should be yours too, is that claims of social morality may be simply authoritarian. One demands that others must do as he instructs because he has access to the moral truth; another admits that she has no access to any moral truth, but nevertheless employs morality as a way to express (or, to use an older language, emote) her own view of what others must do. But what if reasonable moral persons deny the purported truth or are unimpressed by the expressive act? And what if, in spite of that denial, one goes ahead and makes demands blames, punishes, is indignant, and so on at their refusal to comply? In this case, I shall argue, one is just being a small-scale authoritarian. And authoritarians do not respect the moral equality of their fellows. A social order that is structured by a nonauthoritarian social morality is a free moral order: a moral order that is endorsed by the reasons of all, in which all have reasons of their own, based on their own ideas of what is important and valuable, to endorse the authority of social morality. Such a social and moral order is what I shall call “an order of public reason” – it is endorsed by the reasons of all the public. Only if we achieve an order of public reason can we share a cooperative social order on terms of moral freedom and equality. Only in an order of public reason is our morality truly a joint product of the reasons of all rather than a mode of oppression by which some invoke the idea of morality to rule the lives of others.

#### And this produces an obligation to not provide aid. By being complicit in the operation of authoritarian regimes we legitimize their ability to enforce certain kinds of meaning and undermine our own position as a reasonable democracy.

#### Further military aid to unethical regimes is a proactive bad as: A) it is only justified through a few particular belief systems that hold compromising principles to achieve a good end is just, meaning it is not impartial B) it attempts to impose American ways of living upon other areas in the world, which fails to meet the threshold of tolerance.