

although we should claim the
domain of information as ours,
we should, as social scientists,
not transgress into
the domain of decisions. . . .
we have no competence on questions of what
should be done, and therefore no special right
to influence. . . .
As social scientists we have no other expertise
than information to offer.”

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“I cannot forbear adding to these reasonings an observation, which may, perhaps, be found of some importance. In every system of morality, which I have hitherto met with,
I have always remark’d, that the author proceeds for some time in the ordinary way of reasoning and establishes the being of a God,
or makes observations concerning human affairs;
when of a sudden I am surpriz’d to find,
that instead of the usual copulations of propositions,
is and *is not*,
I meet with no proposition that is not connected with an
ought, or an *ought not*.

This change is imperceptible;
but is, however, of the last consequence.

For as this *ought*, or *ought not*,
expresses some new relation or affirmation,
'tis necessary that it shou’d be observ’d and explain’d;
and at the same time that a reason should be given,
for what seems altogether inconceivable,
how this new relation can be a deduction from others,
which are entirely different from it.”

[David Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*, 1740] [T468]

‘We tend nowadays to associate democracy with tolerance.

We also tend to imagine that democracies are by nature lenient in punishment and reluctant to take the lives of their own citizens.

If we have made this assumption, the conduct of the classical Athenian democracy will sometimes surprise us. There does not seem to have been any limit to the community’s rights over the property and lives of the individuals who composed it.’

(Dover, 1974:288-9).

“The way in which these men most often discuss their mobility, and the structure of inequality within which it occurred, is one which in fact concentrates on the same basic elements, that is, features of market and work situations, that are also the focus of the theoretical approach that we have adopted – as distinct, for example, from one which would take as central the idea of status hierarchy.”

“And thus what we would maintain is that the analytical basis on which we have worked . . ., expressed in practice chiefly through our class schema, can in turn be provided with more than a purely theoretical validation: it can also be seen as comprising ‘second order’ constructs that have an obvious affinity with – indeed represent a systematisation and development of – certain of the ‘first order’ constructs through which the subjects of our research try themselves to make sense of the course of their social lives.”

“What I have been arguing ... is that the political agent cannot rely on law-governed regularities in his activities.

But just those premises, which entail that conclusion, entail that the political scientist is in no better position in this respect than the political agent.

The political scientist may claim to know more (quantitatively, as it were) than many political agents; but his knowledge is not of a different kind, and there seems no reason to believe that the chances that he will be able to apply the inductively grounded maxims which he derives from his studies in the course of political action successfully are any higher than they are for any other political agent.”

C Taylor

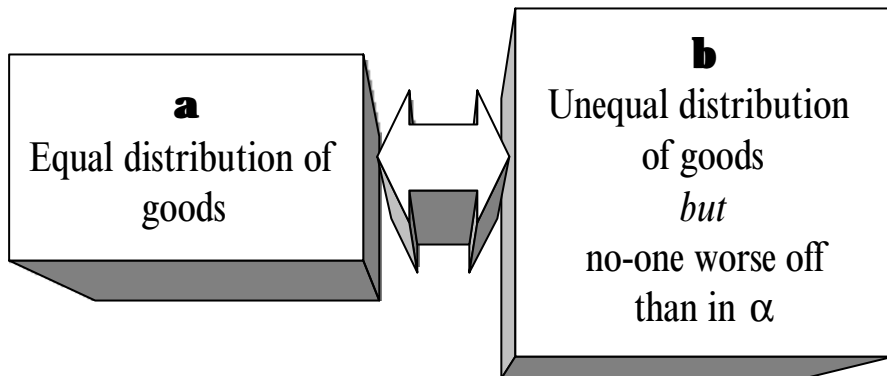
feminist historians Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English (1989) . . . report a study conducted in 1902 [showing that, of those ‘mentally ill’ a higher proportion of women than men were well educated] ‘proving’ that higher education was driving women crazy. From the safe distance of almost a century, the faulty logic and obvious ideological base of this ‘scientific’ interpretation is relatively easy to identify. In historical context, however, statements and ‘findings’ such as these were simply accepted as orthodox medical knowledge. . . .

**The central issues about
power in relation to knowledge
were [then] not considered.
Who generated this ‘expert’ knowledge.
Whose interests did it serve?**

(Kondrat, 1995:417)

'Go and sit
in the lounges of the luxury
hotels
and on the doorsteps of the
flophouses;
sit on the Gold Coast settees
and on the slum shake-
downs;
sit in Orchestra Hall
and in the Star and Garter
Burlesk.
In short, gentlemen
go get the seat of your pants
dirty
in real research.'

Robert Park, Chicago 1920s



All social primary goods
– liberty and opportunity,
income and wealth, and
the bases of self-respect –
are to be distributed
equally
unless
an unequal distribution
of any or all of these
goods
is to the advantage
of the least favored.

The serious difficulty is how to define the least fortunate group. Here it seems impossible to avoid a certain arbitrariness.

One possibility is to choose a particular social position, say that of the unskilled worker, and then to count as the least advantaged all those with the average income and wealth of this group, or less. The expectation of the lowest representative man is defined as the average taken over this whole class.

Another alternative is a definition solely in terms of relative income and wealth with no reference to social position. Thus all persons with less than half of the median income and wealth may be taken as the least advantaged segment. This definition depends only upon the lower half of the distribution and has the merit of focusing attention on the social distance between those who have least and the average citizen. Surely this gap is an essential feature of the situation of the less favored members of society.

I suppose that either of these definitions, or some combination of them, will serve well enough.