THE VIRTUOUS POLITY:
ARISTOTLE ON JUSTICE, SELF-INTEREST AND CITIZENSHIP

DISSERTATION

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Aristotle’s classification of regimes includes a regime called *polity*, a correct regime in which a multitude rules. How can a multitude rule in the common interest? Aristotle’s basic answer is ‘Because they have a share of virtue and wisdom.’ Thus I ask ‘What moral qualities do the citizens of polity have?’ Answering this question leads us to consider what the functions of citizens are (Chapter 1), what broad claims are properly put forward as giving someone a claim to participate in government (Chapter 2), whether the citizens of polity are the middle class (Chapter 3), the relationship between wealth and virtue (Chapter 4), and the relationship between occupation and virtue (Chapter 5). I end by looking at the collectivity ‘argument’ (Chapter 6), where Aristotle states that a multitude of individuals with a share of virtue and wisdom can ‘come together’ and be as good in government as ‘the best few’.

I find that the citizens of polity have military virtue and are at least habitually just and moderate. When the citizens are described by wealth and occupation rather than by character, those who are more wealthy and (more importantly) somewhat less wealthy, are also admissible as citizens, since some polities are mixes of oligarchy and democracy. In particular, farmers resemble the middle class closely enough to explain their admission into democratic-leaning polities.
Dedicated to my parents.
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INTRODUCTION

Aristotle’s classification of regimes includes a regime called *polity*, a correct regime in which a multitude rules. Kingship and aristocracy – the other two correct regimes – require individuals who are virtuous (or: excellent). The citizens of polity lack the virtue of those who rule in kingship or aristocracy. What is more, as Aristotle says, they receive no education in civic virtue. How is good government by such a multitude possible? What moderate virtue, if any, do the citizens of polity possess that enables them to rule in the common interest? My goal in this work is to understand the character of the citizens of polity and to explain their ability to make good decisions.\(^1\)

\(^1\) In a similar vein Will Kymlicka (1993) writes, of modern politics: “Of course, it is not necessary that every citizen display all of these virtues to a high degree. A liberal democracy may not be possible for a society of devils, but nor does it require a society of angels. It would be more accurate to say that liberal justice requires a critical threshold: there must be a sufficient number of citizens who possess these virtues to a sufficient degree. Where to set this threshold is obviously a complicated question, which cannot be answered in the abstract.” (p. 293). John Rawls (1996) writes that “We must start with the assumption that a reasonably just political society is possible, and for it to be possible, human beings must have a moral nature, not of course a perfect such nature, yet one that can understand, act on, and be sufficiently moved by a reasonable political conception of right and justice to support a society guided by its ideals and principles.” (p. lxii)
Answers are not readily forthcoming. Aristotle spends little time discussing polity. His main treatment is only a few pages long and it raises as many questions as it answers. In these pages, polity is described as a mix of oligarchy and democracy. When polity is first introduced it is described as a correct regime of the hoplite (or: warrior) multitude. Polity is also, perhaps, the ‘middle’ regime, where the moderately wealthy are politically influential. I say ‘perhaps’ because nowhere in the stretch of text concerning the middle regime does Aristotle mention polity. How can polity be the hoplite regime, the middle regime and a mixed regime? Indeed, how can a mix of two deviant regimes – oligarchy and democracy – be a correct regime?

Perhaps for these reasons, and because the best regime is Aristotle’s focus and is more glorious, polity and its citizens receive less attention in the literature. This dissertation attempts a sustained examination of polity. I take what Aristotle does say explicitly about polity and augment it, first of all, with a result from his broader theory of citizenship and, second and third, with two passages which, although not described as being about polity, are indeed, I maintain, about polity. I find that the citizens of polity have military virtue, have one or more of the other virtues, and are at least habitually just and moderate. Described by wealth and occupation rather than by character, I find that since some polities are mixes, those who are more wealthy and (more importantly) somewhat less wealthy than the middle or hoplite class, are also admissible as citizens.

Aristotle’s first and most straightforward description of polity is as the regime where the hoplite class has authority. This is appropriate, he says, because military virtue is achievable by many, whereas complete virtue is
achieved by only a few. Aristotle here indicates that he is willing to use the term ‘virtue’ in a weaker sense than in the *Nichomachean Ethics*, where he says that in order to have any one ethical virtue, one must have them all. However, Aristotle defines a citizen as one who is able to perform civic functions well. (This definition is the subject of the first Chapter.) These are the tasks of deliberation about civic matters and adjudicating in the courts, (which together we can call ‘decision-making’, ‘governing’ or ‘ruling’.) Military activity is not initially mentioned as a function of citizenship and seems a secondary form of civic participation. Furthermore, it is difficult to see how military virtue in particular helps in political decision-making. So hoplite virtue is not the end of the story about the virtue of the citizens of polity.

In addition to military virtue, the citizens of polity are also just and moderate, though whether their justice and moderation matches their military virtue is unclear. The justice and moderation of the citizens of polity is at least habitual. This result falls out of Aristotle’s broader theory of citizenship, in the second Chapter, as follows. One of Aristotle’s basic assumptions is that the character of the polis (or: state, city) is a reflection of the character of its citizens. If a person thinks wealth is the good, for example, then he will think the state is successful when it is wealthy. The correct goal, for the individual and state alike, is the life of virtue – ideally civic activity combined with culture. Though acting virtuously does require material provisions, the claim to power of the wealthy – that the state needs funds for its activities – cannot be the whole story. Nor is it sufficient to argue, as the poor do, that everyone of native birth should be included, as the state needs a citizen body. Rather, the state must also be well-
governed and so the rulers individually, or at least together, must have virtue. The citizens of polity individually lead a life of moderate virtue combining freedom and wealth and this is what they set as the aim of the polis. While, individually, they are not educated in virtue, they can overcome this limitation collectively and achieve the virtue and wisdom of the best few. Whether any actual multitude of polity argues for power in this way is doubtful. Rather, because of their similarity to one another and the nature of their character, the moderate virtue they have as individuals is recognized implicitly, even as the debate is carried on in terms of wealth and freedom. We learn more about the virtue of polity’s citizens (and simultaneously about how they come to have it) from Aristotle’s discussion of the ‘middle’ regime (examined in the third Chapter).

That all in government ought to refrain from self-interest is a basic Aristotelian doctrine based on the principle that the character of the polis comes from the character of the citizens. It is not just an assumption of the times, made by someone who was unable to see how competing (self-) interests might produce a just outcome. Aristotle is aware of, and employs, the different mechanisms, such as the division of powers, that can be put to use in satisfying different groups, but in a participatory popular regime, all or at least many of those who hold office must be capable of ruling well, that is, of ruling in the common interest. The middle class, who are themselves just, have a civilizing effect on the remainder of the polis, so that, even if the powers of government are divided into two ‘houses’ both parts rule in the common interest. Without a shared common interest, stable government is impossible and the one state (or:
city, polis) is, as Plato says, really two, the rich and poor at war with each other.\footnote{Republic, 422e-423a} A polis does best when the rich nor the poor, or at least, those among the rich and the poor who are not just, do not take part in politics or have limited power.

As mentioned already, there is a problem in identifying the middle regime with polity, in that the middle regime involves (and gets its name from) the presence of a substantial middle class, while the main discussion of polity describes it as a mix of democracy and oligarchy. This talk of mixture makes it seem that such a regime could be formed without a middle class of moderately wealthy individuals. Faced with this possibility, it is tempting to think that, while hoplite polity may be a middle regime, there are other varieties of polity – mixed polities – that are not middle regimes. It is true that there are different varieties of middle regime and of polity, but the varieties of each genus map onto one another, and so any form of polity is a middle regime. Hoplite polity is the middle regime where all or most of the citizens are middle class and democratic and oligarchic interests do not need to be specifically accommodated. Mixed polities take these interests into consideration, but these are nonetheless middle regimes, for a middle class is required for the mixture to be stable. The rich and the poor compete with each other for power, and only when a middle class is in place are they prevented from victimizing each other. While there is a theoretical possibility of a polity composed only of very rich and very poor matched equally in power, in practice the two groups will continue to fight for exclusive authority. The middle class, by comparison, seeks what is just (or at least acts...
justly) and will join with one side against the attempts of the other to seize power exclusively. The governments established give significant power to both groups, producing forms of polity rather than merely moderate forms of oligarchy or democracy.

With the identity of the middle regime and polity secured, we can turn to what Aristotle says about the middle class (in the fourth Chapter). Aristotle states that the moderately wealthy are willing both to rule and be ruled, are most able to obey reason, and do not covet the goods of others. Since, as we have mentioned, a person takes the goal of his private life into politics, we can say that the middle class are just, not only in their personal lives but in their political lives too, for Aristotle also notes that they are not anxious to rule continually. The unjust, by contrast, wish to continually exercise political power and do so because they wish to use it to their own advantage. Since the middle class are happy to rule and be ruled, they hold that its purpose is not to promote their personal interest but the common interest.

Aristotle also tells us why he thinks the middle class have these characteristics: they do not share the same concern for wealth that consumes the rich and the poor. Unlike those of moderate wealth, both the very poor and the very rich go wrong in making wealth the goal of life in place of virtue. Aristotle assumes, which was true of almost every state at the time, that citizens receive no civic education. The final two books of the *Politics*, 7 and 8, go on at such length about education precisely because so few states have a policy on education, and
those that do, such as Sparta, devote it to the wrong end. In the absence of education, one’s relationship to wealth and one’s occupation are next in importance in the shaping of one’s character. Concerning wealth, the danger is that the goal of wealth in one’s personal life, and the character traits that an excessive relationship with wealth tend to produce, are carried over into political life. Pursuing wealth, Aristotle thinks, makes one unjust. The pursuit of wealth promotes self-interest and injustice at home (and conquest abroad). The very poor are said to commit injustice to obtain material goods. They are slavish, if not in the sense of relating to others in an excessively humble fashion, then at least in the sense of being slaves to material goods. The very wealthy, similarly, are used from childhood to demanding material goods and getting them. As adults, their desires continue to be for material goods, and they repeatedly pursue office in order to satisfy those desires by the most hubristic form of theft – luxurious living at the expense of the public purse, in effect making everyone else their slaves. The rich and poor are aided in this misconception by the advent of currency, which allows wealth to be extended beyond one’s needs and which allows wealth to be easily stored and hidden from public view, thus thwarting a purpose of wealth, namely, to be ploughed back into the community.

On the basis of the triple association of features (birth-wealth-excellence) and the absence of education, we can understand (in the fifth Chapter) Aristotle’s harsh comments about artisans and laborers. Once we see that all three qualities are necessary, we notice them associated with, or coming apart from, one another.

3 A recent work on Aristotle’s argument for civic education is Curren (2000).
throughout Aristotle’s work. The citizens of the best regimes – kingship and aristocracy – excel in all three respects, but even the citizens of polity have all three qualities to some degree. We have already seen the first association of all three qualities in the description of polity as the regime where the hoplite class predominates. These citizens are said to have military virtue, and military activity also requires a certain amount of wealth. This wealth may be called moderate because it is middling between being wealthy and being very poor.

Where the three qualities come apart Aristotle is not willing to grant citizenship. A laborer would be unable to contribute to the military activity or participate politically and would be concerned only with the necessities of life. The very poor are thus ruled out of political participation in a polity because moderate wealth is required for citizenship. More strikingly, Aristotle pronounces that artisans are unfit for citizenship. The problem here is neither birth nor wealth, as the majority of artisans become wealthy. Rather, in the case of artisans, occupation and its effect on virtue comes to the fore. Not only can the work of a craftsperson affect his bodily constitution, it also affects his goals. Due to the productive nature of their livelihoods, artisans spend much of their lives in a subordinate position, not interacting with others as equals, and concentrating on producing material goods rather than on civic matters. If the life of an artisan is limited to exchanging material goods for other material goods, then artisans are among those who have no conception of the good life beyond the acquisition of wealth and who tend to suffer from the attendant selfishness and injustice.

Small farmers, on the other hand, are close enough in quality to the middle class to be admissible. Indeed, when the poor is strong enough to be able
to force the wealthy and the middle class to include their interests, it is the farmers and herdsmen who can be included alongside the wealthy and middle class without the mix resulting in a democracy rather than a polity. Farmers lead lives that, while not deliberately aimed at virtue, have not yet been polluted by wealth. They are by and large not eager to get into politics, but neither will they suffer to be abused by others. Their livelihood is a hearty and natural one, making them of sound constitution and fit for military activity. Although polity cannot have the agricultural class be the dominant one, this class of the poor can be included in mixed polities. Farmers (and herdsmen) resemble the middle class closely enough to explain their admission into democratic-leaning polities.

In general, Aristotle appears to think that the agricultural way of life, (and others connected to the land and sea), provides an individual with all three qualities, because it makes possible the development of virtue suitable for political participation. The three qualities are coming apart under the economic pressures of specialization, and there is no civic education to ensure that craftsmen are just. Changing socio-economic times mean that some native-born people find themselves economically in a position closer to slaves than to landowners. They are moving away from land-based to craft-based life and as Aristotle sees it, they are losing even the virtue that farming provided.

A final element in the character of the citizens of polity – alongside the military virtue and justice already mentioned – is found in a section which describes how they are collectively capable of ruling well (examined in the sixth Chapter). This passage, like the discussion of the middle regime, does not mention polity by name but I believe it nonetheless concerns polity. The
argument in 3.11 is typically thought to be about a democracy rather than a polity, but I argue that it treats, in succession, of both types of multitude. Aristotle is willing to concede that when the poor are numerous they should be admitted to the assembly and allowed to elect and audit officials, along with the better people in the city, but his reason for doing so, in their case, is to avoid trouble. The city, he says, will be ‘full of enemies’ if they are excluded. What is more, they are good judges of when their needs are not being satisfied, which is part of what the state must do. In the part of this section that deals with the multitude of a polity, by contrast, Aristotle claims that they can match the virtue and wisdom of the best few.

