

Whose Justice?
Proxe Station Instructions

<h1>whose</h1>	<h1>JUST</h1>	<h1>ICE?</h1>	<p>Can Science Define Justice?</p> <p>“What if I believe that the highest moral good is [individual freedom], while you believe that the highest good is [happiness for some group] Who decides ” what is a successful life?</p> <p>—Albert physicist Sean Carroll (paraphrased to Sam Harris, on why science cannot define justice and morality)</p> <p>There is a way to decide</p> <p>There is no way to decide</p>
<p>Of These Below, Which Most Infringe You?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legacy admissions Growing economic inequality Unfair trade agreements Racial bias in the criminal justice system Lack of democracy Not enough corporate regulation No restrictions for past rights violators Infringement on freedom of religion Unfettered tobacco 	<p>Which Ruling Was the Most Unjust?</p> <p><i>select one</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> U.C. v. Bakke 1978 (Racial quotas in college admissions) Citizens United 2010 (Corporations are people; campaign donations are free speech; they do not need disclosure) Roe v. Wade 1973 (Abortion is legal and safe; violates) “Obamacare” 2012 (Government can require individuals to purchase health care) 	<p>Redistribution of Wealth = Justice?</p> <p><i>select one</i></p> <p>Year of Jubilee</p> <p>“This fiftieth year is sacred—it is a time of freedom and of celebration when everyone will receive back their original property, and indentured servants will return home to their families. The land, moreover, shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine; for you are but aliens and sojourners with Me.” —The Bible, Leviticus 25:10, 23</p> <p>Unjust <input type="text"/> Just <input type="text"/></p>	<p>Which Justice is Most Important?</p> <p><i>select one</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Getting what you deserve (Meritocratic Justice) Baseline equity (Distributive Justice) Freedom and liberty (Libertarian Justice) Restoring a quality of relationship (Restorative Justice)
<p>Criminals Should</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suffer themselves (retributive justice) Help restore the harm they do (restorative justice) 	<p>Liberty = Justice?</p> <p><i>select as many as apply</i></p> <p>Justice means you are...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free from other people's religions Free from other people's moralities Free to secede from any union you don't want Free from unwanted relationships 	<p>What Do You Owe Everyone Else? (Even If It's Expensive?)</p> <p><i>select as many as your budget</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clean air, water, food Education Affordable housing Medicine, health care A level playing field Secure retirement Nothing Other 	<p>Why Should Your Definition of Justice Prevail?</p> <p><i>select one</i></p> <p>WE MAKE THE RULES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theological foundation Philosophical foundation There is no "justice," only power I don't care I don't know Other

Purpose

The goal behind this proxe station is to engage people on a personal and intellectual level about the topic of justice. It aims to challenge both Christians and non-Christians alike. I believe in the idea of a Christian restorative justice that has concrete implications for critiquing other types of justice (libertarian) and reframing other types (meritocratic, distributive). For non-Christians, I think they struggle with the sense that the four main types of justice (meritocratic, distributive, libertarian, restorative) are arbitrary and don't have a foundation. They don't have a true way of ordering them. Nor do they have a way of knowing if their version of justice is right; they have no epistemology. Hence, they may get to the last slide and confess, 'There is no justice; only power.' For Christians, I think many American Christians have been misled to think that libertarian justice is biblical, which leads to a laissez-faire market and the priority of the individual. I aim to challenge both types of people.

Christian restorative justice is rooted in the creation order and is affirmed and restored by Jesus' teaching, personhood, and work. It is epistemologically grounded in the historicity of Jesus' resurrection, the significance of which is explained by the Scriptures. Hence there is a way of knowing that this type of justice is factually true.

‘Whose Justice?’ Proxe Station Introduction

1. Invite people to participate: ‘Hi, I’m _____ and I’m with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship. We’re asking people how we experience friendships and what we think about them.’
2. Give them a set of ‘dots’ and a quick overview: ‘Answer the questions with the dots. Go top to bottom, and left to right.’
3. Tell them that you’ll ‘When you’re done, if you have time, I’d like to ask a few follow-up questions.’
4. Give them time to engage with the material.

