

1. John Rawls's first principle was on Equal Basic Liberties and on this, he claimed that for every individual citizen there are two fundamental capacities or powers and, correspondingly, two higher-order interests in the realization of those capacities. (i) an interest in being able to formulate and live according to some particular conception of the good and (ii) an interest in exercising one's sense of justice and being motivated by it, providing others to do so as well. Let me amplify this second point a bit: each person has, over that person's entire life, an interest in living cooperatively with fellow citizens, on terms of mutual respect and reciprocal benefit, under a unified and stable scheme of basic political and economic institutions organized by a shared principles of justice which each citizen can affirm. The notion of two powers of the citizen is understood to include the idea that in a democratic society citizens are both equal and free. Rawls uses this idea of the two powers and the corresponding interests of the citizen to ground his elaboration of the concrete basic liberties that each citizen is to have equally.

2. The Second Principle which is Distributive Economic Justice, Rawls begins with the fact that people have different natural endowments and are born into and grow up in different social circumstances. No one can be said to be responsible for these factors in their own case. Nonetheless, factors such as natural endowment and initial social circumstances are not negligible; they powerfully affect a person's life prospects, advantageously for some and disadvantageously for others. Indeed, they may be the main sources of inequality between people.

3. Rawls's contraction method of justification is very complex. One feature that is often emphasized and that Rawls continued to include in his later writings- is that the parties to the contracts are placed (in what he calls the 'original position') behind a thick veil of ignorance. Other features are important as well. The parties understand that they are deciding about principles of justice (principles for distributing certain primary goods -such as liberties, opportunities, income, and wealth-to individuals) and they will have to live, for their entire lives, under the principle they have selected. Accordingly, they would want the principles selected to be clear and intelligible to all, with nothing hidden from view and everything up front and accounted for.

4. Rawls holds that justice as fairness is the most egalitarian, and also the most plausible, interpretation of these fundamental concepts of liberalism. He also argues that justice as fairness provides a superior understanding of justice to that of the dominant tradition in modern political thought.