

# John Rawls' theory of justice: contribution to solve some political issues in the...

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John Rawls is perhaps the most significant intellectual in philosophical ethics to have written in the past hundred years. It is nearly impossible to address ethics in contemporary philosophy without saying something about John Rawls. Central to his theory of justice are the concepts of fairness and equality from behind what he terms a "veil of ignorance". Rawls's veil of ignorance is a component of the way people can construct society.

He refers to an "original position" in which a person is attempting to determine a fair arrangement for society without any preconceived notions or prejudices. In this original position, people are behind what Rawls calls a "Veil of Ignorance" and do not know where they will fall in the social hierarchy in terms of race, class, sex, disability, and other relevant factors.

Rawls is a Kantian liberal in that he believes that principles of justice should be universalizable, and so the only way to ensure that people will select fair principles of justice is to be certain that they do not know how the principles they select might affect them as individuals. A person behind the "veil of ignorance" does not know which side of a social contract he or she will be on, does not know his or her race, class, sex, or status in society.

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A person who does not know what privileges he or she will be born with (or without) is, in Rawls' view, more likely to construct a society that does not arbitrarily assign privilege based on characteristics that should have no bearing on what people get. Rawls believes that a society cannot be just without fairness and equality and believes this veil of ignorance both reveals

the biases of current society and can help to prevent biases in establishing future social arrangements.

Rawls is often thought of as a liberal philosopher given his position emphasizing fairness regardless of social status. His philosophy can be used to justify programs like affirmative action but has also been used by the more politically conservative to argue that the American political system allows each person a fair chance and that most people would choose the American political system from behind a veil of ignorance. Source: John Rawls-A Theory of Justice