Aristotle provides only a series of analogies to back up this claim, comparing collective deliberation to such things as pot-luck dinners and paintings drawing on many models. Aristotle thinks that between them the multitude have (something approaching) complete virtue and wisdom, which, for an individual means being emotionally responsive to all of the various aspects of a situation and choosing the course of action which (best) satisfies those demands. This confirms that when Aristotle says the multitude of polity all have the virtue of military virtue, he does not mean that they have only this. They have other virtues in addition, and all have practical wisdom to some degree. These, together with the habitual justice and reasonableness uncovered in the discussion of the middle class, make up the ‘share of virtue and wisdom’ of each of the multitude of polity.

Each person is attempting to decide what is best for the community and not just for himself. He judges what he hears (either from his fellow citizens in
the assembly or from the plaintiff and defendant in the courtroom) according to
the virtue and wisdom that he has. Aristotle thinks it is unlikely for a majority of
the citizens to make a bad decision simultaneously, and the correctness of the
decision is enhanced by the fact that people with differing virtue and wisdom,
who are sensitive to and intelligently respond to different various different
aspects of the case, vote alike.

In summary, in giving a complete account of Aristotle’s theory of
citizenship, and especially of the citizens of polity in relation to the qualities of
birth, wealth and virtue, we must look not only at the chapters dealing explicitly
with citizenship (*Politics* book 3, chapters 1-5), but further afield, to the
discussions of the types of regime (3.6-8) and the different groups that contest for
power (3.9-13), to the discussions of democracy, oligarchy and polity (books 4-6),
and to the account of the middle regime (4.11) and the collectivity argument in
(3.11). From all of these texts we can piece together a detailed and, I believe,
consistent picture of Aristotle’s views on the citizens of polity.
CHAPTER 1

THE COMMON ADVANTAGE AND CITIZENSHIP

The danger of modern liberty is that, absorbed in the enjoyment of our private independence, and in pursuit of our particular interests, we should surrender our right to share in political power too easily. Benjamin Constant, *The Liberty of the Ancients Compared With That of the Moderns*

1. Introduction

This dissertation is an attempt to understand how the citizens of polity can effect good government. In chapter 7 of book 3 of his *Politics*, Aristotle gives his basic classification of regimes (or: constitutions). There are six forms of regime. These are kingship and tyranny, aristocracy and oligarchy, polity and democracy. The first of each pair is a correct regime, the second of each pair is deviant (or: incorrect). Polity is the broadest of the correct regimes. While kingship and tyranny are the correct and incorrect forms of rules by a single

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4 With a small ‘c’, ‘chapter’ refers to Aristotle’s *Politics*; chapters of the dissertation are referred to with a capital ‘C’. All translations from the *Politics* are by Carnes Lord (1984). All Bekker numbers refer to pages of Aristotle’s *Politics*, unless otherwise indicated. Citations to the *Politics* also include book, chapter and section numbers, as given by Lord.
person, and aristocracy and oligarchy are the correct and incorrect forms of rule by a few, polity and democracy are the correct and incorrect forms of rule by a multitude. Thus we can pose our question this way: How can a multitude rule correctly?

This is an interesting question because those who are citizens in a polity are not as good as those who are citizens in an aristocracy or in a kingship. In order to answer our question we need to know who are included in the multitude (or: many) who are citizens in a polity. The standards for citizenship and the quality of the citizens in a polity are not as high in the other correct regimes. On the other hand, the multitude of a polity is not the same as, and better than, the multitude in a democracy, which is also rule by a many. There are certain qualities of citizens in a polity that those in a democracy lack.

Aristotle has much to say about citizenship and citizens. At the very beginning of Politics book 3 Aristotle writes that virtually (skhedon, 1274b33, 3.1.1) the first question for anyone investigating regimes is ‘What is a polis (or: state, city-state)?’ This question, however, must give way to a prior one, namely ‘What is a citizen?’ The polis is a composite, a whole made out of parts, and the parts are the citizens. So, citizenship must be examined first. (1274b39-42, 3.1.2 cf. 1252a19, 1.1.3) Aristotle’s discussion of citizenship occurs in the first five chapters of book 3. Our problem, or one of our problems, is that he operates by providing a model or an ideal, a description of the perfect or complete citizen. This makes it difficult to say what the citizens of polity are like. I shall discuss this problem explicitly in Chapter 5.

We learn from 3.1 that a citizen is one who is eligible under the constitution to exercise deliberative or judicial functions. (I shall refer to these
two together as ‘decision-making’ or ‘ruling’ or ‘governing’, and employ correspondingly cognates.) In actual states, this typically involves sitting in the assembly and on juries, though the institutions may vary in their precise nature from regime to regime. Further, different regimes have different criteria for office and so the qualities of those admitted as citizens can vary. Thus, while citizens everywhere perform the same (types of) civic functions, the people who perform them differ from regime to regime. Were someone who is a citizen in a democracy to relocate to a polis with an oligarchy, he would not be a citizen there. Who, or, what kind of person, is a citizen in a polity?

In order to answer this question, we need to understand what a citizen is for Aristotle. I shall argue in this Chapter that in order to answer this question, we need to note that although Aristotle thinks every regime has citizens, he makes a distinction between proper and improper citizens. A citizen, properly speaking, is someone who is able to perform the functions of office well. This doesn’t help us very much, of course, until we know what the ‘well’ consists in. The ‘well’, however, differentiates the correct regimes from the incorrect regimes, so we can at least say that to rule well is to rule in the common advantage (or: common interest, common benefit), for this differentiates correct from incorrect regimes. The rulers of correct regimes rule for the common advantage while rulers in deviant regimes rule for their own advantage. (1279a28, 3.7.2) A citizen, properly speaking, is someone who, either individually or with others, is capable of ruling for the common advantage. Several questions arise here, among them being ‘Whose advantage is included in the common advantage?’ and ‘What
advantage does this group have in common?’ We shall begin with the former question and in the next Chapter we shall consider the second.⁵

The common advantage is perhaps just the advantage of the citizens. C. D. C. Reeve says that to think that the citizens are the ‘commons’ of ‘the common advantage’ is a natural first thought.⁶ Donald Morrison⁷ thinks the questions ‘Whose is the common advantage?’ and ‘Who is a citizen?’ are equivalent. At the beginning of his paper on the topic, Morrison links citizenship and the common advantage through a textual equivalence, where Aristotle writes that those who contribute to the polis in deviant regimes either cannot be called citizens or they should share in the advantages. (ἐ γὰρ οὐ πολιτείαν έιναι τοὺς μετέχοντας, ἐ δεὶ κοινόνειν τοῦ συμφερόντος, 1279a31-2, 3.7.2) The line Morrison quotes is an explanation of the deviance of the deviant regimes: about deviant regimes, one is forced to say that those who share in the polis are not citizens. On the contrary, however, they ought to share in the advantage. The term ‘common’ (as in ‘common advantage’) is not employed here explicitly but is implied both by the verb ‘share’ and the previous distinction between correct and deviant regimes. The implication is that those who share should be called citizens.⁸

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⁵ If we look ahead briefly, we can see that the inquiries of both this Chapter and the next arrive at the same conclusions and illuminate one another. The answer there is that the interest is virtuous living. Since capacity for virtuous living includes capacity for government, then virtue is the proper basis of citizenship. While I think Aristotle is more clear on the issue of the interest rather than the commons, we follow his order of exposition in order show, precisely, that the prior discussion, of citizenship, must draw upon the normative elements of the posterior - the distinction between correct and incorrect regimes and the establishment of virtuous living as the goal of the state.

⁶ Reeve (1998). However natural, Reeve on p. lxviii appears to reject the idea on the grounds that the discussion of citizen in 3.1 is completely descriptive.

⁷ Morrison (1999)

⁸ Another passage that may identify the citizens and those who share in the common advantage is 1283b41, 3.13.12, where Aristotle writes that correct legislation is made “with a view
If we could be sure that the common advantage is the advantage of the citizens it would help us in our inquiry into the citizens of polity. If the citizens are the rulers and also the members of the common advantage, then it would give us some idea of what the rulers are supposed to be doing when they deliberate and adjudicate: They should rule in their own interest. But if that is so, we have a serious problem. In the deviant regimes, those in power rule in their own interest and it is exactly that which makes them deviant. In a tyranny, for example, there is only one person who deliberates and judges, the tyrant, and so there is only one citizen. If the task of a good ruler is to rule for the benefit of the citizens, then the tyrant ought to work for his own good. This is, of course, precisely what he does. Hence, tyranny is a correct regime. Similarly in an oligarchy: since the few wealthy people who rule are by definition the citizens, to work for the common good is to work for the good of the rich. Any rulers who rule in their own interest rule for the common advantage. In general, it is impossible for the rulers not to rule in the common advantage, and the distinction between correct and incorrect regimes collapses. But Aristotle clearly thinks it is possible for a regime to fail to act on behalf of the common advantage since it is precisely this that separates correct from incorrect regimes. The tyrant fails to act in the common advantage while the king does not, even though both are monarchs.

The problem may be expressed as follows:

to the advantage of the whole polis and to the common [advantage] of the citizens” (\(\text{pros têς poleôs holês sumpheren kai pros tôn politôn}\)). This is the passage upon which David Keyt (1993) appears to be relying in his identification of the common advantage and the interest of the citizens though he does not explain in what way he takes this passage to show that the common advantage is the interest of the citizens. This passage is treated in detail later in this Chapter.
1. Rulers in correct regimes rule in the common advantage and rulers of incorrect regimes fail to do so; they rule in their own interest, the interest of the rulers.

2. The common advantage is the advantage of the citizens.

3. Therefore, rulers in correct regimes rule in the interest of the citizens and rulers of incorrect regimes rule in the interests of the rulers.

4. A citizen is one who is eligible for office, that is, for ruling

5. Therefore, rulers in correct regimes rule in the interest of those eligible for ruling and rulers of incorrect regimes rule in the interest of the rulers. The difference between them collapses.

(Or, we could use the other half of the first premise and run the argument from the perspective of rulers in incorrect regimes: Since rulers of incorrect regimes rule in the interests of those who hold office, they (by 4) rule in the interests of the citizens and thus (by 2) rule in the common advantage. In this they are like the rulers in correct regimes.)

So perhaps the common advantage is not the advantage of the citizens. Perhaps premise (2) is false. This seems like the obvious way to go, since it’s intuitively very odd to maintain that the rulers of a correct regime rule in their own interest. So we could deny (2), that the citizens (in the sense of those who are eligible for office) are those whose advantage is the common advantage. The citizens will make up part of the community, of course, but correct regimes will differ from incorrect in ruling in the interest of some people in addition to the citizens.
We shall see shortly that this line of thinking does not take us very far. The fault lies, I believe, not with the second premise but with the definition of *citizen* in the fourth, and so this argument is of great interest to us in our attempt to understand Aristotle’s conception of citizenship. Focusing on premise (4) will mean challenging what seems a fairly straightforward and explicit definition of *citizen*. Nonetheless, attempts in this direction have been made by Keyt and by Morrison. Keyt argues that although the common advantage is the advantage of the citizens, there is a category of what he calls ‘second-class’ or ‘ruled’ citizens who do not hold office but *are* to be included in the common advantage. Morrison, on the other hand, suggests that (almost) everyone in the polis is to some *degree* a citizen. Both authors are alike in that they wish to extend citizenship to some who do not hold or are eligible for office, but I argue that they are both mistaken in extending citizenship beyond the decision-makers.

My own resolution is to argue that the category of citizenship should not be extended to second-class citizens, but, as I have already mentioned, that the definition of *citizen* which appears in line (4) is not (merely) descriptive, as it might appear. The collapse argument, as I diagnose it, trades on a failure to recognize the normativity of citizenship. Even though a citizen unqualifiedly (*haplôs*) is always and everywhere an individual who makes deliberative and judicial decisions, these decisions can be made more or less well. For Aristotle, there is an additional question, ‘Who is *correctly* a citizen?’ (1275b39, 3.2.3 ff), over and above that of ‘*What* is a citizen?’

A distinction between descriptive and normative citizenship, between those who merely *happen to be* citizens and those who *ought to be*, is sufficient to avoid the collapse. A citizen, properly speaking, is one who (either individually
or with others) is capable of ruling well, and rulers ought to rule in the interests of the proper citizens. In deviant regimes, however, a certain group, or even a single person as in the case of tyranny, seizes power and directs the energies of the state towards their own benefit and not towards the advantage of those who are properly citizens. The ruling group may exclude some who are properly citizens or it may include some who are not properly citizens, or both. We shall set this question aside for now. I shall argue for ‘both’ in Chapter 3. Another issue that arises here is the possibility that the rulers could rule in the common advantage without each citizen ruling for the common advantage. In other words, what it is for a citizen to rule well may be different from what it is for the citizens to rule well. For example, perhaps the citizens rule well when each citizen bargains as effectively as he can for his own self-interest (or for the interest of a portion of the citizens smaller than all the citizens.) That Aristotle’s position is that each citizen must individually rule at least moderately well, and reasons for this, will become apparent throughout the dissertation.

In this Chapter I shall examine the alternative proposals before giving my own. The main alternatives will be the accounts of Morrison and Keyt. However, one way of ‘avoiding’ the collapse is to claim that the argument does not exactly reach its conclusion due to a difference between those who rule and those eligible to rule. This is not a serious candidate, but it is instructive to examine it briefly before moving on to the thought that there are non-citizens who are part of the common advantage, and then to Morrison and Keyt.
2. *The Distinction Between Ruling and Being Eligible to Rule*

One might note that the argument presented above only goes through if it is understood that the rulers are those eligible for rule. At face value, however, the rulers are those who are actively engaged in ruling, while a *citizen* is one who is eligible for rule. Thus one can maintain that in correct regimes the rulers (in the sense of those actually in office) rule in the interests of the citizens - those who are eligible for office – while in deviant regimes, the rulers rule in their own interest strictly speaking, the interest, not of those eligible for rule, but of those who actually are in power. The conclusion (5) does not present a collapse – rulers of correct regimes rule in the interest of all those eligible, while rulers in deviant regimes rule in the interest only of themselves, those actually ruling.

