

Discuss Aristotle's classification of state in detail.

Aristotle's Classification of State

Aristotle's classification of state in "Politics" categorized the government into good and bad forms on the basis of who holds power and their goals. He classified state into different forms of government to evaluate these forms of government. This greatest work has laid the foundation of government and helps to analyze the political stability, reforms and ^{social} justice in governance structure.

Aristotle's Concept of State

Aristotle's concept of state is deeply rooted in his philosophical ideas of human nature and purpose of life. According to him, the primary purpose of state is to enable its citizens to achieve eudaimonia or human flourishing and the highest good. The state is highest form of communities and laws are beneficial to proper functioning of state. The constitution defines organization of the state and distribution of power among its institutions and citizens.

Explicating Aristotle's Pure and Perverted State

Aristotle divided the state into pure state and perverted state on the basis of two principles: number of rulers and whether they govern for their own interest or for their own benefits.

Number of Rulers	Pure state	Perverted State
One ruler	Monarchy	Tyranny
Few rulers	Aristocracy	Oligarchy
Many rulers	Polity	Democracy

Expounding ^{Good and Corrupt} Forms of Government in Aristotle's Pure and Perverted State

Aristotle called that state 'pure state' where rulers govern for the 'common interest' and called that state 'perverted state' where rulers govern for their own interests. He divided six forms of government into three pairs of good and corrupt forms.

a - Understanding Monarchy of Pure state and Tyranny of Perverted state

Monarchy of Pure state: In a pure state, monarchy is a form of government where one ruler, the monarch, exercises all powers considering the interests of all citizens.

Tyranny of Perverted state: In a perverted state, tyranny is a form of government where one ruler, the tyrant, exercises absolute power while oppressing the subjects.

b - Understanding Aristocracy of Pure state and Oligarchy of Perverted state

Aristocracy of Pure state: In a pure state, aristocracy is the form of government where few rulers, ^{of elite class} exercise supreme powers for the common interests.

Oligarchy of Perverted state: In a perverted state, oligarchy is the form of government where power is concentrated in the hands of wealthy, leading towards laws that only favor the rich at the expense of the poor.

c. Understanding Polity of Pure state and Democracy of Perverted state

Polity of Pure state: Aristotle considered polity as the best form of government because it is a mixed form of government that forms balanced republic ensuring the fulfilment of interests of the majority and the minority and preventing dominance of any single group.

Democracy of Perverted state: This governance structure is characterized by the rule of the majority, the poor; thus leading towards populism and policies that ignore the minorities.

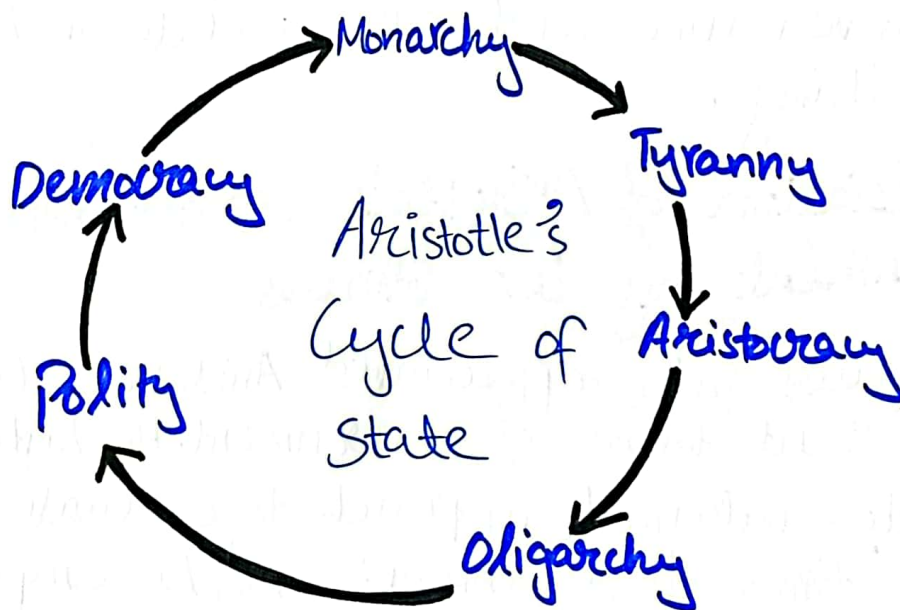


Figure: Aristotle's Cycle of State transforming from one Political Regime into Another

Appreciation of Aristotle's Work

On Classification of State by Great Philosophers

a- Appreciation of Aristotle's Classification of State by Thomas Aquinas

Thomas Aquinas greatly appreciated Aristotle's work on classification of state. In "Commentary on the Politics," he integrated Aristotle's philosophical ideas with his theological and ethical perspectives, underscoring the importance of just governance and role of state in human flourishing.

b- Appreciation of Aristotle's Classification of Government by Leo Strauss

Leo Strauss also appreciated Aristotle's classification of different forms of government. He highlighted Aristotle's balanced approach to evaluate different forms of government and his emphasis on a ^{best} practicable state rather than idealistic utopia (Leo Strauss, Natural Right and History, 1953).

← Appreciation of Aristotle's Classification of State by Alasdair MacIntyre

Alasdair MacIntyre also appreciated Aristotle's work on classification of state. He sees Aristotle's emphasis on role of polis (city-state) and importance of virtuous citizenship as crucial insights that remain relevant in modern political ideas (Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 1981).

Concluding Thoughts

Aristotle's classification of state into different forms of government has given a new concept of governance in political philosophy. His critical evaluation on different forms of government helps to analyze justice, reforms and governance structure in a state. Thus, Aristotle's philosophical ideas are of great significance due to their compatibility with contemporary era.