

Social justice assignment

[Law](#), [Crime](#)



In this assignment, the relevance of Rawls theory of social justice in improving the wellbeing of the people in society has been discussed. Social justice as understood by the writer is concerned with equal justice, not just in courts but in all aspects of society. These concepts demand that people have equal rights and opportunities: everyone, from the poorest person on the margins of society to the wealthiest deserves an even playing field.

According to the Wikipedia encyclopedia “ social justice generally refers to the ideas of creating a society of institution that is based on the principle of equality and solidarity, that understands and values human rights, and that recognizes the dignity of every human being”. This means giving to each what he or she is due. It’s about the fair and proper administration of laws conforming to the natural law that all persons, irrespective of ethnic origin, gender, possessions, race religion etc are to be treated equally without prejudice. Rawls Theory of Social Justice

Rawls theory of justice revolves around the adaption of two fundamental principles of justice which would, in turn, guarantee a just and morally acceptable society. The first principle guarantees the right of each person to have the most extensive basic liberty compatible with the liberty of others. The second principle states that the social and economic positions are to be (a) to everyone’s advantage (b) open to all. Norman. D (1987: 145) explains that “ John Rawls is widely known for his theory of justice as fairness, which develops principles of justice to govern a modern social order.

Rawls theory provides a framework that explains the significance, in society assumed to consist of free and equal persons, of political and

personal liberties, of equal opportunities, and cooperative arrangements that benefit the more and the less advantaged members of society. ” It can be seen that John Rawls discusses his own theory of social justice, which he calls “ justice as fairness”. In his theory, Rawls defines two basic principles of justice. First, each person should be guaranteed certain freedoms regardless of his or social status.

These freedoms include political liberties such as the right to vote and eligibility for public office. Everyone is entitled to free speech, as well as freedom of conscious and thought. People should be free to own their own property and free from unlawful arrest and seizure. Pogge W. (1999: 87) adds that “ 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. Rawls second principal of justice states that inequities are actually okay in society as long as these inequalities still help the less fortunate.

In other words, everyone deserves an equal opportunity to achieve his or hergoals. For example it it is okay that a CEO of Zesco makes more than a worker but all workers should have the opportunity to achieve that work

status. Rawls states that these two principles are essential in order for justice as fairness to occur. According to Rawls, inequalities sometimes become unjust. Pogge W. (1999: 67) stresses that “ just because Rawls’s conception of social justice values equality, this does not mean that equal outcomes will be achieved in society, or that they even can be.

In fact, Rawls second principle asserts that inequalities in society are acceptable as long as they meet two conditions. First, as per the equal opportunity principle. “ Inequalities are acceptable if every person in society, if every person is has a reasonable chance of obtaining the positions that lead to the inequalities. An example would be equal opportunity to achieve any job. Rawls (2003: 43) specifies that “ fair equality of opportunity requires not merely that public offices and social positions open in the formal sense, but that all should have a fair chance to attain them”.

After explaining that today’s economic inequalities are simply not acceptable, Rawls (2003: 59-60) explains the difference principle this way “ to say that inequalities in income and wealth are to be arranged for the greatest benefit of the least advantaged simply means that we are to compare schemes of cooperation by seeing how well off the least advantaged are under each scheme, and then to select the scheme under which the least disadvantaged are better off than they are under any scheme.”

With two competing arrangements of incomes in society, the fairer of the two and therefore the more just of the two is the one that is to the greatest benefit of the least advantage. Relevance of John Rawls theory of social justice in improving human wellbeing in society. Rawls' theory provides a <https://assignbuster.com/social-justice-assignment/>

framework that explains the significance, in a society assumed to consist of free and equal persons, of political and personal liberties, of equal opportunity, and cooperative arrangements that benefit the more and the less advantaged members of society. The following are the reasons why this theory is relevant.

It advocates for equal rights of individuals. According to Voice . P (2011: 189) stresses that “ one the first principle –each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive total system of basic equal liberties compatible with similar systems of basic equal liberties compatible with a similar system of liberty for all. The second principle states that social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both: (a) to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged consistent with the just savings principal, (b) attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity.”.

These principals distribute the primary goods, rights and liberties in the first principles and opportunities, income and wealth in the second principal. The theory addresses injustices by recognizing the importance of social institutions in society. Rawls theory is very realistic in that it looks at the actual events and institutions that exist in society. As stated earlier, social justice is the idea of creating a society or institution that is based on the principles of equality and solidarity, that understands and values human rights, and that recognizes the dignity of every human being.

From this theory it can be seen that he Rawls advocates for a society in which there is cooperation. Lovett . F (2011: 10) explains that “ the basic structure of a society which he defines as a way in which major social

institutions distribute fundamental rights and duties determine the division of advantage from social cooperation. In *A Theory of Justice*, Rawls begins with the statement that Justice is the first virtue of social institution," meaning that a good society is one structured according to principals of justice. "

A basic structure of a society is a set of social institutions and practices that systematically influence how well our lives can be expected to go, individual efforts aside. Here, Rawls explains the importance of 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 distribution of the benefits and burdens of 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. It acknowledges the importance of human rights. Rawls (2003: 75) says " A just world order is perhaps best seen as a society of peoples, each people maintaining a well-ordered and decent political (domestic) regime, not necessarily democratic but fully respecting basic human rights."

