

## **‘EGALITARIAN ARISTOTELIANISM’: COMMON INTEREST, JUSTICE, AND THE ART OF POLITICS**

### **Introduction: An ‘Egalitarian Aristotelianism’?**

This paper aims to reevaluate the Aristotelian political theory from an egalitarian perspective and to pinpoint its legacy and relevance to contemporary political theory, demonstrating its importance for contemporary liberal democracies in a changing world, suggesting a new critique of liberal and neoliberal political theory and practice, and especially the improvement of our notion of the modern liberal-democratic state, since most contemporary representative liberal democracies fail to take into account the public interest of the many and do very little in order to advance it.

In this way, Aristotle’s philosophy is still relevant today, especially his moral and political thought. Indeed, we are experiencing a notable revival of activity in various philosophical areas of neo-Aristotelian philosophy, as well as in the study of Aristotle’s philosophy *per se*. But although Aristotle’s writings serve as a common source, contemporary Aristotelian theories are rarely based on a close analysis of Aristotle’s texts. One of our central aims should be to reconsider Aristotelian political theory and to pinpoint its legacy, relevance, and importance to contemporary political theory. What is needed is to go back to Aristotle’s texts and examine his arguments afresh from both a scholarly and a philosophical perspective<sup>1</sup>. This reveals that one should put Aristotelian political virtues back onto the political agenda. We should focus on key aspects of Aristotle’s thought, such as his notions of the common/public good, justice, friendship, and the art of ruling, arguing that Aristotle’s theory requires us to have concern for our fellow citizens; ‘concern for others’ as opposed to the mere ‘respect for others’ that contemporary liberalism advocates. Aspects of Aristotle’s philosophy, that have not so far been adequately discussed, should be discussed afresh, in relation to his conception of the ‘common good’ (κοινὸν ἀγαθόν/*koinon agathon*) and his notion of the

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1. Introduction, *Virtue Ethics and Contemporary Aristotelianism: Modernity, Conflict and Politics*, A. BIELSKIS – E. LEONTINI – K. KNIGHT (eds), London, Bloomsbury, 2020, pp. 1-7.

'common interest' (κοινῆ συμφέρον/*koinē sympheron*)<sup>2</sup>. A close analysis of Aristotle's arguments on justice, equality and friendship should also be made, and their connection to that of the common interest should be explored, arguing for their importance for the common good of the state.

The paper will focus on key aspects of Aristotle's thought, such as his notions of justice (δικαιοσύνη/*dikaiousunē* and ἀπλῶς δίκαιον/*aplōs dikaion*), concord (ὁμόνοια/*homonoia*), friendship (φιλία/*philia*) and the art of ruling (τέχνη τοῦ ἄρχειν/*technē tou archein*), arguing that Aristotle's theory requires us to have concern for our fellow citizens; 'concern for others' as opposed to the mere 'respect for others' that contemporary neo-Kantian liberalism advocates<sup>3</sup>. Hence, I will examine these aspects of Aristotle's philosophy that have not so far been adequately discussed, in relation to his conception of the 'common or public interest' (τὸ κοινῆ συμφέρον/*to koinē sympheron*) which is essential in order to understand the Aristotelian vision for 'the art of politics' (τέχνη τοῦ ἄρχειν) which should always aim towards the interest of the many, *i.e.* the people (πλῆθος/*plēthos*).

Of course, one could very reasonably ask: 'Egalitarian Aristotelianism'? How could this be possible? Given Aristotle's discussion in the *Politics* on natural slavery (δουλεία/*douleia*) and slaves (δοῦλοι/*douloi*), women, barbarians and his overall arguments in favour of 'natural inequalities'<sup>4</sup>, in relation to his definition of freedom (ἐλευθερία/*eleutheria*) and his conception of a free citizen (ἐλευθερος/*eleutheros*) in both his *Politics* and *Nicomachean Ethics*, but also in his *Metaphysics*, the *De Anima*, and his other biological works, one would rightly assume that it is difficult to be able to argue in favour of a theory of 'Egalitarian Aristotelianism', *i.e.* towards a Neo-Aristotelian theory that could be labeled as such, even loosely. Nevertheless, if we manage to overcome the part of Aristotle's natural teleology which is related to his theory of natural

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2. Abbreviations: *NE* (*Nicomachean Ethics*), *EE* (*Eudemian Ethics*), *Pol.* (*Politics*), *Rhet.* (*Rhetoric*). Translations from Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics* are from ROSS (1980) STALLEY (1995) respectively, and the translations of Aristotle's other works are from BARNES (1984), with many alterations of my own.

3. Cf. M. GAJEK, The Aristotelian Criticism of the Liberal Foundations of Modern State, *Polish Political Science Yearbook*, 45, 2016, pp. 272-287; T. REINER, The sources of communitarianism on the American left: Pluralism, republicanism, and participatory democracy, *History of European Ideas*, 37, 2011, pp. 293-303; F. HÖRCHER, *A Political Philosophy of Conservatism, Prudence, Moderation and Tradition*, Bloomsbury, London, 2021.

4. Cf. R. MULGAN, Aristotle and the Political Role of Women, *History of Political Thought*, XV, 2, 1994, pp. 179-202; R. BENTLEY, Loving Freedom: Aristotle on Slavery and the Good Life, *Political Studies*, XLVII, 1999, pp. 100-113; M. SCHOFIELD, Ideology and Philosophy in Aristotle's Theory of Slavery, *Aristoteles' Politik*, G. PATZIG (ed), Göttingen, Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1990, pp. 1-27; J. KARBOWSKI, Slaves, Women, and Aristotle's Natural Teleology, *Ancient Philosophy*, 32, 2012, pp. 323-350; R. KAMTEKAR, Studying Ancient Political Thought Through Ancient Philosophers: The Case of Aristotle and Natural Slavery, *Polis, The Journal for Ancient Greek Political Thought*, 33, 2016, pp. 150-171; A. BIELSKIS, Managers would not need subordinates and masters would not need slaves': Aristotle's *Oikos* and *Oikonomia* Reconsidered, *Virtue Ethics and Contemporary Aristotelianism: Modernity, Conflict and Politics*, A. BIELSKIS – E. LEONTSINI – K. KNIGHT (eds), London, Bloomsbury, 2020, pp. 40-57.

inequalities, there are several egalitarian notions to be explored in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (Bk. IV), the *Eudemian Ethics* (Bk. IV) and the *Politics* (Bks III & IV). Especially in the *Politics*, one could argue that an equally important theme, if not the most important, is related with the art of ruling which is directly connected with the definition and the role of the citizen, the different kinds of constitutions, but most important with who is capable, most able, and most fit to rule, and in what way and for which purpose.<sup>5</sup> The notion of common interest plays, according to my interpretation and my reading of Aristotle’s texts, a very important role; a crucial one in fact in understanding Aristotle’s ‘egalitarianism’ and his political theory in general.

