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Bachelor´s Thesis

Plato and Aristotle on the Functions of the State
(Názor Platóna a Aristotela na Funkcie Štátu)

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Declaration of Authorship

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Prague, August 1, 2023   Samuel Blecharž

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Abstract

This thesis is a critical examination in a comparative perspective between Plato and Aristotle, paying special emphasis about functions of a state between those two authors deriving knowledge from their own literature as well as other contemporary authors nowadays.

This thesis natural goal is to provide its readers a comprehensive idea about a craddle of democracy in Athens that shaped western political thought paying special attention between those two authors and their ideas about proper functions of a state. Then I provide my valuable insights about the topic, considering similarities, differences and my opinion.

The Athenian state, as it existed in ancient Athens, was one of the earliest and most influential examples of democracy in the history of Western civilization. The functions of the Athenian state can be understood through various institutions and mechanisms that governed different aspects of society and governance

It is important to note that while Athens was a democracy, it was not a modern representative democracy. The functions of the state were largely carried out by a small subset of the population—free male citizens. Women, slaves, and non-citizens had limited or no political rights or participation in the Athenian state. Additionally, Athens was just one city-state in ancient Greece, and the functions of other Greek city-states might have varied to some extent.

In ancient Athens, the government system can be described as a direct democracy, where eligible male citizens had the opportunity to participate directly in decision-making and the administration of the state. The Athenian government underwent various changes over time, but the classical period (5th and 4th centuries BCE) is often regarded as the peak of Athenian democracy.

It's important to recognize that while Athens is renowned for its democracy, it was not a representative democracy like many modern systems. Instead, it was a direct democracy in

which eligible citizens had the opportunity to directly participate in decision-making and governance.

1. Introduction

In my Bachelor´s thesis I try to provide a comparative outlook on two of in my opinion the most influential philosophers of all time Plato and Aristotle evaluating their similarities, differences with regards to ideal form of a government and functions of a state with respect to their best form of constitution.

Plato and Aristotle were two of the most influential philosophers in ancient Greece, whose ideas continue to shape Western thought to this day. They lived in the same era but had distinct approaches and philosophies, creating a significant impact on various fields such as metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, politics, and aesthetics.

Plato, a student of Socrates, founded the Academy, a renowned philosophical school in Athens. He was a rationalist who believed in the existence of a separate realm of Forms or Ideas, which he considered more real than the physical world. For Plato, the physical world is just an imperfect reflection of these perfect and eternal Forms. He also held a strong belief in innate knowledge and argued that the soul possesses knowledge of the Forms before birth, and learning is a process of recollecting this pre-existing knowledge. Plato's philosophy delved into the concept of justice, the nature of the soul, and the ideal form of government.

Aristotle, on the other hand, was a student of Plato and later became the tutor of Alexander the Great. He founded the Lyceum, another prominent school of philosophy in Athens. Aristotle rejected Plato's theory of separate Forms and focused on the study of the natural world. He was an empiricist who emphasized observation, induction, and the accumulation of experiences as the sources of knowledge. Aristotle's work covered an extensive range of subjects, including metaphysics, ethics, politics, biology, and logic. He believed in the pursuit of eudaimonia, often translated as "happiness" or "flourishing," through the cultivation of virtues and the moderation of desires. (Philo-notes, 2023)

While both philosophers shared a passion for seeking truth and understanding the nature of reality, their philosophical perspectives diverged significantly. Plato's ideas often leaned towards the abstract and transcendent, while Aristotle's philosophy was more grounded in empirical observations and the study of the physical world.

The works of Plato and Aristotle laid the foundation for countless philosophical debates and inquiries throughout history, and their enduring influence continues to be studied and debated by scholars and philosophers worldwide.

Plato's views on government are elaborated in his famous work "The Republic," where he presents his vision of an ideal state and the principles that should govern it. Plato's ideal state is based on the concept of justice and the division of society into three distinct classes: rulers, guardians, and producers.

It is essential to note that Plato's vision of an ideal state is highly theoretical and utopian, and many critics have raised concerns about the feasibility and potential dangers of such a hierarchical and authoritarian system. Nonetheless, his ideas have sparked extensive debates and discussions on the nature of government, justice, and the role of the philosopher in society.

Aristotle believed that the best and most stable form of government is a mixed constitution, a combination of elements from the three main types of government. He called this form "polity" (which has the same name as the perverted form of rule by the many, democracy) and saw it as a balanced system that incorporates the positive aspects of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy while avoiding their respective corrupt forms.

Keep in mind that Aristotle's political philosophy emphasizes the importance of achieving "eudaimonia" or human flourishing in the state, and he believed that the ideal government should aim to promote the well-being and happiness of its citizens. His work on politics laid the groundwork for later political thinkers and has remained influential in discussions about governance and the role of the state in the lives of its citizens.

1.1 Research Objectives

The first objective would involve a detailed examination of the philosophical foundations of Plato and Aristotle. This includes understanding their metaphysical, epistemological, and ethical theories, as well as their views on politics, aesthetics, and human nature. Comparing and

contrasting their philosophical systems will provide insights into their differing perspectives on fundamental philosophical questions.

Both Plato and Aristotle extensively discussed political philosophy. The research should analyze their respective works on the ideal state, the nature of governance, and the role of individuals in society. Comparing their political theories will illuminate their differing views on the best form of government and the nature of justice.

Delve into the ethical theories of Plato and Aristotle. Compare Plato's theory of the tripartite soul and the concept of the philosopher-king with Aristotle's virtue ethics. Understand how their ethical frameworks influenced their perspectives on the good life and moral virtue.

Understand the historical context in which Plato and Aristotle lived, including their relationship with other philosophers, the political climate, and cultural influences that shaped their thinking.

By pursuing these research objectives, scholars can gain a comprehensive understanding of Plato and Aristotle's philosophies and their lasting impact on Western thought.

1.2 Contribution

The contribution of this study to deppen one´s understanding on the functions of a state in a comparison from Plato´s and Aristole´s perspecitve in order for readers to have a better knowledge of a just policy- making and fairness of a state.This could offer insights for practicioners nowadays on what to do and what not to do when they elected to represent common people.

2. Literature Review

This following literature review briefly sumarizes Plato´s and Aristotle´s functions on a state. Provided this context, the current state of knowledge and its evidence is mostly found in an academic literature.

Moreover, analysis follows when accounting for the scholars who have followed the work of Plato and Aristotle and thus are built into this argument.

Finally, the intentions and motivations about this thesis are essentially related to this paper´s research questions: *What should be ideal function of a well- prospering state and what are the differences in government between Plato and Aristotle and which could be in a use of a better example?*

The research strategy consists of interpreting qualitative data done by reading and studying academic literature obtained online or offline. For those mentioned as online sources particularly Jstor and Google Scholar.

The inclusion criteria imployed for this literature review consists of key words functions of a state, government, Athenian democracy and other possible key words.

The "Republic" begins with Socrates engaging in a conversation with several other characters, including Glaucon and Adeimantus. Socrates embarks on a quest to define justice and to understand what constitutes a just individual and a just society.

In the dialogue, Socrates creates an imaginary ideal city or state called Kallipolis, in which he examines the principles of justice on both individual and societal levels. The ideal state is divided into three classes: the rulers (philosopher-kings), the guardians (soldiers), and the producers (common citizens). Each class possesses specific virtues that contribute to the harmony and stability of the state.

On a contrary, Aristotle's *"Politics"* has been immensely influential in the development of political thought. His categorization of different forms of government and his analysis of their strengths and weaknesses laid the foundation for political science as a distinct field of study. Many subsequent political philosophers and theorists, such as Thomas Aquinas, John Locke, and Montesquieu, drew inspiration from Aristotle's ideas.

Aristotle's emphasis on the importance of a balanced and mixed constitution and his defense of the polity as the best form of government had a lasting impact on later thinkers. His discussions on citizenship, education, private property, and the role of law also continue to be relevant in contemporary debates on politics and governance.

Overall, *"Politics"* remains a timeless and influential work that provides valuable insights into the complexities of political life and the pursuit of a just and stable society.

The selection of literature provided is subject to both things strenghts and limitations. Namely into strenghts belong heavy academic nature of the sources. This argument helps to establsh a strong foundation for my own input into the thesis.

After acquired certian knowledge I could use my own hypotheses and ideas about both authors what are functions of a state and ideal versions of a government.

3. Methodology

Firstly, I tend to conduct all the necessary theoretical knowledge about all of general philosophy about Plato and Aristotle from their own works. Especially namely Plato´s Republic, Plato´s Constitution, Gorgias and from Aristotle The Politics, The Nichomacean Ethics, Methaphysics.

