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Argument

Although Rahman in his argument has focused on the collective responsibility of the society to help the poor but ignored their independent responsibility. Sabeel Rahman in his article “Losing and Gaining Public Goods” emphasize on the significance of public goods and broadening grants to the wider population. The author provides a critique of Trump's administration that proposed to dismantle net neutrality and reduce funding for Medicaid and housing. I don't agree with Rahman that it is the collective responsibility of the state and taxpayers to invest in public health and welfare. This idea puts the burden on those who are working hard but encourages the ones who are idle.

I disagree with the author's idea that access to employment and salaries makes one responsible for supporting the poor. Rahman claims, “rather than getting that new iPhone that they just love and they want to go spend hundreds of dollars on, maybe they should invest that in health care.” (Rahman). I don’t agree with his viewpoint because it promotes the concept of charities and donations. This will encourage the poor to rely on grants from people and state. I think that the purpose of social security is not to promote unemployment. The comparison drawn between rich and poor is also weak because people who buy commodities holds financial power as a result of their work. The unemployed on the other hand cannot pay for necessities because they rely on grants. It is difficult to decide if unemployment is a personal choice or result of socio-economic injustice. Many people choose unemployment for receiving the benefits of social security. This weakens the argument of Rahman because wealthy or employed are not responsible for paying for the poor who preferred idleness. The burden of supporting the poor also affects one’s position of fulfilling his duties towards self or family.

Elain Kamarck responds to Rahman's argument by providing an in-depth analysis of public goods and their reality in society. I agree with Kamarck that extension of healthcare benefits is illogic because such grants have played a negative part by encouraging idleness, unemployment, and poverty. I think that the extension of grants doesn't provide a long-term solution. Rahman ignores the fact that Americans had been individualists and they relied on themselves. It is still everyone's responsibility to work for themselves and their families. Americans have believed in this ideology since the beginning, and the majority still follows it. According to this philosophy, it is not the duty of employed to take care of the unemployed. They are only responsible for themselves and their families. Karmarck rejects the argument of Rahman by saying, "progressive or liberal policy that ignores this strain in the public consciousness will always be vulnerable to the argument that government that takes from those who work and gives to those who do not is illegitimate” (Kamarck). It is not appropriate to deprive the people of their own money that they acquired through consistent efforts and handwork.

Taking part of incomes form employed in the form of tax and giving it to the unemployed as funds are unfair. This indicates that the state is supporting the people who choose leisure over work rather than people who prefer hard work. This argument can also claim that people are rewarded for idleness, not for work. The author emphasized on providing equal access to the necessities irrespective to one’s choices. I disagree with Rahman’s claim, “Obamacare was the most significant expansion of the safety net since the War on Poverty” (Rahman). No statistics reveals that Obamacare had been effective in ending or reducing poverty. The elimination of poverty cannot be attained until the poor get a permitted source of income. Grants provide only timely relief that is short-term. The author failed to build relevance between Obamacare and poverty by ignoring the real facts or figures. He also neglects the long-term implications of grants.

Rahman mentions, “In economic terms, public goods are defined as being non-rivalries and non-excludable meaning that one person’s consumption does not preclude another’s” (Rahman). In his claim, he failed to consider the fact that deserving are paid on the expense of other citizens who include the middle-class. Taxes on wealthy influence them differently from middle-class. The author did not address the inconvenience caused to middle-income groups due to heavy taxes. All employed are not rich, and they are earning to fulfill their responsibilities, but the imposition of heavy taxes undermines their ability to take better care of themselves. In defining public good, the author did not identify that provision of grants is made at the expense of others. He has emphasized on government provisions that are dependent on taxes collected from the public.

I believe that the better approach of supporting deserving citizens is by adopting a long-term solution. Grants and aids can only provide temporary relief, but people lack jobs, housing and food will continue to suffer until they get employment. The state must focus on providing jobs to the poor that will allow them to take care of themselves. The programs like the Civilian Conservation Corps created by Roosevelt offered work to many people. Roosevelt refused the idea of health insurance and accepted only unemployment insurance and old-age insurance. Rahman's argument exhibits limitations because he fails to propose realistic solutions for supporting the poor. The policy must encourage people to work by providing employment. The purpose of Roosevelt’s social security net was to promote the ideology of American individualism and hard work.

Rahman makes a valid point that "industrialization generated tremendous new wealth and opportunities, but the upheaval also deepened poverty" (Rahman). However, I don't like thing that only aids can be used as practical tools for ending poverty. The only way of improving the conditions of the poor is by providing them work. The expansion of social security must focus on the provision of work. It is difficult to prove that Medicaid has improved participation rate of poor in the labor force. Facts indicate that the New Deal programs were ineffective in controlling poverty. Obamacare has acted much in the same way as it provided food and health but nothing more. Rahman ignores that, “anti-poverty policy is already tied to work. What is needed, then, aren’t more sticks, but more demand-side policies to provide enough decent jobs” (Bernstein and Spielberg). It is difficult to prove who’s capable of working and who’s not. Many people are unable to work due to the many obstacles to the right policy must consider long-term goals. I also believe that the provision of better wages to the poor is better than aids or related programs.

I think that an effective approach for addressing the issue of poverty is by adopting the idea of Roosevelt’s sustainable public goods. It is inappropriate to take taxes from the hardworking middle-class and spend it on aids and programs like Obamacare. The concept of sustainable public goods stresses on providing unemployment benefits only to the people who lack the ability to work. The purpose of public goods should be to encourage work that relies on the creation of jobs. The money spent on aids and programs can be used for creating jobs and offering better work opportunities. The state must make rational decisions for the allocation of aids because that comes from taxes of the citizens.

Work Cited

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