

State and democracy in the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle

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Abstract

For this reason, too, people began to gather, and as a result, the specialization of individuals began to thrive on securing certain tasks for society as a whole, and led to the subsequent emergence of crafts. With the enlargement of communities, the company automatically encountered some problems that needed to be addressed.

In many cases, state institutions have not ensured the kind of life citizens hoped for. This has led some citizens to start to feel disappointed about reality. A perfect example is Greece, which has undergone various changes in social systems throughout its history. It is this knowledge that contributed to the fact that Greek thinkers often used this knowledge in their works. After experience with so many forms of organization of society, they thought what harmed social development and what, on the contrary, benefits.

The most famous philosophers of Plato and Aristotle were among those who did not consider the society and its establishment ideal. It was reflected in what bothers the society and poses questions about how such an ideal establishment should work. As part of their work, they summarized policy knowledge and structured the individual establishments, assigning certain characteristics to them and outlining their views on whether this was a suitable or inappropriate type of establishment based on the vision of their ideal state.

The positions of Plato and Aristotle differed in this. While Plato believed that the individual was supposed to contribute to the benefit of the whole society, Aristotle considered the individual's personal happiness to be an important contribution to society.

Keywords: Plato, Aristotle, democracy, state

1 The term state according to Plato

The work of the Constitution is one of the most important works of Plato, not only from a historical perspective, but also for the benefit of political science. In this work, Plato summed up all his previous knowledge, and these formed the basis for his subsequent writings and works. It is clear from the entire content of the work that Plato's primary objective was to present a clear view of how a perfect state should function. (Platón, 1980)

The basic term for Plato's ideal state is justice. It takes this as a concept that mankind has sought to solve throughout its history, and justice can be viewed from different angles depending on this observer. Plato's goal was to get to know what exactly the term justice is. He based his reasoning on the argument that the concept of justice can be better portrayed within the framework of the so-called. a larger whole. (Platón, 1980) As part of his work, the Constitution, he therefore addressed the concept of the municipality and focused on its development from the very beginning with regard to the political and social context. In his understanding, the term municipality is a group of several individuals who group together in one place, live together and help each other. It follows from the above that a community is formed in a case where an individual invokes the help of other people because he feels insecure.

Plato defines the basic objective of the municipality as a way to improve the provision of common needs of people gathering and living together, especially in the areas of food security, housing and clothing procurement. On this basis, Plato has determined the essence of his theory of the benefit of a similar organization within a society, which is based on the notion that an individual should not do all the tasks, but only perform one particular activity for which he has talent, abilities and innate abilities.

Because if it does not, by doing other activities that are not in line with its capabilities, it naturally reduces the overall efficiency of meeting the needs of society. Plato states that, in his view, it is more appropriate for society as a whole if the individual devotes all of his attention and time to a particular task, the work he has the talents to, and therefore it is appropriate for the individual to control only one craft, not several. (Platón, 1980)

He further states that the natural and fundamental property of people is the desire to have more and more dissatisfaction with the current goods, which leads to the emergence of other needs, the subsequent satisfaction of which leads to the point when the municipality begins to naturally expand.

Since, as a consequence, it is necessary for the municipality to occupy another territory, which may be considered as the territory of another municipality, it is necessary to provide for the municipality a higher force intervention to ensure the successful occupation of new territories and hence the professional army to acquire new areas.

In his perception, such a new community is an unhealthy entity and is in complete opposition to a community where people will live in synchrony, modesty and respect for their property. The human desire for greater comfort and wealth is crucial to the need to expand territories and to the inevitable war. (Platón, 1980)

In his work, Plato characterizes the ideal state by assigning characteristics to this institution, which also includes the attribute of censorship, the absolute reign of several rulers whom he describes in his work as good, wise and educated government officials who themselves decide what is good for society without to be interested in the attitudes, opinions and ideas of ordinary citizens whose lives affect them. They arbitrarily assign the performance of certain tasks to individuals to perform with the view of ensuring the benefit of the whole state. (Platón, 1980)

For this reason, Plato's concept of an ideal state is defined in his work *The Constitution* as an authoritative type of state. In his ideal world, Plato assumes that it is made up of perfect people whose perfection is achieved through controlled marriage in favor of the state and the birth of children. It states that it is necessary to control the lives of individuals without giving them the opportunity to make decisions about themselves in order to ensure the benefit to society as a whole.