Then, after requiring certain theoretical base and knowledge I could jump further and dig deeper into critical perspective considering opinions of the most relevant international authors in past decade who focus exclusively on topic about Plato and Aristotle.

After that I am able to to create a roadmap that navigates me and allows me to dig more precisely and specifially about functions of a state and ideal constitution for both Plato and Aristotle.

Additionally, this thesis should have a comparative element meaning that through analytical evaluation I try to conclude what are the differences in a government between Plato and Aristotle and their functions of a state.

Plato's methodology was more focused on abstract reasoning and contemplation of Forms, while Aristotle's approach emphasized empirical observation, logical reasoning, and systematic classification of knowledge.

Working hypotheses:

1. What should be ideal function of a well- prospering state
2. What are the differences in government between Plato and Aristotle and which state model could work better

4. Results and Discussions

4.1 Plato´s ideal state

Plato's "The Republic" presents a systematic exposition of an ideal state, constructed through Socratic dialogues and philosophical discourse. In this utopian society, Plato seeks to delineate a just and harmonious political order guided by philosopher-kings, thereby challenging traditional notions of governance. This paper explores the key components of Plato's ideal state and evaluates its practical implications for modern societies.

Plato's ideal state is governed by philosopher-kings, known as the Guardians. These elite rulers possess a unique combination of intellectual prowess and moral virtue, trained through a rigorous educational system. The selection of these philosopher-kings ensures that power lies in the hands of the most enlightened and virtuous individuals, promoting the pursuit of justice and the common good.

Plato advocates for communal ownership of property and resources in his ideal state. This notion of common ownership is believed to prevent social disparities and foster unity among citizens. Additionally, he proposes a formidable military system for the defense of the state, asserting that Guardians must be skilled in warfare to safeguard the common good.

While Plato's ideal state presents an intellectually captivating vision, it has faced numerous critiques over time. Critics argue that Plato's elitist approach to governance may lead to the abuse of power and an inherent lack of accountability. Moreover, the feasibility of identifying and nurturing philosopher-kings in the real world is questioned, rendering the concept idealistic and impractical.

Despite its theoretical limitations, Plato's ideal state continues to influence modern political thought. The notions of meritocracy, communal ownership, and the role of education in nurturing enlightened leaders resonate with discussions on governance and social justice. Understanding Plato's ideal state helps us explore alternative models of governance and prompts critical reflections on the imperfections of contemporary political systems.

Plato's ideal state serves as a profound exercise in political philosophy, aiming to establish a just and harmonious society governed by enlightened philosopher-kings. While the feasibility of realizing such a state is debatable, its enduring relevance lies in its exploration of the

fundamental principles of governance, justice, and the pursuit of the common good. As a foundational text in political philosophy, "The Republic" continues to provoke meaningful discussions and offers insights into the complexities of statecraft and human nature.

4.2 Aristotle´s Ideal state

Aristotle's "Politics" serves as the cornerstone of his political philosophy, wherein he expounds upon his vision of an ideal state.

Aristotle perceives the ideal state as an embodiment of virtue, justice, and the common good. Central to this concept is the pursuit of eudaimonia (flourishing or well-being) for all citizens. He envisions a state where political power and governance are guided by rationality and wisdom, ensuring the common good rather than the interests of a select few.

A crucial aspect of Aristotle's ideal state lies in the concept of citizenship. He argues that citizenship is not merely a legal status but rather a moral responsibility. In his view, citizens must actively participate in the political process, promoting virtue and contributing to the state's well-being. By cultivating civic virtues and engaging in collective decision-making, citizens become stakeholders in the state's affairs.

So, Aristotle advocates for a balanced constitution that blends elements of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy. Such a mixed constitution seeks to avoid the pitfalls of extreme forms of governance. The rule of law and a robust system of checks and balances are crucial to maintain stability and prevent tyranny. The ruler, according to Aristotle, must be a philosopher-king, wise and just, with the best interests of the state at heart. This benevolent ruler, guided by reason, ensures the equitable distribution of resources and upholds the rule of law.

While Aristotle's ideal state presents a compelling vision, it is not immune to criticism. Some argue that his concept of citizenship and virtue may be too restrictive, excluding certain segments of the population. Additionally, the reliance on a philosopher-king raises questions about the feasibility and practicality of implementing his ideas.

Despite its ancient origins, Aristotle's political philosophy continues to inspire contemporary political theorists. The emphasis on virtue ethics, civic participation, and the common good resonates with debates about modern democratic governance, social justice, and citizenship

4.3 What Should be the Ideal Function of a State and Proper Government in Ancient Greece

To understand the ideal Athenian government, one must delve into the principles and structures that underpinned its democratic system.

The Athenian democracy emerged in the 5th century BCE and was characterized by a participatory model of governance. In an ideal Athenian government, the primary emphasis was on active citizen engagement and direct decision-making. Citizens had the right to participate in the assembly (Ekklesia) where they could debate and vote on important matters of the state. This direct involvement allowed citizens to have a sense of ownership and responsibility for the decisions made by the government.

Additionally, the Athenian government embraced the notion of sortition, a random selection of citizens to serve in various positions of power. This approach aimed to prevent the concentration of power in the hands of a few influential individuals and to ensure a broad representation of the citizenry in the government. Public offices and juries were often filled through this process, promoting fairness and reducing corruption.

However, it is essential to acknowledge that the Athenian democracy had its limitations. First and foremost, not all residents of Athens enjoyed citizenship status, as women, slaves, and foreigners were excluded from participation. This exclusion raises questions about the true inclusivity of the system and highlights an inherent inequality within the society.

Furthermore, the Athenian government had issues with the potential for demagoguery, where charismatic leaders could sway public opinion and manipulate the assembly for personal gain. This challenge pointed to the importance of a well-informed and politically educated citizenry to safeguard against manipulation and hasty decisions.

The ideal function of a well prospering state in ancient Greece was a multifaceted concept that varied among the different city-states. Ancient Greece was a diverse region with various city-states, each governed by different political systems and ideologies. However, some general principles and characteristics can be identified that contributed to a well-functioning and prosperous state during that era.

A stable political system was crucial for the prosperity of an ancient Greek state. This stability was achieved through effective governance, respect for the rule of law, and the establishment of political institutions that provided a framework for decision-making and conflict resolution. Stability allowed for long-term planning and economic growth

The ideal state in ancient Greece sought to maintain a balance of power between different political entities. In some city-states, this meant a system of checks and balances, where various branches of government had separate and distinct responsibilities. Striking this balance prevented the concentration of power in the hands of a few and safeguarded against potential abuses of authority.

Culturally rich states valued education and the arts. Prominent thinkers, philosophers, and artists were often encouraged and supported by the state. Education was viewed as a means to cultivate virtuous citizens and contribute to the intellectual progress of society.

Although ancient Greece was far from perfect in this regard, some city-states recognized the importance of individual rights and liberties. Protecting the rights of citizens, such as the right to own property, the right to a fair trial, and the right to freedom of expression, contributed to a sense of justice and fairness within society

5. Plato´s Vision of a State

"Plato (428/427 BC – 348/347 BC) was a Greek philosopher and student of Socrates. He founded the Academy in Athens, which was one of the first institutions of higher learning in the Western world. Plato's works are written in the form of dialogues, in which Socrates is usually the main character, and they explore a wide range of philosophical topics such as metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, politics, and aesthetics. Some of his most famous works include "The Republic," "Symposium," and "Phaedo." Plato's ideas have had a profound influence on Western philosophy and his works continue to be studied and debated today". (Lee, 2023)

Taking into a consideration a large amount of writings related to Plato, little is actually known about his life. For what we know is that he was born into a rich well-off family in Athens destined to be involved in politics, he became a pupil for Socrates. In 399 BCE, Plato´s teacher Socrates was sentenced to death. Plato watched the death penalty for Socrates and could not believe his eyes how could Athens condemned to death their most ethical person, which left a big remark on Plato, hence why he left Athens.

Even though Socrates had left no writings and Plato decided to continue on what Socrates started to preserve what he had learnt from his scholar.

Plato is considered one of the most important figures in the development of Western philosophy. His ideas have had a profound influence on subsequent generations of thinkers and continue to be studied and debated today.

Additionally, Plato's theoretical approach was deeply influenced by his belief in the existence of an objective reality that is independent of human perception. He believed that there is a realm of abstract entities or concepts.