The Big Picture Conversations: The conversations I’m hoping to have can move from:

1. *Consistency Question:* Ask if they think they are consistent
 - a. For example, one person put ‘Criminals Should Help Restore the Harm They Do’ (restorative justice) and then answered ‘Which Justice is Most Important’ as ‘Meritocratic’. How is that consistent?
 - b. Another person, on the slide, ‘Liberty = Justice?’ put three of the four, except ‘Free to Secede from Any Union You Want.’ When I asked, ‘Why not that one?’ he had no answer. He said that nation-states need to be preserved. But I asked why. Why does an individual need to surrender their libertarian freedom in favor of the nation state? The logical end of libertarian freedom is divorce, broken friendships, secession, and Civil War. The American Civil War is the logical end of the tradition of libertarian freedom in the U.S.
 - c. Another person put ‘Redistribution of Wealth = Justice’ as ‘Unjust’ and then answered ‘What Do You Owe Everyone Else?’ with ‘A Level Playing Field.’ But the Leviticus 25 text and the Jubilee principle is the ultimate level playing field. You can’t pass down advantage or disadvantage to your grandkids.
 - d. Some people don’t know what they’re saying when they answer ‘Can Science Define Justice?’ They think you can balance things, but that’s a presupposition. There is no way to arbitrate between two directly competing moral claims like ‘individual freedom’ and ‘maximizing economic wealth’ for people or some group of people.
2. *The Truth Question:* Push people on the last slide. Most people don’t want to say, ‘There is no justice, only power,’ but won’t know how to really avoid that reality, ultimately.
 - a. There is no secular basis for organizing the four types of justice – meritocratic, distributive, libertarian, restorative – in an intellectually grounded way. What makes your way of organizing this inherently superior to someone else’s way?
 - b. What philosophical foundation is there? Human dignity doesn’t just float in midair. It has to be grounded in something.
 - i. Libertarian freedom has no intellectual foundation. Only Rousseau and later John Locke started with the individual, to maximize civil freedom, and built society up from there. Rousseau’s theory was that we are born into the state of nature as free individuals. So the society and the government that interferes the least is the most just, by definition. But that is an arbitrary move. As an Asian person looking at Western philosophy and culture, I would offer this critique: I was under the impression that we are not born free individuals into some ‘state of nature.’ In fact, Rousseau’s idea came from his vague impressions of Native Americans, whom he as a European continental philosopher had never in fact met. Instead, we are born into *families*, with benefits and obligations. That is when Enlightenment political philosophy left the other disciplines of history and anthropology and sociology. It became completely unmoored in an unreality. Convenient and perhaps an attractive political theory, but utterly illusory.
 1. See Michael Sandel, *Justice: What’s the Right Thing to Do?* See his last chapter!
 - c. There is a theological foundation in Christian theology, which is grounded in the historical Jesus and his resurrection. God is restoring people to who He always meant for us to be.
 - d. **AND IF THERE IS A RESTORATIVE JUSTICE THAT IS ROOTED IN GOD, THEN EVERY OTHER CLAIM TO JUSTICE IS ACTUALLY AN OBSTRUCTION OF JUSTICE. HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT YOU ARE OBSTRUCTING JUSTICE???**

3. *The Human Nature Question*: This does not come up on the slides, but it's worth mentioning. I don't think that the problem of injustice is just conceptual. It is also emotional and spiritual. We oppose God's true justice. Something in us doesn't want to give up. And something in us doesn't want to accept this.

"God took human nature in the person of Jesus to heal and transform human nature itself. He shared in our broken human nature so we might share in His healed human nature. So we could become more just people."

- a. Have you heard it put this way before?
- b. Do you want to hear more about that?
- c. How do you explain why we do evil and unjust things? Three options:
 - i. Relativism: There is no real good and evil.
 - ii. Because of external things: Bad circumstances make us do bad things
 - iii. Because of internal things: This is scary for most people because there is no belief system other than Christianity that claims to deal with the internal, human nature problem.