

Abstract in English :

Liberalism is one of the most prevailing political thoughts in modern society. It is often mentioned in connection with other social systems such as democracy and market economy. But what exactly are the main characteristics of liberalism? How has liberal thought developed in modern society? The main concern in this thesis is to describe the characters of modern liberal thought from the perspective of social contract theory and of some liberal thinkers who emphasize the self-interested (or rational) individuals. Social contract theory is the hypothetical equipment for thinking about individuality (basic feature of modernity) and social order. The purpose of the first part of the thesis is to describe how self-interested individuals agree with the establishment of a sovereign. At another part, by mentioning some liberal thinkers, I will discuss the possible spectrum of the rules of government in liberal thought. The spectrum could be explained as the result of different assumption of self-interested individuals and of legitimacy in society. In the whole thesis, I will focus on two elements in society: particularity and generality. Particularity means particular interests (self-interested behavior) of individuals and generality means general interests (publicness). In comparison of particularity and generality, I will describe the basic idea of liberal thought and seek the possibility of liberalism.