For Plato, the physical world is a copy or imitation of the world of Forms. The world of Forms is perfect, eternal, and unchanging, while the physical world is imperfect, ephemeral, and subject to change. For example, there is a perfect form of a circle, and all physical circles are imperfect copies of this form.

Plato's approach to philosophy is often called "dialectical," as it involves a process of dialogue and inquiry that aims to uncover the truth. In his dialogues, Plato often presents opposing views or arguments and then seeks to reconcile them or find a higher synthesis.

Plato's philosophy is also characterized by his emphasis on the role of reason and logic in understanding the world. He believed that knowledge is not obtained through the senses but through reason and intuition. He also believed in the existence of innate ideas or knowledge that are present in the soul.

Overall, Plato's theoretical approach is characterized by his belief in the existence of an objective reality, his emphasis on reason and logic, and his dialectical method of inquiry. His ideas have had a profound influence on Western philosophy and continue to be studied and debated today.

"Any discussion of character in the Platonic corpus is complicated by the fact that Plato not only employs techniques of characterization as author, but pervasively makes character an object of analysis. Two obvious examples of this latter feature are the survey of the character types (aristocratic, timocratic, oligarchic, democratic, and tyrannical) that correspond to the different types of constitutions in Republic" (Morgan, 2018)

I introduced an idea of a Platonic corpus from the book mentioned above written by a Kathryn Morgan.

The Platonic corpus refers to the collection of philosophical writings attributed to the ancient Greek philosopher Plato. These works were written over a period of several decades, from around 400 BCE to 347 BCE.

Some of the most famous works in the Platonic corpus include:

The Republic - a dialogue about justice, the ideal state, and the nature of the soul.

- The Symposium - a dialogue about love and desire.
- The Phaedo - a dialogue about the immortality of the soul.
- The Timaeus - a dialogue about cosmology and the creation of the universe.
- The Phaedrus - a dialogue about rhetoric and the nature of language.

There are also many other works in the Platonic corpus, including dialogues such as the *Euthyphro*, the *Apology*, and the *Meno*. These works have had a profound influence on Western philosophy and continue to be studied and debated by scholars today.

To elaborate on that, Zuckert´s book, which I read a few chapters from, builds upon recent approaches to Plato´s dialogues, which "eschew strictly logical analysis of the dialogues and instead stress the dramatic and dialectical character of his works as significant for understanding the full character of his philosophy." (Zuckert, 2011)

5.1 Plato´s Republic and Constitution

Plato's ideal form of constitution is outlined in his famous work, *"The Republic*." In this work, Plato argues that the best possible society would be ruled by philosopher-kings, who are individuals with both the knowledge and the moral character necessary to make wise decisions for the common good.

Plato's ideal society would be structured into three distinct classes: the rulers, the guardians, and the common people. The rulers would be the philosopher-kings, who would be selected through a rigorous process of education and training to ensure that they are truly wise and virtuous. The guardians would be responsible for defending the society from external threats, and they would be trained to be physically strong and courageous.

Thus in an ideal society, private property would be abolished, and all resources would be held in common. The family unit would also be abolished, and children would be raised collectively by the society. This would help to eliminate the influence of selfish interests and promote a sense of community and shared responsibility.

Ideal society would be based on the principles of justice, wisdom, and virtue, and it would be characterized by harmony and stability. By eliminating selfishness and promoting the common good, Plato believed that his ideal society would be able to achieve true happiness and fulfillment for all its citizens.

Subsequently Plato believed that the key to achieving a just society was education. He argued that every individual has the potential to become a philosopher-king, but that this potential can only be realized through a rigorous education that emphasizes both intellectual and moral development. In Plato's ideal society, education would be the responsibility of the state, and all citizens would be required to undergo a common curriculum that emphasizes philosophy, mathematics, and physical training.

One of the most radical aspects of Plato's ideal society was his rejection of private property and the family unit. Plato believed that these institutions encourage selfishness and individualism, which are antithetical to the common good. Instead, all resources would be held in common, and children would be raised collectively by the society. Plato believed that this would help to eliminate the influence of selfish interests and promote a sense of community and shared responsibility.

To elaborate, family unit creates conflicts of interest, as individuals are more likely to prioritize the well-being of their family members over the well-being of society as a whole. He also believed that the family can lead to inequality, as some individuals may inherit greater wealth or status from their families than others. By abolishing the family unit, Plato hoped to create a more egalitarian and harmonious society.

As I mentioned before in my previous paragraphs, Plato´s Republic is some sort of a new pre-communist regime to a certain sense, with a very strong government and rules.

Therefore, the idea of Plato to select rulers as top candidates to rule the state, because they are the most virtuous and more capable of governing with stability just highlight this idea.

"How is it possible to break down the vicious cycle between philosophy and politics, between the need for the philosophers to rule the city and the evidence that only an already philosophically educated city might welcome such a regime? According to Mario Vegetti, the only possible solution consists of positing "the seizure of power by a small group of "spontaneously" formed philosophers". But such a hypothesis, involving a sort of ante-litteram Leninism, is not to be clearly found in the Republic." (Trabattoni)

According to Plato, philosophers are individuals who have undergone extensive training in dialectic, the art of reasoning and argumentation. Through this training, philosophers develop a deep understanding of the forms or ideas that underlie the physical world. This understanding allows them to see beyond the surface-level appearances of things and to perceive the ultimate reality that lies behind them.

Plato believed that rulers should be philosophers because they have a natural inclination towards the pursuit of wisdom and knowledge. Philosophers are not motivated by personal gain or power, but by a desire to seek truth and promote the common good. As rulers, philosophers would be able to use their knowledge and wisdom to create a just society in which everyone can flourish.

However, Plato also recognized that it is difficult to find individuals who possess the necessary qualities to become philosopher-rulers. He believed that a rigorous educational system was needed to identify and train potential philosopher-rulers from a young age. This system would involve exposing students to a wide range of knowledge and experiences, and encouraging them to develop their reasoning and critical thinking skills.

Plato's idea of philosopher-rulers in the Republic is central to his overall philosophy. He believed that true knowledge and understanding could only be achieved through a rigorous process of inquiry and contemplation, which he called dialectic. Through this process, individuals could attain a deep understanding of the forms or ideas that underlie the physical world.

Basing my arguments on what I wrote before about Plato´s ideal form of a government was one of the first utopias, because having the knowledge that we have today, can clearly say that form of a redistribution of children according to their best capacities is not only impossible, but also against today´s law system in every developed country.

"The reason for living with others is that by ourselves we are not able to provide ourselves with good things: the city is our strategy to live well and not only to survive" (Araújo)

This means that city should be responsible and guarantee communitarian exchange, so it is not a surprise for everyone that even in the smallest cities in Ancient Greece needed money in order to operate.

In other words, Plato was in my opinion also a father of a modern social democracy with thinking about the common good for its citizens having a communitarian approach rather than

individual. Keeping in mind that a strong state is a body, which should help its citizens- poor or rich.

Additionally, as Glaucon mentioned that money is not only a means of exchange, but also a symbol for luxury- economy creates but as well as destroys the cities and in his own words, surplus of money makes citizens idle and careless regarding the production that supports the city. (Araújo, p. 146)

Plato's approach to creating a utopia can be found in his famous work, "The Republic." In this work, Plato argues that a just society can only be achieved by creating a hierarchical society, with each person performing the role that is best suited for them based on their natural abilities.

Plato also believed that in order to create a just society, private property should be abolished and replaced with communal ownership. This would prevent individual greed and promote equality within the society. In addition, Plato advocated for strict censorship of art and literature, believing that certain ideas could corrupt the minds of the citizens and lead to social unrest.

Overall, Plato's approach to creating a utopia involved a strict hierarchy, communal ownership of property, and strict censorship. While his ideas have been influential in the history of political philosophy, they have also been criticized for their lack of individual freedom and potential for authoritarianism.

Plato's concept of the ideal society was based on a strong, centralized government. He believed that only a strong government, led by wise and virtuous rulers, could create and maintain a just society.

Plato believed that the philosopher-kings should be selected based on their merit, rather than by birth or wealth. They would undergo a rigorous education in philosophy, mathematics, and other subjects, which would prepare them to rule justly.

So, Plato's vision of the ideal society was one that was led by a strong, centralized government, with a clear hierarchy and a well-defined system of roles and responsibilities. He believed that only by having wise and virtuous rulers, who were guided by the principles of justice and the common good, could a society be truly just and prosperous.

