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APOIO:



Rawls and the meaning of development

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John Rawls did not explicitly write about development. But his writings have much to say about what is development and how it should be shaped. Many of Rawls' ideas have been famously translated into development ethics by authors such as Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum in establishing their own theories. As a result, Rawls' concerns and propositions have not been fully systematised and characterised in their integrity from a development perspective. The Theory of Justice has been used by development theorists as a scarecrow not fully appreciated in its potential for development policies.

Within this context, the objective of this paper is to explore the implication of Rawls' ideas to some development issues. How can we think about issues such as poverty, inequality, economic growth, gender and racial discrimination, provision of public goods, among others, from a Rawlsian developmental perspective? To what extent are they different from development analyses proposed by Sen and Nussbaum? What are the main implications of Rawls' Theory of Justice vis-à-vis Political Liberalism? The paper is divided into three parts. The first part explores Rawls's arguments for 'justice as fairness' as a conceptual basis for development policies. The second part investigates similar implications based on 'political liberalism'. Finally, a range of development issues is examined based on Rawls' ideas. They are contrasted against views put forward by Sen and Nussbaum.