Human rights are expansive and include rights in the following areas: general freedom; dignity; life; liberty; security; equality before the law; fair and public hearings by independent and impartial tribunals; presumption of innocence until proven guilty; freedom of movement and residence; right to seek and gain asylum from persecution. " The above are not the only human rights, but there are others. Human rights are expansive and include rights in

many areas. For example, there should be explicit inclusion of economic, social and cultural rights. Rights of disadvantaged groups including children, women, disabled and the elderly.

Rawls theory is based on the social contract. The social contract according to the Wikipedia encyclopedia is “ an intellectual construct that typically addresses two questions, first, that of the origin of society, and second, the question of the legitimacy of the authority of the state over the individual. Social contract arguments typically posit that individuals have consented, either explicitly or tacitly, to surrender some of their freedoms and submit to the authority of the ruler or magistrate (or to the decision of a majority), in exchange for protection of their natural rights”.

This means people need to agree on some ground rules in order to live together in harmony. Deneulin S. and Shahani L (2009: 234) stresses that “ Rawls turned to social contract tradition, when justice is understood as the outcome of mutual advantage”. Rawls conception of social justice is developed around the idea of a social contract, whereby people freely enter into an agreement to follow certain rules for the betterment of everyone. For example, people cast their votes during presidential or parliamentary election so that these people can represent them and address issues that affect society.

If they fail to work according to the expectations of the people, they are voted out. The theory also recognizes the fact that inequalities should be of benefit to all the people in society. In other words, everyone deserves an opportunity to achieve his or her goals. Pogge W (1989: 47) stipulates that “ inequalities are acceptable as long as they meet two conditions. Daniel N
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(2009: 57) explains that “ inequalities in society are at times just. There are atleast two reasons for this. First economic inequalities that motivate people to strive for more can sometimes be justified, second inequalities may result from differential claims on merit”.

For example, it can be looked at to be unfair if a person is getting 200 million while others are getting 20million but all workers should have the opportunity to achieve that work status. . Every person should be able benefit from the national cake depending on how much is available. This theory calls for meritocracy. that Rawls’s theory of justice acknowledges meritocracy in society. This is relevant in that meritocracy is based on ability and talent rather than on class privilege or wealth. The allocation of rewards, positions and responsibilities is objective and upon the merit of an individual.

By doing so the disadvantaged members of society should also benefit. Inequalities must only occur in certain institutions and jobs that there is unequal opportunity for all to obtain. These inequalities must only occur in certain institutions and jobs that there is an equal opportunity for all to obtain. These inequalities include the distribution of income and wealth. Also inequalities are acceptable if they are used for the purpose of delegating different responsibilities in a chain of command. The other relevance is that, the theory is based on the foundation of justice is fairness.

Fairness means free from bias or injustice or the ability to make judgments free from discrimination or dishonesty. According to Rawls, justice is what free and equal persons would agree to as basic terms of social cooperation in conditions that are fair for this purpose. This idea he calls " justice as fairness. " Daniel N (2009: 76) states that “ Justice is the most important

political value and applies to the ‘ basic institutions of society’ – the political constitution and the institutions that regulate the market, property, family, freedom, and so on – because it is intimately connected to what society is and what it is for.

If society is a matter of cooperation between equals for mutual advantage, the conditions for this cooperation need to be defended and any inequalities in social positions must be justified”. Were there is justice there is peace free participation of individuals in society. This is to say 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. Justice, then, is fairness. Deneulin S. and Shahani L (2009: 123)

“ For our agreement to secure a fair, impartial procedure, we need to eliminate any possible bias towards, say, the rich or the poor, or the religious or the atheist. So, argues Rawls, assume that we are to agree on these principles without knowing what our position in society will be or what our idea of the good is. The point of this ‘ veil of ignorance’ is to ensure that no one is advantaged or disadvantaged in the choice of principles by the outcome of natural chance or the contingency of social circumstances”. This theory is relevant in that, it advocates for social justice.

This is relevant to the wellbeing of the people in that credit is able to go to those who deserve it. For example, most people who benefit from the bursary scheme are those who are capable of paying. The people it is intended to help do not even have access to it. Therefore, society craves for a time when the vulnerable will have a share of the national cake. Thus, Since all are similar situated and no one is able to design principles to favor

his particular condition, the principles of justice are the result of a fair agreement or bargain.

Conclusion In conclusion, it should be noted that, Rawls theory is relevant in improving the wellbeing of the people in society. It is very practical in that it is marked by both conflicts between differing individual interests and an identity of shared interests. According to Rawls, when the two principles are satisfied, each person's liberties are secured and there is a sense defined by the difference principle in which everyone is benefited by social co-operation