The Plato´s Republic theme is justice. Plato shows that politics and philosophy are inseperable and both go hand in hand. „ The political community´s bodily existence and the necessities with which it deals, however virtuously, restrict its excellence" (Blitz, 2010)

In "The Republic," Plato presents a dialogical conversation between Socrates and several other characters. The main focus is on the definition of justice and the quest to find justice in both the individual and the state. Plato aims to discover the nature of justice by constructing an ideal city-state (polis) named "Kallipolis" or "The Republic" and then comparing it with existing states to highlight the difference between the just and unjust ways of organizing society.

To Plato, justice is the harmonious state of the soul and the ideal organization of a just society. In "The Republic," justice is a central theme, and it is thoroughly explored in both the individual and the state context.

Plato extends the concept of justice in the individual to the organization of an ideal state. He argues that a just state should mimic the just soul, where each member of society plays their specific role effectively and without interfering in the roles of others. In "The Republic," Plato describes an ideal state, named "Kallipolis" or "The Republic," that consists of three main classes: rulers (philosopher-kings), auxiliaries (warriors/defenders), and producers (craftsmen/farmers).

In this state, justice is realized when each class performs its function properly: the philosopher-kings, who have attained wisdom through the study of philosophical truths, rule with virtue and knowledge, the auxiliaries defend the state with courage and loyalty, and the producers provide for the material needs of society through their craft. This division of labor ensures that the state functions harmoniously and justly, with each class contributing to the overall well-being of society.

„Polemarchus described that justice is helping friends and harming enemies and that we can uncover Plato´s true intentions in Book 1 by concentrating on it." (Blitz, 2010, p. 167)

Later in the dialogue, Polemarchus' definition is refined and clarified. He agrees with Socrates that true justice involves doing good to friends, but he adds that it also includes doing harm to enemies, but only to those who are genuinely wicked and harmful. This idea reflects the concept of "justice as a virtue" and a belief in just punishment for wrongdoers.

Throughout "The Republic," the dialogue evolves into more complex and intricate discussions about justice, its different aspects, and the nature of the ideal state (Kallipolis), where justice is the central principle governing society.

It's important to note that the concept of justice is one of the central themes of Plato's work, and the ideas and arguments put forth by characters like Polemarchus have been studied and analyzed by scholars and philosophers for centuries.

„Because justice is the heart of a good political community, to explore it is to explore the merits of different forms of government. Whichever comes closest to true justice is the best, as we rank them by their neirness to it." (Blitz, 2010, p. 169)

In Book 5 of Plato's "The Republic," Socrates continues the discussion of the ideal political order (Kallipolis) that he began in the previous books. The main focus of Book 5 is on the philosopher-kings, the rulers of this utopian city-state. According to Plato, the best political order can only be achieved if the state is ruled by philosopher-kings, individuals who have attained the highest level of knowledge and wisdom. (Blitz, 2010, p. 169)

Plato, through his character Socrates, presents his theory of the tripartite soul and the relationship between justice, the soul, and the state. According to Plato, moral virtue is closely tied to the harmonious alignment of the three parts of the soul: reason, spirit, and desire.

Through his exploration of moral virtue, Plato emphasizes the importance of cultivating wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice in both individuals and the state. These virtues are essential for the well-being and flourishing of society, and the quest for moral excellence is a fundamental aspect of Plato's philosophical vision in "The Republic."

"Modern scholars who make these same points conclude that the Republic is therefore in essentials and exercise in moral, not political philosophy" (Schofield, 2006)

Schofield's work often focuses on analyzing the historical and philosophical context of Plato's writings. He is known for his careful examination of the texts, seeking to understand the nuances of Plato's thought and his philosophical intentions. Schofield's scholarship is characterized by its attention to detail and his efforts to bring clarity to complex philosophical issues within Plato's works.

The theme of education has to be also one of the most important aspects of a *Plato´s Laws* and *The Republic*. *„For Plato, written laws (nomoi), cannot take hold in a society without the civic education of a citizen body by custom(nomos)"* (Schofield, 2006, p. 36)

In the context of education, Plato believed that the proper education of citizens was crucial for the well-being and stability of the state. He emphasized the importance of the state's

involvement in education, as he saw it as a means to cultivate virtuous individuals who would contribute to the harmony and prosperity of the community.

Therefore, Plato was some sort of a father of modern strong state theories, even communist regimes or authoritarian regimes of government, where the kings of the government possess absolute power.

In Plato's philosophy, education and virtue were intimately connected. He believed that education was not merely about acquiring knowledge and skills but was primarily concerned with the cultivation of virtues and the development of a just and moral character. Plato's views on education and virtue can be found in several of his dialogues, with the most extensive discussions on this topic found in "The Republic" and "Protagoras."

6. Aristotle´s Vision of a State

"Aristotle (384 BCE – 322 BCE) was born in Stagira, a small town in northern Greece. His father, Nicomachus, was the personal physician to King Amyntas III of Macedon. As a result, Aristotle grew up with a strong interest in the natural world and medicine". (Okeke & Ebele, 2020)

Aristotle was a Greek philosopher and polymath who made significant contributions to various fields, including philosophy, science, politics, and literature. He was a student of Plato and the tutor of Alexander the Great, one of the most famous leaders in history.

"Aristotle's works cover a wide range of topics, including metaphysics, ethics, logic, politics, biology, physics, and astronomy. His philosophy is often characterized by his emphasis on empirical observation and the use of reason to understand the natural world. He believed that knowledge is obtained through observation and experience, rather than through abstract reasoning alone". (Lee, Oxford Open Learning, 2023)

Aristotle's influence on Western thought has been profound and far-reaching, and his ideas have shaped many fields of study to this day. His works were highly influential in the development of medieval philosophy and science, and his ideas continue to be studied and debated in contemporary philosophy and science.

To support this argument: *"In his terminology, natural sciences such as physics are but one branch of theoretical science, which comprises both empirical and non-empirical pursuits. He*

distinguishes theoretical science from more practically oriented studies, some of which concern human conduct and others of which focus on the productive crafts. Thus, the Aristotelian sciences divide into three: (i) theoretical, (ii) practical, and (iii) productive." (Shilelds, 2022)

At the age of 17, Aristotle moved to Athens to study at Plato's Academy, where he spent 20 years as a student and a teacher. During this time, Aristotle became well-versed in Plato's philosophy, but he also developed his own ideas and criticisms of his teacher's work. (Course Hero, 2022)

After leaving the Academy, Aristotle traveled extensively and conducted research in various fields. He spent several years in Macedonia serving as the tutor to Alexander the Great, who would go on to conquer much of the known world. Aristotle's influence on Alexander can be seen in the king's interest in natural history and the founding of the city of Alexandria, which became a center of learning and scholarship.

Aristotle's works were prolific, and many of his writings were lost over time. However, his surviving works continue to have a significant impact on philosophy, science, and politics. His metaphysics, which explores the nature of existence and reality, is still studied today, as are his ideas on ethics and virtue.

Aristotle's impact on science cannot be overstated. He was a keen observer of the natural world and conducted extensive research in biology, physics, and astronomy. He believed that knowledge could be gained through empirical observation and that the natural world was governed by laws that could be understood through reason.

In politics, Aristotle was a strong advocate for the rule of law and believed in the importance of individual rights and freedoms. He also believed in the importance of education, arguing that it was essential for the development of a just and virtuous society.

Overall, Aristotle's contributions to philosophy, science, and politics continue to be studied and debated to this day. His ideas have had a strong impact on Western thought and continue to influence academics in a wide range of fields.

Since Aristotle was a student of Plato and his ideas vary significantly from Plato´s. Therefore, he was critical of him and questioned Plato´s theories.

To elaborate, Aristotle was a big fan of nature and he studied it rigorously.

"We do know that Plato was aware of the Third Man argument, which Aristotle used to refute his theory of Forms. This argument goes as follows: *If there exists in a realm of Forms a perfect Form of a Man on which earthly men are modelled, this Form, to have any conceivable content, would have to be basd on a Form of the Form of a Man- and this too would have to be based on a higher Form on which the forms are based so on ad infinitum*" (Buckingham, et al., 2011)

Aristotle's theory of forms is known as his theory of substance. It is a metaphysical theory that explains the nature of reality and the relationship between form and matter.

Aristotle believed that everything in the physical world is composed of both matter and form. Matter is the underlying substance or stuff that makes up an object, while form is the structure or organization that gives that substance its particular characteristics. In other words, form is what makes a substance what it is, while matter is what provides the substance with its existence.

