

# Classification of Justice: An Aristotle Experience

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**Abstract-***Since its inception till the present, the idea of justice has been a recurrent topic of discussion. The definition of justice and what it entails, which have been hotly contested since antiquity, are still up for dispute. According to this article's findings, Aristotle divides justice into two general and strict meanings, obtained using a descriptive-analytical method. In the broadest sense, justice means the observance of the law and the equality of all citizens. In its purest form, the division of justice into two categories: corrective and distributive. Distributive justice deals with distributing resources among those participating in the political system. Corrective justice facilitates the correction of interpersonal transactions and communications. According to Aristotle, justice must follow proportionality, treat equals pretty, and maltreat inequalities. According to the equality and inequality of the populace, there is a distribution of endowments and facilities.*

**Keywords:** Aristotle, complete justice, partial justice, distributive justice, corrective justice

## INTRODUCTION

Since its early history till the present, the idea of justice has been one of the most crucial issues. A powerful position has been taken by democracy as a form of government in all conceivable realms of existence, both material and non-material. Justice is traditionally understood to address the socioeconomic, moral, and political forces at the human level. The vital foundation of such a one-sided approach is that all happenings and affairs are created and decided upon by maintaining the human at the core.

One of the most significant political thinkers who addressed justice in depth was Aristotle, and there is no disputing his influence on political philosophies in both the East and the West. Aristotle has some influence on the political philosophy of thinkers like Thomas Aquinas, John Lock, Hegel, and Carl Marx, but his profound influence on Muslim scholars'

political thought examines his ideas necessary for us. Therefore, in the current study, we concentrate on Aristotle's class key idea in classifying through his political philosophy and the relationship between the virtue of man and government.

## ARISTOTLE'S JUSTICE THEORY

Aristotle -

*"Let us resume our inquiry and state, in view of the fact that all knowledge and every pursuit aims at some good, what it is that we say political science aims at, and what is the highest of all goods achievable by action. Verbally there is very general agreement; for both the general run of men and people of superior- refinement say that it is happiness and identify living well and faring well with being happy; but with regard to what happiness is, they differ, and the many do not give the same account as the wise."<sup>1</sup>*

Aristotle makes a distinction between complete and partial justice. Insofar as these relationships foster a happy existence and bring enjoyment to the members of the political community, human beings demonstrate "complete justice" in their dealings with others. The distribution of rewards and obligations among people is what "partial justice" means. There has been partial injustice when someone obtains an unjust share of advantages or responsibilities.

In contrast to Plato, Aristotle admits that justice may be many distinct things, each of which may include

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<sup>1</sup> (Aristotle., (2009))

much truth. While Aristotle's definition of partial justice roughly corresponds to our modern understanding of justice or fairness, his definition of complete justice is extensive. "Partial justice" is an element of complete justice and relates to fairness, which is the main topic of "Book V of the Nicomachean Ethics."

Additionally, general justice, according to Aristotle, "perfects" the other virtues by extending their application beyond oneself. Justice is a "complete" or "perfect" virtue, meaning it has been fully activated in all areas of one's life, including interactions with others, instead of just a tiny portion of their affairs.

Consider a legal situation where two parties are at odds over a piece of property. The plaintiff allegedly owns the property, but the defendant is adamant that they are the rightful owners. The judge is entrusted with rendering a decision after the case is tried.

Partial justice will occur if the judge decides that the plaintiff is the valid owner of the property and orders that it be returned to them. Partial justice is a fair and just judgement that only resolves a particular issue or disagreement.

However, this would be an instance of complete justice if the judge did more than just give the property to the plaintiff and also punished the defendant for trying to claim the property fraudulently. Complete justice, according to Aristotle, is the highest kind of justice since it considers both the effect of the judgement on society as a whole and the general moral character of the persons concerned. In this case, the judge's decision to penalise the defendant for making a false claim and returning the property to the plaintiff would illustrate full justice.

One can show courage by caring for one's affairs and interests, but that is only enough and flawed if one can also care for matters that impact one's neighbours. That is why those who have been granted the chance to oversee and manage the entire state's affairs, as opposed to just their own, have been given the most freedom and leeway to "perfect" their virtues or, conversely, their vices.

Second, contrary to popular belief, Aristotle's theory has a much more exciting place for the law. The

starting point for the practical reasoning of virtuous agents will be specific laws. Further research will, We believe, demonstrate that virtue is the capacity to take the legislator's point of view and to reason about the common good and how it can be achieved from an unbiased perspective.

*"Virtue is the capacity to understand these starting points and to apply the law not blindly but with understanding."*

Aristotle saw justice as the culmination of all virtues, which means respecting and adhering to the law. Therefore, all legal actions are just generalised actions. Aristotle implies that justice is the "mother of all" virtues and is a perfect virtue that encompasses all other virtues. Since justice is the application of all virtues, a person who possesses this quality can also apply his or her virtue to oneself and one's family, provided that each action directly benefits the general public.

Justice, therefore, implies a social feature in which all virtues are distributed since it is the only virtue among all virtues that is bad for others. When particular justice is merely a particular feature and not the core of moral virtue, this happens.

