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**INTRODUCTION**

The American philosopher, John Rawls was one of the most influential political thinkers in the late twentieth century (Then and Now, 2020). A moral and political philosopher in the liberal tradition, who lived between 1921 to November of 2002, John Bordley Rawls, received both the Schock prize for logic and philosophy and the National Humanities Medal in 1999, presented by president Bill Clinton (Tankparksalute,2020).

**JOHN RWAL’S FIRST PRINCIPLE**

Rawls first principle of justice states that '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 such as the right to vote, and only those liberties are to be guaranteed their fair value' (David Boucher and Paul Kelly, 2003).

According to David Boucher and Paul Kelly in their book; Political Thinkers, drawing on Rawls's 1980 Dewey Lectures and his 1982 Tanner Lecture as providing the best account of, and arguments for, his first principle of justice, the principle of equal basic liberties. Rawls claims in these lectures that for every individual citizen there are two fundamental capacities and correspondingly, two higher-order interests in the realization of those capacities. He believes that each person has over his entire 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.

The notion of the two powers of the citizen is understood to include the idea that in a democratic society citizens are both equal and free. 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 identifies which liberties should be among the basic constitutional rights, or among the weightiest of such rights, by considering what he calls 'two fundamental cases'. Thus, those liberties that are part of or a means of achieving the first interest, which is the conception of the good interest, constitute the first of these cases and those that are a part of or a means of achieving the second, the sense of justice interest, constitute the second of the 'two fundamental cases'. The basic liberties constitute, in effect, a determinate and well-defined set. For the most part, these liberties are rather standard civil rights, of the sort that would be found, such as the United Nations' Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966, entered into force in 1976)

Finally, other liberties, such as the due process rights to such things as fair trial or the rights to bodily integrity are justified as necessary to the full flourishing of the liberties justified in the 'two fundamental cases'. Rawls believed, that all the liberties just specified should be counted among the basic constitutional rights (David Boucher and Paul Kelly, 2003).

**THE SECOND PRINCIPLE: DISTRIBUTIVE ECONOMIC JUSTICE**

In contrast with his first principle, Rawls thought that the account and formulation of his second principle of justice, as found in ‘A Theory of Justice’ (1971), was substantially sound. Putting into consideration that people have different natural endowments and are born into and grow up in different social circumstances, which no man is responsible for. Notwithstanding, factors such as natural endowment and initial social circumstance are not negligible, because they powerfully affect a person's life prospects, advantageously for some and disadvantageously for others, resulting in inequality between people. Rawls's argument sets out from this point. He first develops the idea of 'democratic' equality of opportunity-conceived 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. Rawls believes that an absolute equality of opportunity with respect to such starting points can never be achieved. And it is precisely where fundamental equality in starting points is not fully and strictly achieved, or cannot be, that concern for reducing the inequality of resultant outcomes is in order. Thus, Rawls further introduces an 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 picture;

The principle of everyone's continual benefit, which in turn is constrained by the idea that, where there are several mutually improving options available, we should choose that option which most reduces the resultant inequality in outcomes 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 (David Boucher and Paul Kelly, 2003).

We can get to Rawls's final specification of the difference principle by repeatedly employing the set of ideas just sketched. The difference principle can be represented, then, as proceeding through a series of stages each one of which embodies a conscientious effort at achieving equality of opportunity and each one of which then repeats the same theme: first satisfy the standard of mutual benefit and then reduce differences in outcome between the topmost and the bottom-most group. This repeated pattern continues at each stage until we reach an optimum point, at which no further mutually improving moves are possible: at this point we have minimized the difference in question, and those least well off have here their greatest benefit. With these two assumptions in place, we have completed our account of Rawls's argument for his second principle of justice, the principle of distributive economic justice. The principle succinctly: 'Social and economic inequalities are to satisfy two condition;

1. They are to be attached to positions and offices open to all under conditions

of fair equality of opportunity.

1. They are to be to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged members of society' (David Boucher and Paul Kelly, 2003).

**THE ORIGINAL POSITION**

Rawls contractarian method of justification has been referred to as complex according to the book, Political Thinkers. The original position is an arena for deliberation and decision about principles of justice. One of the main features of the original position is the veil of ignorance, a feature that is often emphasized. meaning the 'parties' to the contract are placed behind a thick veil of ignorance. Here they are instructed in their subsequent reasoning to ignore their own particular traits, to be unaware of their actual place in society, to be unaware of their society's place in history or in institutional evolution, and so on. The point of the metaphor of the veil is to indicate that the parties should remove sources of bias and irrelevancy from their deliberations (David Boucher and Paul Kelly, 2003).

'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. In its first role the original position is to serve as a screening device for the candidate principles. The features of the original position serve as a checklist against which the candidate principles are to be measured and to be assessed. An avowedly racist principle would probably not pass through the filter afforded by the features of the original position. But other principles such as the various versions of utilitarianism for example, might remain in contention after being examined under the conditions set by publicity, unanimity, the veil of ignorance, and so on (David Boucher and Paul Kelly, 2003).

In analysing Rawls's two principles in the original position, it’s important to note there’s extreme uncertainty about starting points and outcomes for any given individual, which 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 (David Boucher and Paul Kelly, 2003).

We can put the line of reasoning in the maximin argument quickly and intuitively, as follows. Behind the veil of ignorance and given the high degree of uncertainty there, each individual thinks that, since they don't know how or where they might end up, they should set things up in the principles they select, each one having a veto, so that the worst controllable outcome for anyone of them is the best of a bad lot, the best, that is, of the set of worst outcomes. This line of reasoning, which has its home in rational choice theory, is, as I have already indicated, sometimes called maximin reasoning, that is, reasoning literally on the principle of maximizing the minimum. The outcomes, which the maximin 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 maximin argument then chooses between.

Rawls's view is that utilitarians and others, especially in the setting afforded by the original position, would allow the sacrifice or the serious weakening of some of the demands of justice as fairness, or would do so for some people at least. Here the argument focuses, in particular, on the loss of equal basic liberties of the sort enshrined in the first principle. And it is this fact that marks the primary ground, in Rawls's view, for preferring the principles of justice as fairness over their presumed closest competitor. Thus, the maximin test provides what, in the context of the original position, is a compelling reason for ranking the two principles, as a set, above the principle of average utility (David Boucher and Paul Kelly, 2003).

**SUMMARY OF JOHN RWALS IDEA OF JUSTICE**

A theory of justice’, published in 1971 is a philosophy of what a just and fair society would look like. Utilitarianism was the dominant system years before then, and the questions Rwals was trying to answer where; What is justice? And what is fairness? And if we accept that they are important, what then do they mean?

According to John Rwals, “Justice is the first verture of social institutions and that laws of institutions must be reformed or abolished if they are unjust” (Then and Now, 2020).

The whole concept of Rwals idea of justice was the creation of a just and fair society for humans to live in. Rawls thinks that the best-supported principles will be those of justice as fairness'-that is, they will be the two principles of justice, understood now as political principles. He takes inspiration from the social contract theory of philosophers like Thomas Hobbes and John Locke, imagining a state of nature on how a society will come into fusion if they came together to cooperate (Then and Now, 2020).

The book has at least two main problems. First, the complicated procedure whereby Rawls attempted to justify his two principles of justice, has important defects. For one thing, Rawls's theory seemed to rule out from serious consideration certain rival candidates to his own two principles. Secondly, is that Rawls never succeeding in making an adequate case for the priority of the first principle of justice over the second-of the equal basic liberties over elements in the second principle (David Boucher and Paul Kelly, 2003).

**REFERENCE**

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