Aristotle believed that forms exist in things themselves, rather than in some separate realm or world. He argued that the forms of objects are not abstract or ideal, but are instead concrete and real, existing in the things themselves. Thus, according to Aristotle, the form of a tree is not some abstract ideal tree, but rather the concrete structure that makes this particular tree a tree.

Aristotle also distinguished between two types of substances: primary substances and secondary substances. Primary substances are individual entities that exist independently, such as a particular tree or a particular person. Secondary substances, on the other hand, are categories or classes of things, such as trees or humans. According to Aristotle, secondary substances derive their existence from the primary substances that instantiate them. (Philonotes, 2023)

Overall, Aristotle's theory of forms emphasizes the importance of both form and matter in understanding the nature of reality. He believed that forms are not just abstract ideas, but rather concrete structures that exist in the things themselves, and that the relationship between form and matter is essential to understanding the nature of substances.

Therefore, Aristotle´s scientific interest is in the biological sciences, whereas Plato´s interest is in mathematics.

In this very simplified version of a difference in approach can tell us that sometimes abstract concepts of Plato are far removed from every day world, but on the other hand biology, which is based solely on observation.

So, Aristotle declared that specific constraints can be discovered by examining the natural world. (Buckingham, et al., 2011, p. 59)

"Aristotle's studies confirmed what he already believed- that we are not born with some innate ability to recognize forms as lato maintained". (Buckingham, et al., 2011, p. 59)

Aristotle believed that every object in the world had an "essential form" or "essential nature" that made it what it was. According to him, objects have both matter (the physical substance that makes up the object) and form (the defining characteristic that makes the object what it is).

For example, a chair is made up of wood or metal (matter) and has a certain shape, size, and function (form) that make it a chair. The essential form of a chair is its defining characteristic, without which it would not be a chair.

Aristotle believed that understanding the essential form of things was essential to understanding the natural world. He also believed that the ultimate goal of human beings was to understand the essential nature of things, and that this knowledge would lead to happiness and fulfillment.

Subsequently, *at birth we have no innate ideas, so we can have no idea of right or wrong. As we encounter instances of justice throughout our lives, however, we learn to recognize the qualities that these instances have in common, and slowly build and refine our understanding of what justice is"* (Buckingham, et al., 2011, p. 60)

Aristotle's views on justice were also significant in his philosophy. According to Aristotle, justice was not just a moral virtue, but also a social and political virtue. He believed that justice was the means by which individuals and society could achieve their full potential.

"Additionally, he distinguished between two types of justice: distributive justice and corrective justice. Distributive justice involved the fair distribution of resources and rewards within a society" (PhiloNotes, 2023), based on merit and need. Corrective justice, on the other hand, dealt with rectifying wrongs that had been committed, such as punishing criminals for their crimes.

The concept of justice was intimately connected with the idea of equality. He argued that justice required treating equals equally and unequals unequally, in proportion to their differences. For example, it would be unjust to treat a rich person and a poor person exactly the same, as their circumstances and needs are different.

To sum up this way of thoughts, Aristotle believed that justice was a vital component of a well-ordered society and that it was the duty of rulers to ensure that justice was served. He believed that a just society would be one in which individuals were able to live good lives and achieve their full potential.

6.1 Aristotle´s Vision of a State and its Constitution

Aristotle's Constitution, also known as The Politics or The Athenian Constitution, is a work of political philosophy written by Aristotle in the fourth century BCE. In this work, Aristotle examines the various forms of government that exist in ancient Greece, including democracy, oligarchy, and tyranny.

The Constitution is divided into eight books, each of which covers a different aspect of political organization and governance. In Book I, Aristotle discusses the nature of political communities and the various types of government that exist. He argues that the ideal form of government is one in which the rulers are virtuous and act in the best interests of the community.

In Book II, Aristotle examines the different types of constitutions and their strengths and weaknesses. He distinguishes between "good" and "perverted" forms of government, with the former being those in which the rulers act for the common good, and the latter being those in which the rulers act for their own self-interest.

Number of rulers	Normal Form	Perverted Form
One	Monarchy	Tyranny
Few	Aristocracy	Oligarchy
Many	Polity	Democracy

(Orozco, 2013)

In this chart we can take a closer look at the very profound and famous division of governments, which Aristotle considered as bad and perverted and which were good in his own opinion.

Aristotle believed that a monarchy could be a just and effective form of government, as long as the monarch ruled with the best interests of the people in mind. He argued that a good

monarch was one who was virtuous and wise, and who governed with the aim of promoting the common good.

A monarchy could become problematic if the monarch ruled for their own benefit rather than for the benefit of the people. He also believed that a monarch could become corrupt if they were surrounded by flatterers who encouraged them to act in ways that were not in the interests of the people. (Bonner, 1924)

To prevent the abuse of power by monarchs, Aristotle advocated for a system of checks and balances that would limit the power of the monarch and protect the rights of the people. He believed that the people should have a say in governance, either through a system of laws that protected their rights or through participation in an advisory council.

Aristotle also recognized that different forms of government might be appropriate for different societies, depending on their size, culture, and history. He believed that the best form of government was one that was tailored to the needs and circumstances of a particular society, rather than one that was imposed from outside.

To elaborate and sum up this idea Overall, Aristotle saw monarchy as a potentially just form of government, but one that required a virtuous monarch and a system of checks and balances to prevent the abuse of power. He believed that the key to a successful monarchy was to balance the power of the monarch with the rights of the people, and to ensure that the government served the common good of all.

"Tyranny occurs when absolute power is granted to a ruler. In a tyrannical government, the ruler becomes corrupt and uses his power to further his own interests instead of working for the common good. The rule of law is the principle that no one is exempt from the law, even those who are in a position of power. The rule of law can serve as a safeguard against tyranny, because just laws ensure that rulers do not become corrupt". (Constitutional Right Foundation, 2010)

Based on this Aristotelian statement taken from a Constitutional Right Foundation, tyrannical governments are formed when people are dissatisfied with existing government and then people decide to give their vote a powerful individual to solve their problems out of a complete apathy or loss of hope in authorities.

He also believed that tyrants were often people who had been excluded from the existing political system and were seeking power for themselves.

I shall use a case study from my own personal experience and underline Aristotle´s statement very true. In my home country Slovak Republic, we could witness a massive distrust in a democratic political parties after migration crisis or Syrian refugee crisis that peaked in 2015.

People believed the demagogy of politicians who were on the far-right of a political spectrum who threatened people that mass migration could lead us to higher crime rates, higher violence, religious threats and polarization of a society. These courses of actions lead far-right extremist politicians and parties to grew their preferences significantly.

Today is 2023 and time told us that all of this aforementioned claims were false.

Aristotle viewed tyrannical government as a form of government that was not only unjust but also unstable and prone to collapse. He argued that the best form of government was a constitutional government in which power was shared among different groups and individuals, and the rule of law was upheld.

Moving on, we move to another version of government described in Aristotle´s *Politics* and that is Aristocracy.

Aristocracy should consist of the best and most virtuous citizens. These citizens should possess qualities such as wisdom, courage, and self-control, and should be motivated by a desire to serve the common good rather than their own self-interest.

Aristotle also believed that an aristocracy should be structured in a way that allows for the participation of all citizens, regardless of their social status or wealth. This means that everyone should have an opportunity to participate in government, whether through voting or holding office.

However, Aristotle also recognized that an aristocracy can easily devolve into an oligarchy if the rulers become corrupted and start using their power for their own benefit. Therefore, he emphasized the importance of maintaining a system of checks and balances to prevent this from happening.

He believed that the ideal aristocracy should be composed of individuals who have a deep understanding of politics and the needs of the society they govern. He argued that these individuals should be educated and trained in the arts of statesmanship and leadership, so that they can make wise and just decisions on behalf of the people they represent. In addition, Aristotle believed that aristocracy should be tempered by elements of democracy and oligarchy. He argued that a pure aristocracy, in which power is held exclusively by the virtuous and capable, would be too exclusive and could lead to resentment and conflict. Instead, he believed that a healthy society should have a balance of power between the different classes, with the aristocracy serving as a guiding force for the common good. So, ideas about aristocracy were based on the belief that the best form of government is one in which power is held by the most virtuous and capable individuals, who are committed to serving the common good of the society they govern. While his ideas were not without their flaws and limitations, they continue to influence political thought and debate to this day. (Smith, 1895)

Another form of a government explained on our list and chart is oligarchy and how Aristotle sees it.

Aristotle believed that oligarchy was a flawed form of government, characterized by rule by a small group of wealthy individuals who held most of the political power. In his view, oligarchies were unstable because they tended to be self-interested and focused on maintaining their own power and wealth at the expense of the broader population.