One might mention in support of this line of argument the claim that even where office is open to all, there are sometimes costs put in place which discourage some of those eligible for rule from actually participating. For example, Aristotle writes that one way to deceive the poorer citizens from coming to the assembly is to have no penalty for it, or larger fines for the rich. (4.13; see also 6.4) The citizens in such a regime will nominally include both rich and poor, but in practice the regime will be more oligarchic.

However, no distinction between actively ruling and merely being eligible for rule is intended by Aristotle in his discussion of citizenship in book 3. Aristotle is well aware that sometimes the number of participants exceeds the number of offices, as is evidenced, to take only one example, by his statement (1277a26, 3.4.10) that the virtue of a citizen involves both ruling and being ruled.

There is a more important problem with this solution to the collapse, and that is that it does not extend the common advantage far enough and not on the
right basis. Take oligarchy as an example. According to the line of thinking we are considering, the oligarchs who are actually in office fail to rule for the advantage of their fellow oligarchs who are not now actively in office. If they were to rule for the advantage of these other oligarchs, then the regime would be a correct one. But oligarchy itself is a deviant regime and so it cannot be that simply ruling for the advantage of the eligible rulers is the mark of a correct regime. The failure of the oligarchs is rather that they treat unjustly (at least some of) those who are not eligible. Regimes can also be deviant by one faction of rulers attempting to abuse another. This is the problem with democracies. In a democracy, the problem is not that the rulers fail to rule in the interests of some who are not actually in office, but that one faction within those who hold office, the poor, attempts to exploit another group of participants, the rich. (1281a15, 3.10.1) The problem in general is not whether the people being ignored or exploited are presently in office or only eligible for office, but whether they are deserving of maltreatment.

3. The Citizens and the Other Inhabitants

If it is granted that the collapse argument is valid, the first kind of response is to deny (2), that the citizens (in the sense of those who are eligible for office) are the common advantage. This line of interpretation is open to multiple variations, depending on whom, (in addition to those eligible for office), will be included in the common advantage. One may think that the common advantage is the advantage of all of the state’s inhabitants, or of some smaller sub-set of the inhabitants yet larger than the rulers.
In various places Aristotle seems to say that it is the task of the rulers to look after the well-being of the entire state. For example, in one place (1274b35, 3.1.1) he writes that the entire activity of the politician and legislator is concerned with the polis, and in another (1337a29, 8.1.4) that the legislator makes law for each part of the polis. The entire polis would most broadly mean all of the inhabitants, including slaves and foreigners. These, however, would be automatically excluded to the Greek ear. Perhaps then the polis is the (native) members of the households, excluding slaves, for Aristotle writes (at 1289b28, 4.3.1) that all polises are composed of households. In order for this interpretation to avoid the collapse, at least some of the members of some households must not be citizens. This it may be able to do, by pointing either to the women and children who are members of the household but do not perform a political function or to some subgroup of the male householders which is not eligible for office.

On the line of response we are currently considering, ‘the polis’ includes the citizens plus some others in addition. We need not try too hard to determine exactly who (else) is to be included, however, for, the above quotations notwithstanding, the polis is not to be thought of in this way. Rather, Aristotle is more explicit and more frequent in stating that the polis is the citizens. Chapters 2 and 3 of book 3 argue that the state is essentially its regime, its system of government, maintaining that if the constitution changes then the polis does. The regime, in turn, is a distribution of offices – who should hold offices (and exactly what functions they should have) and who should not. Thus one may speak of ‘the polis’ and mean ‘the citizens’. For example Aristotle says (at 1274b40, 3.1.2, in the same paragraph as the first quotation just above in favor of identifying the
common advantage with the advantage of the polis) that the polis is a certain multitude of citizens. And elsewhere (at 1276a40, 3.3.7) he begins a sentence “if the city is a type of partnership, and if it is a partnership of citizens in a regime …” Each of the passages mentioned in the preceding paragraph in support of the idea that the common advantage of the whole polis can easily be understood with this narrow sense of polis as citizens. Thus there is no compelling reason to think that the resolution to the collapse argument lies in this direction.

4. On Not Being Included In The Common Advantage

Before proceeding, we should clear up another potential misunderstanding. By identifying a polis with its citizens I do not think Aristotle wishes to deny that the rulers of a regime should take all of the inhabitants into consideration when making judgments. Not being a member of the common advantage does not mean being one deserves to be exploited. However, the rulers aim primarily at the common advantage and only indirectly at the good of others who make the good life possible. This is because, as we shall see in Chapter 2, the aim of the polis and of the citizen alike is the good life and the life of virtue, including political participation.

Nonetheless, exploitation and unconcern do not follow from the fact that people such as slaves, foreigners and women are not thought suitable for political activity. Rather, the rulers, in organizing and directing the inhabitants of the polis, must bear the well-being of the slaves (and all of those who do not share in common advantage) in mind, even though they are unsuited for political decision-making. It is in the interest of the rulers to look to the interest of the slaves and other inhabitants. Because the form of association between the rulers
and the rest of the inhabitants is not a political one, the situation is similar to the rule of a master over a slave within the household. The real reason for the master’s concern for the slave is the advantage of the master. As Aristotle says (at 1278b33-9a17, 3.6.3) “[m]astery, in spite of the same thing being in truth advantageous both to the slave by nature and the master by nature, is still rule with a view to the advantage of the master primarily, and with a view to that of the slave accidentally.” This form of rule, despotic rule, (which in English has a negative connotation) rather than political or kingly rule, is the appropriate form of rule between the citizens and other inhabitants. The inhabitants of the polis other than the citizens are either private or public slaves, and so it is in the interest of the citizens to ensure that everyone is as well-off as possible, though they do so only incidentally to their own interest.\footnote{Morrison appears to think that because the slave is a part of the household, and the household is a part of the polis, the slave is part of the polis. This chain of thought assumes a transitivity of parts or membership. However, the parts of a social unit are determined for Aristotle by the aim of that unity. The aim of the household is the necessities of day-to-day living, the village aims beyond day-to-day living, while the polis aims not just at living but at the good life or happiness. (1.2, 3.9) The individuals who are considered parts of these social units are relative to those units. The slave is a part of the household, but not of the polis. Only the male householder is a member of all of the relations mentioned by Aristotle in book 1. He alone can be simultaneously be husband, father, master, as well as householder and citizen. A concern for the well-being of slaves and others does not make them members of the polis, for only those who are capable of leading a good life are properly members of the polis. So Morrison has no objection to the claim that the \textit{citizens} are those who have a share in happiness. Morrison may object in response that this reply makes the difference between citizen and non-citizen useless and empties the term ‘common advantage’ of meaning, since everyone’s well-being is considered by the statesman, even if only indirectly.}

The difference between these positions may seem to be only a matter of words. One side thinks that the rulers rule in the interests of all groups, another says that the rulers look to the interests of all, but \textit{aim at} the interests of the citizens. The rulers in both cases are concerned with the well-being of the lesser groups as it relates to the well-being of the higher groups. There is some truth to
this charge, but it accords with Aristotle’s usage of ‘citizen’ and ‘common advantage’ to think of the rulers’ task as promoting flourishing (eudaimonia as described in the ethical works) and not simply well-being in some broader sense that would allow that slaves can fare well.

5. Citizens are Those Who Contribute to the Polis (Morrison)

The view considered in the previous section makes the citizens the rulers but denies that the citizens alone share in the common advantage, extending the common advantage to include others who are inhabitants of the state. The second type of resolution, now to be considered, allows that the citizens share in the common advantage, but give an understanding of citizen which is broader than ‘those eligible for office.’ In this section and the next I examine and reject two proposals along this line, before going on to propose an alternative.

The first is that of Donald Morrison. As mentioned in the introductory section, Morrison believes that the common advantage is the interest of the citizens. He then wishes to avoid the collapse by arguing that citizenship is a notion which can be satisfied in degrees, by all of the inhabitants of the polis. The motivation for this interpretation is Aristotle’s talk of sharing in or contributing to the state. (1275a13, 3.1.4) Morrison then claims that citizenship comes in degrees as one contributes to the polis.

I am in agreement with him that citizenship comes in degrees, but I think that Aristotle puts lower limits on citizenship. See especially Chapter 5.
The political community is an association of people with a certain shared purpose and certain shared activities. Someone who shares fully in that purpose and those activities is a full citizen. To the extent that certain people share partially in that purpose and those activities, it will make sense to regard those people as partial citizens.  

This is the guiding principle of what is to be a ‘rich and complicated philosophical investigation’ into how people partially participate in the community and what degree of citizenship they deserve as a result. Morrison wishes to include those whom Aristotle mentions (at the start of 3.1) as ‘qualified’ citizens – children, old-age citizens, resident aliens, exiles and the disenfranchised. Women, Morrison thinks, will be added to the list. Correct regimes will aim at the good of the citizens (both full and partial) that this investigation uncovers in addition to that of the full citizens, while in deviant regimes the rulers will rule in their own interest.

Morrison says that different types of ruled citizen are like full citizens in different ways. Citizenship turns out to come in degrees but, Morrison writes, “[i]n speaking of degrees of citizenship I do not mean to imply that citizenship can be measured against a single, quantifiable scale.” The child can be thought of as a future participant in office when his reason has developed sufficiently and the elderly citizen as a past participant, while resident aliens would be eligible for

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13 Ibid., p. 161
14 Ibid., p. 156. Morrison omits from this list honorary citizens (mentioned by Aristotle), but does not explain why. The list generated by Morrison’s investigation into ‘partial’ citizenship will produce a list of citizens much longer than Aristotle’s lists of ‘qualified’ citizens.
15 Ibid., p. 158
16 Ibid., p. 157
office were it not for their foreign extraction. The exiled and disenfranchised are individuals whose right to participate has been revoked. Women and slaves, however, are not past or future or potential office-holders in any sense. Morrison says only that women and slaves share in the community to a lesser degree than full citizens.

In order to support his interpretation, Morrison claims that Aristotle has not determined “which activities are central to the pursuit of [the good life] and which are accidental or merely instrumental.” Thus, citizenship has no definitive cut-off point. Morrison also claims that Aristotle does not tell us which of the contributors to the state are the full citizens – here, he says, we are pushing Aristotle’s theory further than Aristotle himself takes it.

On the contrary, however, Aristotle does distinguish proper parts from necessary parts. Every polis is constructed out of the same basic groups, some of which are proper parts of the polis, and these groups contribute (or could contribute, if they were allowed by deviant regimes) to the polis. The groups are farmers, artisans, traders, physical laborers, warriors, wealthy people, and office-holders. (4.4) In 7.8 the list is comprised of farmers, artisans, warriors, the wealthy, priests, and office-holders. The proper parts of the polis are warriors

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17 Aristotle notes that in fact some regimes do admit foreigners, though they are excluded again when there are sufficient numbers of non-foreign citizens. (1278a30, 3.5.8) Behind this conventional device lies the suspicion that metics do not share the same attachment to the polis and the other citizens as the native-born inhabitants do. However, since the metic contributes to the economic life of the polis, he has access to the courts in this respect, though in some polises a patron must be found. (1275a1-21, 3.1.2-5)


19 Ibid., p.158

20 Ibid., p. 160
and office-holders.\textsuperscript{21} The other groups are responsible for the necessities of polis life and are instrumental to the pursuit of the good life.

One problem with Morrison’s principle of inclusion is that it will include some groups that Aristotle appears explicitly to exclude. Without further direction on how to apply the principle, at face value slaves would seem to be included since they certainly play a part in the polis. The slave is not a free person, and so cannot put forward even the most common claim to citizenship, native, free birth. Women too are permanently in the position of being ruled by others, because, Aristotle thinks, they are incapable of ruling. Artisans and laborers, as we shall see in Chapter 5, are also to be kept from office.

In the light of these exclusions, I will argue (later in this Chapter) that there is a principled explanation of whom Aristotle considers eligible for citizenship and whom he does not. Aristotle denies citizenship to artisans and slaves and so on because of their inability to lead the good life and contribute to the polis. Slaves and artisans are capable only of living as opposed to those who are capable of living well (and can contribute to living well.) This explanation of citizenship will also make clear why Morrison is incorrect to think of metics as partial citizens because they have access to the courts.

A final problem is that Morrison’s partial citizens are not those whom we intuitively think are especially neglected by the tyrant or the oligarchs who rule for their own advantage. When we read that in an oligarchy (for example) the rulers rule in their own interest, we do not immediately think of the exclusion of

\textsuperscript{21} Priests, too, in the latter discussion, for these positions are filled by citizens who have retired from active deliberation. Note that an individual can have multiple roles.
children, metics, etc., but of others who could play a more important role in the polis.

6. Ruled Citizens (Keyt)

In response to the threatened collapse, Keyt (1993) accepts that the citizens share in the common advantage but argues for an expansion of the citizenry by making use of Aristotle’s talk in a few places of ‘ruled’ citizens. If a case can be made for ruled (or as Keyt calls them, ‘second-class’) citizens and further for the claim that these ought to be taken into consideration when the rulers rule in the common advantage, the collapse would be prevented. The failure of rulers in incorrect regimes would be that they fail to rule in the interests of those non-office-holders (and to be clear, here we mean people who are not even eligible for office under the regime.\(^2\))

Keyt marshals various texts to make plausible the category of ruled citizens. For example, in 3.5 (1278a15, 3.5.5) Aristotle writes that as there are several kinds of regime so there are also several kinds of citizens and ruled citizens, depending on how offices are distributed. In some regimes, certainly those where offices are distributed aristocratically, artisans and laborers are

\(^2\) Johnson (1984) likewise suggests in a final footnote that the term ‘ruled citizens’ should be employed, to capture the status of those who are ruled in aristocracy and kingship.