Therefore, my main aim in this paper is to reveal those aspects of Aristotelian political philosophy that, according to my opinion, have not been discussed, neither sufficiently nor extensively, in relation to Aristotle’s notion of ‘public’ or ‘common’ interest (τὸ κοινῆ συμφέρον/*to koinē sympheron*), a notion that is, as I will argue, prominent throughout his *Politics* but also in his *Nicomachean* and *Eudemian Ethics*.

In particular, my aim is to present both an exegesis and a critical analysis of the Aristotelian pronouncements and arguments on polity, the non-deviant form of democracy (πολιτεία/*politeia*), political justice (δικαιοσύνη, ἀπλῶς ἢ πολιτικὸν δίκαιον/*dikaiousunē, haplōs or politikon dikaion*), equality (ἰσότης/*isotēs*) and civic friendship (πολιτικὴ φιλία/*politikē philia*) and I will explore on the connection of these concepts with that of the public interest (*to koinē sympheron*), aiming to show how these are crucial for the promotion of the public interest in the state (πόλις/*polis*). In addition, the connection made by Aristotle between ‘polity’ or ‘constitutional government’ (πολιτεία)<sup>5</sup>, justice and friendship as well as the connection made by him with the notions of freedom (ἐλευθερία/*eleutheria*) and equality (ἰσότης/*isotēs*), as well as with the good of concord (ὁμόνοια/*homonoiā*) needs to be seriously analyzed and examined<sup>6</sup>.

### **Aristotle on the ‘common’ or ‘public’ interest and the art of ruling**

Aristotle’s notion of ‘public’ or ‘common’ interest (τὸ κοινῆ συμφέρον/*to koinē sympheron*) or ‘common advantage’ –as it is often translated by H. Rackham,

5. A point that needs to be emphasized is that ‘polity’ is the usual translation of *politeia*. Nevertheless, as we know, Aristotle uses the word *politeia* both as a general word for ‘constitution’ and to describe a specific form of constitution (one in which participation is confined to those who can afford the armor of a *hoplite* soldier). Although it is customary to translate the word as ‘polity’, this practice can be misleading since it obscures the suggestion, implicit in Aristotle’s usage, that the so-called ‘polity’ has a special claim to be constitutional. Hence, the translation of *politeia* proposed by Richard Stalley is ‘Constitutional Government’ (R. F. STALLEY, *Aristotle. The Politics*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1995, p. 356). Cf. also M. SCHOFIELD, Sharing in the Constitution, *The Review of Metaphysics*, 49, 1996, pp. 831-858.

6. Cf. E. ΛΕΟΝΤΣΙΝΗ, Ἡ ἔννοια τοῦ κοινοῦ συμφέροντος στὴν ἀριστοτελικὴ πολιτικὴ φιλοσοφία, *ΑΡΙΣΤΟΤΕΛΗΣ: Παιδεία, Πολιτισμός, Πολιτικὴ, Θεσσαλονικιὰ, Ἐταιρεία Μακεδονικῶν Σπουδῶν*, 2018, pp. 107-116.

D. Ross, E. Barker, R. Stalley, R. Kraut, S. Broadie, C. Rowe, C.D.C. Reeve, and many others<sup>7</sup>— occurs almost everywhere in Aristotle’s text, but one must search very carefully in the ancient Greek text in order to notice it and pay the due attention deserved to it. The usual ‘common advantage’ English translation has not helped in spotting the importance of this, as for example in the case of Aristotle’s notion of civic friendship (πολιτική φιλία/*politikē philia*) which also aims at the common interest (and not ‘advantage’ as, yet again, is always translated in English)<sup>8</sup>.

‘Common’ or ‘public’ interest’, or plainly ‘interest’, is quoted very often, not only in the *Politics*, but also in both the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Eudemian Ethics*. To offer only some few examples, ‘interest’ is referred in some places in the *Nicomachean Ethics* such as καλόν and ἡδύ (*kalon kai ēdu*/good and pleasant) (*NE* 1104b31), καλόν (*kalon*/good) (*NE* 1168a12, *NE* 1140a29 & 1127a5), ἀγαθόν (*agathon*/good) (*NE* 1140a27), τὸ ἄλλωφ (*to allō*/the other) (*NE* 1130a5), τὸ ἑαυτῷ (*to eautō*/the personal) (*NE* 1141b5 & 1160b2), τὸ παρόν (*to paron*/the present) (*NE* 1134b35, τὸ κατὰ συμφέρον (*to kata sumpheron*/the one that is according to the most beneficial) (*NE* 1134b35), τὸ συμφέρον διώκειν (*to sumpheron diōkein*/pursuing one’s interest) (*NE* 1156a27), τὰ συμφέροντα ἀγνοεῖν (*ta sumpheronta agnoein*/ neglecting what is commonly beneficial) (*NE* 1110b27), τὸ ἀντίξουν συμφέρον (*to antixoun sumpheron*/the conflicting interest) (*NE* 1155b5) τὸ δοκοῦν συμφέρον (*to dokoun sumpheron*/ what seems to be commonly beneficial according to one’s opinion) (*NE* 1169a6). It should be noted that in all the above cases the term ‘interest’ is always associated with that of the ‘common interest’, either in a positive way (as in the case of the good, ἀγαθόν/*agathon*) or in a negative way, by contrasting public interest with personal one, as in all other cases when Aristotle is usually referring to the notion of personal interest which aims merely at personal non-altruistic gain, and not self-preservation.

