

THE IMPORTANCE OF INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM AND THE ROLE OF SOCIETY IN LIMITATION OF PERSONAL FREEDOM

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Annotation

In particular, this article covers the following: tension between **individual freedom** and **societal control**; maintaining both personal liberty and social order; Public Safety and Order, Protection of Rights, and Proportionality; free speech and hate speech laws.

Keywords: Social philosophy, Individuals, freedom, Cybersecurity specialists, public safety, social order.

Annotatsiya

Xususan, ushbu maqola quyidagilarni qamrab oladi: shaxs erkinligi va jamiyat nazorati o'rtasidagi ziddiyat; shaxsiy erkinlik va ijtimoiy tartibni saqlash; Jamoat xavfsizligi va tartibi, huquqlarni himoya qilish va mutanosiblik; so'z erkinligi va nafrat nutqi qonunlari.

Kalit so'zlar: Ijtimoiy falsafa, Shaxslar, erkinlik, Kiberxavfsizlik bo'yicha mutaxassislar, jamoat xavfsizligi, ijtimoiy tartib.

Аннотация

В статье рассматриваются следующие вопросы: противоречие между индивидуальной свободой и общественным контролем; поддержание как личной свободы, так и общественного порядка; общественная безопасность и порядок, защита прав и принцип соразмерности; свобода слова и законы о разжигании ненависти.

Ключевые слова: социальная философия, индивиды, свобода, специалисты по кибербезопасности, общественная безопасность, общественный порядок.

The conflict between societal control and individual freedom is one of the main issues in social philosophy. Every civilization must determine how much freedom people should have and whether it is appropriate for the state or society to restrict that freedom. Social and political philosophers like Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Isaiah Berlin, and John Stuart Mill have all

extensively discussed this topic. A key dilemma at its core is: How much of ourselves must we sacrifice in order to coexist? In reality, "freedom" is a negotiated border that changes as society changes, despite the fact that we frequently perceive it as an absolute.

Individuals should enjoy maximum freedom to think, speak, and act, provided their actions do not harm others. Freedom is essential for personal development, creativity, and human dignity. John Stuart Mill argues that individual freedom is essential for human happiness, progress, and truth, but it can be limited only when a person's actions harm others.

Excessive control over individuals suppresses originality and critical thinking, which are vital for social progress. Therefore, freedom of expression, belief, and personal choice must be protected in any democratic society [3]. But nobody lives in a vacuum. Since individual acts frequently have an impact on other members of society, complete freedom would result in chaos and conflict. Mill's most important idea is the Harm Principle: Society or the government may restrict an individual's freedom only to prevent harm to others—not to protect the person from themselves. This means: You are free to think, speak, and act as you wish, as long as your actions do not harm other people. This perspective holds that a person should have complete control over their own body and thoughts. As long as your actions don't violate someone else's rights or safety, you should be allowed to think, dress, and behave however you like.

When a person's behaviors clearly and demonstrably endanger the group or other people, society is usually justified in restricting that person's freedom. Usually, these explanations can be divided into three groups: Public Safety and Order, Protection of Rights, and Proportionality. Public Safety and Order is the state in which a society is safe from danger, violence, and disorder, so that people can live together peacefully and safely according to established rules and laws. Moreover, in philosophy and political theory, public safety is sometimes employed to rationalize laws that limit certain individual liberties, including speed restrictions, firearm regulations, or emergency lockdowns, as these actions seek to avert harm to others.

In social philosophy, public safety and order are seen as legitimate reasons for limiting individual freedom. Thinkers like Thomas Hobbes argued that without public order, life would become chaotic and insecure, making strong authority necessary [1]. Later philosophers, such as John Locke and John Stuart Mill, accepted restrictions on freedom only when they are necessary to protect others from harm [2].

Furthermore, Protection of rights refers to the protecting of individuals' fundamental freedoms and entitlements so they can live with dignity, equality, and security within society. These rights may be civil, political, social, economic, or cultural, and their protection is a core responsibility of the state and society. Rights such as the right to life, liberty, equality, freedom of expression, religion, and property are fundamental for personal development and social justice. Without protection, rights become meaningless, as persons may be susceptible to

exploitation, discrimination, or abuse. Protecting rights guarantees that every person is treated fairly and has equal chances under the law.

Proportionality is a principle in law, ethics, and social philosophy which holds that any action taken by the state—especially actions that limit individual rights or freedoms—must be appropriate, necessary, and not excessive in relation to the objective being pursued. The principle of proportionality requires that the severity of a restriction should match the importance of the goal it seeks to achieve. It prevents the state from using extreme or harsh measures when milder ones would be sufficient.

Society or the state is justified in limiting personal freedom when individual actions threaten public safety, social order, or the rights of others. Jean-Jacques Rousseau argued that individuals accept certain restrictions on freedom through a social contract in order to live peacefully within a community. By obeying laws that reflect the general will, individuals ultimately protect their own freedom.

Restrictions are also justified to protect vulnerable groups and ensure equality. However, as warned by Isaiah Berlin, excessive state control can lead to the loss of negative liberty—freedom from interference. Therefore, limitations on freedom must be lawful, proportionate, and aimed at the common good [5].

The debate between free speech and hate speech laws clearly illustrates the conflict between individual liberty and social responsibility. Free speech is essential for democracy, allowing citizens to criticize authority and exchange ideas freely [3]. Suppressing speech can prevent truth from emerging and weaken democratic institutions.

However, hate speech—speech that incites violence, discrimination, or hatred against specific groups—can cause serious social harm. Such speech threatens equality and social harmony, and may justify legal restrictions to protect human dignity and prevent violence [5].

The challenge lies in ensuring that hate speech laws do not become instruments of political suppression. A balance must be maintained where free expression is protected while harmful speech that endangers others is reasonably restricted.

The link between individual freedom and society requires a delicate balance. Individuals should have extensive freedom to construct their own lives, but this freedom cannot be endless. Society and the state are justified in restricting personal liberty when it causes harm or threatens social justice and peace. A just society is one that respects individual rights while properly regulating them for the public interest.

References

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