Secondly, oligarchies were prone to corruption and tended to be less effective than other forms of government at promoting the common good. This was because the oligarchs were primarily interested in maintaining their own power and wealth, and thus were not motivated to invest in public goods or social welfare programs.

"So, oligarchs who mistakenly think that those who are superior over others in wealth should also have other privileges. Namely political rights, whereas on the other hand democracy says that people are equal at birth, so they should also have similar voting rights when they grew up." (Okeke & Ebele, 2020)

According to Aristotle, both of these conceptions are mistaken. Because they do not promote the well- being of a city state.

"The city-state is neither a business enterprise to maximize wealth (as the oligarchs suppose) nor an association to promote liberty and equality (as the democrats maintain). Instead, Aristotle argues, "the good life is the end of the city-state," that is, a life consisting of noble actions. Hence, the correct conception of justice is aristocratic, assigning political rights to those who make a full contribution to the political community, that is, to those with virtue as well as property and freedom." (Miller, 2022 edition)

Since Aristotle was a very complex thinker who was always knew how to explain his arguments in a very profound and factical way, so his ideas about democracy were no other.

Here I explain and take a closer look into another form of government, which is democracy. While he believed that democracy could be a good form of government under certain conditions, he also believed that it had some inherent flaws.

One of the key aspects of Aristotle's political philosophy was his belief in the importance of the middle class. He believed that a healthy democracy required a strong middle class that was able to participate in government and act as a check on the power of the wealthy elites. In this sense, Aristotle saw democracy as a way to empower the middle class and create a more equal society.

However, Aristotle also believed that democracy was susceptible to several problems. One of the biggest was the danger of demagogues, or charismatic leaders who appealed to the emotions and prejudices of the masses rather than their reason. Aristotle saw demagogues as a threat to democracy because they could manipulate public opinion and undermine the rule of law.

Another problem with democracy, according to Aristotle, was the potential for tyranny of the majority. In a democracy, the majority of the population holds power, which can be a good thing in terms of representing the interests of the people. However, Aristotle was concerned that the majority could become too powerful and trample on the rights of minorities, leading to injustice and instability.

While he recognized its potential as a form of government that could empower the middle class and promote equality, he also saw several inherent flaws that could undermine its effectiveness. Ultimately, Aristotle believed that the success of democracy depended on the ability of its citizens to reason and make informed decisions, rather than being swayed by emotion or demagoguery.

"In a democracy, rule is by and for the needy. In contrast, rule of law or aristocracy (literally, power [rule] of the best) or even monarchy, where the ruler has the interest of his country at heart, are better types of government" (Gill, 2019)

On a more positive note, democracy is the least perverted form of a government out of the bad ones listed in the table on the page above.

Even though, the factor "few" factor in oligarchy is the same as "many" in democracy. In oligarchy the wealth is criterion for status, in democracy the procession of freedom, which is mostly derived from the poor, because democracy is a government of a poor majority. Clearly, these two constitutions are based on two opposed class-interests speaking about oligarchy and democracy. (Lintott, 2009)

In his view, the best democratic constitutions were those that balanced the power of the people with the power of the elites. This could be achieved by creating a system of checks and balances, in which the different branches of government had the ability to limit each other's power. This would prevent any one group from becoming too dominant and abusing their power.

Aristotle believed that democracy was a complex and challenging form of government that required careful thought and planning to be successful. While he recognized its potential flaws, he also believed that it had the potential to be a just and effective form of government if it was properly structured and managed.

To further elaborate on Aristotle's views on democracy, he believed that in order to have a stable and effective democracy, there needed to be a strong middle class. This middle class should be made up of property-owning citizens who have a stake in the success of the community and are invested in its future.

Democratic government should be designed to promote the common good, rather than the interests of a particular group or faction. He argued that the government should aim to achieve the highest level of happiness and well-being for all citizens, rather than just a select few.

Aristotle's views on democracy was the idea of civic virtue. He believed that citizens needed to be educated and trained to be virtuous and to put the common good above their own self-interest. This would ensure that the government was run by individuals who were committed to serving the community, rather than just themselves.

Polity is the rule of the best qualified people, some sort of an intellectual elite that knows the best how to govern over its citizens.

On the other hand, a polity is a government in which power is shared by the middle class, which he believed was the largest and most stable class in society. He argued that this form of government was a mixture of democracy and oligarchy, as it combined the principles of both rule by the people and rule by the wealthy.

"In other words, polity explicitly combines the best versions, because people already try to elect the best people as representatives in democracies and aristocratic element is also present in polity mostly the meaning and explanation of ruling upper layer. Thus, the upper ranks of government form the political aristocracy of the state; the stratum of the highest religious dignitaries constitutes the aristocracy of the church; and the richest corporate executives and investors constitute an aristocracy of economic wealth". (The editors of Encyclopedia Britanica, n.d.)

However, Aristotle also recognized that a polity could be vulnerable to various forms of corruption and instability. For example, he believed that a polity could be undermined by factions that sought to promote their own interests at the expense of the common good. He also believed that external threats, such as invasions or economic disruptions, could weaken a polity and make it more vulnerable to internal strife.

Despite these challenges, Aristotle believed that a polity was the best form of government for most societies because it allowed for the participation and representation of a broad range of interests. He believed that a polity was more likely to be just, stable, and prosperous than other forms of government, and that it could adapt to changing circumstances and needs over time.

In "Politics," Aristotle argues that the state is a natural institution that arises from the need for people to live together and cooperate for their mutual benefit. He also contends that the purpose of government is to promote the common good and the happiness of the citizens.

So, Aristotle identifies three types of government: monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy. He argues that each of these forms of government can be good or bad, depending on how they are organized and operated.

Thus, from the literature I read from various authors, Aristotle believed that citizens are ultimately *zoon politikon* which means that people are social animals whose primary motivation in life is the well- being of a state they participate in.

Elaborating on this idea, Aristotle believed that the beginning of a politics or *zoon politikon* being in the households.

"The relation of the head of the household to these three elements is not one, but various. He rules the wife, not as absolute despot, but as constitutional adviser; he rules the children not as absolute despot, but as the king, who looks to their good rather than his own." (Dunning)

Moreover, Aristotle's idea of household, which he called *oikos*, was based on the concept of a self-sufficient and functional unit of a society. According to Aristotle, the household was the basic unit of society and it included not only the family members but also the slaves and servants who worked for the family.

Purpose of the household was to meet the basic needs of its members such as food, shelter, clothing, and other necessities of life. He considered the head of the household, which was usually the husband and father, to be responsible for managing and organizing the household.

The household was also an economic unit that produced goods and services for its members. He believed that the management of the household should be focused on maintaining a balance between production and consumption, with the goal of achieving self-sufficiency.

Therefore, Aristotle's idea of household emphasized the importance of a well-managed and self-sufficient unit of society, which could contribute to the greater good of the community as a whole.

What I personally find very striking is that obviously Ancient Form of democracy is farly old model, so we are able to witness some form of deviations in there in my opinion like relationship between the head of the household and a slave was rational when it corresponds to universal principle of nature. (Dunning, p. 279)

Since I truly believe that Aristotle relied his thought process on observation and data experience such as in a biology man need to study various phenomenons in order to understand underlying principles. Therefore, he found out that observation of an animals could lead us to understanding the truths about their nature. (Aristotle, 1998)

"One of Aristotle's most famous observations about nature was his classification of living things into different categories based on their physical characteristics. He divided living things into animals, plants, and humans" (Philonotes, 2023)and then subdivided them based on characteristics such as their method of reproduction, their habitat, and their diet.

To elaborate, he also made extensive observations about the behavior of animals, and he classified them into different categories based on their actions and movements. He believed that

animals were motivated by different instincts and that they acted in accordance with these instincts.

In addition to his observations of living things, Aristotle also made observations about the physical world. He believed that the universe was composed of four elements - earth, air, fire, and water - and that these elements interacted with each other in various ways to create the natural world.

I am truly confident to say that this observation laid down the very basics for scientific thinking.

The rationale why I mentioned this part explicitly about Aristotle observing nature is a fact that *"living things have within them a principle of growth which impels them not to sprout randomly but to develop towards an end to instantiate a particular form"* (Aristotle, 1998, p. 10)

Thus I believe that his conception of nature is teleological. So, in other words everything that exists by nature exists for an end, hence why when one cannot grasp its nature without understanding the end. (Aristotle, 1998)

This concept overall is fairly influential, because it is used also in his *Poliitcs* that Polis is a compound rather than mere aggregation- Polis is not just a collection of human beings.

