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Constructivism versus Realism There has been a lot of debates surrounding realism and constructive criticism in the world today. Arguments have been put forth for, and against the topic of constructive criticism on realism, each side providing compelling facts. In this paper, I will outline all the facts and arguments for both theories. Finally, I will select and defend my choice between the two theories based on the arguments and evidence discussed.

Introduction

Is constructive criticism on realism is justifiable or not? This paper seeks provide an answer to this question, in addition to providing evidence to, support its stand. It will argue the fact that constructivist criticism concerning realism is justified. However, this is largely dependent on the alternative procedural decision making process offered by the constructivists. To illustrate this, arguments as well as practical problems that call for constructivist criticism on realism will be analyzed.

A common ground between constructivists and realists arises on the question of whether moral concepts possess values of truth. The two groups acknowledge the existence of truth-apt in moral concepts. The difference, however, surfaces about the role of moral concepts as well as what do renders them true. As realists would have it, moral concepts could have values of truth because they illustrate normative entities or facts that exist independently of those concepts themselves. Metaethical constructivists, on the other hand, oppose the fact that all that moral concepts are meant to elaborate the reality. Constructivism may be understood as a different view that the function of a normative concept uses to refer schematically to the solving a practical problem. Contrary to traditional analysis, constructivists' account of a concept is aimed at working out solutions to problems.

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The approaches to moral concepts differ between constructivists and realists in terms of nature. Constructivists have centered their criticism mainly revolving on the radical knowledge that defines the reality as a function of moral concepts. In addition to that, there exist other reproaches against realist views. One of the main questions asked is which phenomenon describes the decision making process better—realism or constructivism based on moral values. The second would be whether one view of the reproaches against another are acceptable. Last but not least, which would be explained further, would be which theory would be more credible and under what conditions.

Constructivist criticisms on realism.

Realist views, on one hand, and constructivists' views, on the other, on moral concepts bring about much condemnation towards realists. The main problem associated with the sentence mentioned above is the query—what defines moral judgments as true and what qualifies certain moral standards as the right ones. Realists respond to the question by saying moral standards are right if they go hand in hand with the present reality. Other than that they do not have a further general answer (Shafer-Landau 2003: 45). The following view can be argued by stating that basic realism fails to respond to the doubtful challenge as it simply assumes the presence of impartial standards of morality without offering a rational basis for them. As a result, the realists also fail to account for the power of moral responsibilities and why exactly are we supposed to do what morality expects us to. Realists also cannot base their explanation on constructive processes when answering the question on why some moral standards are correct. The realists must decide on the morals they choose that they favor are just correct and not in a

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matter of them being selected or created by anyone but because they are simply correct (Shaffer –Landau 2003: 46). This means that the realist approach leaves the moral agents out of the decision making process. It obviously takes for granted that there are other values that ought to be pursued their own sake and that we have to follow the objective ethics even if they contradict with what we believe in.

Secondly, realism tends to leave the moral agents without independence in their own issues hence another way to criticize realists arises. If there really exists moral objective, then there is no responsibility carried by people for creating their ends as they will be chosen for or imposed on them. This may also represent an unjustified constraint on our freedom and autonomy. In other words, one could also say that realism displaces ones ends with more objective ones, which in turn, takes away the ability and freedom to fix what is really right and important. (Shafer-Landau 2003: 44). The constructivists' assumptions that all laws and standards require lawmakers is how realists could approach the first criticism. Since moral standards are normative, we can point out and state that their command comes from heavenly command, from reason or perfect versions of us. As realists, we can also come up and say that moral standards do not require lawmakers at all as laws are not only normative but objectively true. Otherwise, if one wants to deny realism and advocate for constructivism, then it would only be right to do so according to all types of laws. Arguing that laws require lawmakers is only reasonable, when anyone discards realism in every field. Such that all laws concerning logic, mathematics, physics and chemistry are products of construction (Shafer-Landau 2003: 45). In arguing the second disagreement about moral dependence, realists could base their answer by comparing them to the <https://assignbuster.com/international-studies-in-business-essay-samples-4/>

nature of laws such that the facts of chemistry and geology are not assumed to be made by our own minds. Yet it is not said that geologists and chemists are deprived of chances to make independent decisions in their own jurisdictions. On the other hand, realists allow their moral agents to autonomously select their own ends. Insistently, realists, however, say that such a means of selection is not a determinant of those ends. Though ends are not self-certifying, they instead are quantifiable by referring them to independent truths. Just like realists about mathematics or physics, realists of ethics will deny that autonomy is compromised by the presence of such truths. This is because it is not a restriction on autonomy that one cannot make two and two equal five (Shafer-Landau 2003: 44).