In addition, there are two very important passages in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (V.1.129b15 and VIII.9.1160a14) that throw further light into the notion of common or public interest. In the fifth book of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle, as we know, discusses justice and its various forms. At the

7. Cf. H. RACKHAM, H., *Nicomachean Ethics*, Cambridge, Mass., Loeb Classical Library, 1956; *Ibid.*, *Aristotle’s Politics*, Cambridge, Mass., Loeb Classical Library, 1956; D. ROSS (ed.), *The Works of Aristotle*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1925; E. BARKER, *The Politics of Aristotle*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1958; R. F. STALLEY, *Aristotle. The Politics, op. cit.*, 1995; R. KRAUT, R., *Aristotle on the Human Good*, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1989; S. BROADIE, *Ethics with Aristotle*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1991; S. BROADIE & C. ROWE, *Aristotle Nicomachean Ethics*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002; C.D.C. REEVE, *Aristotle Nicomachean Ethics*, Indianapolis/Cambridge, Hackett, 2014.

8. In fact, this is a ‘mistake’ (a misrepresentation really) that I have also made myself in my published work. Cf. E. LEONTSINI, *The Motive of Society: Aristotle on Civic Friendship, Justice, and Concord, Res Publica*, 19.1, 2013, pp. 21-35, where I also defined Aristotle’s notion of civic friendship as ‘common advantage friendship’ (pp. 25-29). But I have now totally abandoned this interpretation for the reasons explained above, and I advocate that political friendship in Aristotle should be translated and elaborated as a “common interest *philia*”.

beginning of the *Nicomachean Ethics* (Bk. V.1), Aristotle starts his discussion on justice on its sphere and outer nature and on what sort of mean justice is, considering the just as the lawful (universal justice) and the just as the fair and equal (particular justice). Having concluded that the lawless person was seen to be unjust and the law-abiding person just, evidently all lawful acts are in a sense just acts; for acts laid down by the legislative art are lawful, and each of these, we say is just (*NE* V.I.1129b11-14). Nevertheless, in *NE* V.I.1129b15-19, Aristotle makes a further point: «Now the laws in their enactments on all subjects aim in their enactments at the public interest (τοῦ κοινῆ συμφέροντος) either of all or of the best or of those who hold power, or something of the sort; so that in one sense we can call those acts just that tend to produce and preserve happiness and its components for the political society».

In the same chapter of the *Nicomachean Ethics* Bk. V, Aristotle, while elaborating on why the saying of Bias of Priene is thought to be true, that «rule will reveal the man» (καὶ διὰ τοῦτο εὖ δοκεῖ τὸ τοῦ Βίαντος, ὅτι ἀρχὴ ἄνδρα δείξει, *HN* VI.1130a1-2) –which is similar to the ἀρχὴ ἄνδρα δείκνυσι attributed by others to Pittacus of Mytilene, also one of the seven sages like Bias of Priene that Aristotle quotes– meaning that the true nature of a person is revealed when he/she acquires political power, since the ruler is defined necessarily in relation to other people but also as a member of a society or a community or an association (κοινωνία/*koinōnia*). Aristotle also argues that «For this same reason justice, alone of the virtues, is thought to be ‘another or different or alien good’ (ἄλλότριον ἀγαθόν), because it is related to our neighbour; for it does what is advantageous to another (acts on what advantages the interests of others / ἄλλω γὰρ τὰ συμφέροντα πράττει), either a ruler or a co-partner» (*NE* V.I.1130a17-18).

Another important passage which refers to the common interest occurs in Aristotle’s discussion on friendship (*philia*) in Bks. VIII & IX of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Aristotle moves on in Bk. IX.6-7 to elaborate further on this view on the relation between political friendship and concord by arguing that «Concord also seems to be a friendly relation. For this reason, it is not identity of opinion; for that might occur even with people who do not know each other; nor do we say that people who have the same views on any and every subject are in accord, e.g. those who agree about the heavenly bodies (for concord about these is not a friendly relation), but we do say that the city is in accord when people have the same opinion about *what is to their interest*, and choose the same actions, and do what they have *resolved in common*. It is about things to be done, therefore, that people are said to be in accord, and, among these, about matters of consequence and in which it is possible for both or all parties to get what they want; e.g. a city is in accord when all its citizens think that offices in it should be elective, or that they should form an alliance with Sparta, or that Pittacus should be their ruler – at a time when he himself is also willing to rule. But when each of two people wishes himself to have the thing in question, like the chorus in the *Phoenissae*, they are in a state of faction; for it is not concord when each of the two parties thinks of the same thing, whatever that may be, but only when they think of the same

thing in the same hands, *e.g.* when both the common people and those of the better class wish the best men to rule; for thus and thus alone do they get what they aim at. *Concord seems, then, to be political friendship*, as indeed it is commonly said to be; for it is concerned with things that are *to our interest* and have an influence on our life (*NE IX.6.1167a21-1167b9*)<sup>9</sup>.

In this sense, political friendship (*politikē philia*) can function as a social good that can contribute not only to the most sovereign good (*kyriōtaton agathon*) of the political association but also to the common interest (*to koinē sympheron*) of its citizens. According to Aristotle, civic friendship between fellow citizens is important because it advances the unity of both state and community by transmitting feelings of intimacy and solidarity. In that sense, it can be understood as an important relationship predicated on affection and generosity, virtues lacking from both contemporary politics and society that seem to be mainly dominated by post-Enlightenment ideals and neoliberal policies. For Aristotle, friendship is important for community (*koinōnia*) because it generates concord (*i.e.* unanimity of the citizens), thus articulating a basis for social unity and political agreement<sup>10</sup>.

Hence, Aristotle's notion of *politikē philia* is a form of 'common interest friendship' or, better, as a *philia* that promotes what Aristotle calls 'the common interest' (*to koinē sympheron*) which also bares a connection between political justice (*dikaioῦnē; haplōs* or *politikon dikaion*) and equality (*isotēs*). All these are crucial for the promotion of the public/common interest (*to koinē sympheron*) of the state (*polis*). Thus, according to my argument, Aristotle's notion of common interest, is important, in the same sense as friendship is, because it can, if successfully applied to our notion of the modern liberal state, contribute to its improvement, by strengthening community bonds, practices and institutions, as well as 'genuine' solidarity, and citizen equality<sup>11</sup>.

It should be pointed out that despite Aristotle's lack of extensive discussion of political *philia* in the *Politics*, there is no question that Aristotle's notion of political friendship is unequivocally linked with his notion of political community (*koinōnia*): «Friendship is community, and, as we are in relation to ourselves, so we are in relation to a friend» (*NE IX.12.1171b32-33*). A similar point is also made in *NE IX.11. 1171a1-20*. But also, one should be careful not to associate all kinds of associations (communities), which, although

9. The italics are mine.

10. Cf. E. LEONTSINI, *The Motive of Society: Aristotle on Civic Friendship, Justice, and Concord, Res Publica*, 19, 1, 2013, pp. 21-35.