Aristotle viewed the polis, or city-state, as the highest form of political organization. He believed that the purpose of the polis was to create conditions in which its citizens could live good and virtuous lives.

The polis is a natural and necessary institution, as human beings are social creatures who require the company of others to live a fulfilling life. He believed that the polis should be governed by a constitution that reflects the values and interests of the community it serves.

Additionally Aristotle also believed that the polis should be self-sufficient and have a strong economy that is based on agriculture and other productive activities. He argued that the well-being of the polis depends on the virtue and wisdom of its citizens, who must work together to promote the common good.

7. Comparison Between Plato and Aristotle´s Functions of the State

Plato and Aristotle were two of the most influential ancient Greek philosophers, and their ideas have had a profound impact on Western philosophy and thought. Despite being contemporaries, they had different views on many philosophical concepts. Here is a comparison of their key ideas and philosophical approaches.

Plato believed in the existence of a higher reality beyond the physical world, which he called the "World of Forms" or "Ideas." According to him, the physical world is a mere reflection of these abstract and perfect Forms. For instance, the concept of beauty or justice exists in a non-material realm and is eternal and unchanging.

Aristotle in contrast to Plato, Aristotle rejected the notion of a separate World of Forms. He believed in a single, concrete reality that we experience through our senses. Instead of transcendent Forms, Aristotle proposed the concept of "substances" and "accidents." He argued that individual objects have essential characteristics (substances) and accidental properties (accidents).

He emphasized the importance of observation and studying the material world to understand reality. While he acknowledged that universals exist, he rejected the notion of separate, independent Forms. Instead, he believed that universals are instantiated in individual objects.

"At the core of Platonism is the theory of Forms (also known as Ideas). Plato believed that the material world we perceive with our senses is merely a shadow or imperfect copy of a higher, non-material realm of abstract Forms. These Forms are eternal, unchanging, and perfect archetypes that represent the true reality. For instance, there is a perfect and eternal Form of a circle, of justice, of beauty, and so on. All instances of circles or expressions of justice and beauty in the physical world are imperfect reflections of these ideal Forms. Another key aspect of Platonism is the theory of knowledge, called the Theory of Recollection. According to this theory, true knowledge is not acquired through sensory experience but rather through a process of recollection (anamnesis) of the knowledge that the soul had in its pre-existence in the world of Forms. Socrates illustrates this idea in Plato's dialogues, particularly in the Meno and the Phaedo". (Balaguer, 2016)

To understand the metaphysical approach and comparison between those two, Plato was a dualist believing in existence of a two realms- the sensible world (the world of appearances) and the world of Forms that represents a true reality. On the other hand, Aristotle´s metaphysics was more monistic, therefore considering the physical world as the prime reality. Where, everything is composed of matter and a form, so true reality is found in actual existing things.

As mentioned earlier, Plato's Theory of Recollection proposed that true knowledge is innate and acquired through remembering the knowledge of the Forms that the soul had before birth. He emphasized the role of reason and intellect in gaining knowledge. Whereas, Aristotelian epistemology was based on empirical observation and categorization as some sort of a proponent of the scientific method.

In Plato's philosophy, the ultimate good is found in the realm of the Forms. He believed in the concept of the "Philosopher-King," where a just society is governed by wise philosophers who have knowledge of the Forms and pursue the good of the whole community and Aristotle's ethics were focused on achieving eudaimonia, often translated as "happiness" or "flourishing." He believed that cultivating virtues and practicing moderation in all things would lead to a fulfilling and meaningful life. Unlike Plato, Aristotle's ethics are more grounded in practicality and the real world.

When it comes to politics, Plato´s ideal state is hierarchical society led by philosopher kings with division of the citizens. Society in this hypothetical utopia is divided into three classes rulers, guardians and producers. Plato believed in a strict and strong division of labor and property, with an emphasis on a communal living. In contrast, Aristotle's political philosophy is explored in his work "Politics." He favored a mixed form of government, combining elements of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy. He believed that the state's purpose is to promote the good life for its citizens and to cultivate virtuous individuals.

Overall, while both Plato and Aristotle were significant philosophers with profound contributions, they had different perspectives on key philosophical issues, such as metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, politics, and aesthetics. Understanding their similarities and differences can provide valuable insights into the evolution of Western philosophical thought

7.1 Context of Athens With Regards to Plato and Aristotle

"In the 6th century city of Athens implemented some of the most significant political reforms in a political history. This system got called democracy and eventually changed political theory. The constitutional history of Athens can be divided into three distinct eras. At first Athens was an Oligarchy, where a group of powerful and rich families ruled the city state. After some time and reforms the city- state became some sort of limited democracy. Roughly after hundred years and numerous reforms, regime evolved into a democracy, but as much as we know it nowadays. Unfortunately, political rights back then were not extended to women, children, slaves, foreign residence etc. who eventually made a good majority of inhabitants of Athens. During an oligarchy in Athens, *Areopagus* was at the centre of a political life. It was some sort of council or senate. Only people who were born into affluent families could be heard and the poor were basically ignored. Firstly, political appointees served for life, then it switched to every ten years and lastly to every year. Basically, there were three main political appointees. First, were *Basileus,* which means kings who held power pro-forma and in reality were powerless. Second group of appointees were called *Polemarch-* war leader. This person was a commander in chief of an Athenian military, as well as, having a small role in war related festivals and or ceremonies. Thirdly there was *Eponymus Archon-* city´s chief government official. They stood at the head of the government bureaucracy and administered the Athenian state. Apparently, this was the most important position in Athens". (Historia Civils)

Solon, an ancient Greek statesman and poet, is best known for his significant contributions to the development of democracy in Athens during the 6th century BCE. While he didn't have a comprehensive theory of the state in the same way as modern political theorists, Solon's reforms and political ideas laid the foundation for Athenian democracy.

Solon's theory of the state revolved around the principles of justice, equality, and social harmony. He aimed to establish a system where power and wealth were distributed more equitably, and where every citizen had a voice in the affairs of the state. While his reforms did not create a full-fledged democracy, they set the stage for further developments and inspired later democratic movements in Athens and beyond.

According to Aristotle, the Athenian constitution was a mixture of democracy and oligarchy. He believed that Athens had a democratic government because all free male citizens had the right to participate in the Assembly and the law courts. However, he also noted that the Athenian

government was dominated by the wealthy and powerful elite who controlled the military and the financial resources of the city-state.

Aristotle identified three key political institutions in Athens: the Assembly, the Council of Five Hundred, and the law courts. The Assembly was the most important institution because it was responsible for making decisions on matters of policy and legislation. All free male citizens were eligible to participate in the Assembly, which met about 40 times per year. The Council of Five Hundred, on the other hand, was a smaller body composed of 500 citizens who were chosen by lot to serve for one year. The Council prepared the agenda for the Assembly and oversaw the daily administration of the city-state.

So, the law courts were responsible for administering justice in Athens. All citizens had the right to serve as jurors in the courts, and trials were conducted in front of a panel of jurors. However, Aristotle noted that the wealthy and powerful elites had an advantage in the courts because they could afford to hire better lawyers and could influence the outcome of trials through bribery and other means.

Therefore, Aristotle's analysis of the Athenian constitution provides insight into the strengths and weaknesses of the world's first democracy. While Athens was a remarkable achievement in terms of political innovation and citizen participation, it was also a flawed system that was subject to manipulation and corruption by the elites who controlled the city-state's resources. (Polin, 2019)

„Elections are the epitome of democracy, right? Well that was not so certian in an ancient Athenian democracy. Actually, an election played just a small part of that. Essentially, most of offices were filled by random lottery from a citizen volunteers." (TEDed)

5th century Athens was a direct democracy. Athens in the 5th century BC was a significant period in the city's history. It was a time of great cultural, intellectual, and political achievements, often referred to as the "Golden Age of Athens."

"Athens was a democracy, where citizens had the right to participate in the decision-making process". (Government of Tamil Nadu) This system, although limited to adult male citizens, was a significant departure from the prevailing systems of monarchy and aristocracy.

Approximately thirty thousand eligible citizens could attend the Eclesia" (TEDed)-The Ecclesia, or Ekklesia, was the principal assembly of citizens in ancient Athens during the 5th

century BC. It was a crucial institution in the Athenian democracy, where eligible male citizens had the right to participate in decision-making and governance.

