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**John Rawl's The first principle:**

Rawls's first principle of justice: 'Each person has an equal claim to a fully

Adequate scheme of equal basic rights and liberties, which scheme is compatible with the same scheme for all; and in this scheme the equal political liberties [e.g. the right to vote and to Campaign], and only those liberties, are to be guaranteed their fair value.

John Rawl political thought is centered around two main themes which are political liberalism and that ultilitarism was not the ideal system.

John Rawl's First principle of Justice is centered on equal basic liberties, although he wanted to use to use his *theory of justice* to explain basic rights and liberties but he himself admitted he was unable to do that till a decade or so ago.

According to Rawl, every citizen has two fundamental powers in the realization of such powers or liberties, they include:

1) Having an interest in being able to formulate and live according to some particular conception of the good (the conception of the good interest)

2) Having an interest in exercising one's 'sense of justice' and being motivated by it, providing others do so as well.(the sense of justice interest)

John Rawl points that since in a democratic society all citizens are expected to be equal and free to live life, there is need to have these two powers sufficiently so that it will be achieved and also to be able to contribute to the society. John Rawl also point as that if everybody has this power it will be at an equal ground or footing.

John Rawl uses the above interests and power to explain basic liberties that each citizen is to have equally. He also identifies which 'liberties'-should be among the basic constitutional rights, he did this by using what he called two fundamental cases'. Thus, those liberties that are part of or a means of achieving (the conception of the good interest) constitute the first of these cases and then (the sense of justice interest) constitute the second of the 'two fundamental cases'.

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 simply that people would not be able to have or live according to their own particular determinate conception of the good, whatever it was, and in particular would not be able to *revise* any such conception, without liberty of conscience or freedom of Liberties under the first interest (the conception of the good interest) include liberty of conscience and freedom of personal association.

**2) John Rawl's The second principle: distributive economic justice**

According to Rawl he states the fact that people have different wealth and are born into and grow up in different social circumstances. And no one can be said to the cause of such circumstance. These factors wealth powerfully affect a person's life prospects, advantageously for some and disadvantageously for others. This may in turn be the reason for differences or inequality between people.

To explain this, Rawls develops the idea of 'democratic' equality of opportunity which can be explained as the taking of remedial steps, conscientiously, to reduce the *initial* differential in advantages that accrues to individuals, arbitrarily, from their starting points in life. Rawl mentioned that State-supported primary and secondary education (of good quality and at no cost to the individual student) would be an example of such a step. The reason for developing this is 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 ensure that everyone has capacity to contribute to the society.

Rawl understands that total equality can never be achieved. Thus, John Rawls introduces a further idea to complement equality of opportunity (point 1 above) and complete the line of argument.

**3) The original position**

Rawls belongs to the social contract tradition, although he takes a different view from that of previous thinkers. Specifically, Rawls develops what he claims are principles of justice through the use of an artificial device he calls the Original position; in which, everyone decides principles of justice from behind a veil of ignorance. This "veil" is one that essentially blinds people to all facts about themselves so they cannot tailor principles to their own advantage.

Rawls bases his Original Position on a "thin theory of the good" which he says "explains the rationality underlying choice of principles in the Original Position". A full theory of the good follows after we derive principles from the original position. Rawls claims that the parties in the original position would adopt two such principles, which would then govern the assignment of rights and duties and regulate the distribution of social and economic advantages across society. The difference principle permits inequalities in the distribution of goods only if those inequalities benefit the worst-off members of society. Rawls believes that this principle would be a rational choice for the representatives in the original position for the following reason: Each member of society has an equal claim on their society's goods. Natural attributes should not affect this claim, so the basic right of any individual, before further considerations are taken into account, must be to an equal share in material wealth. What, then, could justify unequal distribution? Rawls argues that inequality is acceptable only if it is to the advantage of those who are worst-off.

What is original position? The original position is an arena for deliberation and decision about principles of justice; its var ious 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**.

1. 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.

2) The second main role of the original position: to rank the remaining eligible candidates, after the preliminary screening has been accomplished.

**Features of Rawls's contractarian method of justification**

1) 'Parties' to the contract are placed behind a thick veil of ignorance.

2) 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 have selected

Therefore, for Rawl original position it is somewhat clouded with **uncertainty** for example one of the main features of the original position is the veil of ignorance. Thus, extreme uncertainty about starting points and outcomes for any given individual would characterize the deliberations in the original position, in which individuals are called upon to construct and then to choose the principles of justice that they would prefer to determine the basic structure of their society, in which they are to spend their entire lives.

Given this high degree of uncertainty, we find that Rawls's earlier straightforward argument for his second principle of justice fares rather well.

**4) John Rawl's idea on Justice**

Justice as fairness aims to describe a just arrangement of the major political and social institutions of a liberal society: the political constitution, the legal system, the economy, the family, and so on

According to Rawl, there are two principles of justice, Rawls contends that the most rational choice for the parties in the original position are two principles of justice: The first guarantees the equal basic rights and liberties needed to secure the fundamental interests of free and equal citizens and to pursue a wide range of conceptions of the good.

He holds that an adequate account of justice cannot be derived from utilitarianism, because that doctrine is consistent with intuitively undesirable forms of government in which the greater happiness of a majority is achieved by neglecting the rights and interests of a minority.Reviving the notion of a social contract, Rawls argues that justice consists of the basic principles of government that free and rational individuals would agree to in a hypothetical situation of perfect equality. In order to ensure that the principles chosen are fair, Rawls imagines a group of individuals who have been made ignorant of the social, economic, and historical circumstances from which they come, as well as their basic values and goals, including their conception of what constitutes a “good life.” Situated behind this “veil of ignorance,” they could not be influenced by self-interested desires to benefit some social groups (i.e., the groups they belong to) at the expense of others.

The “basic liberty” mentioned in principle 1 comprises most of the rights and liberties traditionally associated with liberalism and democracy: freedom of thought and conscience, freedom of association, the right to representative government, the right to form and join political parties, the right to personal property, and the rights and liberties necessary to secure the rule of law. Principle 2 provides that everyone has a fair and equal opportunity to compete for desirable public or private offices and positions. This entails that society must provide all citizens with the basic means necessary to participate in such competition, including appropriate education and health care.