11. It should be noted that Aristotle's account of justice as presented in both the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Politics* is complex and that there are many concepts of justice discussed by Aristotle. Indeed, Aristotle is aware of this complexity in justice, as he makes sure to stress in *NE II.7.1108b17-19*: «With regard to justice, since it has not one simple meaning, we shall, after describing the other states, distinguish its two kinds and say how each of them is a mean». For Aristotle, there are universal and particular concepts of justice as well as natural and conventional ones. Especially in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, there are many concepts of justice discussed, and the main distinction made in *NE V.1-2* is between 'universal' and 'particular' justice, as pointed out previously.



similar to the political community, should be distinguished from it, since it is the ‘constitution’ (the system of courts, a common set of laws and a shared conception of justice) which distinguishes the political community from any other associations either merely contractual or commercial<sup>12</sup>. Aristotle rejects the commercial model for the kind of community a *polis* constitutes in *NE* III.9, since for Aristotle the end of the *polis* is not mere life, nor an alliance for mutual defense but the *common* promotion of a good quality of life<sup>13</sup>. So, Aristotle clearly states that political friendship is a form of a common interest, a *philia* that promotes ‘the common interest’. Hence, I do not see why we should attribute to his account more than Aristotle is claiming. So, what is the problem? Why should political friendship retain the ‘virtue’ (excellence-based) friendship characteristics? It is not fraternity that is the ideal, but *homonoia* (concord). Concord, and not fraternity in its common use of the term.

In addition, according to Aristotle, ‘universal’ or ‘general’ justice (‘the just as the lawful’) refers to the whole of virtue: «This form of justice, then, is complete virtue, although not without qualification, but in relation to our neighbour. And therefore justice is often thought to be the greatest of virtues, and ‘neither evening nor morning star’ is so wonderful; and proverbially ‘in justice is every virtue comprehended’. And it is complete virtue in its fullest sense because it is the actual exercise of complete virtue. It is complete because he who possesses it can exercise his virtue not only in himself but towards his neighbour also; for many people can exercise virtue in their own affairs, but not in their relations to their neighbour» (*NE* V.1129b25-35).

This universal or general concept of justice includes all the habits and dispositions of a good citizen and aims at the common interest (*to koinē sympheron*): «The laws in their enactments on all subjects aim at the public interest either of all or of the best or of those who hold power, or something of the sort; so that in one sense we call those acts just that tend to produce and preserve happiness and its components for the political society» (*NE* V.1129b15-19). As Young succinctly points out, «The identity of universal justice, lawfulness, and virtue as a whole thus brings together two major themes of Aristotle’s moral and political philosophy: the moral idea that acting virtuously promotes happiness and the political idea that the political community exists to promote the happiness of its citizens»<sup>14</sup>.

12. This commercial model of ‘civil’ friendship is similar to that of modernity as advocated by Adam Smith and David Hume. Cf. A. SILVER, Friendship in Commercial Society: Eighteenth-Century Social Theory and Modern Sociology, *The American Journal of Sociology*, 95.6, 1990, pp.1474-1504; L. HILL – P. MCCARTHY, Hume, Smith and Ferguson: Friendship in Commercial Society, *The Challenge of Friendship in Modernity*, P. KING – H. DEVERE (eds), London, Franc Cass, 2000, pp. 33-49; L. HILL – P. MCCARTHY, On Friendship and *necessitudo* in Adam Smith, *History of the Human Sciences*, 17, 4, 2004, pp. 1-16.

13. For an informative discussion of this, cf. J. COOPER, Political Animals and Civic Friendship, *Reason and Emotion*, J. COOPER, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1999, pp. 356-377.

14. C. M. YOUNG, Aristotle’s Justice, *The Blackwell Guide to Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics*, R. KRAUT, (ed.), Oxford, Blackwell, 2007, p. 181.

‘Particular’ justice (‘the just as the fair and equal’) is a character virtue, like the other virtues (for example, courage, temperance, liberality, honesty, loyalty, etc.), and is part of ‘universal’ justice. Particular justice is divided into two kinds: distributive justice (*dianemētikon dikaion*) and corrective (or rectificatory or commutative) justice (*diorthōtikon dikaion*). Distributive justice operates in a society and allocates benefits and burdens fairly, while rectificatory justice operates between two parties and either maintains or restores a balance (*NE V.2*)<sup>15</sup>.

### The Centrality of Justice and the Common Interest

My analysis will, first, focus on the discussion of the Aristotelian conception of political justice which is introduced in *NE V.6*. Having demonstrated that the reciprocal is related to the just, Aristotle points out that «we must not forget that what we are looking for is not only what is just without qualification (*to haplōs dikaion*) but also political justice (*to politikon dikaion*)» (*NE V.6. 1134a25-26*): «This is found among people who share their life with a view to self-sufficiency, people who are free and either proportionately or arithmetically equal, so that between those who do not fulfil this condition there is no political justice in a special sense or by analogy. For justice exists only between people whose mutual relations are governed by law; and law exists for people between whom there is injustice; for legal justice is the discrimination of the just and the unjust. And between people between whom injustice is done there is also unjust action (although there is not injustice between all between whom there is unjust action), and this is assigning too much to oneself of things good in themselves and too little of things evil in themselves. This is why we do not allow a person to rule, but rational principle, because a person behaves thus in his own interests and becomes a tyrant. The magistrate on the other hand is the guardian of justice, and, if of justice, then of equality also» (*NE V.6. 1134a26-1134b2*).

Justice (*dikaiosunē* or *politikon dikaion*) is central to Aristotle’s political theory; it is the chief virtue of the *polis* that promotes the common or public interest (*to koinē sympheron*). As Aristotle points out in *Politics III*, repeating in a way the argument of the first section of the first chapter of *Politics I*<sup>16</sup>: «In all branches of knowledge and in every kind of craft the end in view is some good. In the most sovereign of these, the capacity for [leadership in] political matters, the end in view is the greatest good and the good which is most to be pursued. The good in the sphere of politics is justice (*dikaion*), and justice consists in what tends to promote the public interest (*to koinē sympheron*)» (*Pol. III.1282b12-14*).

