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Department Political Science

Matric Number 17/sms08/016

Course code Pol 304

Assignment

Read the chapter on rawls [full name is John Rawls].In the political thinkers,Edited by David Boucher and paul Kelly and write a short note on

1. John rawls first principle.
2. The second principle:Distributive Economic Justice
3. The original position
4. Summarize John Rawls Idea of Justice

ANSWERS

1. The first and most essential principle of states that every individual has an equal right to basic liberties like the right to life,right to properties,etc.Rawls claiming that certain rights and freedoms are more important or basic than others.For example,freeman argues,Rawls believes that personal property-personal belongings,a home constitutes a basic liberty,but an Absolute right to unlimited private property is not as basic liberties,these rights are inalienable that no government can amend,infringe or remove such rights from individual. 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, for example, in the European Convention on Human Rights (1954) or the United Nations' Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966, entered into force in 1976), or on a list of important rights in current American constitutional law. Organized by a shared set of principles of justice which each citizen can affirm. 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. Here 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 (or, at least, the working years). In having these powers at some such level, all the citizens are on the same footing. This, then, is the grounding idea behind Rawls's notion that the citizens are equal: they are equal in having reached what might be called this same minimum threshold level . 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'-which ways of acting or of not being injured-should be among the basic constitutional rights, or among the most weighty 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 (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'. Thomas mertens says Rawls contends that principles for a society are just when chosen by representatives citizens placed within ‘Fair’’conditions. Rawls claims that for every individual citizen there are two fundamental capacities or powers and, correspondingly, two 'higher-order interests' in the realization of those capacities. Thus, each person has, over that 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. Let me amplify this second point a bit: each person has, over that person's entire life, an interest in living cooperatively with fellow citizens, on terms of mutual respect and reciprocal benefit.

2 The Equality principle is the component of Justice as fairness establishing distributive justice.Rawls awards the fair Equality of opportunity principle lexical priority over the different principle ;a society cannot arrange inequalities to maximize the share of the least advantaged whilst not allowing access to certain offices or positions. Rawls's started with the fact that people have different natural endowments and 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. Nonetheless, 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 between people. Rawls's argument sets out from this point. He first develops the idea of 'democratic' equality of opportunity-conceived as

(1) the taking of remedial steps, conscientiously, to reduce the initial differential in advantages that accrues to individuals, arbitrarily, from their starting points in life. 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 leading 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. 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 introduces a further idea to complement equality of opportunity (point 1 above) and complete the line of argument. Rawls calls this new idea the'difference principle'; it adds two further remedial steps to the picture; it adds

 (2) 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,

(3) 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.

1. A key component of Rawls argument is his claim that his principles of justice would be chosen by parties in the original position.The point in which he was addressing concerning various parties that select principles that will determine the basic structure of the society that will live in . The point of the metaphor of the veil is to indicate that the parties should remove sources of bias and irrelevancy from their deliberations. Other features are important as well. The parties understand that they are deciding about principles of justice (principles for distributing certain primary goods-such goods as liberties, opportunities, income, and wealth-to individuals) and that they will have to live, for their entire lives, under the principles they have selected. Accordingly, they would want the principles selected to be clear and intelligible to all, with nothing hidden from view and everything up front and accounted for. (This Rawls calls the 'publicity requirement'.) Such principles, when looked at from a variety of perspectives, ought to be acceptable to persons in each of those perspectives-this Rawls calls the 'unanimity requirement'. (Rawls's main discussion of the original position is found in a Theory of Justice, and a very helpful summary of its main features is found in. 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, 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.As a thought experiment,the original position is a hypothetical position designed to accurately reflect what principles of justice would be manifested in a society premised on free and fair cooperation between citizens,including respect for liberty,and an interest in reciprocity.In social contract theory,persons in the state of nature agree to the provisions of a contract that defines the basic rights and duties of citizens in a civil society.In Rawls theory,justice as fairness,the original position plays the role that the state of nature does in the classical social contract tradition of Thomas hobbes,jean-jacques Rousseau,and John locke.The original position figues prominently in Rawl’s 1971 book.

 4 Justice is the first virtue of social institutions, as truth is of systems of thought. A theory however elegant and economical must be rejected or revised if it is untrue; likewise laws and institutions no matter how efficient and well-arranged must be reformed or abolished if they are unjust. Each person possesses an inviolability founded on justice that even the welfare of society as a whole cannot override. For this reason justice denies that the loss of freedom for some is made right by a greater good shared by others. It does not allow that the sacrifices imposed on a few are outweighed by the larger sum of advantages enjoyed by many. Therefore in a just society the liberties of equal citizenship are taken as settled; the rights secured by justice are not subject to political bargaining or to the calculus of social interests. The only thing that permits us to acquiesce in an erroneous theory is the lack of a better one; analogously, an injustice is tolerable only when it is necessary to avoid an even greater injustice. Being first virtues of human activities, truth and justice are uncompromising. These propositions seem to express our intuitive conviction of the primacy of justice . In order to do this we are not to think of the original contract as one to enter a particular society or to set up a particular form of government. Rather, the guiding idea is that the principles of justice for the basic structure of society are the object of the original agreement. They are the principles that free and rational persons concerned to further their own interests would accept in an initial position of equality as defining the fundamental terms of their association. These principles are to regulate all further agreements; they specify the kinds of social cooperation that can be entered into and the forms of government that can be established. This way of regarding the principles of justice I shall call justice as fairness. Thus we are to imagine that those who engage in social cooperation choose together, in one joint act, the principles which are to assign basic rights and duties and to determine the division of social benefits. Men are to decide in advance how they are to regulate their claims against one another and what is to be the foundation charter of their society. Just as each person must decide by rational reflection what constitutes his good, that is, the system of ends which it is rational for him to pursue, so a group of persons must decide once and for all what is to count among them as just and unjust. The choice which rational men would make in this hypothetical situation of equal liberty