

The Debacle of the Social Pact: Finding a New Theoretical Framework for Egalitarian Justice

Authors : Abosede Priscilla Ipadeola

Abstract : The quest for egalitarian justice requires a suitable theoretical foundation that can address the problem of marginalization and subjugation arising from various forms of oppression, such as sexism, racism, classism, and others. Many thinkers and societies have appealed to contractarianism, a theory that has been widely regarded as a doctrine of egalitarianism by some political theorists for about five centuries. Despite its numerous criticisms, the social contract still enjoys a prominent status as a key theory for egalitarian justice. However, Pateman and Mills have contended that the contractarian approach legitimizes gender and racial inequalities by excluding and marginalizing women and people of color from the original agreement. Therefore, the social contract is incapable of generating or fostering equality. This study proposes postcontractarianism, which is a viable alternative to the social contract. Postcontractarianism argues that the basis for egalitarianism cannot be grounded on agreement but rather on understanding. Postcontractarianism draws on Jorge Nef's idea of mutual vulnerability and Obiri (an African theory of cosmology) to argue for the imperative of social equality.

Keywords : postcontractarianism, obiri, mutual vulnerability, egalitarianism, the social contract

Conference Title : ICFPP 2024 : International Conference on Feminism and Political Philosophy

Conference Location : London, United Kingdom

Conference Dates : November 25-26, 2024