Under the notion of an ideal state, Plato divides its inhabitants into classes consisting of rulers, guards, and other inhabitants. In doing so, it is based on the role of the inheritance of the position of the individual, while not precluding the individual being able to advance or fall within the social hierarchy. Although it is not exactly defined who is a citizen, it can be concluded that, in this context, it is a grouping of individuals who have a certain kind of relationship with each other, given the fact that they live together in one territory, designated by the term municipality. (Platón, 1980)

The Rangers in Plato's work are a group of people that has an important function for society because their primary role is to guard the community, while rulers in an ideal state are defined as leaders of the character and attribute them the task of dedicating life to municipalities based on their opinion. (Platón, 1980)

In order to do so, the condition of best education and the personality characteristics of the individual must necessarily be met. (Platón, 1980) The question arises as to whether a ruler or a group of rulers, however clever or educated, can actually fulfill the essence of the goal of an ideal state as described by Plato, to secure the benefit and well-being of the whole state without there was a preference, or rather, the achievement of their own goals and benefits.

It can also be said that it is still a question of whether it is possible to reconcile the concept of absolute power in the state with the idea of achieving individual goals, which are often associated with the concept of freedom and reflected in individual ideas of individuals to fulfill the sense of good life. (Anasová, 1997)

2 The concept of democracy according to Plato

In its works, the *Constitution and Laws* treat Plato as demanding a state system. It defines it as a betrayal based on freedom and freedom for every individual within the framework of a state establishment. The main problem of democracy is that such an establishment does not have the ability to force an individual to act against his will, because the very nature of democracy rejects it. Each individual may arrange his or her life in his own way, which is in stark contrast to what Plato saw in his ideal state.

In its conception, it is possible to ensure a good function of the state only if everyone is obliged to do what is most suitable for them. Plato is disappointed that an individual with appropriate traits has the ability to refuse to accept the role of ruler in the state if he / she does not want to do so, and the community has no coercive mechanism to force him to do so.

In principle, Plato is opposed to what an individual provides to democracy, and that is the right to renounce voluntarily the duty to serve the whole state and citizens. The essence of the existence of the State is to ensure the benefit of the whole of society, and by carrying out its task everyone should contribute to the achievement of that objective.

In the work *The Constitution*, Plato ranked democracy second from below in his division of inappropriate foundations of society under tyrannidism. Among other inappropriate establishments, according to him, democracy is not a constitution in the true sense, because it leads to the fact that its character, which allows the free expression of man's will and his freedom, causes an unwelcome result - dissension between individuals in society.

Plato sees democracy negatively also because in his ideal state there are one or more rulers, respectively, who have all the necessary prerequisites to decide on the direction of the whole society and thus there is no division of power among the citizens. In his view, there is a negative impact of democracy on laws that citizens will not accept because they could have the effect of restricting their freedom. (Platón, 1980)

Plato outlines a democratic system as a system without laws that citizens would have to adhere to. Nor does it give him too much freedom, which leads to the benefit of the individual, which is contrary to the essence of Plato's ideal state, whose main aim is to place the welfare and benefit of society first.

3 The concept of state according to Aristotle

Plato's pupil Aristotle defines the state as a structure that has enough citizens, which are a necessary condition for the state to ensure its own self-sufficiency. (Aristotle, 1988) His view of the concept of state is essentially similar to that of Plato. For the relationship between citizens and the state that individuals associate and would do so even if the relationship between them did not imply a basic need for mutual assistance. According to Aristotle, the state community has the highest position among the others communities, because it contains the characteristics of all others. Given the presumption that in a state there is a law governed by the power to decide what is and what is not fair, then justice is an unconditional part of the state. It defines the state as the last stage of development of all communities as a natural entity (Aristoteles, 1988).

Aristotle considers the state to be an entity whose goal is to ensure all the conditions of life so as to ensure the existence of man, the development of his abilities and virtues, and so that citizens can develop fully in such a state to their full potential. Aristotle considers a good state to be a community that ensures good coexistence for its citizens and a self-sufficient life for the individual.

Aristotle states that the exact definition of the term citizen varies with the type of establishment and is linked to the state. Aristotle is not of the opinion that citizenship is acquired by a certain person living in a certain defined place. Defines a citizen as a person who participates in the judiciary and government. From this it can be concluded that, according to him, anyone who has the opportunity to participate in an advisory or judicial office is a citizen. Like Plato, Aristotle uses the Policy of Equality in his work to define the role of the citizens, who he says are responsible for the whole, and each individual should strive to perform his or her function to ensure the benefit of the whole state. (Aristotle, 1988)

According to Aristotle, every citizen is responsible for contributing to the benefit of the community. The virtue of citizens is a prerequisite for a good state. Man's virtue and civic virtue are not the same, because Aristotle states that not every person is a perfectly good person. The similarity with Plato is that Aristotle also understands a good ruler as one who has a good virtue, while the virtues of a ruler and a citizen are not conceived in the same way.

