**What is a Just Society?**

With the current friction found in modern day society, the concept of a just society appears to be an unattainable utopia. This utopia being a society where everyone one is equal, and there is no perception of unfairness. While this utopia may seem unattainable, it is still important to understand what this society might look like and the principles behind it. This is important because it gives modern day society a goal to strive for and can lead to insights on how current society may be changed for the better. However, there are many different views on what a just society may be without appearing biased towards certain people or classes who may support the view. Philosophers try to define this just society from an unbiased point of view which all classes and types of people may agree upon.

One theory of a just society is provided by Plato in his book “Republic.” In this book, Plato discusses a society where everyone has their role in society and contribute to society in their own unique way. Not only do people have different roles in society, but they want to have that role and are the ones best suited for that role. This appeals to the idea that humans tend to enjoy things that they are good at, and dislike things they are not good at. Plato also describes four virtues of this society; it must be wise, courageous, moderate, and just. Wisdom applies to the leaders of the society, which is most likely held by philosophers. This wisdom must also be able to be passed down to new members. Courage applies to the protectors of the society and their ability to stand against any enemies. Moderation is different in that it applies to all members of society. In this context, moderation implies that members of different roles do not act outside their own role or interfere with the roles of others. Just is applied to all members of the society as well, which means everyone in the society can perform whatever role they want. However, the idea here is that the role a person in the society will perform is the role they will perform best at. This theory of a just society from Plato provides a very concrete foundation on which a society can be built, and appeals to people because they get to perform the role they are best at and enjoy doing. However, there are some downsides of this type of society as well.

Plato’s theory on justice depends on people fulfilling their roles in society based upon what they enjoy and are best at. Where to Plato what you are best at and what you enjoy are the same. However, it appears to be biased towards philosophers since Plato put philosophers at the top of society as the leaders because they carry wisdom. While the society is supposed to be moderate, so the philosophers cannot, or should not, interfere with the roles of a farmer for example, it still suggests that a farmer would be in capable of being a leader in the society. This also leads to a potential problem where not all of the necessary roles of a society are met. For example, if no one in a society was a good farmer, then how would the society provide food? Based on Plato’s theory, it would be unjust to force someone to be a farmer when they do not enjoy farming or are better at a different role.

John Rawls provides another possible theory for the idea of a just society. Rawls theory is similar in its conception as to how John Locke’s theory is conceived. Rawls’ just society uses a thought experiment called the original position. In the original position, a person is asked to design a society from the point of view of not knowing where in the society they will be. This is meant to give the person a completely unbiased point of view in which to design the rest of the society. This is ideal because the person is designing the society from an unbiased point of view, and therefore the society will come out balanced with favoring any type of people or classes. If the society did, this would be undesirable because there is a chance that the person could end up in the unfavorable class in society.

While Rawls’ thought experiment provides a good way to conceive of a just society from an unbiased point of view, it is not without flaws. One factor the original position does not take into account is the human factor and our tendency to not always act in the most logical or common sense way. From the unbiased point of view, it is assumed that the person will make the society equal because they do not know where in society where they would end up, and would not want to end up in an unfavorable part of society. However, due to human nature, it is possible people will take risks while designing a society, similar to gambling where in society they may end up.

In my personal opinion, I believe that John Rawls has a better setup for a just society. It is clear that the original position aims to provide an unbiased point of view to develop the society from. While there is the possibility people may try to gamble in this position, they are less likely to make extreme risks, therefore making any risks they take in society moderate. While this may not result in a perfect society, it still closely resembles a just society because it did not stray far from those principles. Another reason this risk taking might not seem as bad as it sounds is because this argument suggests that the people taking the risks are knowingly doing so. By knowingly taking these risks, the person is more likely to accept the position he is in even if it does not end up the way we hope. Another reason I like the original position is that it does not give a rigid structure on how the society will be when it is conceived. This is different from Plato, where he gives a fairly rigid structure on how society should be laid out. I think this is advantageous because the society will tailor itself to the people who will be in it. Not every societal structure will be the best structure for every group of people, and Rawls’ theory takes this into account much better than Plato.

The principles of what makes a society just tie in closely to the principles of morality. This has an especially strong connection to the original position. This is because the original position aims to take the principles of morality from an unbiased view, and use them to shape a just society. It is hard to imagine a just society where the members of society do not share moral principles, because it is these moral principles which guides us as to what is right and wrong. Therefore, the principles of morality in what is right and wrong will have a strong influence on what is right and wrong in a just society. If it is morally right to steal based on a societies moral principles, then it would be expected that there would be stealing in this society. A society without stealing then would be unjust based on these moral principles.

Defining the principles of a just society can be very difficult. This is because it involves large groups of people who all must agree on certain sets of principles the society must abide by. Due to the diversity of human nature that can be found on this world, it would be extremely hard to define a rigid structure that will work for all possible groups of people. Instead, it seems more practical to develop a society based on the principles of the members of that society.