\(^2\) To be clear, by ‘ruled citizen’ is meant permanently ruled citizen. The laborers of the best regime are ruled citizens because they never rule, as opposed to being eligible for rule but not at some given time in office. (This is the kind of ruled citizen - the temporarily ruled citizen - being discussed at 1277a, 3.4.) Just as active citizenship varies from regime to regime, so does ruled citizenship. In aristocracy laborers will be permanently ruled and in kingship everyone but the king is ruled. In an oligarchy, the poor are the ruled citizens. They are permanently excluded from office by the high property qualifications. In a democracy there are no ruled citizens. Laborers, artisans, rich and poor all have access to all of the offices, though the superior numbers of the poor mean that the rich have not effective power. In a polity, all have access to some of the offices.
excluded from office, but in order to then differentiate artisans and laborers from slaves Aristotle says we might call them either ‘public slaves’ or ‘ruled citizens’.24

The discussion of kingship also suggests the category of ruled citizens. In a kingship, only one person – the king – holds office, while everyone else is ruled. This arrangement, however, does not prevent Aristotle from applying the word ‘citizen’ to those who are ruled by the king. For example, he notes (at 1285a27, 3.14.7) how “the citizens guard kings with their own arms, while a foreign element guards the tyrant, since the former rules willing persons in accordance with law, while the latter rule unwilling persons. So the ones have a bodyguard provided by the citizens, the others one that is directed against them.”25 Another passage in the discussion of kingship (1287a11, 3.16.2) moots the condition, (eventually expressed in chapter 17), that the king must be exceedingly different from the rest of the citizens; if they are alike, the complaint is made that it is unjust for one person to rule over the others.26 In discussing this objection, Aristotle calls the contesting group ‘the citizens’. Another passage27 is relevant because it speaks of some one of the citizens as ruler. Such a locution would be strictly speaking impossible if ‘citizen’ meant ‘person eligible for rule’. The one person who rules, on this definition, would be the only citizen.28

24 Also ‘incomplete citizens’ at 1278a6, 3.5.2.

25 cf. 1311a7, 5.10.10

26 Some think that it is not according to nature for one to be sovereign over the many citizens where the state is established out of similar [men]. (This is closely repeated at 1287a23, 3.16.4)

27 1287a20, 3.16.3: “Accordingly, to have law rule is to be chosen in preference to having one of the citizens do so.” The term ‘citizen’ is being used here to describe a pool of people from whom a king might be drawn; the questions then center on whether it is possible that one of these should rule over all the rest.

28 A fourth usage of ‘citizen’ in the discussion of kingship occurs at 1286a38, 3.15.9: “This
Keyt takes it that the citizens under a king (or a tyrant) do not have any political role. If the monarch is sole officer of the state, then these ‘citizens’ are permanently ruled. Further, he assumes, plausibly, that the king’s citizens (as I shall call them) are, or are at least are included in, the common advantage. Thus, since ‘citizen’ is applied to those who do not govern who nonetheless share in the common advantage, then these ruled citizens are included in the common advantage. Thus there are at least these two kinds of ruled citizens: artisans and laborers, and the king’s citizens. Are these the same? Keyt does not explicitly differentiate; I will argue that they are different, which is probably Keyt’s position too.

With the introduction of the category of ruled citizens, Keyt can avoid the collapse problem by saying that the rulers (those who are eligible for office) ought to rule in the interests of the citizens, where this means the rulers and the ruled citizens. In kingship, the king, the king’s citizens, and the artisans and laborers all share in the common advantage. The same is true in the other correct regimes – aristocracy and polity – though in these regimes some of the types who do not rule in kingship might in fact be rulers. In the deviant regimes, by

is certainly not easy for many], but if there were a number who were both good men and good citizens, is the one ruler more incorruptible, or rather the larger number who are all good?” The questions are mostly hypothetical, that is to say, it is not clear that kingship is permissible - the chapters are an enquiry into the conditions under which kingship is possible. Only the first assumes a monarch in place, and this may be due to its historical nature, noting that as a matter of actual practice, kings form their bodyguards from the citizens, while tyrants seeks foreign protection against the citizen body - and its position in the descriptive portion of the inquiry, prior to the lodging of criticisms.

29 It is not clear that the king is the only officer of the regime. First, if the proper parts of the polis are not restricted to those who hold office but extend to those who perform military functions, then guarding the king may be a civic function. Second, some people will also be rulers of a sort as the eyes and ears of the king: “Since even now monarchs make of themselves many eyes and ears and hands and feet, for they make people friendly toward their rule and themselves co-rulers.” 1287b29, 3.16.12).
contrast, all or some of these people are exploited. In tyranny both those who would qualify as the king’s citizens, and the artisans and laborers, are exploited. In an oligarchy the wealthy will ignore the poor generally, and in democracy, although all have are eligible for office, the poor use their superior numbers to dominate the wealthy, who are thus ruled, yet who nonetheless ought to share in common advantage. Thus in each case, there are others in addition to the rulers who should be included in the common advantage.

So much for the details of Keyt’s position. I think Keyt is right about the king’s citizens but wrong about the artisans and laborers. I shall argue that while artisans and laborers are, for Aristotle, always ruled and never share in the common advantage, those who would be citizens under a king would, in a different regime, participate in government and so do share in the common advantage. Thus, being ruled is not a mark of whether one shares in the common advantage. To make good on these claims will require giving my own account, which will follow in a moment. For now I give only a negative argument against Keyt’s position.

Like Morrison, Keyt has a key passage which he uses to support the claim that only citizens share in the common advantage, from 3.13, which then means that he looks to a broader understanding of ‘citizen’ to resolve the collapse.

For, indeed, multitudes have an argument of some justice to make against those claiming to merit authority over the governing body on the basis of virtue, and similarly against those claiming it on the basis of wealth: nothing prevents the multitude sometimes being at some point better than the few and wealthier—not as individuals but taken together.

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Hence also it is possible to confront in this manner a question which certain persons pursue and put forward. For some raise the question whether the legislator who wants to enact the most correct laws should legislate with a view to the advantage of the better persons or that of the majority. ... But correctness must be taken to mean “in an equal spirit”: what is [enacted] in an equal spirit is correct with a view both to the advantage of the city as a whole and to the common [advantage] of the citizens. A citizen in the common sense is one who shares in ruling and being ruled; but he differs in accordance with each regime. In the case of the best regime, he is one who is capable to and intentionally chooses being ruled and ruling with a view to the life in accordance with virtue. (1283b30-84a3, 3.13.10-12)

I shall argue that this very passage appears to stymie Keyt's tactic of expanding citizenship to include ruled citizens along with citizens proper. The focus will be on the second paragraph. Someone wishing to argue that the common advantage is the interest of a group wider than that of the citizens (i.e. against line (2) of the collapse argument rather than line (4), which Keyt and Morrison attack) will argue that by ‘the interest of the whole city’ Aristotle has in mind a wide sense of, or at least an extension of, ‘the common advantage’ while then going on to speak more narrowly of the interests that the citizens have in common. The common advantage would be the interest of a group wider than the citizens. This kind of interpretation takes the ‘and’ as conjoining two distinct things – the interest of the non-citizen polis-members and the interest of the citizens.

The alternative reading is to argue that the ‘and’ is epexegetical, an ‘i.e.’ kind of ‘and’. If this reading can be substantiated, then this passage would affirm the identity of the common advantage and the interest of the citizens and require us to turn to premise (4) in order to prevent the collapse. Keyt takes this ‘and’ as epexegetical, it is an ‘i.e.’ kind of ‘and’ rather than a conjunction of two different
Thus Keyt turns away from premise (2) of the collapse argument and concentrates on line (4), arguing, as we have just seen, that, while the citizens share in the common advantage, there are both ruling and ruled citizens.

However, the appended definition of citizenship is quite distinctly of citizen in the sense of ruling citizen. If Aristotle is using ‘citizen’ to mean ‘one who shares in the common advantage’ and the common advantage can include some persons who do not rule, then we would not expect to find here a definition of citizen as one who partakes in or is eligible for office. The ruled citizens of kingship cannot be citizens according to this very specific definition, since they never rule. The definition of ‘citizen’ which Aristotle here takes care to repeat is explicit in pointing only to ruling citizens (those at least eligible for office). So if the king’s citizens are members of the common advantage, the common advantage must extend to these (ruled) citizens, then the ‘whole state’ and the ‘citizens’ appear to be two different things. It might indeed be thought that ‘the whole polis’ indicates that the legislator should rule in the interests of others in addition to the citizens – this reply is still open to someone who wishes to resist the claim that the citizens are not the common advantage and shall be examined next – but this is to challenge premise (2) and attempt to expand the common advantage, not premise (4) which is a claim about the scope of citizenship.

Keyt might reply that although Aristotle’s definition of citizenship, both here and when it is initially given in 3.1, focuses on active citizens, it does not follow from this that only active citizens are citizens. Since ruled citizens are citizens in a derivative sense, it would be natural not to include them in a

31 Keyt (1993) fn. 23
restatement of citizenship, yet they may still be included in a complete
description of citizens. This reply is insufficient, as the wider context of the quote
appears to identify the legislator’s interests as ranging over the ‘the citizens’
which are here being identified with ‘the whole polis.’

In our passage, after making a claim on behalf of the multitude, Aristotle
notes that a similar line of argument may be applied to the legislator’s problem,
of whether to legislate in the interests of the better people or of the greater
number. The parallel between the legislator’s puzzle and the claim of the many
suggests that the legislator should take all of those he has just been discussing –
including the body which, when taken collectively, should be admitted to office -
into consideration. How is the lesson learned from the collective virtue of the
many to be applied to the puzzle about the legislator? An obvious way to
proceed is to say that just as the many ought to be admitted to office alongside
the better people, so the legislator should make law in the interests of the whole
polis and the citizens. That is, we match up the whole polis and the citizens with
the many and the betters, respectively.

This would be a mistake. We have taken note already of the appended
definition of ‘citizen’, and so when Aristotle speaks of the legislator working in
the interests of the citizens he means that the legislator should work in the
interest of those who, as the definition says, participate in office. Further,
Aristotle states that the multitude might be citizens in this sense because of their
collective wealth and virtue. (We’ll investigate this claim in Chapter 6.) By the

Such a question is odd given that the inclusion of the multitude as citizens would make
them citizens and these might have legislative power. I suspect that Aristotle has in mind the
initial founding of a constitution, by lawgivers such as were Solon and Lycurgus (1296a19,
4.11.15), or by any group subsequent to a revolution.
argument that the many have a claim to office Aristotle makes them citizens in the sense of ‘eligible for office’. That is, the many satisfy the definition of ‘citizen’ given at the end of the passage, and so their interests are included among the legislator’s concerns under the interests of ‘the citizens’, alongside ‘the few’ who are also admitted to office. Since the many are citizens, they cannot be mapped onto ‘the whole polis’ in contradistinction to ‘the citizens’. Further, since the argument on behalf of the many is supposed to provide the key to the legislator’s interests, the ‘whole polis’ is the few and the many together. The multitude admitted collectively represent the broadest possible extension of the legislator’s interests, and these are citizens. Thus to say that the legislator should legislate for the whole polis and the citizens is to say the same thing.

In summary, then, the argument against Keyt goes like this:

1. The legislator rules in the interest of the many and the betters (The terms come from 1283b38 – the puzzle is posed in these terms; the answer in these terms is ‘both’)

2. The many and the betters are both (active) citizens (1283b28-34)

3. So, the legislator makes law in the interests of citizens.

4. The legislator rules in the interest of the whole polis and the citizens (1283b40 – the puzzle is answered in these terms)

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In the wider context of the chapter from which this quotation comes (3.13), Aristotle’s general point is that the initial question - Regarding whose advantage should the lawgiver make law, the superiors or the many? - is misguided if it is thought that to make laws for the advantage of one party rather than another is to give them more than their share. The better and the many typically compete for exclusive power, but Aristotle has just concluded that the many have a strong claim when taken collectively. Applying this result to the debate about the legislator’s aims, all interests, then, should be taken into consideration when law is being made. The point of the additional comment - that the best citizens rule with an eye to the life of virtue - seems to be that a good regime (in this case a polity), a regime that aims at the good life, can be constructed out of those who individually do not aim at the good life.
5. The many and the betters are *all* of those in whose interest the legislator makes law; there is no class of people mentioned in the context of the quotation external to the many and the betters.

6. So there is no one else that ‘the whole polis’ can refer to who is not also included in ‘the citizens’.

Keyt is correct that the ‘and’ is epexegetical but there is no room in this passage for ruled citizens as members of the group falling under the intent of the legislator. This result is consonant with the result we saw above (in section 3), when I argued that the polis is its citizens and is not to be thought of as including other inhabitants.

7. *Normative Citizenship*

My own response to the collapse is to argue that there is no collapse because the definition of citizen which appears in premise (4) is intended to be normative. The correct way to think of citizenship is in terms of those who are capable of dispensing the offices well, either individually or with others.

To recap, the collapse works by identifying the common advantage with the advantage of the citizens and the citizens with those who are eligible for office. What differentiates correct from incorrect regimes is that the rulers of incorrect regimes fail to rule in the common advantage; but given the equivalences just mentioned, this is to rule in the interest of the citizens; so ruling for one’s own advantage and the common advantage are the same. The fourth premise plays its part in this argument by being open to instantiation by both correct and incorrect regimes. The collapse argument combines two different pieces of the *Politics*, the definition of ‘citizen’ in 3.1 and the difference between
correct and deviant regimes given in 3.6. A fault of the collapse argument is that it does not take heed of what has occurred in the intervening chapters.

In 3.1 Aristotle is careful to give a definition of ‘citizen’ that applies to all regimes. This is clear when he considers that citizens cannot be those who are eligible for assemblies and juries (as specific forms of deliberative and judicial bodies), since some polises, such as oligarchies, do not have such institutions (1275b7, 3.1.10) or from the statement that democracy makes different people citizens than does oligarchy. Hence one consideration Aristotle seems to impose on his discussion of citizenship is that the definition of citizen should be generally applicable to all kinds of regimes. A citizen is one who shares in judgment and office (politês d’ haplês oudeni tôn allôn horizetai mallon ê toi metekhein kriseôs kai arkhês 1275a22, 3.1.6, cf. 1275b18, 3.1.12) and all regimes require that these functions are performed. (Although Aristotle will return to the question of the identity of the polis, note that the answer is already clear from what is said here – the identity of the polis is determined by its regime, by whom it admits as citizens and whom it does not.)

