

Aristotle on gender

Sociology



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Justice and Gender The peer discussion held last week had its attention focused on a comparison of Aristotle's and Plato's ideas of justice and gender. As previously discussed from our lectures, Plato's idea of justice was concerned with an internal equality between the members of the classes present within the polis. This focused more on individualism in that one must only be concerned with his/her business and not minding other's problems. The justice that occurs in their society depends on the class to whom one belongs. However, Aristotle, his student, was more for all-encompassing justice aiming for the ultimate goal of the constitution. Equality, for Aristotle, depends on the constitution in which the society is built upon. For democracy, it promotes equality for those who are equal, but only for those who are equal. Elaborating on this, equality only exists for the majority, who rules in this kind of polis. On the other hand, oligarchy focuses more on the distribution of office, in which there is equality for those who are unequal. (Curtis, 1981) However, this failed to consider the degree of goodness in a citizen. Oligarchs depended more on a wealthy upbringing, giving them superiority over the others who have less riches than them. Democrats was more dependent on free birth, all for equality among every member of the society. Aristotle's justice was an advocate of excellence over birth. Considering his example of the story of the flutists, Aristotle concluded that justice all ends up to the contribution of a good citizen to the aim of the society and to the "end" of state. Aristotle could care less about the social standing of a citizen, instead focusing more on his triumphs instead of what he was born to be. Gender is another topic wherein these two philosophers' opinions differ. For Plato, equality among women and men existed within the society itself. Women were free to choose what profession they have,

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provided that they have the proper education to back it up. Aristotle's idea for gender, however, is a sexist one. He believed that only men were worthy to be citizens, and that was only if he was a holder of office. Women were "naturally" governed by men, as indicated in his works, specifically identified by the phrase "mastery of husband over wife". He gave statements wherein the men were given rights over those of the opposite gender. In spite of their standings as teacher and student, their opinions differ regarding how a society must work in order to achieve peace and harmony within their constitution. However, important points can also be withdrawn from their works, such as the fairer justice referred to in Aristotle's works, and Plato's ideas of equality and the manner of governing a society. Not one person is perfect, and we cannot find fault upon one making a mistake that we ourselves may have committed. Group: # 4 — Section: WBVDX