

# Platos republic

Philosophy



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Socrates describes a perfect city in Plato's *The Republic*. Many questions are asked in the book, such as "What is an ideal city?" Or, "What is justice?" And, "Is justice in the city possible?" Socrates tries to find the real meaning of the word justice. He starts with justice within a single person, and then he tries to take that concept and apply it to the city. Then, to figure out the perfect city, he goes back to the single person to find justice there. He shows that the perfect city needs the people in it to be assigned to their place.

People who play their role in the city must be people of justice for the city to have justice. For Socrates, his idea of a perfect city has all the needed requirements for the city to exist with harmony. In order to develop the idea for a perfect city, Socrates has to create two versions of his city. In his first version of a city, each person in the city fills a need for the city. They are like gears in a watch, and they must fit perfectly. But a city that runs well like a watch doesn't make a just city. Socrates brother points out that people need luxuries and entertainment.

So the second version of the city needs luxuries. Plato's "ideal city" is really the search for the truth of justice, if Socrates were able to find the relationship between the soul and city in his "ideal city" then he would have the true meaning of justice. We saw from the reading how he broke down the city's parts and also the soul. According to Plato, Socrates broke down the perfect city into four parts; each part is tied to a specific virtue that he believes will help define justice. The first three virtues are wisdom, courage, and moderation.

Wisdom is the whole knowledge, which describes the rulers of the city. The rulers should be the ones who incorporate philosophy and ruling together to

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rule the city wisely. Courage describes the guardians, whose job was to defend the city from invasion and take new lands for the city. The third virtue of the ideal city was moderation which is the concept of self-control and each person knowing his or her role, also the concept of "one man, one job". In *The Republic*, Plato divides the city into three classes: gold, silver, and brass and iron souls.

Each class is designated to have a specific virtue. He believes that wisdom, courage, moderation, and justice combine together to form *The Republic*. Plato's four virtues individually do not produce a perfect society. A combination of the four in each citizen is needed to have the ideal society. In Plato's idea for the perfect "republic", he decides that the basis of the city will be on four virtues. The first of them is wisdom. Plato defines wisdom as knowledge of the city as a whole. Of the three classes, the gold souls possess the virtue of wisdom.

The gold souls are the only class whose knowledge goes beyond the mere facts to the level of true wisdom. In *The Republic*, the gold souls would be the philosopher kings, because they have been taught to see the truth of all things. The idea that philosophers should be kings would infuriate the leaders. Socrates threatened their positions and their qualification for being leaders. This is likely why they made false charges against him and killed him, as shown in his *Socrates' Apology*.? The second virtue that Plato defines is courage.

Courage is the preservation of the opinion produced by law, through education about what things are bad and what things are good. Courage can be found in the silver souls. Plato uses the example that when  
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dyers want to dye wool, they start with the background. They need the right kind of white material, and they have to prepare it carefully; and if they go to this trouble, you cannot bleach the color out. If they do a poor job of it, the cloth quickly becomes washed-out and faded. Plato uses the dying analogy to city how he wishes to train the silver souls.

He states that the people will undergo a precise training. Only uplifting music and physical activity will only be allowed. Plato wants a good upbringing to make the right ideas permanent in them, so that the bleach of pleasure, grief, fear, or death, would not wash the true colors from their souls. Once they get to this point of having a clear, firm grasp of what is really dangerous to a man, they knew their only task was to show courage. The silver souls can be compared with the guardians of the city who were not selected to be the leaders. They are also referred to as the auxiliaries.

The third virtue in The Republic, is moderation. Plato defines moderation as the kind of harmony between the brass and silver souls. Moderation is the ability to control desires and to be the master of one's own self. There are two things at work in a man's heart. One is good, and one is bad. The bad can overwhelm the good. If the people have bad training or keep company with the wrong people, the bad force grows powerful and can overwhelm the good. If the good one controls them, then there is moderation; but if the bad one controls, they are a slave to their own desires.

When a city as a whole is moderate, it is in harmony. Moderation is different from wisdom or courage. It is found not just in the gold and silver souls, but as something that runs throughout the city. The kings and the guardians must possess these to be people of justice and to help the city be a city of

justice. The brass and iron class were the workers, and they are not held to the same high standard of sacrifice and knowledge that the silver and gold classes are, but as individuals they are required to have the same balance of the three virtues.

However, they are stuck in the cave, looking at the forms on the walls. Their role in the city is to not be as enlightened as their leaders.? The fourth virtue comes when the city has a perfect balance of the other three. That is justice. The ideal city described in the Republic is ideal because it relates all essential parts to bring harmony among the different kind of people and the virtues that go hand in hand with to bring about justice. Socrates did have a belief that the person's sex should not matter when it comes to their role in the perfect city.

People were assigned to their roles based on if they fit the role - that is all. Socrates believed that if a woman can do everything a man can do then so be it. She could become a guardian. So, if a woman is fit for a guardian position, she should be a guardian. This belief was ahead of its time by more than 2000 years. Therefore, the question should be asked, " Is such a city possible, or is it just an ideal that is good to dream about? " My answer would be that it is impossible - because it seems that everyone has a specific role to follow depending upon their abilities, both physically and mentally.

What Socrates assumed is that with all the justice, people will be content with where they are. People who do not have much always look at the rich and want that kind of life. People on the bottom are always going to want more, which is human nature. This part of human nature will probably never be kept down, no matter how much justice there is in a city. The people of <https://assignbuster.com/platos-republic-research-paper-samples/>

the city will be happy for some time, but the people at the bottom will ask questions about why they're stuck in the job they have. When one group decides they want more the happiness will be destroyed, because each group will want more and more.

The lower groups always want to reach for the top. When we see kids today, they are always striving to become the best and do something out of the ordinary, something that may be out of their class but if determined they can accomplish any feat. I know from my own experience, growing up in India, that big problems occur in a society when we classify everything, because the lower classes want to be higher. This is just basic human nature. Putting Plato and Socrates' city to real life, take any country or city. For instance, India is a country that still has a lot of problems with castes.

The highest caste was the educated Brahmins and the lowest caste is still called " Untouchables. " The Brahmins were only to be knowledgeable, or educated, and there were also people who entered the armies or were placed into them. The armies were the guardians of India, protecting the kingdoms and constantly looking for new land to acquire. The lower castes worked as tradesman and farmers. They took care of the basic needs of everyone in the country by producing products for the entire country. When you look at India today, it is changing. In the cities, you see people succeeding no matter what their caste is.

Untouchables are getting educated more and they are not held back from getting a job just because they are untouchable, and India is improving without the required placement of people in lifelong roles. What happened? People do not want to be placed in certain roles, even if the role suits them.

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It is fine if you are the upper class, but the people at the bottom want to achieve success and rise to the top, which breaks down Socrates's perfect city. No one wants to be content with being at the bottom; everyone wants to be able to try to be at the top.

Plato's ideal city would only work if people were content with their God-given positions. If there is harmony between the groups, then there is happiness, as we see in the soul and city throughout *The Republic*. However, in real life people find harmony with themselves when they achieve their goals and live a good life. I agree with that philosophy because I also want to achieve more and I am happy when I achieve my goals. Unfortunately, no one is truly happy though because people will always want more. Video References ? <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3bVBpLjh13E> ? <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d2afuTvUzBQ>