However, this is not the final word on citizenship and not the understanding of citizen that should be carried into the division of regimes into correct and incorrect, as the collapse argument assumes, generating the collapse by taking Aristotle to be giving only a descriptive definition of ‘citizen’.

The intended normativity of the definition of citizenship is demonstrated by the discussion of citizenship subsequent to its definition in 3.1. In 3.2 Aristotle goes on to the question of whether those who take power after a revolution are rightly citizens. The new citizens are certainly citizens in terms of the definition put forward in 3.1 (1276a5, 3.2.5) as they participate in deliberative and judicial
office, but there is a further question about whether they are correctly citizens. (a6, cf. 1275b39, 3.2.4) This question is said to be connected to the question ‘What is a polis?’ By linking this question together with the question ‘When is a citizen rightly a citizen?’ Aristotle suggests that it is possible for a polis to not properly be a polis and that there is an intimate connection between the polis being properly a polis and its citizens properly being citizens.

Further hints of the forthcoming distinction between correct and incorrect regimes (and so of citizens) appear in the discussion whether the new regime is responsible for the contracts of the old one. The newly installed democrats protest that they should not have to pay back the debts of the former tyrant. They have some reason for their argument, Aristotle suggests, for they argue on the grounds that the tyrant did not represent the polis properly, but was acting in his own interest while forcing others to do his bidding. (1276a13, 3.3.2) Aristotle points out that democracies rule in this manner too, and so the actions of a democracy can be said to be actions of the polis only in the same sense that is attributed to tyrants. (He ultimately does not resolve the issue of whether or not they should take on his debts, 1276b14, 3.3.9) Change of government brings out what is important in determining whether the citizens are justly citizens, namely whether or not they represented the common advantage. Whether a citizen is properly so, or not, depends on whether the state acts appropriately and represents the common advantage. 35

34 Cf. 1281a15, 3.10.1 on the use of force, explicating the quip (at 1276a13, 3.3.2) made against the democrats who wish to renege on the tyrant’s agreements.

35 The reverse is also true: “A state is only a state, therefore, ..., when the people who are its citizens are rightly so.” Johnson (1984) p. 82. I assume he means “A state is only properly a state ...”
Most significantly, Aristotle employs a distinction between correct and incorrect regimes (but not in terms of the common advantage\textsuperscript{36}) at 1275b1, 3.1.9. His point in passing is that defining citizen is made difficult by the fact that the different kinds of regimes are not on a par, but rather some are ‘prior’ (the correct regimes) and some are ‘posterior’ and “errant and deviant” (the incorrect regimes). These remarks suggest that there are likewise ‘prior’ and ‘posterior’ citizens. The definition of citizenship applies first and foremost to correct regimes or applies to incorrect regimes only in a secondary way. While it is true that every regime allocates the various functions to various people (and so may be said to have citizens) only in correct regimes are these offices allocated to those who are capable of governance in the common advantage.

The division of regimes into correct and incorrect in 3.6 thus picks up on themes already mooted in the discussion of citizenship. The discussion of citizenship does not distinguish the six different forms of regime; rather by separating those who are justly citizens from those who are not, it allows us to separate correct polises and regimes from incorrect. In this way it is made clear why Aristotle’s discussion of regimes begins with this broad distinction and only when this is done is the six-fold classification of regimes laid out, reflecting the three general types of population given which a correct regime is possible and the three types of population which are liable to produce a deviant regime.

\textsuperscript{36} There is also a prior usage of ‘the common advantage’ in the discussion of citizenship. This is at 1276a12, 3.3.2. “For then [after a revolution] some wish to renege on the debts, since it was not the polis but the tyrant who took the loan, and make many other such claims besides, as some regimes operate by force and not for the common benefit.” Citizenship is not mentioned in this quote, but the context is whether the citizens who take office after (and because of) a revolution are rightly citizens Aristotle mentions the Kleisthenic reforms at Athens, which introduced many foreigners into the citizen rolls (1275b36, 3.2.3). This seems to be an example of some who are not rightfully citizens being admitted to office. The reverse may reasonably be thought to happen also, as when an oligarchy keeps those who are rightfully citizens from office.
This distinction between descriptive and normative import of citizen is enough to prevent the collapse. (4) should read: The common advantage is the interest of those who are capable of ruling for the common advantage. Rulers in deviant regimes will fail to rule in the interest of all and only these people. There may be some people who are excluded from power who would make good citizens. The recognition that the definition of citizenship is normative allows us to speak of certain people as citizens even if they are not eligible for office under the particular (deviant) regime, thus avoiding the collapse. If we take Aristotle to be giving us a normative definition, of who ought to be a citizen in the regime, even if in fact they are not in office under a particular regime, then there will be some citizens whose interests are not considered in deviant regimes. Indeed, it turns out that the citizens (rulers) in deviant regimes aren’t properly citizens themselves. They perform the right kind of function – decision-making, but perform it poorly. At the end of the passage examined in the previous section, Aristotle admits that such people are citizens, but opposes this with the idea that the citizen properly speaking is someone who rules in accordance with virtue. While the legislator may have to establish a democracy (because of the distribution of different types of people – there are too many poor people to ignore safely), better would be a citizenry who live in accordance with virtue.

37 Premise (2) also changes as a result, since it too involves the notion of citizenship presently being discussed. The common advantage is now the interest of the citizens proper. It is worth pointing out that in correct regimes (with a caveat concerning kingship, as explained above) the rulers rule in their own interest, just like the rulers of deviant regimes. The difference is that in correct regimes all of those who ought to be citizens are citizens.

38 Kraut (2002) writes that oligarchy ignores the good of those who deserve citizen status. (p. 385 n. 1)
Aristotle has not changed his definition of citizen. What is naturally for Aristotle at once both a descriptive and normative definition of citizenship causes us confusion. Since in a teleological system all specimens may be thought to aim at the perfected form, the definition captures what all have in common while simultaneously providing a goal at which to aim. This kind of definition may be more familiar from an argument in Aristotle’s ethical writings. The conception of citizenship operates similarly to the definition of human happiness (or: eudaimonia) generated by the ‘function’ argument of the Eudemian Ethics (2.1) and Nichomachean Ethics (1.7). In the function argument we can move from the function of a human being to goodness for a human being by adding the word ‘well’ – a good human is one who performs humans functions well. Similarly with citizenship. The function of a citizen is to hold deliberative or judicial office; the good citizen is one who performs this task well. The definition Aristotle offers in 3.1 applies to all citizens, but the actual office-holders of different regimes are able to perform the tasks of citizenship to a greater or lesser degree.

Aristotle’s discussion of citizenship combines both description and normativity. The struggles Aristotle goes through in the initial chapter of book 3 are an attempt to find a definition of citizen that is common to all regimes, a definition of the citizen unqualifiedly. But this definition admits of better and worse satisfaction by different individuals, though this does not come up explicitly until the problem of citizens after a revolution is brought up. The purpose of 3.4 and 3.5, as I read them, is to continue the explication of normative citizenship by describing, as it were, upper and lower limits to citizenship. 3.4 describes the virtue of the good man as the pinnacle of good citizenship, while 3.5 describes the kind of character that is entirely incompatible with office. These
chapters are examined in some detail in Chapter 5. I will there discuss the difficulties in securing the interpretation just stated. Even so, it is still clear that Aristotle’s purpose in 3.4 and 5 is to add further normative elements to the discussion of citizenship, describing what makes for a good citizen and expressing concerns about occupations that interfere with one’s character and ability to participate successfully in politics.

We have just seen that Aristotle portends the distinction between correct and incorrect regimes in his discussion of citizenship, leading us to think that citizenship is normative and in particular that those who rule in deviant regimes are not properly citizens, while those in correct regimes are. If we turn our attention to correct regimes for a moment, is it the case that only those who rule in the correct regimes are properly citizens? A citizen properly speaking is someone who is capable of ruling well. Does this mean that every such person is a ruler, (is eligible for rule)? We could say that in order to be rightly a citizen, the citizen must be an active, ruling, citizen in a polis that is properly a polis, i.e. a correct regime, but this would mean that the king’s citizens are not citizens (assuming that the king’s citizens do not hold any offices of any kind). I wish to argue that the ruled citizens of a kingship are not meant to be classified as ruled citizens in the same sense as the artisans and laborers are in the best regime. What makes us call those who are ruled by the king ruled citizens is not what makes artisans and laborers ruled citizens of the best regime, and indeed the king’s citizens are citizens in the normative sense. Although we might casually say that only those who rule in correct regimes are correctly citizens, when we are most careful we adopt the language of capability and willingness from Aristotle’s formulation in 3.13. A citizen, properly speaking, is one who is capable
of ruling for the common advantage (i.e. ruling well), rather than, simply, one who rules well.

Arguing for the proper citizenship of the king’s citizens is to deny an aspect of Keyt’s analysis. Keyt, recall, wishes to employ the notion of second-class or ruled citizens in order to avoid the collapse. But if we then wanted to say that the common advantage includes the advantage of the ruled citizens, artisans would have to be included in the common advantage. Keyt’s strategy fails to capture a qualitative difference between two groups who are in fact quite different. My aim is to distinguish these two groups, thus allowing that the king’s citizens, although ruled, are citizens in the requisite sense, while leaving room for the claim that artisans and laborers never are. If it can be argued that there is a class of persons who are ruled but who are not artisans or laborers, then the reference to citizens in 3.14 and 5.10 (the passages on kingship employed by Keyt) can be said to refer to this group, and not to artisans and laborers.

To begin with, we should note that the phrase itself – ‘ruled citizen’ - is not used of the citizens under a king, only ‘citizen’. That ‘ruled citizen’ is never used suggests that there is a qualitative difference between these ruled citizens and artisans and laborers. We may ask the same question here that Aristotle

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In defense of Keyt, Fred Miller directs me to 1277a18-21, 3.4.7-8 where Aristotle both uses the phrase ‘ruled citizen’ and mentions kingship. The passage in its entirety reads: “We assert that the excellent ruler is good and prudent, while the [excellent] citizen is not necessarily prudent. Indeed, some say that the very education of a ruler is different, as is manifestly the case with the sons of kings who are educated to be expert in riding and war; and when Euripides says “no subtleties for me, but what is needed for the city,” the assumption is that there is a certain education of a ruler. If the virtue of the good ruler and the good man is the same, and if one who is ruled is also a citizen, the virtue of citizen and man would not be the same unqualifiedly, but only in the case of a certain sort of citizen.” First, Aristotle is here exploring the tension between the virtue of a good man as ruler and of a good citizen as ruling and being ruled in turn, and not ruled permanently. Second, I take the mention of kings and their sons to be an incidental illustration of the difference between ruling and being ruled.
posed of artisans and laborers in an aristocracy: if there is a difference, as I contend, between manual laborers and the king’s citizens, but also a similarity (not sharing in office) what should we call these people under the king? If the two groups were meant to be treated alike, one would expect to find them also being called ‘public slaves’ or ‘ruled citizens’. Rather, we find that Aristotle calls them citizens without qualification, and there is no mention of slaves or slavishness. To call the king’s citizens ‘ruled citizens’ is a description that we infer from their position in the regime, rather than a name given by Aristotle.

Further, although not in office, they qualify as citizens (and distinguished from the ruled artisans and laborers) by their virtue. By mentioning the virtue of citizens, we begin to draw on notions that will not be thoroughly developed until the next Chapter, but there will hopefully be enough intuitive understanding to see the point being made. The citizens over which the king rules are themselves good men and respect his superiority in virtue. (1284b30, 3.13.25) If a single individual of such excellence were to arise in a polis that lacked such people, that individual would be ostracized as being too different from the rest of the citizens and threatening the stability of the polis. Only where the citizens are prepared to accept the superior virtue of the individual is a kingship possible. (1284b25-33, 3.13.24-5) Were it not for the appearance of the superlatively virtuous king, these people would have been the officers of the state and would have formed a correct regime (and in fact an aristocracy) by themselves. The king’s citizens are citizens proper because they are capable of office, though the presence of the king makes redundant this ability. Hence Aristotle is willing to call them ‘citizens’ without qualification.  

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40 A further class of comparison is the multitude admitted to office in polity because of
The virtue of the king’s citizens differentiates them from the artisans and laborers who are ruled citizens in aristocracy. Again, the virtue of artisans and laborers will be examined in detail later (in Chapter 5), but suffice it to say that they come in for constant criticism where virtue is concerned – their work misshapes their bodies, they lack the leisure to develop virtue and participate politically and they are slavish. (1.13, 3.4, 3.5, 4.12, 6.4, 7.1, 7.4, 7.9, 8.2, 8.5, 8.6, 8.7.) It will be argued that their virtue is so lacking that they cannot correctly be admitted even into polity. (Chapter 5, drawing upon the qualities of citizens unearthed in Chapters 2 and 4.) Whatever it is about the king’s citizens that makes them deserving of inclusion in the common advantage is absent in the case of vulgar artisans and laborers.

Thus, to summarize the positive proposal, we cannot strictly say that a citizen properly speaking is anyone who is a citizen (a ruler) in a correct regime and only these.\textsuperscript{41} We are better off staying with the description of a citizen as one who is \textit{capable} of ruling well. One advantage of this understanding of citizen is that it makes it possible to say, as is surely the case, that those who rule in deviant regimes are defective in their citizenship. If we simply included others in the common advantage, in addition to the rulers, then the common advantage would include those who abuse power. Given the normative understanding of \textit{citizen}, it is easy to see how the rulers of incorrect regimes are not properly their collective virtue (3.11). These citizens are inferior to the king’s citizens and so the king’s citizens are capable of citizenship proper.