15. For a clear exposition of the aforementioned concepts of justice presented in *NE V*, cf. C. M. YOUNG, *Aristotle’s Justice*, *op. cit.*, pp. 179-180.

16. E. BARKER, *The Politics of Aristotle*, *op. cit.*, p. 129.



The centrality of justice in Aristotle's political thought is obvious from the very beginning of *Politics* I.2. There, Aristotle defends something we can call 'political naturalism'; the idea is that human beings have the natural impulse to live together and to form political associations<sup>17</sup>. He argues that human beings –being political animals by nature– are uniquely endowed by nature with the ability to form the concept of justice and with the capacity for political co-operation (*Pol.* I.2.1253a7-18): «The city belongs to the class of things that exist by nature, and a human being is by nature a political animal» (*Pol.* I.2.1253a1-3). In addition, Aristotle argues in *Pol.* I.2.1253a31-39 that, although the impulse towards these kinds of associations exists by nature in all people, «the person who first constructed such an association was none the less the greatest of all benefactors». This also contains the claim that human beings need law and justice in order to form a political association<sup>18</sup>. Aristotle illustrates this point further by pointing out that: «A human being (*ἄνθρωπος*), when perfected, is the best of animals; but it is isolated from law and justice he is the worst of all. Injustice is all the graver when it is armed injustice; and a human being is furnished from birth with weapons which are intended to serve the purposes of wisdom and goodness, but which may be used in preference for opposite ends. That is why, if it be without goodness [of mind and character], he is a most unholy and savage being, and worse than all others in the indulgence of lust and gluttony. The virtue of justice belongs to the city; for justice is an ordering of the political association, and the virtue of justice consists in the determination of what is just» (*Pol.* I.2.1253a29-39).

As we have seen, according to Aristotle, justice is important since its purpose is the common interest of the *polis*. It is very interesting that Aristotle also relates political *philia* with the promotion of the common interest of the *polis*. In addition, it should be pointed out that the common or public interest of the *polis* is also associated with both democracy and polity as well as with his constitutional theory in general (*Pol.* III.6.1279a17 ff.; III.9.1280a10; III.9.1280a22; V.1.1301a36; V.1.1301b36). The best constitution (*politeia*) is the one that aims at the common interest (*Pol.* III.4.1277b7-9 & III.6.1278b6-25). As Aristotle points out, justice is restricted to states with good rulers, irrespectively of the type of constitution followed: «Those constitutions which consider the common interest are right constitutions, judged by the standard of absolute justice. Those constitutions which consider only the personal interest of the rulers are all wrong constitutions, or perversions of the right forms. Such perverted forms are despotic; whereas the polis is an association of free people» (*Pol.* III.7.1279a17-21).

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17. For an extensive discussion of Aristotle's political naturalism and the relevant bibliography, see E. LEONTSINI, *The Appropriation of Aristotle in the Liberal-Communitarian Debate*, with a foreword by R. F. STALLEY. Athens, Saripolos Library, 2007, pp. 49-92.

18. Cf. Fr. D MILLER, *Nature, Justice, and Rights in Aristotle's Politics*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1995, p. 67.

In the *Nicomachean Ethics* we find further support to the above claim since Aristotle points out that the political community is formed and survives for the sake of the common interest that its members derive from it. In this sense, it is essential for such a community to aim at securing what is needed by its members to support their lives (*NE* 1160a11-23). All these different small associations, which exist within the larger political association, seem to be subordinate to this political community, because political community aims not at what is immediately useful, but at what is useful for the whole life: «All these communities/associations, then, seem to be parts of the political community; and the particular kinds of friendship will correspond to the particular kinds of community» (*NE* VIII.1160a28-30)<sup>19</sup>.

Also, in *Eudemian Ethics* IX.1242a6-13, political friendship is also classified as a ‘common interest friendship’: «Political friendship on the other hand is constituted in the fullest degree on the principle of utility, for it seems to be the individual’s lack of self-sufficiency that makes these unions permanent – since they would have been formed in any case merely for the sake of society. Only civic friendship and the deviation from it are not merely friendships but also partnerships on a friendly footing (*ὅς φιλοὶ κοινόνουσιν*); the others are on a basis of superiority. The justice that underlies a friendship of utility is in the highest degree just, because this is the civic principle of justice».

Aristotle maintained that ‘*philia* is the motive of society’ (*Pol.* III.1280b38-39) and argued that friendship is even more important than justice since it generates concord in the city (*NE* VIII.1155b21-27)<sup>20</sup>. Indeed, one of the most striking features of Aristotle’s account is that he sees an important relation between justice and friendship. In his view, friendship is in some ways as important as justice –if not more– for the prosperity of the state. The city is a partnership for the sake of the good and –in the same sense that justice is the good in the sphere of politics– friendship is also a good and holds the state together. Lawgivers, according to this argument, «seem to care more for friendship than for justice, since friendship generates concord (*homonoia*) –i.e. unanimity of the citizens– which is similar to friendship. In that way, friendship can hold the state together – in the same sense that justice does– and can also expel faction. It is in this sense that, when people are friends, they have no need of justice, while when they are just, they need friendship as well, and the highest form of justice seems to be a matter of friendship<sup>21</sup>.

19. For an extensive analysis on this, see E. LEONTSINI, *Justice and Moderation in the State: Aristotle and Beyond*, *Philosophy of Justice*, G. FLØISTAD (ed.), International Institute of Philosophy, Series: Contemporary Philosophy: A New Survey, vol. 12, Dordrecht-Heidelberg-New York-London, Springer, 2015, pp. 27-42.

20. For the importance of the relation between justice, friendship and concord in Aristotelian political philosophy, see E. LEONTSINI, *The Motive of Society: Aristotle on Civic Friendship, Justice, and Concord*, *op. cit.*, pp. 21-35.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 29.

This view is expressed by Aristotle in both the *Nicomachean* and the *Eudemian Ethics* in two central passages, respectively. First, in *NE* VIII.1155a22-28 where he says that «Friendship seems also to hold states together, and lawgivers to care more for it than for justice; for concord seems to be something like friendship, and this they aim at most of all, and expel faction as their worst enemy; and when people are friends they have no need of justice, while when they are just they need friendship as well, and the truest form of justice is thought to be a friendly quality». Furthermore, in the *Eudemian Ethics* III.1234b25-31 he also expresses almost the same view: «All say that justice and injustice are specially exhibited towards friends; the same person seems both good and a friend, and friendship seems a sort of moral habit; and if one wishes to make people not wrong one another, one should make them friends, for genuine friends do not act unjustly. But neither will people act unjustly if they are just; therefore justice and friendship are either the same or not far different».

