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INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND DIPLOMACY

300 LEVEL

IRD 320

QUESTION

Read the Chapter on Rawls (Full Name is John Rawls) in the Political Thinkers, edited by David Boucher and Paul Kelly (e-book sent on whatsapp) and write short explanatory notes on:

1. John Rawl's First Principle;

2. The Second Principle: Distributive Economic Justice;

3. The Original Position;

4. Summarize John Rawls Idea of Justice

ANSWER

John Rawls was said to be born in Baltimore, Maryland, on 21 February 1921. He grew up in Baltimore, where his father was a lawyer. He attended secondary school in Connecticut (the Kent School) and then entered Princeton University in 1939 as an undergraduate.

John rawl’s first principle was the principle of equal basic liberties, rawls intended that his theory of justice would provide a 'convincing amount of basic rights and liberties and of their priority, but it was said that he admitted he did not successfully achieve this objective until ten years or so later. it was notified that rawl also claimed that for every citizen there are two fundamental power, he also said that each person has over the person’s entire life (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 do so as well. The understanding point of these two powers of a citizen is clarified to include the idea that in a democratic society citizens are both equal and free. In this case each person is conceived as having the two powers at a sufficient level to be able to be a fully contributing member of society over that person's entire adult life. Rawls uses the 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. He points out which liberties has ways of acting or should be among the basic constitutional rights, or among the weightiest such rights, by considering what he calls 'two fundamental cases'. Although these liberties that are part of a means of achieving the first interest “the conception of the good interest” constitute the first of these cases and those that are a part of a means of achieving the second (the sense of justice interest) constitute the second of the 'two fundamental cases'. Moreover, Rawls offers liberty of conscience and freedom of personal association as examples of liberties justified under the first interest (the conception of the good interest). The argument here is that people would not be able to have or live according to their own particular determinate conception of good, whatever it was, and in particular would not be able to revise any such conception, without liberty of conscience or freedom of personal association. The main argument here, then, is simply that people could not live cooperatively with fellow citizens, on terms of equality and mutual respect, under a unified and stable scheme of democratic political institutions without having a practice of free political speech in place there. And the same could be said about liberty of political association and assembly. In essence rawl gave a clear understanding of what rights and liberty are in concerning with citizens.

Rawls second principle was that of distributive economic justice, unlike the first principle, Rawls thought that the account and formulation of his second principle of justice, is as found in A Theory of Justice (1971), was substantially sound. Rawls's thought begins with the fact that people have different natural endowments which they 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. Nevertheless, factors such as natural endowment and initial social circumstance 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 amongst people. Rawls's argument is said to have set out from this point. The main idea here is to try to make people somewhat less unequal at the point where they actually enter into adult life, as citizens and as workers. And to make sure that everyone there, so far as possible, has the basic capabilities required to be contributing members of society. Hence, Rawls introduces a further idea to complement equality of opportunity and complete the line of argument. Rawls calls this new idea the ‘difference principle’; it adds two further remedial steps to the equation; it adds the principle of everyone's continual benefit, which in turn is constrained by the idea that, where there are several mutually improving (that is, efficient) options available, and we should choose that option which most reduces the resultant inequality in outcomes (as measured in terms of average income over a five-year period, say) between the topmost and bottom-most groups. The object of this three-step process is to reduce, ideally to minimize, the gap between persons by taking account of both starting points and end results. It remains now only to state that principle succinctly: 'Social and economic inequalities are 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, Rawls's contract method of justification is very complex and is also considered to have many features. One of these features is that the parties should remove sources of bias and irrelevancy from their deliberations. There are said to be other features. The original position is told to be 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 visualized two main roles for the original position. In its first role the original position is to serve as a screening device for the candidate principles, that is, principles taken from a short list of main, historically available theories of justice-such as Plato's republic, various versions of utilitarianism, and so on. Here the features of the original position serve as a checklist against which the candidate principles are to be measured and to be assessed. Therefore, the second main role of the original position is to rank the remaining eligible candidates, after the preliminary screening has been accomplished. In performing this second role, of ranking, the parties rely on the balance of reasons (determined in light of assessments that could be reached in the original position) to decide which of the remaining eligible candidates is best. If they can do so unanimously, there should be no real doubt about that particular ranking. Rawls's straightforward arguments for each of his two principles would fare well in the original position construct; the arguments could be formulated and would hold up, under the constraints identified there. I have stressed, in this discussion, his arguments for the second principle, in particular. The two reasons for this is to achieve economy and simplicity of presentation and to emphasize how the screening function of the original position would proceed. The outcomes of this principles, which the maximum argument ranges over, are in fact generated by the main competing principles under review-by justice as fairness (Rawls's own theory), on the one hand, and by its strongest competitor, the principle of maximizing average utility, on the other. It is these particular outcomes, sets of characteristic outcomes as determined by these competing principles, which the maximum argument then chooses between. This lecture emphasized on the two principles of justice and the arguments for them and how they were preferred to alternative theories.

John Rawls idea of justice, Justice as fairness, Rawls used this term as a shorthand way of describing the acceptable to all perspectives and impartial procedures of the original position, suggesting that, whatever result came from using these procedures, it would be judged by all to have been a fairly decided one. Utilitarianism, this is the theory that made maximizing the overall or aggregate well-being of all human beings into the supreme principle of ethics and politics. One variant of this theory suggested that we should try to maximize, not the sum total of human welfare, but the average of such well-being, but it was said that rawls never agreed with both versions. . Rawls rejected both versions. Rawls thought that neither version took seriously the idea that ultimately people are individuals with distinctive projects and interests and affections, and their own lives to lead. These challenges are the wellspring of Rawls's political thinking. He believed that they were not being effectively met by utilitarianism, the dominant political and moral theory in the Anglo-American world at the time he began his reflections. “In the preface to the 1999 revised edition of his Theory of Justice (originally published in 1971), Rawls says that he 'wanted to work out a conception of justice that provides a reasonably systematic alternative to utilitarianism', He continues”. The primary reason for wanting to find such an alternative is the weakness ... of utilitarian doctrine as a basis for the institutions of constitutional democracy.

 In essence, it is believed so that utilitarianism can provide a satisfactory account of the basic rights and liberties of citizens as free and equal persons, a requirement of absolutely first importance for an account of democratic institutions. In all, rawls didn’t agree with some versions of political thinkers because he had his own thought.