\textsuperscript{41} One interesting thing to notice, however, is that where this is true (as it is in polity, the broadest of the three regimes) there \textit{is} a collapse between the rulers ruling in their own interest and ruling for the common advantage. Kingship is remarkable in that there is a great difference between the ruler and the ruled and in that the ‘ruled citizens’ are virtuous enough to recognize the superiority of the king.
citizens, because they fail to rule in the common advantage. Similarly, this characterization cuts across the description of oligarchy and democracy (both deviant regimes). We might think that the fault of the rich oligarchs is their failure to include the poor in the common advantage, and vice versa for democracy. But this is equivalent to saying that the common advantage should include those who have no desire to govern according to it. Keyt bases the category of ‘ruled citizen’ simply on the property of ‘not ruling’ rather than on any normative notion. This leads to the problems we have described. First, the common advantage is extended to some controversial classes, such as artisans and laborers. Second, that the ruled citizens in an oligarchy are the poor, as though the oligarchs were properly citizens. Third, Keyt uses democracy as a basis for normative claims about citizenship, making an incorrect regime the basis of comparison. I will argue that for Aristotle this is to improperly extend the common advantage to some who do not deserve it, for the citizens in a democracy make native free birth alone their claim but (as I argue in Chapter 2 and as Keyt himself seems to argue in his (1991)) correct claims to office are based on all three political claims – native birth, wealth and excellence.

In sum, I think that the common advantage is the advantage of those who are capable of ruling well, either individually or with others. As we shall see in the next Chapter, Aristotle thinks that the advantage held in common is virtuous living, and this is something in which, he thinks, artisans and laborers and the very rich and very poor can not properly share (and so, ideally, they ought not be included in government). It is clear that in order to make good on the claims made in this section we need an account of the virtue required for good citizenship accompanied by an account of who has virtue. Virtue will quickly
come up in a discussion of the common advantage, which is obviously the key notion in fleshing out the normative conception of citizenship. In addition to asking who is included in the common advantage, there is the question of what good the rulers ought to be pursuing for the common advantage. Pursuing their own interest and not also that of the poor is not the only problem with oligarchy. They are also to be faulted for having an incorrect aim. What the common advantage is goes hand in hand with who shares in the common advantage and who should be admitted as a citizen. Investigating the common advantage will steer us towards a conception of citizenship based on the merits of the individual with respect to leading the good life.
CHAPTER 2

THE BASES OF CITIZENSHIP

Now constipation was quite a different matter. It would be dreadful for the whole world to know about troubles of that nature. She felt terribly sorry for people who suffered from constipation, and knew that there were many who did. There were probably enough of them to form a political party—with a chance of government perhaps—but what would such a party do if it was in power? Nothing, she imagined. It would try to pass legislation, but would fail.

Alexander McCall Smith, *The No. 1 Ladies’ Detective Agency*

Clearly there must have been some sort of justice in them that at least prevented them from doing injustice among themselves at the same time they were doing it to others.

Plato, *Republic* 1, 352c3, Grube/Reeve trans.

O say does that star-spangled banner yet wave
O’er the land of the free and the home of the brave?

Francis Scott Key, *The Star-Spangled Banner*

1. Introduction

In the previous Chapter we saw that a citizen is someone who, either individually or with others, can rule well, rather than one who happens to be eligible for office under the constitution in place. What is it to rule well? The difference between correct and deviant regimes is that in correct regimes the
rulers rule in the common advantage (or: interest, benefit), while in deviant regimes, they rule in their own interest. ‘The common advantage (to koinon sumpheron, to koinêi sumpheron\(^{42}\)) is thus a key notion in Aristotle’s political philosophy.\(^{43}\) Two questions arise. First, ‘Who shares is the common advantage?’ This question was answered in the previous Chapter: the common advantage is the advantage of the citizens, of those who are properly citizens. But what makes someone properly a citizen? It would be circular to answer ‘sharing in the common advantage.’ Rather we need some other notion to explain proper citizenship. This is where the second question comes in, the second question being, ‘What is the advantage of this community?’ If we can say what the advantage of the rulers is, then when can say that those who are able to rule (i.e. those who are properly citizens) are those who, perhaps among other things, are able to bring about this advantage.

In this Chapter we shall see the intimate connection between what one takes to be one’s own advantage, what one sets as the goal for the state, the argument one makes as to who should be a citizen and how the subsequent

\(^{42}\) On the Greek, Delba Winthrop (1975) provides the following footnote (n. 19) “To koine sympheron. \textit{Sympheron} means “the bringing together” as well as “benefit.” To koine sympheron, as distinguished from to koinon sympheron, means a bringing together into what is common, which must be a feminine, singular noun as is \textit{arche}, for example. Or \textit{koine} is an adverbial dative, and the meaning is then a benefit or bringing together by common efforts. To koinon sympheron suggests a benefit to or bringing together of those who have something in common, as well as the ordinary in contrast to the rare.” At \textit{Nichomachean Ethics} 1104b30, 2.3, Aristotle writes that the beneficial is one of the three factors that determines choice, along with the noble and the pleasurable.

\(^{43}\) The common advantage is said (at 1278b22, 3.6.3) to be one of the reasons that people originally and naturally band together. Correct regimes will maintain this aim, the rulers will resist the temptation to benefit personally from their access to and influence over the common funds. (This is the second use of the term ‘common advantage.’ See Chapter 1, p. 40 n.33 for the first. There is one possible prior usage even to this. Common \textit{good} is used most interestingly at 1286b31, 2.8 in relation to the possibility that change may be advantageous to the community. If the kind of change being discussed here is or includes change of regime, then Aristotle would seem to be recognizing that there is a common \textit{good} for each polis which may or may be best represented by the current regime.)
government acts. Aristotle endorses the principle that individuals espouse the same goal for the polis as they do in their private lives. In the quote at the head of this Chapter, the constipated take power, and act, (or fail to act,) just as in their private lives. In politics, a person who is rich or who aims at wealth in his own life, for example, will think that wealth is also the appropriate goal of the state, and so, that those best able to provide wealth are suited for government. More seriously, oligarchy is the regime of those who think their advantage, both privately and in common, is wealth. Oligarchies thus admit individuals as citizens based on wealth.

Now, given the way Aristotle describes the various regimes in (book 3) chapter 7 and following, one would be forgiven for thinking that each of the six forms has a single goal which it holds as relevant to citizenship. In the three correct regimes citizenship is based on virtue (or: excellence), while in oligarchies it is based on wealth and in democracies native, free birth. Aristotle’s thought, however, is that while in democracy citizenship is based on free birth, in oligarchy it is based on free birth and wealth, while in the correct regimes all three qualities are at play. How the three qualities are to be recognized in the allocation of offices is a difficult question. It is possible that Aristotle means that people of each of three types should be admitted or that all three qualities are required for citizenship. Aristotle’s answer at this stage is that only those with all three qualities are to be admitted. An individual, however, need not excel in all three respects. Aristotle allows that groups in addition to individuals may press their claims and as a group can advance all three qualities – the multitude can

4 In this Chapter, and henceforth, I shall use ‘free birth’ as a shorthand for ‘native free birth.’
gather together their wealth, and some multitudes can even claim an increase in virtue, as we shall investigate in Chapter 6. In order for this to happen, the individuals involved must each have a certain level of birth, wealth and excellence, and it is this which we are attempting to describe in the course of the work.\footnote{Perhaps some people could even lack one or more of the qualities entirely. But I think Aristotle, like Plato, is committed to the thesis that the character of the polis mirrors the character of its citizens. Aristotle does not think citizens of the multitude need rely on any features of institutions to produce decisions in accordance with virtue.}

One obvious association of all three qualities in the citizens of polity comes when Aristotle says that polity is the regime of the hoplite class. These are said by Aristotle to have military virtue. Military activity requires a certain wealth as well as patriotism. Is this alone the measure of virtue that citizens of polity have? Can military excellence by itself make the citizens fit for ruling in the common interest? Is military activity the aim of polity? I end by suggesting that the citizens of polity have other qualities in addition to military virtue.

2. Claims to Rule

I begin with an overview of Aristotle’s theory of claims. In this section I catalogue its apparent tensions, while in the next I attempt to resolve them, following Keyt (1991). Aristotle states that the common advantage is justice (1282b16, 3.12.1). So a place to begin our examination of citizen virtue is with justice. Justice concerns the distribution of goods. Every distribution should be based on some feature relevant to the distribution. Aristotle at one point gives an economic example: if a man contributes one dollar out of one hundred to a project and another the remainder, the first should not expect to gain an equal
share of the profits. (1280a28, 3.9.5) If, in politics, people came together merely for the sake of property then they “would share in the city just to the extent that they shared in possessions.” (1280a25, 3.9.5) In politics, however, the good under discussion is not the material benefit of economic activity (or, not just this) but political power. In book 3 of the *Politics* Aristotle is focused on justice concerning the distribution of power, and through this we begin to learn what Aristotle thinks are the necessary qualities for individual citizenship.

When each person puts forward a certain quality that, he claims, makes him fit for government, even oligarchs and democrats, Aristotle says, “fasten on a certain sort of justice (*haptontai dikaiou tinos*), but proceed only to a certain point, and do not speak of the whole justice in its authoritative sense” (1280a8, 3.9.1; cf. 1301a36, 5.1.5) or speak of some sort of justice up to a point (1280a10, 3.9.1 cf. 1280a22, 3.9.3) or speak of some part of the just (*meros ti tou dikaiou legousi* 1281a10, 3.9.15). What do these expressions mean and what is justice in the ‘most authoritative sense’?

In the deviant regime of democracy power is distributed on the basis of free birth, while in an oligarchy it is distributed on the basis of wealth. Democrats claim that the just way to distribute power is to give all of the free-born an equal share. They wish to have office distributed to everyone on the basis of freedom and they do not recognize differences in birth. Oligarchs, on the other hand, claim that the just way to distribute power is to give power to the wealthy and they claim that they are qualitatively superior in wealth. In the mouths of democrats and oligarchs ‘equal’ and ‘unequal’ are meant absolutely – there are no gradations of birth and a firm cut-off point of wealth. To be equal in birth or freedom means that no difference is recognized and so power must be
exactly equal; to be unequal in wealth means to be infinitely so, such that those below the mark have no power at all. Oligarchs think of justice as inequality because they wish to have office distributed according to wealth. They recognize an equality amongst the rich, but these equally rich people hold themselves infinitely more wealthy than the poor. Thus power should go to the rich.

Both sides err, Aristotle says, concerning the part that reads ‘for equals’ or ‘for unequals’. The reason behind their respective arguments is injustice. Both sides are motivated by self-interest and find a way, some quality they possess, to gain power for themselves.\(^4^6\) Behind the claim that justice as an equal or unequal share \textit{for me} (or, for us rich folk, or for us free folk) lies simply the desire to have power for one’s self or one’s group. This is why Aristotle diagnoses the problem by saying that people judge badly concerning themselves. (1280a14, 3.9.2) Each (unvirtuous) person takes himself to be equal or unequal in everything and will grasp at whatever basis for a claim is available in order to pursue his advantage. The same, presumably, goes for groups, with the further wrinkle that the individuals within the group are in an uneasy agreement which destabilizes the group and leads to faction, as when Aristotle describes how oligarchies can fall due to internal competition. (1305b22, 5.6.6)

Justice can be viewed as a kind of equality or a kind of inequality and so both democrats and oligarchs have grasped \textit{something} about justice, which is equal shares for those of equal merit, and unequal shares for those who are

\(^{4^6}\) It might be asked how the democratic principle of justice is self-interested, since whereas the poor are excluded from office by the criterion of the rich, the wealthy satisfy the criterion of the poor, namely free birth. The poor however know that if office is distributed equally to each person, the poor will have a majority. They can thus carry out their agenda and declare, for example, that appropriation of the property of the wealthy is just. See 1281a12-20, 3.10.1-2.
unequals. Moreover, they have each grasped one of the qualities relevant to political office. Aristotle argues (in 3.12) that claims to citizenship based on the qualities of free-birth, wealth and excellence (or: virtue) have merit, while claims based on height or running speed or complexion are not. The dispute over who should be eligible for office should not concern itself with who is tallest or who has the finest features. Aristotle says that such claims based on such qualities are “plainly false”. We can tell the difference between the politically relevant and irrelevant features by looking to the aim of the polis. Concerning the example of who should get the best flutes in 3.12, Aristotle writes that those who are well-born will play the flute no better for being well-born, but rather those who are good are flute-playing should receive the best instruments. The principle seems to be that when the feature that is the basis for the claim is in no way to the purpose of the honor, that feature does not constitute the basis for a good claim.47

After rejecting the views that a polis is an economic or a military unity,48 Aristotle then goes on to discuss what the aim of the polis is. It is not for the sake of living in company and sharing a location, nor for the sake of economic exchange nor military alliance nor for mere living but a life of happiness and deliberate choice.

The political partnership must be regarded, therefore, as being for the sake of noble actions, not for the sake of living together. (1281a2, 3.9.1449)


48 Various other options are rejected. See Keyt (1991) p. 250-1 for a fuller discussion.

49 Cf. NE 1103b5, 3.1.
One might at this point expect Aristotle to continue to argue that only those who make a contribution to the ultimate purpose of the polis have a claim to office which secures them eligibility for office *in a correct regime* (which we can call a ‘valid’ claim since the argument made will be just). The suggestion seems to be that an individual has a valid claim to political participation when that claim is based on his share of and/or contribution to the good of the polis. If the goal were property, then property would be the decisive feature. The end of the polis, however, is living well, so we would expect virtue to be the sole feature upon which claims to office are properly based.

Recall from the first Chapter that, for Aristotle, a citizen in the best regime is “one who is capable and intentionally chooses being ruled and ruling with a view to the life in accordance with virtue.” (1284a2, 3.13.12) We now see this definition and the claim that rulers rule for the common advantage, that is, according to justice, come together. A just society will grant citizenship to those who ought to be citizens. Who ought to be citizens? Those who perform well the functions of deliberation and adjudication. What makes for a good decision-maker? Virtue. To rule for the common good is to rule in the interest of those who are virtuous. Those who are virtuous are deserving of power.