#### CLASSIFICATION IN STRICT SENSE

Aristotle first distinguishes between complete and partial justice before broadening the classification to distributive and corrective justice and then describes the differences. In his own words:

*"The just as the fair and equal: divided into distributive and rectificatory justice."*<sup>2</sup>

Justice in the strict sense and proper behaviour that corresponds with it—distributive justice—influences the distribution of honour, money, and other things among people who participate in the community's political system. "Corrective justice," a different type, improves interpersonal relationships and commercial transactions. Additionally, there are two types of this justice: voluntary transactions and those that are not. With the acknowledgement of the link between justice and equality, Aristotle concludes his study of distributive justice.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 82 (1030a)

Given that everyone agrees that fairness in distribution should be based on merit, justice must follow harmony, which treats equals equally and inequalities unequally. A person's equalities or disparities are considered while distributing gifts or facilities. According to Aristotle, the equality component also occurs in distributive justice, but numerical fitness develops in transactions rather than geometric fitness in corrective justice.<sup>3</sup>

For instance, when someone harms another, and the judge orders reparation following corrective justice, both parties' characteristics and situations are the same; in this case, the precise amount of harm should be compensated. In Aristotle's view, every virtue lies between the two vices of excess and waste.

Imagine a society where wealth is divided based on merit to help visualise these ideas. A person would be entitled to a more significant part of the wealth than someone who does not work as hard or contribute as much to society. Distributive justice would be demonstrated in this situation.

Consider a town's population. Food, water, and shelter are some of the town's scarce resources. A fair distribution of these resources among the community members based on their merits and needs would be necessary for distributive justice. For instance, the town council may give elderly or disabled people or families with children a larger share of the available resources.

He then proceeds to other topics, covering the connection between justice and reciprocity, justice in the political sense, and other topics. Most interpreters have concentrated on Aristotle's statements on distributive and corrective justice regarding the following subjects as appendices, even though they make up nearly two-thirds of his overall analysis. This approach has generated peculiar difficulties, particularly when addressing Aristotle's concepts of fairness and reciprocity.

Now picture a member of this society committing a crime like theft. As Aristotle defines, corrective justice

holds that the crime's penalty must be commensurate with the harm caused. The worth of the stolen goods and damage to the victim would determine the theft's punishment in this instance. The punishment should not be too severe, such as capital punishment for minor theft, nor too lenient, such as a small fine for a significant theft. Punishment proportional to the harm done would be an example of corrective justice.

A person with a disability might need more resources than someone without a disability to live comfortably. In this situation, distributive justice would entail the person given the necessary resources to ensure that the community addresses their needs.

However, there may still be situations where people hurt or violate each other's rights, notwithstanding an equitable allocation of resources. Corrective justice would apply in these situations.

We propose that this is what Aristotle means when discussing "reciprocity by a proportion rather than with arithmetic equality."

As a form of the contribution principle that appears to support his theory of distributive justice and where the concept of a contribution is construed widely, "proportional reciprocity" is used in this context. Now that we have that out let us go on to Aristotle's explanation of corrective justice in transactions. This explanation assumes that some injustice has happened in transactions, breaking from the idea of "proportional reciprocity" in trade.

The primary attribute of corrective justice is that it is based on "arithmetic" equality, as defined by Aristotle, as opposed to proportional equality. Corrective justice does not consider the parties' relative contributions to the larger political community when assessing what constitutes corrective justice, in contrast to distributive justice, which promotes the reciprocal exchanges that keep the political community together.

*"It makes no difference whether a good man defrauds a bad man or a bad one a good one, nor whether it is a good man or a bad one who commits adultery."*<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> (Aristotle, 1999)

<sup>4</sup> (Aristotle., (2009))

The following statements by Aristotle are all connected to his initial query of how we should conceptualise justice as “unqualifiedly”:

*“In associations based on mutual exchange, the bond of union is this sort of justice: reciprocity in accordance with a proportion rather than with arithmetic equality. It is by proportional requital that the city holds together. People seek either to return evil for evil – for 66 Aristotle’s Theory of Justice, otherwise, they consider themselves reduced to enslaved people – or to repay good with good, for otherwise there is no mutual contribution, and it is by the mutual contribution that men hold together.”<sup>5</sup>*

According to Aristotle, justice is at the core of the virtues that bring about human prosperity. Aristotle defines *prosperity* as our action’s ultimate welfare.

### CONCLUSION

Aristotle established the groundwork for many of the crucial ideas that would eventually dominate Western thought on justice with the development of his theory. He developed a methodical, if schematic, framework to think about distributive justice issues—a subject that had previously gotten little attention. Aristotle provided a precise analysis of the principles of retributive justice and the conditions under which errors in voluntary transactions should be corrected. He gave a perceptive analysis of how justice is applied in transactions. A conception of reciprocity known as the contribution principle is the foundation of all these concepts. Even though modern insights have challenged its intellectual foundations, it still has a firm hold on the imagination of many people today. Many of the critical ideas, classifications, and claims about justice that has influenced Western thought up until the present day can be found in Aristotle’s theory. No single thinker has had a more considerable influence on how we view justice.

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<sup>5</sup> (Aristotle., (2009))