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* JOHN FIRST PRINCIPLE

*The two important things that were highlighted by john rawls in the principle of liberty*

(1) Each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive basic liberty compatible with a similar liberty for others.

(2) Social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both

(*a*) to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged and

(*b*) attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair [equality of opportunity](https://www.britannica.com/topic/equal-opportunity).

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. Economic rights and liberties, such as freedom of contract or the right to own means of production, are not among the basic liberties as Rawls construes them. Basic liberties cannot be infringed under any circumstances, even if doing so would increase the aggregate welfare, improve economic efficiency, or augment the income of the poor.

Clause b of 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. Clause a of principle 2 is known as the “difference principle”: it requires that any unequal distribution of wealth and income be such that those who are worst off are better off than they would be under any other distribution consistent with principle 1, including an equal distribution. (Rawls holds that some inequality of wealth and income is probably necessary in order to maintain high levels of productivity.)

In Rawls’s view, Soviet-style communism is unjust because it is incompatible with most basic liberties and because it does not provide everyone with a fair and equal opportunity to obtain desirable offices and positions. Pure laissez-faire capitalism is also unjust, because it tends to produce an unjust distribution of wealth and income (concentrated in the hands of a few), which in turn effectively deprives some (if not most) citizens of the basic means necessary to compete fairly for desirable offices and positions. A just society, according to Rawls, would be a “property-owning democracy” in which ownership of the means of production is widely distributed and those who are worst off are prosperous enough to be economically independent. Although Rawls generally avoided discussion of specific political arrangements, his work is widely interpreted as providing a philosophical foundation for egalitarian liberalism as imperfectly manifested in the modern capitalist welfare state or in a market-oriented social democracy.

* THE SECOND PRINCIPLE DISTRIBUTIVE ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Unlike the first principle, the second principle is a whole different from the first with a lots of views on the society. The principle of distributive economic justice is talking about how people are born into different social circumstances. He said that no one is born is responsible for the factors in their own case, such factors can be natural endowment or initial social circumstance these factors are not meaningless, rather these factors are a powerful tool that affect a person’s life prospect which also take advantage for some and disadvantage for some.

The economic, political, and social frameworks that each society has—its laws, institutions, policies, etc.—result in different distributions of benefits and burdens across members of the society. These frameworks are the result of human political processes and they constantly change both across societies and within societies over time. The structure of these frameworks is important because the distributions of benefits and burdens resulting from them fundamentally affect people’s lives. Arguments about which frameworks and/or resulting distributions are morally preferable constitute the topic of distributive justice. Principles of distributive justice are therefore best thought of as providing moral guidance for the political processes and structures that affect the distribution of benefits and burdens in societies, and any principles which do offer this kind of moral guidance on distribution, regardless of the terminology they employ, should be considered principles of distributive justice.

This entry is structured in the following way. After outlining the scope of the entry and the role of distributive principles, the first relatively simple principle of distributive justice examined is Strict Egalitarianism, which calls for the allocation of equal material goods to all members of society. John Rawls’ alternative distributive principle, which he calls the Difference Principle, is examined next. The Difference Principle permits diverging from strict equality so long as the inequalities in question would make the least advantaged in society materially better off than they would be under strict equality. Some have thought that neither strict equality nor Rawls’ Difference Principle capture the important moral roles of luck and responsibility. The “Luck Egalitarianism” literature comprises varying attempts to design distributive principles that are appropriately sensitive to considerations of responsibility and luck. Desert-based principles similarly emphasize the moral roles of responsibility and luck but are distinct because they approach these factors through claims about what people deserve because of their work.

Advocates of welfare-based principles (of which utilitarianism is the most famous) do not believe the primary distributive concern should be material goods and services. They argue that material goods and services have no intrinsic value but are valuable only in so far as they increase welfare. Hence, they argue, distributive principles should be designed and assessed according to how they affect welfare, either its maximization or distribution. Advocates of libertarian principles, by contrast to each of the principles so far mentioned, generally criticize any distributive ideal that requires the pursuit of specific ‘patterns’, such as maximization or equality of welfare or of material goods. They argue that the pursuit of such patterns conflicts with the more important moral demands of liberty or self-ownership. Finally, feminist critiques of existing distributive principles note that they tend to ignore the particular circumstances of women, so feminists tend to argue for principles which are more sensitive to facts such as that women often have primary responsibility for child-rearing and on average, spend less of their lifetimes than men in the market economy.

* THE ORIGINAL POSITION

The original position is a central feature of John Rawls’s social contract account of justice, “justice as fairness,” set forth in Theory of Justice. The original position is designed to be a fair and impartial point of view that is to be adopted in our reasoning about fundamental principles of justice. In taking up this point of view, we are to imagine ourselves in the position of free and equal persons who jointly agree upon and commit themselves to principles of social and political justice. The main distinguishing feature of the original position is “the veil of ignorance”: to insure impartiality of judgment, the parties are deprived of all knowledge of their personal characteristics and social and historical circumstances. They do know of certain fundamental interests they all have, plus general facts about psychology, economics, biology, and other social and natural sciences. The parties in the original position are presented with a list of the main conceptions of justice drawn from the tradition of social and political philosophy, and are assigned the task of choosing from among these alternatives the conception of justice that best advances their interests in establishing conditions that enable them to effectively pursue their final ends and fundamental interests. 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. The second principle provides fair equality of educational and employment opportunities enabling all to fairly compete for powers and positions of office; and it secures for all a guaranteed minimum of the all-purpose means (including income and wealth) that individuals need to pursue their interests and to maintain their self-respect as free and equal persons.

* SUMMARISE JOHN RAWLS IDEA OF JUSTICE