Aristotle's concept sees the perfect ruler as being wise and good, and the citizen may lack rationality, which is again similar to Plato's, because he too saw the necessity for the ideal ruler to be wise. According to him, the ruler is a personality who has the ability not only to rule, but also to listen and to be righteous. The essence of the concept of politics at Aristotle is in comparison with Plato the individual and his good, because according to him, citizens should live satisfied. (Šramo, 2012)

4 Democracy according to Aristotle

Like Plato, Aristotle considers democracy harmful. But he considers the constitution the best of all evil institutions. According to him, this is a type of establishment of the government of many people, while citizens who do not possess considerable wealth but have freedom, make up the majority and rule in society.

Freedom is a prerequisite for a state's democracy, including the need to change the cycles of government and subordination. According to Aristotle, all the offices are chosen from all citizens and the People's Assembly decides on all matters in the state. The concept of democracy naturally associates it with attributes such as infertility, poverty and under-education due to the abundance of the majority of the population. (Aristoteles, 1988)

Opposite Plato, who did not pay much attention to democracy, Aristotle knows several types of democracy. The first establishment of democracy is the kind in which every citizen, regardless of his or her property, is equal and is guaranteed equal participation in the running of the state. Decisions are mostly taken.

The second type is democracy, where the citizen has the opportunity to participate in the government according to the estimation of property, while the threshold of property is low, so almost everyone has the opportunity to participate in the running of the state.

The third type is democracy, where the share of state power is governed by origin. Anyone who is considered a citizen has the right to participate in government, and the law decides.

The last form of democracy, according to Aristotle, is similar to the previous one, with the exception that citizens not only participate in the running of the state, but also make their own decisions. (Aristoteles, 1988)

5 Comparison of Plato's and Aristotle's approach to democracy and the state

Although there are many similarities between the understanding of the state and its function by both philosophers, there are many fundamental differences between them. Above all, it is also the direction in which their works take it. While Plato seeks to embrace the essence of an ideal state, Aristotle focuses rather on questions about the functioning and organization of the state by defining interrelated concepts and examining the essence of individual constitutions and establishments.

According to Plato's definition of ideal establishment, the essence of such an establishment is precisely the division of the population into classes, defining the ruler as a wise philosopher who decides on other citizens. Another important group are guardians, who must not own property and must have appropriate education and training.

Aristotle, criticizing the model of his teacher's state, also sees that Plato defines an ideal state as an establishment that resembles one large family without clearly defined family ties, disrupting the classic family and consequently increasing crime. According to Aristotle, people tend to commit crimes in a society where it is not clear who their relatives are. (Karamanolis, 2006)

6 Conclusion

The paper was devoted to presenting a brief summary of the ideas of the ideal state as seen by Plato and Aristotle and comparing their visions. Although both thinkers were convinced that it was natural for people to gather, there was a slight difference between their perception of the initial impulse for community formation. While Plato considered the main reason for people to gather together and form communities to benefit, Aristotle considered that there was another aspect, namely the natural inclination of human beings to seek out the company of other people.

Thus, it can be argued that both saw the root cause of the emergence of communities on a similar level. Well, their other ideas about the state were different. Plato's ideal state can be viewed as a model of a theoretical ideal state that is unrealistic under normal circumstances, given that there is no violation of law, citizens are perfect people, and the individual is unconditionally subject to the wishes of a strong, rational and wise ruler he acts for the benefit of the community and subordinates his whole life to this mission.

In fact, a ruler may actually have many shortcomings, and citizens are also not perfect beings who unconditionally submit to something. Plato denies the individual who has the most appropriate traits for this mission the freedom to refuse to exercise the role of ruler.

According to Plato, the essence of a balanced and well-functioning society was that every class he divided into was destined to do what he had the qualities and talents of, and that would lead to a happy and good life for the company. Plato considered it important to consider a good life for society, not for the individual, as Aristotle saw. Whether he or she has a good life if he / she performs his / her role in ensuring the benefit to society he / she did not care.

Plato also outlined in his ideal state that the guards and rulers should not possess the property he saw as common property, just as the women and children who were also common.

Plato stated that marriages were to be contracted for the benefit of society, and all these measures should subsequently lead to the elimination of disputes, which were mostly caused by problems, whether in the family or in disputes over property.

Aristotle, on the other hand, was of the opinion that it was important for the state to ensure a happy and good life for the individual, and it is the community that is such an establishment that should contribute to the individual's development of his abilities in accordance with his potential. This in turn will ensure prosperity for society as a whole. While Plato argued that the individual has a duty to do whatever is commanded unconditionally, Aristotle believed that a certain degree of independence and freedom was needed for the individual.

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