However, Aristotle’s conclusion is not that only the virtuous are eligible for citizenship. He goes on immediately from the above quote as follows:

Hence those who contribute most to a partnership of this sort have a greater part in the city than those who are equal or greater in freedom and family but unequal in political virtue, or those who outdo them in wealth but are outdone in virtue. (1281a2-7, 3.9.15)

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50 See also 1283a24, 3.13.1 and cf. 1281a1, 3.9.14.
Aristotle says that those who can contribute to living well have, not the only claim to office, but rather the best claim to office. The comparative ‘larger’ suggests that those who put forward a claim to office based on something other than virtue has some, smaller, claim. Aristotle does not restrict claims to office only to the virtuous who are able to contribute to the task of rightly organizing the polis in accordance with virtue. Although he discusses the proper end of the polis, he does not limit claims to office to those who play a part in contributing virtue and wisdom.

We get the same flow of ideas in Aristotle’s second discussion of the matter, in 3.12. He begins by rejecting the claim that offices should be distributed by overall superiority, for this would have the consequence that if two (or more) persons were equal in everything but complexion, the man with the finer complexion would be allocated a greater office, since he is superior overall. The absurdity of such a tie-breaker again shows that just as good birth has nothing to do with the allocation of flutes to flute-players, so complexion has nothing to do with the allocation of political office to individuals. Even a man of immeasurably good looks, or far surpassing any other in handsomeness, should thereby benefit nothing in his claim for office. The example of the flutes suggests the principle that in the allocation of a certain good, the allocation should be made proportional to the ability that the individuals have in achieving its end. Thus in the case of flutes the best flutes should go to those who are best able to play them, for these persons and flutes will together produce the best music.

When it comes to claims to political office, we again do not get the answer that since the purpose of the polis is living well, the virtuous have the only relevant claim to office. Rather, Aristotle says that offices should be based on the
things from which a polis is constituted and so the claims of the rich and the poor do have some merit. Aristotle writes:

It is reasonable, therefore, that the well born, the free, and the rich lay claim to honor. (1283a16, 3.12.8)

The ‘well born’ here seems to stand for the excellent (“good birth being old wealth and virtue together” (1294a21, 4.8.9)), but even if not, Aristotle immediately affirms the claim of the virtuous by saying that “with a view to the good life it is education and virtue above all that would have a just claim in the dispute.” (1283a25, 3.13.1) Even though living well has been differentiated from merely living and political contribution differentiated from contribution of necessities (in 3.9) Aristotle says only that the virtuous and the educated have the ‘most just’ claim to office, not that they have the only claim. The rich and the free are (partly) constitutive of the polis. Without the free and the rich a polis cannot exist, Aristotle says, but without the excellent and the educated it cannot be well-managed. (1283a14-21, 24, 3.12.8-9)

One might think that when Aristotle says that each quality is reasonable he means that we find each of the different qualities as the governing principle of different regimes. Freedom is the goal of democracy and freedom likewise provides the standard for admission to citizenship. Wealth is the goal of oligarchy and wealth provides the standard for citizenship. Aristocratic regimes are focused on the single feature of virtue. Offices, he says, will be allocated according to excellence and worth (1278a20, 3.5.5 en hèi kat aretên hai timai didontai kai kat axian.51) Indeed, Aristotle says in 4.8. that “virtue is the defining mark of

51 See also 1283b21, 3.13.8: “And the same thing will perhaps result with respect to aristocracies in the case of virtue.”
aristocracy, wealth of oligarchy and freedom of democracy." (1294a8, 4.8.7) Such statements suggest that in aristocratic regimes, such as the regime of books 7-8 which is said to be the best regime at the end of 3 and the opening of 7, the claims of wealth and freedom are not employed in allocating offices.

However, the deviant regimes incorrectly focus on the qualities of free birth or wealth. Oligarchy and democracy are incomplete in the sense that they have not reached the natural end of political communities, they do not aim at living well, which is the complete interest of the citizens. Democracies and oligarchies have the wrong idea about the end of the polis, but the communities they form are polises nonetheless, for to aim at wealth or at freedom is to make a decision about what the good is and to regulate behavior according to this vision. Thus the (or at least, a) problem with deviant regimes might be that they focus on a lesser feature of the three, freedom or wealth instead of virtue. They should instead aim at virtue. Thus, on the ‘one regime-one quality’ view, it is difficult to show how freedom and wealth are the bases of good claims, if we take good claims to be those that have force within a correct regime.

Virtue, and virtue alone, on the other hand, again seems to have pride of place. So we are trapped in the following quandary: How can each of the three qualities be the bases of reasonable claims, but virtue alone be the mark of an aristocratic regime?

Let us note a further difficulty. At this stage of the discussion we think that the only relevant claim in aristocracy is one based on virtue. However, Aristotle maintains that a polis allocating offices upon any one claim is deviant. For immediately after saying that “education and virtue dispute especially justly with respect to the good life” he says that “since those who are equal in one thing
alone should not have equality in everything, nor those who are unequal in a single thing inequality, all regimes of this sort are necessarily deviations.” (1283a27, 3.13.1) The implication is that if a regime distributes offices on any single basis, it would be a deviant regime, even if it is on the basis of virtue.52

This same conclusion may also be drawn from an earlier passage. At 1281a9, the end of 3.9 and his discussion of types of claim and the purpose of the polis, Aristotle concludes that all of the disputants grasp only a part of justice. One of the groups included in this conclusion is the virtuous, who think that because they are unequal in one thing, virtue, they should be unequal in honors. So it seems that Aristotle thinks that regimes must be based on all three qualities.

This only deepens our perplexity. We might well wonder at the inclusion of free birth and wealth as reasonable claims to office, for as we’ve seen, the goal of the polis is virtuous living, as when Aristotle writes that …

The political partnership must be regarded, therefore, as being for the sake of noble actions, not for the sake of living together. (1281a1, 3.9.14)

To accept claims based on wealth and free birth seems illegitimate, for these appear to make only a indirect contribution to the goal of the polis, which is living virtuously. If virtue is the mark of aristocratic regimes then the possession of the other qualities are of no (political) consequence. To accept the claim of the rich would seem to be like allowing the benefactor who provides the flute to play the flute, while accepting the claim of the free would be like allowing the one who carries out the orders to be the one who gives them. The

52 Later in the work, Aristotle similarly writes: “Yet to have everywhere an arrangement that is based simply on one or other of these sorts of equality [numerical and proportional] is a poor thing. This is evident from the result: none of these sorts of regime is lasting.” (1302a2, 5.1.14)
free born and the wealthy are to the virtuous in the polis as the body and external goods are to virtue in the individual.\textsuperscript{53} To accept their claims would seem to be like including the claim of the flute-maker or the wood-cutter in the distribution of flutes. These persons only provide the flutes; an ability to provide a good wood or make a well-sounding flute tells us nothing (it might be argued) about their flute-\textit{playing} ability. Similarly in 3.5 we get the remark that not everyone that is necessary for the functioning of the polis should be called a citizen. In short, it is strange that each of the three provides the basis for a reasonable claim when only virtue contributes directly to the aim of the polis.

Yet, to repeat, the indirect contribution of free birth and wealth to the political activities of the state appears to make them reasonable. Free-birth, wealth and excellence each grasp justice in part because “the dispute must be based on the things from which the polis is constituted (1283a14, 3.12.8) and the free born contribute one of these things. Thus justice and political virtue, wealth, and free-birth all reasonably lay claim to office. What does Aristotle mean where admission to power is concerned when he says that birth and wealth are reasonable as the bases of claims? And how can he say that a regime must be based on all three qualities, when he says that virtue is the mark of an aristocratic regime?

\textsuperscript{53} It is perhaps thinking like this that Aristotle is counteracting when he uses the collectivity argument (of 3.11) to show that the many may safely be admitted to office, to lessen the ‘absurdity’ of the many, who are not good deliberators, nonetheless taking their place in office. See Chapter 6.
3. *Three Qualities Together*

In sum, Aristotle seems to hold, simultaneously, that all three types have some justice to their claim, and, that the virtuous have the best claim (and the only unqualifiedly just claim), and, that virtue is the only feature relevant to the proper end of the polis, and, that a regime based on one claim is deviant. Here is another question, and the beginning of a resolution. When he says that all three types dispute reasonably (*orthôs* 1283a24, 3.13.1) for office, does Aristotle mean that each of the three qualities is the basis for a valid claim, i.e. that free birth, or wealth, or virtue, makes (or ought to make) one eligible for citizenship in correct regimes?

Aristotle appears to allow that the rich and the poor, seemingly *as such* have some merit to their respective claims. *Politics* 3.10 and 3.13 present a mock debate between poor and the wealthy (and the virtuous), all present in a polis and contesting for power. Aristotle presents problems with each of the three qualities as the basis of a claim to exclusive power, thus suggesting that power should be distributed in a way that recognizes the importance of all three qualities. As we have noted, it is not even the case that the ‘decent’ people should rule alone, for that would deprive the other groups of office. (1281a28, 3.10.4) Thus Aristotle seems to maintain that the free born and the wealthy have at least some justice to their claims. Similarly, the conclusion of 3.12 seems to indicate that the each of the three types deserves recognition, as “it is reasonable, therefore, 

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54 Two other related issues are (i) explaining polity as a correct regime even though (as we shall see) it allocates offices according to wealth and free birth (and not virtue) and (ii) Aristotle’s (albeit reluctant) allowance of ostracism in 3.13.

55 Aristotle could perhaps be talking about permanent rule by a few best people, which would deprive other virtuous people of office, but in the context of the chapter, ‘everyone else’ would seem to be the other groups being discussed - the poor who are free-born and the wealthy.
that the well born, the free, and the wealthy lay claim to office.” (1283a15, 3.12.8)

A polis requires free people, wealth and virtue, and so those individuals or groups which can provide these things have some claim to office. Most straightforwardly, the poor provide the people, the wealthy the wealth and the virtuous the virtue. A little less straightforwardly, we should note that the virtuous are usually also wealthy and free and most of the wealthy are also free, while the poor are free alone. Even so, conceiving of each claim as sufficient for office, the wealthy (who lack virtue) and the poor (who lack both wealth and virtue) would still be admitted to citizenship because they possess one or more of the qualities.

An alternative view is that Aristotle instead admits only those who have all three qualities. This is the view of David Keyt. According to Keyt’s ‘Aristotelian Standard’ (AS), correct regimes are those which admit only those who qualify on all three counts.\(^5\) None of the qualities by itself is individually sufficient for proper citizenship. The three qualities can be held either by individuals or groups. A group is free born if each of its individual members are free-born, but a group is wealthy if it is collectively as wealthy as any other group, and there may also be room to argue that a group is virtuous even if its individual members are not.

Keyt’s evidence that Aristotle’s standard includes all three qualities comes from the description of the best citizens in book 7 on and a description of the multitude in 3.11. In book 7, Aristotle describes how the citizens will excel in all three qualities, birth, wealth and virtue and are, by themselves, the citizens of

their polis. In 3.11 Aristotle describes how the AS is satisfied collectively by (some) multitudes. On the grounds of their collective wealth and collective virtue, the many can supplement their free birth and gain eligibility for office, (though only collective offices – that is, offices where their collective virtue will be operative.) It is not clear whether such multitudes are the sole citizens in their polis. From these two cases, Keyt concludes that the AS is the just criterion for citizenship.

What about the rich and the poor (either individually or collectively) and the multitude of polity individually – do these satisfy the AS? One reason for thinking that the rich and poor do not satisfy the AS is that they put forward only one quality as the basis of their claim to citizenship. However, we must remember that each person is what I call a ‘three-in-one’. Everyone who makes a claim to office has some all three qualities to some extent, even if, in arguing their case, they pick one of the qualities in particular on which to make their argument. Human life, or at least civic life, requires self-possession, material goods, and decision-making ability. Additionally, everyone has enough wherewithal to know what the prize is – political office – and that it is important. In the political realm, the relevant features – native birth, wealth and virtue – are distinct, just as they are in the life of an individual, but unlike within the individual, they can be supplied by different individuals. A regime that would admit a person on the basis of one feature is in fact admitting an individual who is tri-partite. Even though the native born and the wealthy put forward their birth and wealth respectively in the debate over power, they are not merely free-born or wealthy.57

57 Plato faces the same issue in his Republic, though in a different form. Aristotle’s three
Three-in-one thinking helps with our two outstanding problems. The first is to explain how Aristotle can simultaneously say that virtue (alone) is the mark of aristocratic regimes but that regimes must acknowledge all three qualities. In 3.9 Aristotle purports to show that each group grasps justice at least in part, but the chapter itself reads more easily as a justification for the claim of virtue, as though the claims of the rich and poor were well-understood and accepted. Perhaps political facts make clear the strength of wealth and free-birth in practice while excellence is atypical as a criterion for office. Free birth and wealth are familiar claims from many actual polises. Their relevance seems to be accepted without question and it is the claim of excellence that must argue its case. But Aristotle is concerned with correct regimes and these appear to be distinguished by their focus on virtue and he seems to think that without virtue, a free-born person, and even a wealthy, free, person, is not fit for office, which is reasonable, since decision-making is the important function of citizens.

Among the three features, Aristotle holds that birth and wealth are properly subordinate to virtue. The aim of life, for both the individual and the state, is virtuous living. Native free birth in one sense is having been born of free parents and continuing to be a free person, someone who is not a slave. Nothing appears to prevent resident aliens from physically carrying out civic tasks except for the fact they are not ‘one of us’. The wealthy, for their part, provide the resources upon which these activities depend. When in 7.8 Aristotle writes that “though property is needed by polises, property is no part of the polis, though

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parts are birth, wealth and virtue; for Plato they are appetite, spirit, and reason. Aristotle, like Plato, relegates some people purely to productive activity, but they differ in that ideally for Aristotle these have none of the three qualities involved (whereas for Plato this is the appetitive class.)
many parts of property are living things” (1328a34, 7.8, Kraut trans.) he not only puts it in its place, but asserts its importance. Wealth and free-birth are aids to the proper parts of the polis - to deliberation and adjudication, as well as military activity. In this way, for Aristotle, a person with the virtue suitable for office is also wealthy and free-born. The supporting role that wealth and birth play to virtue means that a virtuous person will have all three qualities. This allows Aristotle to say that the virtuous have an unqualifiedly just claim to rule and that aristocratic regimes are based on virtue.

