

Rawls and Habermas: Reason, Pluralism, and the Claims of Political Philosophy

Todd Hedrick

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Rawls and Habermas: Reason, Pluralism, and the Claims of Political Philosophy Todd Hedrick This book offers a comprehensive evaluation of the two preeminent post-WWII political philosophers, John Rawls and Jürgen Habermas. Both men question how we can be free and autonomous under coercive law and how we might collectively use our reason to justify exercises of political power. In pluralistic modern democracies, citizens cannot be expected to agree about social norms on the basis of common allegiance to comprehensive metaphysical or religious doctrines concerning persons or society, and both philosophers thus engage fundamental questions about how a normatively binding framework for the public use of reason might be possible and justifiable. Hedrick explores the notion of reasonableness underwriting Rawls's political liberalism and the theory of communicative rationality that sustains Habermas's procedural conception of the democratic constitutional state. His book challenges the Rawlsianism prevalent in the Anglo-American world today while defending Habermas's often poorly understood theory as a superior alternative.



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