

2016

Give Critical analysis of Aristotle's Classification of Govt?

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What is the Aristotelian Classification of state?

Q2. Give a Critical analysis of Governments.

ANSWER:

Introduction:

Aristotle, one of the most influential thinker in Western political philosophy, systematically classified governments in his work Politics based on two criteria

- i- Number of the rulers
- ii- Purpose of Governance.

His topology distinguished between good and corrupt form of rule, aiming to identify the ideal state.

Aristotle Classification of Governments.

Aristotle identified six types of government, dividing into two main categories

1- Pure or Just Form of Government:

According to Aristotle, pure governments are there

- i- Monarchy
- ii- Aristocracy
- iii- Polity

i- Monarchy:

If one person rules for the good of community, under the law.

ii- Aristocracy:

If few people rule for the good of public

iii- Polity:

If many person rule, for the public interest. According to Aristotle "Polity is the best form of Government"

2- Perverted Or Corrupt Form of Government:

Each form has its perversion, which are also three:

- i- Tyranny
- ii- Oligarchy
- iii- Democracy

i- Tyranny:

If one person rules for his personal interest.

ii- Oligarchy:

If a few wealthy rule for the private class / own interest.

iii- Democracy:

If many poor rule for their own interest, neglecting the common good.

Critically Analysis:

1) Strengths of Aristotle Classification:

i- Empirical Approach:

Aristotle Combine ethical consideration (what should be) with empirical observation (what is), His observation of actual city-states, giving his theory practical value. He emphasized that the best government is one that serves the common good (eudaimonia)

ii- Flexibility and Realism:

Unlike Plato's idealistic Republic, Aristotle recognized that

different societies require different form of government based on their social and economic conditions.

iii- Focus on Public Interest:

His emphasis on the ruler's intent (common good vs self interest) adds a moral dimension to politics, which remains relevant today.

iv- Recognition of Mixed Government:

Aristotle's idea of polity (a mix of democracy and oligarchy) anticipates modern republican and constitutional systems, promoting balance and stability.

2) Weaknesses of Aristotle Classification:

i- Favored Rich and Educated / Elite class:

Aristotle believed only the educated or wealthy class should rule which is unfair by today's standards.

ii- Misinterpretation of Democracy:

Aristotle viewed democracy as a deviant form, equating it with mob rule or rule by the poor for self gain (mobocracy). This contradicts modern liberal democratic values that champion equality and participation.

iii- Static and Idealistic:

According to Miller, 1995, his classification does not account for evolving political system e.g. modern republic, federalism and assumes fixed social hierarchy.

iv - Cultural and Historical Limitation:

His classification was based on Greek city-states (polis) and does not apply to nation states or non-Western political tradition.

(- Finley, 1983).

Conclusion:

Aristotle's classification of governments stands as a foundational contribution to political science. While some of his views are outdated by current standards, his methods of categorizing government and evaluating them based on moral and functional criteria continues to be a vital tool in political analysis.