Friendship and justice seem to be concerned with the same things and to be found in the same people: «For there seems to be some kind of justice in every community, and some kind of friendship as well. At any rate, people address as friends their shipmates and fellow soldiers, and similarly those who are members of other kinds of community or association with them. And the extent of their community is the extent of their friendship, since it is also the extent of their justice. The proverb, ‘What friends have, they have in common’, is correct, since friendship is based on community. But while brothers and comrades have everything in common, what the others whom we have mentioned have in common is more limited – more in some cases, less in others, since friendship too differs in degree» (*NE* VIII.1159b25-1160a).

Again, similar examples are also offered by Aristotle in the *Eudemian Ethics*, where he says that: «Therefore to seek the proper way of associating with a friend is to seek for a particular kind of justice. In fact the whole of justice in general is in relation to a friend, for what is just is just for certain persons; and persons who are partners, and a friend is a partner, either in one’s family or in one’s life. For a human being is not only a political but also a house-holding animal, and does not, like the other animals, couple occasionally and with any chance female or male, but a human being is in a special way not a solitary but a gregarious animal, associating with the persons with whom he has a natural kinship; accordingly there would be partnership; and justice of a sort, even if there were no state» (*EE* VII.1242a20-27).

A short clarification on Plato’s notion of *homonoia* (or harmony/ἁρμονία or unanimity/ὁμοδοξία/*homodoxia*), in various passages in his *Republic* is needed here: Plato of course in *Republic* 351d<sup>22</sup> claims something quite different than Aristotle (but also maybe quite similar as well); he rather argues that it is justice that generates concord and friendship (justice in the soul/justice in the city), while in Aristotle we see a kind of reversal

22. «Στάσεις γὰρ που, ὧ̄ Θρασύμαχε, ἦ γε ἀδικία καὶ μίση καὶ μάχας ἐν ἀλλήλοις παρέχει, ἢ δὲ δικαιοσύνη ὁμόνοιαν καὶ φιλίαν» (PLATO, *Republic*, 351d).

of that claim in the sense that for Aristotle *philia* is even more important than justice since it is *philia* that generates concord and concord is more important than justice. But it seems to me that, from what we have seen above, Aristotle also thinks that justice is *the* cardinal virtue, in the sense that, if *politikê philia* fails to produce *homonoia* in the *polis*, it is justice that would 'step in' to secure it. Hence, one could argue that Aristotle's opposition and criticism to Plato's *homonoia* in his *Kallipolis* in the *Republic* is not towards the importance of justice (*dikaiosûnê*), but with his conception of *philia* and *homonoia*, as it is expressed in *Politics*, Bk. II.

Aristotle's view of political friendship is also closely connected with his advocacy of moderation in the mixed constitution (*πολιτεία/polity*) in relation to justice, since equality of means produces the right kind of relationship among the citizens (which is a friendship among equals) and encourages, therefore, not only the right kind of political community but also a secure and stable political regime<sup>23</sup>. Aristotle illustrates this in his discussion on the problems arising from a *polis* in which the distribution of wealth is unequal: «The result is a city, not of free people, but only of slaves and masters: a state of envy on the one side and of contempt on the other. Nothing could be further removed from the spirit of friendship or of a political association. An association depends on friendship – after all, people will not even take a journey in common with their enemies. A city aims at being, as far as possible, composed of equals and peers, which is the condition of those in the middle, more than any group» (*Pol.* IV.1295b20-27).

According to Aristotle, polity (*politeia*) is bound to be the best constitution (the non-deviant democracy), since it is composed of the elements which naturally constitute a city. The middle classes enjoy a greater security themselves than any other class, since they do not, like the poor, desire the goods of others; nor do others desire their possessions, as the poor covet those of the rich, and since they neither plot against others, nor are plotted against themselves, they live free from danger. The best form of political association is, first, one where power is vested in the middle class, and, second, those cities where good government is attainable because is a large middle class – large enough, if possible, to be stronger than both of the other classes, but at any rate large enough to be stronger than either of them singly; in that case, its addition to either will suffice to turn the scale, and will prevent either of the opposing extremes from becoming dominant. It is therefore the greatest of blessings for a *polis* that its members should possess a moderate and adequate property. Where some have great possessions, and others have nothing at all, the result is either an extreme democracy or an unmixed oligarchy; or it may even be, because of the excesses of both sides, a tyranny, since tyranny grows out of the most immature type of democracy, or out of oligarchy, but much less frequently out of constitutions of the middle order, or those which approximate them (*Pol.* IV.1295b30-1296a12)<sup>24</sup>.

23. J. HAMPTON, *Political Philosophy*, New York, Westview Press, 1997, p. 154.

24. E. LEONTSINI, *The Appropriation of Aristotle in the Liberal-Communitarian Debate*,

### Conclusion: Friendship, Concord, Justice and the Common Interest

Aristotle’s criticisms of Plato’s *Republic* in *Pol.* Book II.3-4 could help us illuminate further this notion of the unity of the state and its relation to friendship<sup>25</sup>. Aristotle makes an important point when he says that Plato’s view would give rise to a ‘watery’ (ὕδαρῆ/*hudarē*, *Pol.* 1262b16) friendship. Indeed, his argument against such a watery friendship in the *Politics* is essential for achieving an understanding of the notion of Aristotle’s political friendship, and its relation to justice and the unity of the state<sup>26</sup>. According to Aristotle, «the spirit of friendship is likely to exist to a lesser degree where women and children are in common; and the governed class ought to have little of that spirit if it is to obey and not to attempt revolution» (*Pol.* 1262b1-3). Friendship, he argues, is the chief good of cities, because it is the best safeguard against the danger of factional disputes. This is similar to what Aristophanes in Plato’s *Symposium* (191a, 192d-e) refers to when he speaks of lovers desiring out of friendship to grow together into a unity, and to be one instead of two. In the case of the lovers, it would be inevitable that both or at least one of them should cease to exist; but in the case of a political association, Aristotle points out, that, if this happens, there would be merely a watery sort of friendship, since a father would be very little disposed to say ‘mine’ of a son, and a son would be as little disposed to say ‘mine’ of a father: «Just as a little sweet wine, mixed with a great deal of water, produces a tasteless mixture, so family feeling is diluted and tasteless when family names have as little meaning as they have in a constitution of this sort, and when there is so little reason for a father treating his sons as sons, or a son treating his father as a father, or brothers one another as brothers» (*Pol.* 1262b17-21).

