

Social justice essay examples

[Law](#), [Justice](#)



Social justice can be defined as a) Historical inequities that affect present problems should be fixed until the real inequities no longer exist or have been addressed; b) the idea that wealth, power, and status should be re-distributed for the sake of the individual, the community, and society as a whole; or c) the responsibility of the government (or those who hold significant power) to ensure an essential quality of life for all its citizens. All of these relate directly to a country's historical values and economy, and have a dramatic effect on minorities and those not in power.

However, there are distinct differences between the three definitions as well. For instance, there are ideologies that maintain that wealth and power redistribution is immoral, as those who would receive it would be effectively 'taking' it from those who worked for it. There are also those who may be unrepentant about prior historical inequities, or feel that they should not be negated through power and wealth redistribution. Furthermore, some may not believe that it is the responsibility of the government to redistribute wealth, or that the 'basic quality of life' for all citizens should not be executed through wealth redistribution. These definitions involve achieving justice in different ways, and some are predicated on the idea that historical inequalities have to be corrected in order to achieve justice.

Social contract theory, or contractarian theory, can help to achieve this notion of social justice in America. This theory states that individuals must adhere to the communal sense of good and evil in order to maintain that society. According to Hobbes, there is a struggle between the laws and rights of nature of all human beings. People have the right, or the liberty, to do whatever they can to stave off death and see to their interests; however, in

order to interact with a group of other human beings, they must voluntarily give up those rights of nature to an extent to allow other people to have a communal sense of civilization. This is known as a social contract theory, wherein a group of people understand that they cannot just follow their urges, as that would disrupt the society in which they live. Socrates also followed this theory, as he believed one should subordinate self-interest in order to live in a society that oversees its peers. If this theory were implemented, it would create a just society that self-regulates.

Social contract theory is more or less in place in the United States, as there is a general fealty to authority and an understanding that everyone has to play by the same rules as everyone else. However, there are ways the theory could be applied more evenly; for example, those with more money have a greater chance of avoiding punishment for mistakes, despite those mistakes potentially having greater consequences for others (e. g. banks sabotaging the housing market, those with higher incomes enjoying lower tax rates) (Patterson, 2011). The idea of the social contract theory runs contrary to libertarianism, in which people should enjoy little regulation and be able to pursue their own self-interest; this attitude, arguably, is what allows some to take advantage of others, as they rely on the free market and their own resources to get ahead by themselves.

References

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