

## **PHILOSOPHY OF RATIONAL EGOISM AS ETHICAL FOUNDATION OF POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES**

The current political environment is increasingly characterized by a deep-seated crisis within collectivist governance frameworks [2, p. 15]. Traditionally, political theory and public administration have frequently emphasized the abstract notion of the «common good», a utilitarian perspective that inherently places the individual's interests secondary to those of the state or the majority [4, p. 80]. Nevertheless, the unavoidable growth of state interventionism necessitates the urgent establishment of a strong, unwavering ethical basis for safeguarding individual rights. A significant paradigm shift is underway: a fundamental move from the conventional inquiry «What benefits society?» to the foundational question «What is the individual's right?» [1, p. 27]. This shift demands an ethical framework that perceives human beings not as instruments for achieving collective objectives, but as ends in themselves, where the defense of an individual's rational interests serves as the primary measure of legitimacy for any political ideology [3, p. 115].

To establish a viable political ideology, it is imperative to first define its underlying moral premises. The fundamental premise of rational egoism, as systematically developed in Ayn Rand's Objectivism, is the moral principle that a human being is an end in themselves, not a means to the ends of others [1, p. 27]. This ethics categorically rejects the morality of altruism, which dictates that self-sacrifice is the highest virtue, while simultaneously condemning «predatory egoism», which justifies sacrificing others for one's own benefit. Instead, rational egoism advocates for a society of independent equals who interact through voluntary exchange, respecting each individual's absolute right to exist for their own sake without serving as sacrificial animals for the collective [4, p. 82]. To understand why this egoism is termed «rational», its epistemological root must be examined. Unlike animals, which rely on automatic instincts to survive, man's primary and basic tool of survival is his mind – specifically, his capacity for reason [1, p. 22]. Because human beings must independently discover and apply the knowledge required to sustain their lives, rationality is elevated to the highest moral virtue. Consequently, the pursuit of self-interest in this philosophical framework is not a license to act on blind desires; rather, it requires a rigorous, uncompromising commitment to objective reality and long-term rational judgment [3, p. 214].

This reliance on reason creates a clear demarcation between rational egoism and irrational hedonism. Hedonist doctrines posit that pleasure is the standard of morality – that one should act simply to maximize immediate gratification. Objectivism identifies this as a dangerous inversion of cause and effect. Happiness or pleasure is the psychological reward of achieving one's rational values, not the standard by which those values are chosen [1, p. 30]. Acting on irrational whims, emotional impulses, or the desire to exploit others inevitably contradicts the requirements of human survival and leads to self-destruction [3, p. 220]. Therefore, a truly rational egoist operates strictly on the «trader principle», exchanging value for value – both in material and spiritual realms – without ever resorting to coercion, exploitation, or fraud [2, p. 19].

When the ethical theory of rational egoism is projected onto the political sphere, it forms the logical bedrock for the concept of inalienable human rights. The transition from moral philosophy to political ideology rests on a fundamental premise: if an individual has the moral right to exist for their own sake, they inherently possess the right to act on their own rational judgment, free from external coercion [3, p. 351]. In a social context, this ethical imperative translates directly into the recognition of the fundamental rights to life, liberty, property, and the pursuit of happiness. Within Objectivist political theory, the right to life is recognized as the source of all other rights, while the right to property is its essential implementation; a human being cannot sustain their life or act independently without the right to keep and control the products of their labor [1, p. 94].

The most crucial political derivative of this ethical framework is the absolute rejection of the initiation of physical force in social relations. Because reason is man's basic means of survival, and coercion paralyzes the rational mind, a moral society must banish the initiation of physical violence from human interactions [1, p. 108]. This principle ensures that individuals deal with one another exclusively through voluntary consent. Consequently, a legitimate government derives its sole moral justification not from enforcing a collective «public good» or sacrificing individuals for the majority, but strictly from the retaliatory use of force to protect individual rights against violation by criminals or foreign aggressors [2, p. 331].

In the economic and political dimension, the logical culmination of the ethics of rational egoism is *laissez-faire* capitalism. Objectivist philosophy argues that capitalism is not merely an efficient economic mechanism, but the only profoundly moral social system, as it is the only system fully compatible with a rational being's nature [2, p. 19]. It is entirely based on the recognition of individual rights – most notably property rights – which are the practical implementation of the right to life. In a truly capitalist society, human relationships are governed by the principle of voluntary trade, where individuals exchange value for value by mutual consent and to mutual benefit, strictly forbidding the initiation of physical force [1, p. 34]. Consequently, the pursuit of profit, productive work, and voluntary economic cooperation are recognized not as necessary evils, but as profound moral virtues that reflect an individual's commitment to rationality and self-sustenance [4, p. 89].

Within this paradigm, the concept of the state is radically redefined and strictly limited to the role of a «night watchman». A legitimate government possesses only three specific, clearly defined functions, all dedicated exclusively to the protection of individual rights: the police, to protect citizens from domestic criminals; the armed forces, to protect against foreign invaders; and the court system, to peacefully resolve disputes and enforce voluntary contracts according to objective laws [3, p. 364]. Therefore, any form of state intervention in the economy, forced redistribution of wealth, or arbitrary regulation of private enterprise is viewed as an immoral violation of property rights and individual autonomy [2, p. 33]. By stripping the state of its power to initiate force or coercion in the economic sphere, rational egoism completely separates the economy from the state – just as it separates religion from the state – ensuring absolute freedom for individual action and association [2, p. 331].

In conclusion, the philosophy of rational egoism provides a cohesive and uncompromising ethical justification for individual liberty and the capitalist system. By fundamentally rejecting the morality of altruism – which demands human self-sacrifice as a primary duty – rational egoism strips collectivism, statism, and totalitarianism of

their unearned moral high ground [1, p. 34]. It establishes the critical premise that a truly free and prosperous society cannot be sustained if it operates on the belief that individuals are the property of the state or the subordinate servants of the majority. Therefore, rational egoism serves not merely as a personal moral guideline or an abstract ethical code, but as a rigorous, objective methodological base for classical liberalism, libertarianism, and modern right-wing political theories [4, p. 95]. It provides the necessary philosophical armor to effectively oppose statism in all its forms, logically proving that individual rights are not a conditional gift from society, but an absolute necessity derived from the requirements of human survival [3, p. 377]. Ultimately, understanding and acknowledging this ethical underpinning is essential for a comprehensive analysis of the ideological structures that defend a free, capitalist society against the continually encroaching and coercive demands of the collective.

#### **REFERENCES**

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