

Aristotle on political community

GV100 Class Slides: week 4

London School of Economics and Political Science



Questions/comments to start the class

Looking up or looking out?

Activity: Speak with someone next to you (or in a breakout room on Zoom). What is the different between Aristotle's approach to political philosophy and Plato's approach? What are the merits and drawbacks of each?

The three kinds of association

What are the different kinds of associations according to Aristotle?

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What are the different kinds of associations according to Aristotle?

- 1 Household
- 2 Village
- 3 Polis

What are the relations that make up the household?

① Household

Master/Husband/Father

Wife/Mother

Slave

Children

② Village

③ Polis

Humans as political animals

“It is evident from these considerations, then, that a city-state is among the things that exist by nature, that a human being is by nature a political animal, and that anyone who is without a city-state, not by luck but by nature, is either a poor specimen or else superhuman.” (Politics Book I.ii)

- The city is natural because it comes out of other natural associations and completes the goal of those associations, i.e., self-sufficiency (1252b30–1253a1).
- The city is natural because nature has given us speech, which allows us to communicate and live together, and nature does nothing in vain (1253a1–18).
- The city is natural because it is necessary for our natural end of living well (1253a29–39).

Comparing constitutions

What makes for good rule for Aristotle?

GOOD:

DEVIANT:

Comparing constitutions

What makes for good rule for Aristotle?

GOOD:

- Monarchy
- Aristocracy
- Polity

DEVIANT:

Comparing constitutions

What makes for good rule for Aristotle?

GOOD:

- Monarchy
- Aristocracy
- Polity

DEVIANT:

- Tyranny
- Oligarchy
- Democracy

The status of women and slaves

- What is Aristotle's argument for the rule of men over women?
- What is Aristotle's argument for the rule of masters over slaves? What is the difference between a 'natural' and a 'conventional' slave?
- Is Aristotle mistaking social hierarchy for natural hierarchy?

Who should have rights of political participation?

Aristotle raises an important question. Who should have rights of political participation (the right to vote, to hold political office, to serve as a member of a jury)?

Activity: Speak with someone next to you (or in a breakout room on Zoom). Forget Aristotle. Discuss what you think the answer to the above question should be.