

Example of essay on political philosophers

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



PLATO

The role of leadership in a state or an organization is one that requires a great deal of forethought and determination – an entire philosophy is dedicated to the employment of sound leadership principles when others are at one's command. Plato's "The Republic" discusses these aspects in detail, settling upon the idea of the philosopher-king as the ultimate solution for effective leadership of an organization or state. He explores the role of philosophy through a number of analogies that, in essence, argue for an aristocracy wherein the philosopher is allowed the power to make policy due to his greater understanding of the world around him. In the analogy of the sun, the Form of the Good is painted as the thing that the philosopher-king desires the most. Also, there is the analogy of the line, wherein there are four different levels of cognitive activity a human is able to reach; the fourth and highest level can only be reached by philosopher-kings, granting them higher understanding of the world, and the wisdom to rule it.

Central to his philosophy is the idea of the philosopher-king, detailed in Book VI of The Republic. These would be the rulers of society who would preside over the ideal city-state of Kallipolis. A philosopher would love wisdom, and would seek true knowledge instead of merely educating themselves; of course, they would have to maintain the ship of state, comparing a nation to a ship where the philosopher king would be the captain. "A true pilot must of necessity pay attention to the seasons, the heavens, the stars, the winds, and everything proper to the craft if he is really to rule a ship" (The Republic, 6. 488d). According to Plato, those who sail the ship and work under it (the

citizens of the philosopher-king's rule) have not really seen a true philosopher, and so will ignore what he calls their "idle stargazing."

ARISTOTLE

Aristotle's perspectives on the state and the individual differ greatly from Locke's. For one, his concept of the state is related to the concept of the human good, wherein authority by the state is used to create a common good that works toward the happiness of its citizens: "Even if the end is the same for an individual and for a city-state, that of the city-state seems at any rate greater and more complete to attain and preserve. For although it is worthy to attain it for only an individual, it is nobler and more divine to do so for a nation or city-state" (EN I. 1. 1094b7-10). Basically, it is of the highest good to serve the state, as the individual is dedicating their life to a higher ideal – that of serving the absolute good. A citizen is defined as anyone who is able to participate in the governmental process, and Aristotle believes that the vast majority of people in the polis have the power to be citizens. "He who has the power to take part in the deliberative or judicial administration of any state is said by us to be a citizen of that state; and speaking generally, a state is a body of citizens sufficing for the purpose of life." (Aristotle Politics, Book 3).

SOCRATES

Socrates believed in a vision of justice that splits it into two types, the kind for man and the kind for the state, or polis. Cities are more important and larger in scale than a man, with many different facets of justice, including political. He forms a perfectly ideal and just city for his hypothesis, and looks

at how justice enters into this city. Through this city, he builds on his thesis in order to determine the best way for justice to thrive for its own sake. According to Socrates, the quality of an education is absolutely important, as getting the wrong kind of education will poison your mind with erroneous ideas. Specialization is an important aspect of education – finding an individual's best strengths and speaking most fervently to them, allowing that person to serve the polis the best way he can. Whether it is through food or medicine, or craftsmanship, the producing class is the basic specialization to fill, because it fills the most pressing needs of the people. According to Socrates, "The result, then, is that more plentiful and better-quality goods are more easily produced if each person does one thing for which he is naturally suited, does it at the right time, and is released from having to do any of the others." A specialist can do one thing very well, and rely on the others to provide the rest of the things that the people need due to their specializations.

This basic form of the city, from the producing class on, is the "healthy city," allowing it to only be operated based on what is necessary. This kind of city is out of the realm of reality, as some desires are unnecessary but must be met. Culture and art are not necessary for physical survival, but people crave them anyway.

JOHN LOCKE

John Locke's philosophy is strongly associated with right-libertarianism: In classic liberalism/libertarianism, limited government is the key to a successful society; individual liberty and choice is placed above everything else, and people should be allowed to pursue their self-interest. Free market

capitalism is heavily linked to this principle, as it is thought that the concept of a free market would allow people to realize their destinies according to their will and resources. John Locke was known as the Father of Classical Liberalism, and believed that people earn their property through the labor expended to create their goods and properties.

Locke believed that the people, not the state, should have ultimate sovereignty over their lives. In essence, he argues that people are imbued with equal rights handed to them by the state of nature; this is “ a state of perfect freedom of acting and disposing of their own possessions and persons as they think fit within the bounds of the law of nature” (Locke 70). Locke believes in a concept known as the state of nature, wherein people do not have the right to tell other people what to do. At the same time, Locke does not think this gives men license to behave as they will: “” The state of nature has a law of nature to govern it, which obliges every one: and reason, which is that law, teaches all mankind, who will but consult it” (Locke, Ch. 6). This interaction between the state and law of nature helps to chiefly define Locke’s perspective; the state is an empire formed by a confluence of these two elements of nature, creating a society where no one is oppressed or taken advantage of, but people are not controlled by any outside force.

References

Aristotle. Politics.

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Plato. The Republic.