Week 2 Discussion 2: Utopian Ideas

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Author Note

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In Plato's Republic, his teacher Socrates engages some of his followers in a discussion over creating an ideal city. Socrates's ideas and responses to the various arguments form the basis of Plato's utopian society.

The ideal city is built upon a highly developed society that is divided into three class divisions; the guardians, craftsmen and farmers, and the auxiliaries. The guardians serve as the city’s military, embodying physical and mental strength. The auxiliaries are the complete guardians within the city, who form the highest class. They are endowed with knowledge and the love of philosophy, guarding the city against internal friends and external enemies. They are concerned with the good of the city before themselves, serving as the foundation for the city as well as the guardian’s convictions (White, 1988). The third class within the city are its craftsmen and farmers, who are as important as any other class. They fulfill critical roles in society to produce goods that the rest of the city needs.

To offset a perceived resentment with these class divisions, Socrates proposes a noble lie to prevent citizens from feeling that they are within an unfair category. The lie is noble because it results in a good outcome rather than evil, and helps with internal cohesion. The lie is that a certain god has given each citizen a form of metal that determines their place in society. Being in accordance with one's metal will help people find their destined place in society and realize their full potential. Thus each citizen will be tasked towards a job that they perform best until the city starts to function as a single unit; each member benefitting from one another’s work (Magstadt, 2017). An ideal city is, thus, one in which each member fulfills their due role, while the noble lie would prevent them from resenting other classes.

Socrates and Plato built a solid foundation for their utopia in which each citizen performs their due role. Although, they are subjected to a noble lie, but that lie achieves profitable outcomes and helps people remain satisfied with their roles.

# References

Magstadt, T. M. (2017). Comparative Political systems: Models and Theories. In *Understanding politics: ideas, institutions, and issues* (12th ed., pp. 49-159). Boston, MA: Cengage Learning.

White, N. P. (1988). *A companion to Plato's Republic.* (4th ed.). Indianapolis, Ind.: Hackett.