NAME: OBIAKOR CHRISTIAN

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INTRODUCTION

**John Rawls** (born February 21, 1921, U.S.—died November 24, 2002), He is was an American political and ethical philosopher, best known for his defense of egalitarian liberalism in his major work, A theory of justice (1971). He is widely considered the most important political philosopher of the 20th century. He was the child of William Lee Rawls and Anna Abell Stump .Immediately after graduating from Preston University he was enlisted in the war, after the war he continued his post graduate studies where he earned his ph. D degree, as at this period there was a persistent tension between the NATO and the Soviet Union which lasted till 1990.

There was an ongoing challenge of thoughts such as fascism that threatened western political institution which had no commitment to and respect for the idea of the rights, human or constitutional, of individuals.

These challenges are the wellspring of the Rawls s political thinking. He believed that they were not effectively met by utilitarianism, the dominant political and moral thought in Anglo-American world, Rawls said he wanted to work on the concept of justice and provide a systematic alternative to utilitarianism.

JOHN RAWLS FIRST PRINCIPLE: EQUAL BASIC LIBERTIES

Here he claims that every individual has two fundamental capacities or powers. Thus each individual has over their lives:

1. An interest on being able to formulate and live according to a conception of good

2. An interest in exercising one s sense of justice and being motivated by it, providing others do so as well.

The notion of the two powers is also said to include the idea that in a democratic society citizens are both equal and free in having these powers at some such level all the citizens are on the same footing.

Rawls uses the idea of the two powers and corresponding interest of citizen to ground the elaboration of the basic liberties that each citizen is to have equally. He identifies which liberties should be among the constitutional rights by considering what he calls fundamental two cases.that is :

a**. the conception of good intention**; where he offers that liberty of conscience and freedom of personal association , the argument here is that people would not be able tolive accordingly to their own determinate conception of the good, without liberty of conscience or freedom of personal association.

b**. the sense of justice interest**; Here he offers freedom of political speech as an example. the main argument here is that people could not live cooperatively with fellow citizens, on terms of equality and mutual respect under a democratic political institution without having freedom of speech.

In Rawl first principle of justice each person has equal claim to a fully adequate scheme of equal basic rights and liberties to guarantee their fair value.

THE SECOND PRINCIPAL: DISTRIBUTIVE ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Rawls began with the fact that people have different natural endowments and are born to grow up in different social circumstances thus no one can be said to be responsible forthese factors in there own case. This may be seen as main sources of inequality.

Rawls argument here sets out from the point where he develops the idea of democratic equalityof opportunity as –

* The taking of remedial steps, conscientiously, to reduce the initial difference in advantage between individuals from the starting point of life, by state-supported primary and secondary education which would be a good example.

Rawls believes than an absolute equality of opportunity with respect to the starting point can never be achieved thus Rawls also introduced further ideas to complement equality of opportunity

* The principal of every one s continual benefit, which in turn constrained with the idea that there are several mutual improving options available.
* We must choose the action which must reduce the resultany inequality in outcomes between the top most and bottom most groups.

The objective of these three step process is to reduce, ideally the gap between the persons by taking account of both starting points and end results.

Rawls assumes that everyone starts from a hypothetical point of strict equality among people. This 'zero points' doesn't describe the way things actually are, rather it is merely to orient a clarify ones thinking. Rawls also assumes that as long as the benefit of the least well of the group could possibly be higher, so can the other groups be higher, right on up to the goal point. This assumption identifies a zone or context in which the repeated procedure (satisfy the standard of mutual benefit or efficiency and then reduce differences in outcome between the topmost and the bottom-most group) can operate, with full effect, to achieve its intended end.

These assumptions complete the argument of Rawls second principle of justice. The principle of distributive economic justice. Now it remains for social and economic inequalities to satisfy two conditions: first, they are to be attached to positions and offices open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity; and second, they are to be to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged members of society.

THE ORIGINAL POSITION

The original position is an arena for deliberation and decision about principles of justice; its various features are meant to frame and constrain the debate about such principles. 'The idea of the original position is to set up a fair procedure so that any principles agreed to will be just.

Rawls envisions two main roles for the original position. The first role is to serve as a screening device for the candidate principles, that is, principles taken from a shortlist of main, historically available theories of justice, such as Plato's republic, various versions of utilitarianism etc. Here the features of the original position serve as a checklist against which the candidate principles are to be measured and to be assessed. These screening processes involves requirements which Rawls refers to as the ‘publicity requirement’ where selected principles are clear and understandable to all with nothing hidden from view and everything is upfront and accounted for, the ‘unanimity requirement’ where the selected principle is looked at from a variety of perspectives and is acceptable to persons in each of those perspectives.

The second role of the original position is to rank the remaining qualified candidate principles after screening has been accomplished. In other to perform this role, the parties rely on the balance of reasons to decide which of the remaining eligible candidates is best .Although if they can do so unanimously then there should be, no doubt about that particular ranking.

SUMMARIZE RAWLS IDEA OF JUSTICE

In Rawl first principle of justice each person has equal claim to a fully adequate scheme of equal basic rights and liberties to guarantee their fair value. The first principle of equal basic liberties is embodied in the political constitution, it affirms that all citizens should have familiar basic rights and liberties such as the liberty of conscience and freedom of association, freedom of speech and liberty of the person, the right to vote, to hold office, to be treated in accordance with the rule of law etc. The first principle accords these rights and liberties to all citizens equally.

Rawls second principle which is that of distributive economic justice argue on how not everyone is born equal and how the gap has to be reduced , and how it sets out from the point where he develops the idea of democratic equality of opportunity . Also how he believes than an absolute equality of opportunity with respect to the starting point can never be achieved thus introducing further ideas to complement equality of opportunity .

The third which is the original position his conception of citizens and society are still very abstract. The original position aims to move from these abstract conceptions to determine the principle of social justice. The original position constructs a method of reasoning that models abstract ideas about justice and focuses their power together onto the choice of principle. The original position posits that real citizens will choose representatives (veil of ignorance) that will represent the majority of individuals in society in coming to an agreement on which principles of justice should order the political institution.His views was that using the original position provides just and fair principles that will order the society.