Aristotle points out at the end of this discussion of ‘watery’ friendship that there are two motives which particularly move people to care for and love an object: «the first is that the object should belong to yourself, while the second is that you should like it» (*Pol.* 1262b22-23). But neither of these two motives can exist among those who live in a constitution such as the one envisaged by Plato in his *Republic*. Aristotle’s argument against this kind of watery civic friendship reveals that it is not possible to legislate friendship.

According to Aristotle, friendship is an essential ingredient in the good life, not just because it is useful but because it is the source of some of our

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*op. cit.*, pp. 96-107. Cf. also R. G. MULGAN, ‘Aristotle and the Value of Political Participation’, *Political Theory*, 18, 2, 1990, pp. 195-215; A. PREUS, ‘Aristotle’s Theory of Citizenship in Context’, *Dia-noesis: A Journal of Philosophy*, 2, 2016, pp. 115-140.

25. Aristotle’s remarks on Plato’s *Republic* should not be taken as direct criticisms of the *Republic* but should be seen as expressions of Aristotle’s own political position. Cf. E. LEONTISINI, ‘Sex and the City: Plato, Aristotle, and Zeno of Kiton on *Erōs* and *Philia*’, *Erōs in Ancient Greece*, E. SANDERS – C. THUMIGER – C. CAREY – N.J. LOWE (eds), Oxford University Press, Oxford 2013, pp. 129-141.

26. R. F. STALLEY, ‘Aristotle’s Criticism of Plato’s *Republic*’, *A Companion to Aristotle’s Politics*, D. KEYS – FR. D. MILLER (eds), Oxford, Blackwell, 1991, pp. 191-193 and R. MAYHEW, *Aristotle’s Criticism of Plato’s Republic*, Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield, 1997, pp. 79-85.

greatest satisfactions. In addition, there is also a political dimension to friendship, since it is both what holds the city together and a main reason for its existence. The city «is formed for the good life which requires relations with one's fellows; it also involves parents, children, wives, and in general one's friends and fellow-citizens: thus, the city is to be valued as providing the context for friendship»<sup>27</sup>.

The role of friendship in the city is to generate *homonoia*, i.e. concord (unanimity; agreement; consensus)<sup>28</sup>, and to safeguard justice. He clearly points out though that «concord is not agreement in belief, since this can occur even among people unknown to one another»; «nor are people described as being in concord when they agree about just anything, for example, the heavens (since concord here has nothing to do with friendship), but a city is said to be in concord when people agree about what is beneficial, rationally choose the same things, and carry out common resolutions» (*NE* 1167a22-28).

Aristotle stresses that concord in a city, if achieved, does not deprive the citizen body of its separateness and individuality, or its ability to deliberate on political decisions: «In the case of a city, concord exists when all the citizens think that public offices ought to be elective, or that they ought to make an alliance with Sparta, or that Pittacus ought to govern, when he himself is willing. But when each person, like those in *The Phoenissae*, wants the same thing all for herself, then there is civil strife. For being in concord does not consist merely in each person's having the same thing in mind for the same person» (*NE* 1167a28-1167b2).

Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that the relation between justice and friendship does not make friendship a necessary condition for justice. Justice can exist, in Aristotle's account, even if we had no political friendship in the city. The state might not have concord, but then again one would not expect all constitutions to have that; if they did, they would be no imperfect ones. Concord seems to be political friendship since it is concerned with what benefits people and what affects their lives. This kind of concord is found among good people, since they are in concord with themselves and with each other, being as it were of the same mind wishing for and aiming in common at what is just and beneficial. As he points out: «Bad people cannot be in concord, except to a small extent; for they try to get more than their share of interests,

27. R. F. STALLEY, *Aristotle's Criticism of Plato's Republic*, *op. cit.*, p. 193.

28. I am using here the English/Latin word 'concord' for the translation of Greek *homonoia*, although there is an etymological difference between the Greek concept and its English equivalent, *homonoia* involving a reference to *nous*, as explicit in *NE* 1167a28-1167b2 ('having the same thing in mind'); *homonoia* is the opposite of faction (*stasis*) and expresses the unity among the citizens that is produced by their literally being 'same-minded'. Although Aristotle does not fully expand on the notion of *homonoia*, giving the impression that he takes for granted the familiarity with the concept, it should be noted that *homonoia* was considered a key political virtue for fourth-century political writers and that there was a philosophical tradition in associating friendship, which generates concord, with justice, the unity of the state and the pursuit of happiness in the city. Cf., for example, R. KAMTEKAR, 'What's the Good of Agreeing? *Homonoia* in Platonic Politics', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, 26, 2004, pp. 131-170.



while falling short in difficult jobs and public services. And since each wish this for himself, he keeps a sharp eye on his neighbour and holds him back, because if people do not look out for the public interest, the *polis* is destroyed. So, what happens is that they are in civil strife, pressing one another to do what is just while not wishing to do it themselves» (NE 1167b9-16).

The civic friendship that Aristotle advocates could not be any sort of excellence-based friendship, since this would mean that Aristotle would have made the same mistake that he accused Plato of. By attempting to make political friendship as close as character or familial friendship, the citizens would have to feel close personal friendship for one another as if the whole city was a close family. This could not be feasible, since it is not possible to be friends with so many people. Plato's solution will result in leaving affection out of his ideal city in the *Republic*. Aristotelian political friendship does not require us to feel the same strong feelings of affection and liking that excellence-based friendship does. Aristotelian political friendship does, nevertheless, require us to have concern for our fellow citizens; 'concern for others' as opposed to the mere 'respect for others'. Therefore, political friendship for Aristotle is a much weaker version of excellence-based friendship. Political friendship can contribute to the unity of the state by creating political agreement (*homonoia*). The unity of the state advocated by Aristotle is one where citizens agree on what the proper conception of justice would be, enabling them thus to make arrangements concerning civic affairs (the rulers and the ruled, the election of offices etc). The unity of the city depends on the parts of the *polis* being held together by a certain type of constitution. It is the agreed conception of justice that would ultimately shape the desired constitution for the city. And it at this point where justice relates to the art of ruling (*technên tou archein*) and with the common interest that the ruler should promote for all his/her citizens.

