



The Good Life and the Good State

A Neo-Aristotelian Theory of Government

By Katharina Nieswandt

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Draws inspiration from Aristotle's philosophy and argues that the good life is only achievable within a state, updating the ancient concept of a common good for contemporary, pluralistic societies.

There is no good human life outside of a state, and the good state enables us to live well together – so says Constitutivism, the theory developed in this book. Reinvigorating Aristotelian ideas, the author asks in what sense citizens of modern, populous and pluralistic societies share a common good.

Readership

The target audience are scholars and advanced students from the disciplines of philosophy, political science and law.

Contents

Preface; My good against the common good?; Modern political philosophy; The state as a private alliance of egoists; Privatists reject the concept of political community; The state as a collective performance; Collectivists lack a coherent concept of the common good; From ancient city to modern nation state; The instrumentalist mind; Was Aristotle a Tory?; Central questions for my inquiry; What is a common good?; Constitutivism in outline; Spouses are separate agents with a common good; The personal good within public institutions; Personal and public good are constitutive of one another; What is a state? Why have one?; Fusing ancient with modern tradition; Personal goods and identities presuppose social complexity; Social complexity presupposes enforceable rules; Why not anarchy?; Is the good life political?; The good state; Functional design; Reasons other than outcomes; Histories as reasons; Identities as reasons; Political reasoning; Healthcare as an illustration; A note on civil disobedience; Constitutivism and its alternatives; Apologia; Liberalism and perfectionism; Natural law theory and virtue theory; Critical theory; Conclusion

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Katharina Nieswandt is Associate Professor of Philosophy at Concordia University in Montreal. She specialises in metaethics and political theory.

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