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**John Rawls First Principle**

In Rawls first principle he claims that for every individual citizen there are two fundamental powers and correspondingly two higher order interests in the realization of those powers. However, 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 one’s sense of justice and being motivated by it, providing others do so as well.

Rawls therefore uses the idea of the two powers and corresponding interests of the citizen to ground his elaboration of the core basic liberties that each citizen is to have equally. He identifies which liberty’s way of acting or of not being injured should be among the basic constitutional rights or among the weightiest such rights, by considering what he calls ‘two fundamental cases’.

**The Second Principle: Distributive Economic Justice**

Different from the first principle of Rawls, in his second principle of distributive economic justice he thought that the account and formulation of his second principle of justice was substantial sound. Rawls accounts that people have different natural endowments they are born into and grow up in different social circumstances. He claims that no one can be made responsible for these factors in their own cases. However, factors such as natural endowment and initial social circumstances are not negligible, rather they powerfully affect a person’s life prospects, which have an advantage on some and a disadvantage on others.

Theories of distributive justice seek to specify what is meant by a just distribution of goods among members of society. Liberal theories of justice consider the process or outcome of individuals’ free actions to be just except as this depends on factors, in the form of personal characteristics, which are considered to be morally arbitrary. Equality of resources defines a distribution to be just if everyone has the same effective resources, i.e if for some given amount of work each person could obtain the same amount of food. It adjusts for ability and land holdings but not for preferences. It is achieved by taxes and subsidies on income.

**The Ordinary Position.**

Rawls has a very complex method of justification. There are many features on these justifications. One feature is that Rawls has continued to include in his later writings that the parties to the contract are placed (i.e the original position) behind a thick veil of ignorance. The parties understand that they are deciding about principles of justice and that they will have to live for their entire lives under the principles they selected.

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

There are however two roles in the original position. The first role is to serve as a screening device for the candidate principles, i.e principles taken from a short list of main and historical theories of justice such as Plato’s republic etc. The second role has to do with ranking, i.e ranking the remaining eligible candidates after the preliminary screening has been accomplished. For the second role of ranking to be performed, the parties rely on the balance of reasons to decide which of the remaining eligible candidate is best and if this can be done unanimously there will be no real doubt about that particular ranking.

**Summary of John Rawls Idea of Justice**

In John Rawls theory of Justice, he observed that a necessary condition of justice in any society is that each individual should be the equal bearer of certain rights that cannot be disregarded under any circumstances, even if doing so would advance the general welfare of a majority. He further states that this condition cannot be met by utilitarianism, because that ethical theory would counter forms of government in which the greater satisfaction of a majority is achieved by neglecting the rights and interests of a minority. Therefore, utilitarianism is unsatisfactory as a theory of justice.

According to Rawls, a just society is one whose major political, social and economic institutions, taken together, satisfy some particular principles. These principles are;

1. each individual has an equal claim to a scheme of basic rights and liberties i.e the maximum consistent with the same scheme for all.
2. social and economic inequalities are permissible only if they confer the greatest benefit to the least advantaged members of the society and if they are attached to positions and offices open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity.

Rawls also claims that justice requires an approximately egalitarian redistribution of social and economic goods. Rawls tries to accommodate his theory of justice to what he takes to be the important fact that reasonable people disagree deeply about the nature of morality and the good life and will continue to do so in any nontyrannical society that respects freedom of speech.