Aristotelian political friendship is a variant of the friendship of utility, being a form of 'common or public interest friendship'. This kind of political friendship, as envisaged by Aristotle, could serve as an antidote to the alienating aspects of modernity, providing a model for a political community where there is both a common bond among citizens (no matter how loosely this bond is to be understood) and recognition of their separate identities. This bond of friendship creates concord in society that prevents civic strife. In this loose (Aristotelian) sense, civic friendship as a form of 'common/public interest friendship' could serve as a model for contemporary society satisfying thus its ever-growing need for social unity without posing a threat to either liberty nor justice. In this sense, friendship is significant for both politics and political theory, and Aristotle's notion of civic friendship could provide the basis for a meaningful political form of friendship that could foster social unity in the context of pluralism. According to Aristotle, although there is no plausible way to legislate friendship (nor it is of course desirable to force citizens to become friends), there must be mutual concern if human beings are to flourish inside a political community. Civic friendship is indeed a public and a social good

equally important to justice, since it is only the bonds of friendship that can safeguard civic harmony, social unity, political agreement, and most importantly the common interest of all citizens. And it is in this sense only that one might be able to argue in favour of a theory of 'Egalitarian Aristotelianism'.

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**«ΕΞΙΣΩΤΙΚΟΣ ΑΡΙΣΤΟΤΕΛΙΣΜΟΣ»:  
ΚΟΙΝΟ ΣΥΜΦΕΡΟΝ, ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣΥΝΗ  
ΚΑΙ Η ΤΕΧΝΗ ΤΟΥ ΑΡΧΕΙΝ**

Π ε ρ ί λ η ψ η

Ἡ μελέτη αὐτὴ ἔχει ὡς στόχο της νὰ ἀναλύσει τὴν ἀριστοτελικὴ πολιτικὴ φιλοσοφία ὑπὸ τὸ πρίσμα μιᾶς ἐξισωτικῆς προσέγγισης καὶ νὰ ἀναδείξει τὴν ἐπικαιρότητα καὶ τὴν κληρονομιά τοῦ Ἀριστοτέλη καθὼς καὶ τὴ σημασία τους γιὰ τὴ σύγχρονη πολιτικὴ θεωρία, καταδεικνύοντας τὴν ἀναγκαιότητα τῆς ἀριστοτελικῆς πολιτικῆς φιλοσοφίας γιὰ τὶς σύγχρονες φιλελεύθερες ἀντιπροσωπευτικὲς δημοκρατίες μέσα σὲ ἓνα κόσμο ποὺ διαρκῶς ἀλλάζει, προτείνοντας μία νέα κριτικὴ ἐνάντια στὶς νεοφιλελεύθερες πολιτικὲς καὶ πρακτικὲς ποὺ ἀλλοιώνουν τὴν ἐξισωτικὴ φιλελεύθερη πολιτικὴ θεωρία. Χρειάζεται ὁμως νὰ σημειωθεῖ ὅτι, παρ' ὅλο ποὺ τὰ κείμενα τοῦ Ἀριστοτέλη χρησιμεύουν ὡς κοινὴ πηγὴ ἀναφορᾶς, οἱ σύγχρονοι «Ἀριστοτελισμοὶ» σπάνια συλλογίζονται μία καταρτισμένη ἀνάλυση ἢ μιὰ ἐμπειριστατομένη ἐξήγηση τῶν ἀριστοτελικῶν κειμένων. Χρειάζεται, ἐπομένως, νὰ ἐπιστρέψουμε στὴν ἀνάλυση, ἐξήγηση καὶ ἐρμηνεία τῶν ἀριστοτελικῶν κειμένων καὶ νὰ τὰ ἐρμηνεύσουμε ἐκ νέου.

Ἡ συγκεκριμένη μελέτη ἐπικεντρώνεται στὴν ἐρμηνεία βασικῶν πλευρῶν τῆς σκέψης τοῦ Ἀριστοτέλη, ὅπως αὐτὲς τῆς δικαιοσύνης, τοῦ ἀπλῶς δικαίου, τῆς ὁμόνοιας, τῆς φιλίας καὶ τῆς τέχνης τοῦ ἀρχεῖν, υποστηρίζοντας πὼς ἡ ἀριστοτελικὴ θεωρία μιᾶς ἐπιβάλλει νὰ προτάσουμε «τὸ ἐνδιαφέρον μας γιὰ τοὺς ἄλλους ἀνθρώπους» ('concern for others') σὲ ἀντίθεση μὲ «τὸν σεβασμὸ πρὸς τοὺς ἄλλους» ('respect for others'), χωρὶς ὁμως αὐτὸ νὰ σημαίνει, κατὰ τὴ γνώμη μου, πὼς τὸ δεύτερο εἶναι ἀσυμβίβαστο μὲ τὸ πρῶτο ἢ πὼς ὁ Ἀριστοτέλης δὲν πρότασε ἐξίσου τὴν ἔννοια τῆς δικαιοσύνης ὡς πρωτεύουσα ἀρετῆ. Ἐπομένως, θὰ ἐξετάσω τὶς πτυχὲς αὐτῆς τῆς φιλοσοφίας τοῦ Ἀριστοτέλη, οἱ ὁποῖες δὲν ἔχουν κατὰ τὴ γνώμη μου ἐπαρκῶς μελετηθεῖ, σὲ σχέση μὲ τὴν ἔννοια τοῦ κοινοῦ ἢ δημόσιου συμφέροντος (τὸ κοινῆ συμφέρον), ὥστε νὰ κατανοηθεῖ τὸ ἀριστοτελικὸ ἰδεῶδες γιὰ τὴν τέχνη τοῦ ἀρχεῖν, ἢ ὁποία θὰ πρέπει πάντοτε νὰ στοχεύει στὸ συμφέρον τῶν πολλῶν (πλῆθος), ὥστε νὰ καταστεί δυνατόν νὰ ὑποστηριχθεῖ μία ἀριστοτελικὴ καὶ σύγχρονη νεοαριστοτελικὴ θεωρία, τὴν ὁποία ἀποκαλοῦ «ἐξισωτικὸ ἀριστοτελισμὸ» ('Egalitarian Aristotelianism').

Ἑλένη ΛΕΟΝΤΣΙΝΗ