
Defining Justice

As human beings, we employ acts of justice in our daily lives, like when you allow the elderly man to take your seat on the bus, or punish your son for misbehaving. Yet, when asked to define the term “justice”, it is challenging.

The course textbook, *Pursuing Justice* (Hurlbert, 2011), states there are at least four meanings or understandings of “justice”. Nonetheless, I believe that it is possible to have one main definition of justice, moral righteousness, to cover all people, places, and situations in Canada.

Firstly, moral righteousness, though nonreciprocal, encompasses desert, fairness, and equality. It demonstrates fairness and equality, as it aims to make society a better place, as “a morally righteous person may work harder to achieve equality and fairness in broader society” (Hurlbert & Mulvale, 2011, p. 17). Though it may seem contradictory, desert, can also be moral righteousness. Punishing a wrongdoer for a misdeed to benefit the good of society, as opposed to reciprocation the misdeed, is a morally righteous approach to desert. Secondly, it seriously considers the perspectives of the minority and admitting that the disadvantaged must receive privileges in order to rectify the inequality. This is the thought process used by lawmakers according to the article, *Sentencing reform is critical for youth in the justice system* (Levin & Lavy, 2018). Here, lawmakers are looking at reforming the sentencing laws as it pertains to life sentences for children. They acknowledge that although one must be held accountable for one’s actions, the court must also take into consideration factors, including age, possible abuse, and their limited understanding of risk and consequence, when determining a child’s sentence.

Most importantly, it can be seen in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Rooted in moral righteousness, “The Charter of Rights protects those basic rights and freedoms of all Canadians” (Heritage, 2017). They include the right to a fair trial and Aboriginal people’s rights. It covers all people, places, and situations in Canada. Thus, moral righteousness can be the main definition of justice.

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