

What according to socrates is a just city essay sample

[Sociology](#), [Ethics](#)



According to Socrates a just city where most of the population is virtuous, because a just city is based on the virtues of wisdom, moderation, and courage. The reason the city came into existence was for justice, not pleasure and happiness. Wisdom and good judgment are based upon knowledge. Also, Socrates examines the effect of wealth on craftsmen, and states that if a potter gets rich, he will not be concerned for his craft and will become lazy and a bad potter; unless he remains poor, then he wont be able to afford the tools needed to become a good or better potter. As a result, both wealth and poverty cause bad work and workmen, and it should be the duty of the guardians to prevent these from coming into the city.

Then the men begin to discuss what is justice, and injustice. The first thing they come across is wisdom. They recognize that it comes from good judgment, which is clearly a kind of knowledge. Therefore, people make good judgments because of knowledge rather than ignorance. If a society ever got to the point of being totally just, the society would no longer have greed, drive for a better life, and it would not have poverty or wealth. The society would just stop. There would be no more invention, growth, or change.

This knowledge needs to be complete, rather than for just one skill. So it is recognized that it belongs with the guardians. Next, Glaucon and Socrates try to find where the Athens' courage comes from. Courage is the " power to preserve under all circumstances, the right, lawful opinion of what is and is not to be feared." Socrates and Glaucon find that the people in the city who exhibit this courageous behavior are the guardians of the city. The class system is based upon the knowledge of the forms, therefore the philosopher

kings and the guardians supply wisdom. The auxiliaries provide the courage, and the money makers supply moderation. When all three of these are realized justice is formed.

Now on to temperance, the two define it as a kind of control over certain desires and pleasures of the body. So, a temperate man is a master of himself. This means that a man's goodness rules over the unjust part of his soul. In the city, the good rules over the bad.

They then assume that the women, children, slaves, and free men who make the lesser part of the city, where those people are guided by reason, along with intelligence and right opinion are the better few. So, "the desires of the worthless many are controlled by the desires and knowledge of the decent few." Since Athens is a temperate city, many recognize the few as better people. Therefore everybody in this city should have the same opinion of who should rule. This results in a form of control existing among all people, and temperance resembles harmony, since there is an agreement in all parts.

Justice is the last part of the soul, and Socrates then comes to find that this is just handling your own matters, and not meddling in the affairs of others. This would entail the money makers becoming guardians. This is because it will eventually lead to wisdom, moderation, and courage. Justice is when each main group of the city does their job, and no one else's. Since each man is only truly good at one craft, if a person tries to interfere in someone else's affairs, he will be doing something without any skill, and this will lead

to weakness in the city, and eventually the city's death. It is wrong to do something that can harm the city because, not only is it wrong, but it is unjust. However, to determine a just individual you must find out if the soul has the same three parts of the city. Since the attributes of the city are driven from its people, the individuals have to have these same parts in their lives.

The soul has two parts, the rational and the irrational parts. This is evidence that there is eternal conflict. Someone's appetite and spirited are the irrational parts of the soul. Wisdom would be the rational side. Courage is the spirited part of the soul, but only if it can be controlled. Finally moderation is the appetitive part of the soul.

Socrates then goes on to see whether the philosophers or non-philosophers should rule the city of Athens. Those who rule the city must be the best citizens that are capable of guarding the laws and pursuits of the city. So Socrates asks the people around him who they feel is more capable to rule. The philosophers have the knowledge of the whole city, and the forms which makes them rash and wise. It is either those who see the truth, or those who only think that they see the truth. Everybody agrees that those who see the truth, and don't change any part of it are better than those who don't. Glaucon asks Socrates if he means that the future rulers are to have extensive knowledge of the Forms. Socrates then replies saying the rulers must possess knowledge of Goodness, understandably that would be one of the ways a man may recognize the goodness of Justice and Beauty.

Socrates then says that all philosophers must have honest in nature, and they must hate lies. This is because someone who is passionately in love will concern everything they do with what matters to him his love. Since philosophers love wisdom, and wisdom is very much related to truth, they must also love truth. Philosophers who have true vision are best suited to guard the laws and customs of a city. They are temperate, courageous, and just. Philosophers also learn easily and have a good memory. Finally, philosophers' grace and sense of proportion enable them to easily understand the nature of the forms. So, the philosophers will love the pleasures of the soul, not the pleasures of the body.

In order to make the citizens care about each other even more, Socrates proposes telling them a lie that all their training and upbringing was a dream, and that when the gods formed them at birth, he mixed gold into the guardians, silver into the auxiliaries, and iron and bronze into the farmers and craftsmen. However, they are all brothers, and their offspring need not be of the same metal as them. When they do find out what metal is in the soul of their offspring, they must demote or promote him or her accordingly. This means, the peoples concern for the city and each other will increase.

But, in order to prevent jealousy among the citizens, there will be no more private property beyond the bare essentials. So, nobody will have a house or treasure that isn't open to everyone. Citizens will lead a common life and eat in a common place. They will be told that because of the metals that are in their souls, therefore the people will have no human needs. It will be forbidden to handle silver or gold. If they ever possess houses, money land,

or anything that is valuable they will become farmers and enemies to the rest of the citizens, and they will remain hated.

Democracy comes from oligarchy because people want to get as rich as possible, and normally the only people that are getting rich, are the people who are rich already. The rulers are hesitant to let self-sufficient men from losing their property, so they buy it or lend them money. So the rulers are increasing their wealth even more. This proves that a city can't honor wealth and still have enough temperance in her citizens. Thus, an oligarchy neglects self control and encourages indulging in ones own fulfillment. So, the moneymakers convince any person with any excellence left to become a money-lover by giving him money. In order to prevent this, laws are passed so contracts are made at the contractors own risk.