

THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE COLLECTIVE

Communitarianism is the 'balancing of the individual's rights against those of the community.' In the US Constitution we are guaranteed rights that we were born with: life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness. That last one, as you know, was to be 'property.' Property is not just land. YOU are your own property. That was an element of fundamental freedom in the original draft of the Declaration of Independence.

So how can you 'balance' those rights with those of the community? The community has no rights under the US Constitution. Individuals have rights and responsibilities, but the community as a whole, what is that? The collective? Whenever you 'balance' or subsume, or subordinate, or consensus-ize the individuals' rights you'll get something different from what we are guaranteed under the Constitution.

Here's an example.

Let's take two glasses and set them on a table.

One glass is full of water. Let's call it a Republic.

The other glass is full of milk. Let's call it a Communitarian state.

Now we'll get a glass pitcher and set it on the table.

Let's balance the water with the milk by pouring them both into the pitcher.

What do you have?

It's not water anymore, is it?

It's milk. Watery milk. But milk. Not water.

The Third Way.

Communitarianism. Balancing your individual rights with the 'rights' of the community. This is being pitched to you as the new enlightened form of political discourse. You are 'selfish' if you insist on your individual rights and freedoms. This is the justification for Agenda 21-Sustainable Development. For the good of the planet. For everyone's security. For your health. To protect your children. To limit workplace violence. To stop bullying.

All of these things are laudable, but somehow they always result in more restrictive laws that affect everyone. They criminalize everyone. In many towns the Civil Code has been criminalized. What does that mean? If you don't mow your lawn it's a misdemeanor.

Will your child have a criminal record if he calls another kid a 'queer?' Will you be held responsible if your employee shoots someone and you knew he was upset over a breakup with his wife? Will your 15 year old daughter be strip-searched at the airport? Will you lose custody of your 10 year old because he is obese? Will you be evicted from your apartment because you smoked on your balcony in violation of a local ordinance? Will you be taxed for driving 15 miles to work instead of riding your bike? Will you be fined for watering your vegetable garden? Will your Smart Meter be used to tell advertisers what to sell you? Will your Smart vehicle with remote shut off capability be shut down by someone in your state capitol while you're driving?

Will your neighbor report you to the Community Oriented Policing Unit of your local police department because you seemed to be acting strangely? Will you be denied the right to use the water in your well? Will you be required to pay triple your original electricity rates because your town has decided to go into the power business (Community Aggregate Power Generation)? Will you be required to donate acres of your ranchland for county open space before you can put a house on it? Will you pay years of property tax without receiving any services for it because Redevelopment debt has crippled your city? Will you be required to do your mandatory volunteering before you can get your child into Little League? Will you be accused of not caring about the planet if you question Sustainable Development?

Your rights have been balanced.