

John Rawls' Sociopolitical Order

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Rawls presents a social contract theory of politics that is based on the principle of justice as fairness; the aim is to create procedurally illustrate the principles for the “basic structure of society”. The basic structure of society for Rawls involved all of a society's political, social and economic institutions, and how they fit into a unified whole by means of the first principle. Rawls articulates the first principle of the modern institution as being “justice as fairness”, focused predominately on distribution of basic social goods, such as rights, products, duties, and freedoms, without stipulations on what or how one should go about sing them. This conception of the modern state was a response against the dominant theory of modified utilitarianism (as seen in John Stuart Mill's though), and argues instead that we need to know and understand how every individual citizen understands themselves and how they believe their lives should be. For this however, Rawls does not require every individual to share moral values; he only requires the basic liberal tenet of noninterference into the moral values of others. Rawls' modern state requires respect for toleration. (Rawls, 1971)

Due to Rawls' modern state, being based on a theory of fair distribution and on respect for toleration, I argue that the sociopolitical order Rawls favours is social democracy. This order is consistent with his moral principles, as his principles are based on equality of

opportunity. To argue this, I will first define a social democracy and illustrate where Rawls' modern state is much the same. I will continue by further elaborating on Rawls' moral principles, and will finish by explaining how a social democracy follows from those moral principles to ...

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...est balance the reflective equilibrium.

With all of the above considered, it is abundantly clear that Rawls is ultimately in favour of a social democratic sociopolitical order. To illustrate this, I have explained social democracy as a ideology and have shown how Rawls in "[A Theory of Justice](#)" supports the tenets of social democracy. Further, I have explained how Rawls' moral philosophy, in this case the "veil of ignorance", is consistent with social democracy in terms of equality of opportunity. Thus I conclude that contrary to the label of liberal philosopher, self-prescribed or otherwise, Rawls truly supports social democracy.

Works Cited

Social democracy. (2013). Encyclopædia Britannica

Rawls, J. (1971). Theory of justice. In S. Kahn (Ed.), Political philosophy: The essential texts (2 ed., pp. 694-709). New York, New York: Oxford University Press.

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