„Understandably a croud of a big number of people trying to speak at the same time would not have made for effective government- the Boule, also known as the Council of 500 or Council of Five Hundred, was an essential institution within the democratic system. It played a vital role in the governance and administration of the city-state". (TEDed)

The Boule played a crucial role in Athenian democracy, acting as an intermediary body between the citizens and the assembly. It provided a system for deliberation, organization, and preparation of legislation, ensuring that decisions made in the Ecclesia were well-informed and effectively implemented. The Boule's democratic structure and emphasis on broad citizen participation helped shape the unique democratic experiment of ancient Athens.

The people in these positions were chosen by a lottery- sortition.

Sortition, also known as allotment or random selection, is a method of selecting individuals for public office or decision-making processes through a random process rather than through elections or appointment. It has been used in various historical and contemporary contexts, including ancient Athens and modern deliberative democracy experiments.

"The only position filled by elections were those requiring expertise, such as generals, but those were considered aristocratic. " (TEDed)

"Democracy arose in Athens after long periods of social and political tensions" (TEDed)

Political tensions played a significant role in the rise of democracy in Athens. The transition from aristocratic rule to democratic governance was marked by struggles for power, social unrest, and conflicts between various factions.

"Powers once restricted to elites, such as speaking in the assembly and having their votes counted, were expanded to ordinary citizens and ability of ordinary citizens to perform these tasks adequately became a central feature of the democratic ideology of Athens" (TEDed)

21st-century democracy differs significantly from Athenian democracy in several key aspects.

Athenian democracy was practiced in a city-state with a relatively small population of adult male citizens. In contrast, 21st-century democracies operate in larger nation-states with millions or even billions of citizens. The sheer size and diversity of modern democracies present unique challenges in terms of representation, decision-making processes, and accountability.

Athenian democracy was limited to adult male citizens, excluding women, slaves, and foreigners. In contrast, 21st-century democracies have expanded the franchise to include women, minorities, and all adult citizens. Universal suffrage is a foundational principle of modern democracies, ensuring broader political participation and representation.

Athenian democracy was a direct form of democracy, where citizens themselves voted on laws and policies. In contrast, most modern democracies are representative democracies, where citizens elect representatives to make decisions on their behalf. This allows for more efficient governance and accommodates larger populations.

Moreover, Separation of Powers: Athenian democracy did not have a formal separation of powers between the legislative, executive, and judicial branches. In contrast, modern democracies often have a clear division of powers, with separate branches of government to ensure checks and balances. This separation helps prevent the concentration of power and protects individual rights.

While Athenian democracy served as an important historical precedent, 21st-century democracies have evolved and adapted to the complexities and demands of the modern world. They strive to balance the principles of representation, participation, individual rights, and effective governance in a more extensive and interconnected context.

8. Conclusion

Plato and Aristotle were two ancient Greek philosophers who made significant contributions to the field of political thought and government. While they shared some similarities in their ideas about governance, they also had notable differences. Let's explore their perspectives and draw some conclusions.

Both Plato and Aristotle sought to address the question of the best form of government, and they agreed that the state's primary objective should be the pursuit of the common good and human flourishing. They believed in the importance of virtue and ethics in governance, but their approaches differed.

Plato's ideal state was more utopian and hierarchical, with philosopher-kings ruling and a rigid social structure based on individual capabilities and virtues. He was skeptical of democracy and favored rule by a select few wise leaders.

On the other hand, Aristotle's approach was more pragmatic, advocating for a mixed government that balanced the strengths of different forms while mitigating their weaknesses. He saw the middle class as a crucial stabilizing force in society.

In conclusion, Plato and Aristotle's ideas about government were shaped by their philosophical outlooks and visions of an ideal society. While Plato's government was more utopian and centered on philosopher-kings, Aristotle's approach was more practical and focused on achieving a balanced polity. Despite their differences, their contributions to political thought have had a lasting impact on the development of Western political theory and governance.

Plato and Aristotle's ideas have had enduring impacts on political thought and governance throughout history. Plato's ideal state and distrust of democracy influenced later philosophers and leaders, who often favored aristocratic or even authoritarian systems of government. His thoughts on justice, virtue, and the role of the state in shaping individuals' characters also resonated in subsequent political and ethical theories.

Aristotle's emphasis on empirical observation and his recognition of various forms of government helped shape the study of politics and political science. His ideas about the middle class and a balanced polity influenced the development of constitutional governments, especially during the Enlightenment era.

Overall, both Plato and Aristotle offered valuable insights into the nature of politics and the search for the best form of government. Their contrasting approaches continue to stimulate debates on the balance between idealism and pragmatism in governance and the role of ethics and virtue in political leadership. By understanding their philosophies, we can better appreciate the complexities and challenges of governing societies and promoting the common good.

8.1 Summary

Plato and Aristotle, two of the most influential ancient Greek philosophers, had profound impacts on the course of Western thought. Despite the teacher-student relationship between them, their philosophical perspectives diverged in various aspects, while also sharing some common ground.

Metaphysics, the study of the nature of reality, was a topic of interest for both Plato and Aristotle. However, their approaches differed significantly. Plato proposed the Theory of Forms, positing that the physical world we perceive is a mere imperfect reflection of an ideal realm of unchanging and perfect Forms. On the other hand, Aristotle rejected this theory and emphasized empirical observation and data as the foundation for knowledge about the natural world.

Both philosophers delved into the realm of ethics, discussing the concept of virtue and its role in leading a meaningful life. Plato believed in cultivating virtues such as wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice. He saw the pursuit of these virtues as essential for individuals and society to achieve their highest potential. Aristotle, too, emphasized the importance of virtues and the pursuit of eudaimonia, a state of happiness or flourishing, attained through a virtuous life.

Education was a common theme in their works. Both Plato and Aristotle recognized the significance of education for personal development and the betterment of society. They believed in the value of knowledge and intellectual growth, although their specific approaches to education differed.

Regarding the structure of the ideal state, Plato envisioned a utopian society governed by philosopher-kings—wise and enlightened individuals with knowledge of the Forms. These philosopher-rulers would ensure justice and harmony in the state. In contrast, Aristotle proposed

a more pragmatic system, advocating for a mixed form of government that blends elements of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy. He believed that such a combination could lead to a balanced and stable state.

Plato's criticism of democracy stemmed from his concerns about mob rule and the potential manipulation of the uneducated masses by charismatic leaders. Aristotle, while acknowledging the flaws of democracy, had a more nuanced view. He recognized its advantages when tempered by the rule of law and the right kind of education for citizens.

Aristotle introduced the concept of teleology, the belief that everything in nature has a purpose or end goal, striving to fulfill its potential. He also proposed the theory of the Four Causes (material, formal, efficient, and final causes) to explain the existence and behavior of things. These ideas were not explored systematically by Plato.

8.2 Limitations

This section offers a comparative analysis of the limitations identified in Plato and Aristotle's philosophies. It explores similarities and differences in their respective constraints, elucidating broader themes that may have influenced their philosophical worldviews.

Understanding the limitations of Plato and Aristotle's philosophies provides insights into the complexities of their thought and encourages critical engagement with their ideas. Moreover, it highlights the evolution of philosophical thought over time and raises questions about the relevance and adaptability of ancient philosophical frameworks in modern contexts.

In conclusion, Plato and Aristotle were intellectual giants whose contributions to philosophy continue to shape Western thought. Nonetheless, their works are not devoid of limitations, and this paper has critically examined these constraints, encouraging a nuanced understanding of their ideas within the context of contemporary knowledge and values. By acknowledging these limitations, scholars can further develop and refine their philosophical inquiries, fostering a more inclusive and comprehensive philosophical discourse.

8.3 Future Prospects

The enduring appeal of Plato and Aristotle's philosophies lies in their exploration of fundamental questions about reality, ethics, politics, and epistemology. In the contemporary world, their works continue to inspire scholars, prompting interdisciplinary studies and fostering cross-cultural dialogues.

Advancements in digital humanities provide new opportunities to engage with the philosophical works of Plato and Aristotle. Digital platforms offer enhanced accessibility and interactive tools, making their ideas more approachable to broader audiences and facilitating cross-disciplinary studies.

The ethical theories of Plato and Aristotle, centered on virtues and the pursuit of the good life, could remain significant foundations for ethical reflections in contemporary contexts. Scholars may explore their relevance to contemporary moral frameworks and ethical decision-making.

By addressing contemporary challenges through the lens of their enduring ideas, the ongoing relevance of Plato and Aristotle's philosophies can extend into the future and contribute to meaningful philosophical discourse and societal progress.

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