

Platos detailed description

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Response paper about Plato's detailed of how it should be decided who will rule. To adequately respond about who should rule and have political power according to Plato's perspective, it would be necessary to recall his philosophy about meritocracy and leaders in his celebrated work The Republic. In the book, Plato outlined who, what and the circumstance or policy that would make somebody to rule.

To have a just " policy" or " basis" for somebody to rule, Plato outlined the need for a society that subscribes to meritocracy. By meritocracy, it meant that having a station in society depending on one's capacity, intelligence, talent and hard work. It is far from monarchy which a child of king or queen automatically becomes a ruler by birth right. In Plato's meritocracy, a child of the king does not have to rule if he or she is unfit to have a political power. Rather, a child of a peasant can even be a ruler provided that the person has demonstrated the qualities necessary to become a ruler.

The ruler comes from a ruling class which Plato designates as the Guardians. The Guardians has a heart of bronze and silver which meant that they have the physical capability and also the intellectual prowess to rule. In short, they are the class who has the potential to rule. They should be the smartest and the strongest. Guardians must also have wisdom which can be acquired by diligent study of which the truth can be found. Plato did not discriminate by birth but by capability and will of who should rule and exercise political power over a state.

The policy or tests to become the Guardian that will rule is unforgiving according to Plato's standards. The person will have to engage in diligent study and gymnastics (the term for exercise during Plato's time) to become intellectually and physically able to rule. In addition, a ruler must also live an

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ascetic life and far from the life of a privilege person so that the ruler will not get spoiled which will weaken him. For Plato's perspective, living a life of comfort will weaken a ruler because it will prejudice him to perpetuate the life that he is beginning to like. To guard against this character weakness, it is mandated that a Guardian or ruler must live a simple life.

A Guardian has no possession also and is not even paid despite the tremendous political power that he has. Whatever that he has should be donated by society at large for is not paid for ruling. The rationale for this stringent life was that for the Guardian to focus solely on ruling. That is, if he will dispense a law or administers justice or that of the state, that he may do so for the interest of the state and greater majority and to himself.

To some extent, this idea of Plato about the ruling class is still carried to this day where we expect our leaders to unselfishly serve with meager government salaries.