In my view, the counter-arguments put forth by realists have succeeded in criticizing constructivist concepts. This is because the emphasis of such counter-arguments are mainly on the perception that certain laws, for instance the laws of physics, naturally exist and as such are to be adhered to. A weakness exists in the realist perception of constructivists when it comes to the reasons for, as well as the possibility of moral standards being like logic or the laws of physics. From this point, a mutual weakness for the two criticisms emerge; the bind of moral laws as the regulation for moral actions of people, as well as the self-sufficiency of moral agents. Moral judgments may be assessed the background of the social world structured context by some values. This structure could serve as the moral knowledge which appear as a habitation. Unfortunately, this structural pattern leave behind many inconsistencies for the similarity of ethics and physical laws to be believable. The arrival of the effects of law breaching brings about the difference. An example is falling down, which is inevitable if we do not

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conform to the laws of physics. In contrast, failure to conform to moral standards do not bring inevitable consequences. Despite the objectivity of moral standards breaching, it may not evoke reactions from people, even if they are aware of it. Some people may condemn it while others may support its breach under certain circumstances.

The question of whether realism still holds the natural method of choosing correct moral standards with no reference to social bond, flawless procedure where the standards are selected, or some model observer. The answer to this question forms the third constructive criticism. Realists in their theory do not provide answers to many questions. They defend this view by proving that the constructivist procedures are not necessary. In Moral realism, the explanatory resources are enough to do the job (Shafer-Landau 2003: 47). This is in contrast to constructivists' view, where a model observer and a social bind is required to elaborate morality status.

The argument used by realists in this case looks for “partners in crime”. They attempt to illustrate the inability in showing the accuracy of moral standards by constructivists themselves. Realists ask whether we can have a defensible idea of a moral observer through which we can reach believable and determinate moral judgments. Constructivists must provide a better answer to this question than realists' explanation if they are to be considered. Otherwise, simplicity of the realist theory seems like a more reasonable choice compared to constructivists' procedures.

From the assessment of strengths and weaknesses of both theories, I would support the realism theory as it is simpler than constructivism. The special procedure used by constructivists in identifying moral standards does not prove self-evident to everyone, in my opinion. In addition, the question about <https://assignbuster.com/international-studies-in-business-essay-samples-4/>

motivation aforementioned comes up again. Abiding by moral standards that chosen by some model observer raises questions. In as much as constructivists presume that the moral standards are the laws of self-sufficiency, the question why average people abide by those rules in everyday life also surfaces. Is there a truth that constructivist theory, through the extra step in respect of the procedure, offer more advantage compared to the realist version?

As aforementioned, the fourth criticism relies on the way realists and constructivists view the functioning of moral concepts. This is the most interesting of all criticisms in my opinion. Normative concepts are not predominantly the names of facts, components of facts, or objects that people come across in the world according to constructivism. They name solutions of problems, which are named to point them out as substances for practical thought. The precise conception of an idea guides to its accurate application. If this happens, the result is truth. However, what determines the precision of a concept is whether it offers solutions, and not its description of some piece of outside reality. This difference between the theories, in my understanding, gives constructivism a plus. When considering normativity, realists purport that normative truth does outclass entailment from within the practical point of view. Constructivists, however, deny this concept as they are convinced the normative truth does not outclass entailment from within the practical point of view. In short, constructivists imply that there is no normative truth independent of the practical point of view. When this fact is analyzed, there is a need in adding the extra step to the selecting of moral standards. As such, the realism's simplicity advantage over constructivism is lost in this case. There is a counterfactual necessity of <https://assignbuster.com/international-studies-in-business-essay-samples-4/>

value on the attitudes of appreciating creatures according to constructivists, and it better illustrates the motivation to act. It is more plausible to impose on ourselves, action- guiding principles that are selected, as opposed to assuming that motivation that come from objective criteria that is mind independent. Realists can point out, only reliant connections between reasons for action and moral obligations, as well as the abstract procedure that constructivists offer, itself is doubtful.

Conclusion

From this paper, it can be concluded that constructivist criticisms of realism are justified. Realism has failed in indicating where the moral standards derive their authority and why a person should adhere to them. The questions concerning the self-sufficiency of moral agents who in realist view should stick to the rules as they are complex and normative in themselves is also ignored. In addition, realism does not explain the motivation of moral agents. The similarity with the laws of physics is not reason enough to disapprove that the extra procedure given by constructivists offer gives them a plus over realist theory. The simplicity of realism, however, still provides a reasonable argument in comparison to the theoretical procedure that constructivists offer. One can find this procedure as far from everyday practical problem solving conditions as the realist normative moral standards. However, if one would find the description of the procedure acceptable, then realism would lose its simplicity advantage. As a result, constructivist criticism will be justified in this aspect.

Reference

Shafer-Landau, R. “ The Constructivist Challenge” in “ Moral Realism: A Defense”, Chapter 2, Oxford University Press: 2003.

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