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## **Sen on human rights**

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The article discusses the idea of ‘human rights’ and the Amartya Sen’s reflections on that topic. By assumption, Sen does not present a catalogue of human rights, yet he claims that the language of human rights can be used to talk about the so-called human capabilities (the main concept of Sen’s theory). The aporia that exists in the current paradigm of human rights consists in the fact that it has been based on a few (liberal) foundations, while, on the other hand, it has been extended into a broad system of individual rights/entitlements conflicting with their foundation. Each of those systems of rights entails a specific vision of social life. The liberal tradition postulates the existence of a minimal state, which guards freedom, life and property. In the leftist tradition, in contrast, there is postulated the existence of a welfare state, which satisfies people’s ever growing needs, based on an extensive bureaucracy and high taxes – under the patronage of the idea of social justice. Those social visions cannot be reconciled – they lead to conflicts. In this text, I present the problem of inconsistency and tension within the ‘human rights’, contrasting Amartya Sen’s theory with classical liberalism of John Locke. I claim that assessment of the contemporary ‘human rights’ theory should depend on whether a given theory is capable of proper determination and – at least to some extent – solving the problem of incoherence and tensions present in the Western ‘human rights’ paradigm. It seems that Sen’s conception cannot meet that challenge.