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QUESTION

Read the chapter on Rawls (John Rawls) in the Political Thinker, and write a short not on;

1. John Rawls First Principal
2. The Second principal: Distributive Economic Justice
3. The Original Position
4. Summarize John Rawls Idea of Justice

**The first Principal**

Rawls intended his Theory of Justice to provide a convincing account of basic rights and liberties, and of their priority. But he did not successfully achieve this objective until about 10 years later. Rawls delivered two lectures one in 1980 Dewey and another in 1982 in tanner. In these lectures Rawls claims that for every individual citizen there are two fundamental capacities or powers and, correspondingly, two higher-order interests in the realization of these capacities. Thus, each person has over that person’s life

1. An interest in being able to formulate and live according to some particular conception of the good and;
2. An interest in exercising ones sense of justice and being motivated by it providing others to do so as well.

The notion of two powers of the citizens is understood to include the idea that in a democratic society citizens are both equal and free. Rawl uses the idea of the citizen to ground his elaboration of the concrete basic liberties and that each citizen is to hold equally. He identifies which liberties, which way of acting or of not being injured- should be among the basic constitutional rights. The basic liberties constitute, in effect a determined and well defined set. For the most part liberties are rather standard civil rights; some liberties fall under neither case directly but are necessary for the proper and adequate exercise of those that default. For example the due process to such thing as fair trial or the right to bodily integrity are justified as necessary to the full flourishing of the liberties justified in the two fundamental cases. For Rawls, then all the liberties just specified should be counted among the basic constitutional rights.

**The Second Principal**

Unlike the case with his first principle, Rawls thought thst the account and formulation of his second principal of justice as found in A Theory of Justice (1971) was substantially sound. Rawl believed that people have different natural endowment they are born into and grow up into different social circumstances. However factors such as natural endowment and initial social circumstance are non-negligible they affect a person’s life and for some it might be an advantage while others a disadvantage. Indeed, they may be the main source of inequality between people.

Rawls argument sets out from the fact that he develops the idea of democratic equality of opportunity conceived as;

1. Taking of remedial steps, conscientiously to reduce the initial differential in advantages that accrues to individuals, arbitrarily, from their stating point in life.
2. The principle of everyone’s continual benefit
3. We should choose that option which most reduces the resultant inequality in outcomes between the topmost and bottom-most groups.

The objective of this three step process is to reduce, the gap between persons by taking account of both starting and end point result. We can get Rawls final specification of the different principle by; first satisfy the standard of mutual benefit and then reduce differences in outcome between topmost and bottommost groups. The second assumption is to identify a zone or context in which the procedure can operate, with full effect, to achieve its end. These two assumptions complete the account of Rawls argument for his second principal of justice, the principle of distributing economic justice.

**THE ORIGINAL POSITON**

Rawls original position is an arena for deliberation and decision about principles of justice; the original position is to set up a fair procedure so that any principal agreed will be just. Rawl envisions two main roles for the original position. The first role is to serve as a screening device for the candidate principle that is principle taken from a short list of main, historically available theories of justice such as Plato’s republic, various versions of utilitarianism and so on.

The second main role of the original position, to rank the remaining eligible candidate after preliminary screening has been accomplished. Rawls view is that utilitarian and others, especially in the setting afforded by the original position, would allow the sacrifice or the serious weaking of some people at least.

**RAWLS IDEA OF JUSTICE**

Rawls theory of justice revolves around the adaptation of two fundamental principles of justice which would, in turn, guarantee a just and morally acceptable society. The first principle guarantees the right of each person to have the most extensive basic liberty compatible with the liberty of others. The second principle states that social and economic positions are to be a) to everyone’s advantage and b) open to all.

A key problem to Rawls is to show how such principles would be universally adopted and here the work borders on general ethical issues. He introduces a theoretical “veil of ignorance” in which all the “players” in the social game would be placed in a situation which is called the “original position”. Having only a general knowledge of the facts of “life and society”, each player is to abide based on their moral obligation. By denying the players any specific information about themselves it forces them to adopt a generalized point of view that bears a strong resemblance to the moral point of view. Rawls proposes that the most reasonable principles of justice for a society are those that individuals would themselves agree to behind the “veil of ignorance”, in circumstances in which each is represented as a moral person, endowed with the basic moral powers. What this position supports is that while each person has different ends and goals, different backgrounds and talents, each ought to have a fair chance to develop his or her talents and to pursue those goals – fair equality for opportunity. It is not a race or contest where the talented or gifted prevail; it should be complete cooperation among all so that there may be reasonable life for all.