



What is an ideal society?

[Source: Heteconomist](#)



I'm sure everybody has their own pet notion of the ideal society. Mine goes something like this. The means of production should be owned in common and production planned to ensure everyone in the world is well fed, housed, educated, and supplied with appropriate care (including healthcare, childcare, old-aged care, etc.) as well as public communications, information, and recreational facilities.

Environmental sustainability should be a central consideration in how production, transportation, and consumption items are designed. As much as possible, and increasingly over time, the menial aspects of the production processes involved in meeting these basic physical needs should be automated, freeing up individuals to focus on vocations of their own choosing, whether physical, nature-oriented, sporting, intellectual, scientific, artistic, social, spiritual, or whatever, as long as the chosen activities don't infringe on the liberty of others or cause unacceptable harm to the environment. These vocations would be reward in themselves and not require material compensation.

For instance, in this ideal society, scientists would work for the pleasure of the job and receive the same basic amenities as everybody else. Their minimum labor-time commitment could, however, be met through their research activities. Similarly, the recordings of musicians or the books of authors would be made freely available (e.g. though free internet download), but the

facilities for producing the recordings or books would be made available free of charge to suitably qualified individuals (perhaps on the basis of proficiency, popularity of output, or some combination). There would also be facilities provided for dabblers in the various vocations, but not necessarily to the extent made available to the experts in the respective fields where cost in terms of resources remained a constraint. Even so, over time, technological improvements would tend to increase availability of desired facilities.

Of course, short of the general community undergoing something akin to a great spiritual awakening, it is hard to see how we could get from where we are now to anything remotely resembling such a society any time soon. In countries such as the US, for instance, it seems hard to imagine any move away from the private ownership of capital and the current system of property rights in the foreseeable future. For that matter, it seems hard to see how even a modest shift towards social democracy is likely to occur, given the mindset of the general community and the tenor of the public debate. Further shifts to the right seem at least as likely as shifts to the left.

[More on ideal society and utopia](#)

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