

NAME: EBELEBE EMMANUEL

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IRD ASSIGNMENT: Read the chapter on Rawls and write short explanatory notes on John Rawl's first principle, the second principle (Distributive Economic Justice), the original position and summarize John Rawl's idea of justice.

JOHN RAWL'S FIRST PRINCIPLE

The first principle of John Rawl is "Equal basic liberties". In this principles Rawl claims that for every individual citizen there are two fundamental capacities or powers and correspondingly, two higher interest in the realization of those capacities, thus each person has over that person's entire life, an interest in being able to formulate and live according to some particular conceptions of good and 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 citizens is understood to include the idea that in democratic society citizens are both equal and free, each person is conceived as having the two powers at a sufficient level to be able to be fully contributing member of society over that person's entire adult life or at least working years. In having these powers at such level all citizens are the same footing, this is then the grounding idea behind Rawl's notion that the citizens are equal. Rawl uses the idea of the two powers and the corresponding interest of the citizens to ground his illustration; he identifies which "liberty", those liberties that are part of or a means of achieving the first interest. Rawl's argument sets out from this point. He first developed the idea of "democratic" equality of opportunity conceived as the taking of remedial steps, to reduce the initial differential in advantages that accrues individuals, arbitrarily, from their starting points in life. The

leading idea here is to try to make people somewhat less unequal at this point where they can actually enter into adult life, as citizens and as workers. 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 the outcomes is in order. Thus, Rawls introduces a further idea to complement equality of opportunity and complete the line of argument; we can call this idea the “difference principle”. We can get Rawls’s final specification of the difference principle by repeatedly employing the set of ideas just sketched. With these two assumptions in place we have we can see the reasoning of Rawls’s principles.

THE SECOND PRINCIPLE (DISTRIBUTIVE ECONOMIC JUSTICE)

The second principle is very different to the first principle; Rawls thought the account of the second principle is “Justice”. Rawls’s account of the second principle believes with the fact that people have different natural endowment 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 circumstances are not negligible, they powerfully affect a person’s life prospects, advantageously for others. Indeed, they may be the main sources of inequality between people. A key problem for Rawls is to show how such principles would be universally adopted and here the work borders on general ethical issues, he introduces a theoretical veil of ignorance in which all players in the social game would be placed in a situation which is called the “Original Position”. Having a general knowledge about the facts of” life and society” each player is to make a rationally prudential choice concerning the kind of social institution they would enter into contract with, by denying the players any specific information about themselves if forces them to adopt a generalized point of view that bears a strong resemblance to the moral point of view. Moral conclusion can be reached without abandoning the prudential stand point and

positing a moral outlook merely by pursuing one's own prudential reasoning under certain procedural bargaining and knowledge constraints

THE ORIGINAL POSITION

Rawls's contractarian method of justification is very complex. One of the major features that is emphasized is that parties to the contract are placed in what he calls original position. Other features are important as well, the parties understand that they are deciding about the principle of justice (principle for distributing primary goods and such goods include liberties, opportunities, income and wealth to individuals) and they have to live for the entire of their lives under the principles selected to be clear and intelligible to all, with nothing hidden from view and everything up front and accounted for. Such principles when looked at from a variety of perspectives, ought to be acceptable in persons in those perspectives, this is what Rawls calls the "unanimity requirement". The original position is in 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 set up a fair procedure so that any principles agreed to will be just. Rawls's envision two main roles for the original position. In its first role of original position is to serve as a screening device for the candidate principles that is principles taking from short lists of main, historically available theories of justice such as Plato's republic various versions of utilitarianism and so on. The features of the original position serve as a checklist against which the candidate principles are to be measured and to be assessed. An example is an avowedly racist principle would probably not pass through the filter afforded by the features of the original position, thus if people contemplated living in a multiracial society under that principles, it is clear that some of them would be seriously disadvantaged and deeply harmed by its operation.

SUMMARY OF JOHN RAWL'S IDEA OF JUSTICE

In this theory of Justice, Rawl begins with the statement that “justice is the first virtue of social institution” meaning that a good society is structured according to the principals of justice. Rawls assert that existing theories of justice developed in the field of philosophy, are not adequate: “My guiding aim to work out a theory of justice that is an alternative to these doctrines which have long dominated our philosophical traditions”. He calls his theory aimed at formulating a conception of the basic structure of society in accordance with social justice as fairness. Rawls set forth to determine the essential principles of justice for two key purposes: first to provide a way of assigning rights and duties in the basic institutions of society, and secondly to “define the appropriate distributions of the benefits and burdens “of the society. He observes that, by his definition well-ordered societies are rare due to the fact that “what is just and unjust is usually in dispute”. He further notes that a well-ordered and perfectly just society must be formulated in a way that addresses the problems of efficiency, coordination and stability.