On the basis of such ‘three-in-one’ thinking, we can explain how aristocracy can at once be the regime “based on virtue” yet, as a correct regime, one which acknowledges all three qualities. Virtue is said to be the ‘defining mark’ of aristocracy, just as freedom and wealth are the defining marks of democracy and oligarchy, respectively. (1294a9, 4.8.7) The virtuous, however, have all three qualities. If there are no others who have any of the three qualities, an aristocracy results. If there are others who deserve to be included, they will be admitted too, bringing about a ‘so-called’ aristocracy. ‘So-called aristocracy’ is any regime which allocates offices on the basis of aristocracy and one or both of the other qualities, wealth and free-birth.

An aristocracy properly speaking is where power resides in the hands of the best people alone. It is possible only under two conditions. First, that the virtuous have all three qualities. They are free and wealthy in addition to excellent. Second, that everyone else is neither free born, nor wealthy, nor

58 A similar discussion takes place in 4.4. Pertaining to wealth in particular, Aristotle does not think wealth to be one of the elements of happiness, but rather a pre-condition and instrument of excellent action. The same thinking in the political context would suggest that the wealthy do not have a claim to office because they provide only the ‘necessities’ and do not contribute directly to the good life.
virtuous – that is, when there is a radical distribution of the qualities relevant to power. The ideal polis of books 7 and 8 (which I take to be the largest possible aristocracy) requires a wide gap between the virtuous land-owners and those who provide the necessities. In such a context, the regime will be ruled by the best people and the regime will aim first and foremost at virtue (though it will also ensure that it has sufficient citizens and is well-provisioned.) Thus the short-hands of ‘the virtuous’ and ‘aiming at virtue’ can be used. Both locutions indicate that virtue is put ahead of all else, not that the necessities are abandoned. However, there is no one who has any one of the qualities without having all three.

4. The Virtue of Rich and Poor

We have just explained how the absence of those who have only free-birth, or birth and wealth allows us to say that aristocracy is based on virtue alone. What about the wealthy and the free? Our second problem is to explain why Aristotle allows that wealth and free birth provide at least some (if not the best) basis for a claim to rule. Although the three types – the virtuous, the wealthy and the poor – are all the same in being three-in-one’s, the rich, and the poor are nonetheless different, in not having all three qualities to the same extent. The notion that the AS can be satisfied to a lesser extent will be important in what follows, with respect to rich and poor and to the citizens of polity.

The rich and poor might have a valid basis for participating in power, not as such, but as three-in-one’s. The key question is whether the wealthy and the

59 As is the case in kingship and in the best regime, where the citizens are virtuous and everyone else is a foreigner or slave See 7.9.
poor lack excellence. The wealthy are wealthy and free, we assume, while the poor are free but lack wealth. In the debate over power, each type points to wealth or free-birth (respectively) rather than excellence. The purpose of doing so is to argue, unjustly, for a monopoly of power, and this suggests that, where most people are virtuous by habit (or strong-willed or weak-willed) the rich and poor are actually vicious and as such are not properly admissible to office. As partisans, they (either individually or as a group) will not make good citizens and in setting wealth or freedom as the aim of the state they realize the purpose of the state only partially. The claims to power based on wealth and free-birth may be in some sense reasonable, but they are not valid, they are by themselves sufficient to gain office in a correct regime.

However, this result provokes a serious problem. If the rich and poor as disputants in the middle third of book 3 are partisans, who are the citizens of polity, given that in polity individuals are admitted in accordance with wealth and freedom and not in accordance with virtue? (This question in turn raises a further one: How can such a regime be correct? If I was correct to claim that there is a tight connection between the quality one would use to distribute power and

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60 The statement that those who focus on one quality are unjust makes the virtuous unjust, and so, paradoxically, not virtuous. Modern commentators, beginning with Newman, have balked at this result and claimed that Aristotle here means only the rich and poor. Perhaps Aristotle means that only the rich and poor will in fact argue this way. However, (i) there is no specific restriction of the statement at the beginning of 3.13 to the rich and poor; (ii) Aristotle says that the virtuous “would engaging in factional conflict most justifiably” but refraining from doing so for lack of numbers. (1301a38, 5.1.6) perhaps, then, by ‘the virtuous’ in the Politics, Aristotle means those of ability and perhaps education. (For this reason, ‘excellence’ or ‘ability’ is more suitable for the Politics as a translation of ‘areté’. (See the ‘A Share of Virtue and Wisdom’ section of Chapter 6 for another example of the looser way in which Aristotle employs the term ‘virtue’. See also Mara (1987) p. 379) These people consider it an injustice to be compared with their inferiors and share power. But, as we’ve seen, they only have the best claim, not the only one. It’s these ‘unjust virtuous’ people and the possibility of rulers (especially those of ability) acting above the law that (iii) motivates Aristotle to discuss ostracism later in 3.13.
the aim of the state, then polity is not a regime which aims at virtue. It is not a correct virtue.)

Perhaps there are rich and poor who are not partisans and have virtue (to a lesser extent). Or perhaps the multitude is neither the rich nor the poor.

Both answers are in a way correct. At this point of the treatise Aristotle has not distinguished between different classes of the poor and of the rich, out of which he can distinguish a middle class and so divide the polis not just into rich and poor but into rich, poor and middle class. This middle class will form (the basis of) the multitude in polity, with the rich, if there are enough of them, forming an upper class deserving of greater honors. When Aristotle introduces the middle class, he will assert a connection between middling wealth and moderate virtue. I shall argue in Chapter 6 that these are the multitude of 3.11 and so could collectively satisfy the AS to the highest degree. However, this collective virtue is possible because each individual of the multitude has a share of virtue and wisdom. Thus, the multitude of polity individually satisfy the AS, though to a lesser extent than the individuals who form an aristocracy.\footnote{Indeed, it is unlikely that multitudes employ collectivity arguments concerning virtue in order to argue for power. As presented by Aristotle, the collectivity argument is an attempt by him to explain why it is that some multitudes ought to be admitted.}

The middle class are the lowest level of the wealthy, the hoplite class. Among the wealthy and among the poor, those close to the middle class have virtue and wealth (in addition to free birth) sufficient for citizenship. At the present juncture of the treatise, however, which is concerned with the broad classification and the best regime of kingship of aristocracy, the rich and poor denote for Aristotle the dominant, partisan, groups of oligarchy and democracy,
who are unfit for citizenship. Rich and poor, in the sense of partisans, are not suitable for office. Aristotle thinks that it is difficult for the very poor and the very rich to rule justly. The more towards the extreme of wealth or poverty the individual, the less virtuous he is. (We shall examine justice briefly at the end of this Chapter and in Chapter 4).

Aristotle’s attitude towards the wealthy is, in some places, more favorable than towards the poor.\(^6\) The rich are said to be more trustworthy in transactions. (1293b38, 4.8.4) Another part of the text perhaps provides an explanation. The rich are to have already that for which the poor commit injustices. (1293b37, 4.8.4) These are indications that the wealthy, or at least some of them, have some virtue in addition to their wealth. They are not tempted to commit certain kinds of injustice. Further, since the main device for excluding people from power is to impose a property qualification, the rich are not excluded as easily as are the poor. Aristotle states that a polity is established by pushing up the property qualification as high as it will go without destabilizing the regime. (1297b1 4.13.7, cf. 1296b15, 4.12.1) What he says, precisely, is that those in favor of the constitution should be more numerous than those against it. This type of regime will thus be a regime of the many rather than of the few, but it will be a regime of the many from the top (wealthiest) down, rather than from the bottom up. A regime of a large middle class, excluding the very rich is impossible, given that the main way of regulating admission is by setting a single property qualification which must be exceeded. An upper bound was unheard

\(^6\) And in some places less, as in the descriptions of faction in oligarchy, in book 5. This hunger for power is to be contrasted with what Aristotle regards as a benign eschewal of politics by the poor.
of; the power of the rich was curtailed in other ways. In the theory of constitutions and the theory of claims, though, Aristotle’s concern is with the wealthy who are partisans and so lack the virtue necessary for citizenship. Clearly, if oligarchy is a deviant regime because the wealthy oligarchs rule in their own interest rather than in the common interest, there are at least some of the wealthy whom it is dangerous to allow into office.

The poor on the other hand are in some sense entirely to be excluded from office. Aristotle hints in various places (e.g. 1297b5, 4.13.8; 1318b17, 6.4.3; cf. 1292b38, 4.6.3) that the poor, when they are not radicalized, are happy to stay out of politics or are happy with a small share of power. Otherwise the poor wish to assume the sovereign offices and deny any difference in birth and claim that their free-birth means they should be eligible to undertake any political function. We shall investigate later whether any of the poor are admissible as correct citizens.

Citizenship, thus, seems to require wealth and virtue in addition to native birth, and everywhere we look in Aristotle’s thought on citizenship we find the three qualities associated with one another. For us (moderns), birth in a certain territory is all that one needs to be a citizen of a that state, while for the ancient Greek states, citizen parentage was the requirement. On this way of looking at it, there does not seem to be much more to say about free-birth.

There is, however, another sense of ‘free’ in addition to ‘being born of citizens rather than of slaves or foreigners.’ In his characterization of a slave and its opposite, the free person, R. G. Mulgan63 contends that the essence of being a

63 Mulgan (1970)
free person is that the free person takes himself to be of “independent value or, in more modern terms, is an ‘end in himself’”. Aristotle takes this to be an objective quality, which someone may lack even though he thinks himself to have it. Democrats and oligarchs claim to be free persons in this sense, but Aristotle thinks that they are wrong, because they lack the virtue necessary for citizenship.

Expanding on the insistence on free birth we have the distinction between the well born and the free born. The well born are those who excel in all three qualities and who are established in the community. We saw in passing above that ‘good birth’ is said to be a combination of old money and virtue.” (1294a21, 4.8.9) Those who are well born are those of standing within the community, due to their wealth and virtue. Aristotle seems to hold that this reputation will not come without a certain noted civic activities having been performed by the person or family honored, deeds which will often require great provisions.

The free born, by contrast, are those who have made no pass-remarkable contribution to the civic life of the polis. Even with free birth there are connections to civic virtue. By restricting citizenship to native birth, regimes exclude foreigners from political participation. It is assumed that someone who is born of citizens will share the parents' concerns for the polis, while those who come from without, or who are born of foreign parents, do not share the civic concern of the native born. The contribution that the hoplite class is able to make is not an outstanding one, but they are independent of the polis (in the sense that they are not a material burden) and can be of some use to it. The military activity of such citizens requires both a certain kind of virtue and a certain amount of

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64 Aristotle speaks of military excellence (τὴν πολεμικὴν aretēn) at 1279b1, 3.7.4.
wealth. Military contributions are not the most important of civic contributions. More important is fitness to perform the distinctive tasks of citizens: deliberation and adjudication. We know already that deciding in accordance with the correct goal for the polis – free people living virtuous lives aided by wealth – is most important.

The requirement of moderate virtue will allow us to explain Aristotle’s exclusion from citizenship of artisans and laborers, examined in detail in Chapter 5. It used to be possible, in Hellenic culture, to designate proper citizens by speaking simply of ‘the free born’. Free birth once stood for the lesser level of the birth-wealth-ability triumvirate and ‘well born’ for the upper level. But the advent of foreigners and the movement of some free-born into trades and laboring causes the three qualities to come apart. Aristotle fears that wealth and free-birth are becoming divorced from justice. With open borders, foreigners can enter the polis and become wealthy, so wealth no longer guarantees civic interest. Given economic developments, some of the free-born are artisans and some laborers are free-born. Artisans are often wealthy, but Aristotle thinks that these trades jeopardize even basic political ability. In both cases, free-birth no longer indicates the virtue it once did. Before the advent of foreigners and the move of free persons away from the land and into trades, at least some measure of the three qualities would naturally be found together, but livelihoods have come into existence which break the natural association of the three. Further, those (free born individuals) who have excessive relationships with wealth – the rich and the poor – also throw the three qualities out of whack. As we shall as we proceed, Aristotle is in effect attempting to shore up the old meaning of the term ‘free’ in the face of modern changes.
5. *Justice and the ‘Original Decision’*

Key among the moderate virtue of the citizens of polity is justice, which they all possess at least to the extent that they are not partisans and not actively unjust. Here, I attempt to explain the relationship between justice and the theory of claims we have been examining to this point. In what way the citizens of polity are just will be a continual concern throughout the work.

Aristotle says that the aim of the state is not (just) common defense or mutual exchange, but virtuous living. Those who are correctly citizens are those who are capable of ruling in a way that promotes virtue amongst those who are capable of it. The *ethical* virtues are those well-developed dispositions to act and react in accordance with reason, rather than by brute habit or by chance or by nature. The *intellectual* virtues are powers of thought, such as practical wisdom and intellectual wisdom. Virtuous individuals lead lives of virtuous action and of thought. Practical wisdom,\(^{65}\) and not theoretical, is important, as it is by practical wisdom that we come to decisions about how to lead our lives; not just about how to act in or react to various circumstances, but about how to live our lives purposively.

A *citizen* is a decision-maker concerning common matters, who makes decisions in accordance with virtue. If a correct regime is one that aims at virtue, and virtue centrally involves decision-making, a correct regime aims at good governance. This may seem so tautological as to be unhelpful, but note that the task for the state is already difficult. Not only must a regime secure its

\(^{65}\) Practical wisdom and the ethical virtues are together called the ‘practical’ virtues.
continuation in the sense of defending itself from external enemies and generating funds for common activities, it requires and must produce people who take action and decision-making that are at least *in accordance with virtue* to be the good. These goals provide some content to what *good governance* is, even before we add the aim of culture and learning. Many governments do not seek these goals. Rather their members, who are in pursuit of freedom, or wealth, and not virtuous living, seek that *only* those who share their view should hold power and continue to rule. Thus deviant regimes fail to distribute political power justly and will exclude some who ought to be citizens and allow into power some who ought not be citizens. Any government that fails to establish government properly governs not politically, as the rulers of correct regimes do, but despotically, like a master over a slave. Each deviant regime, as Aristotle says, “involves mastery”.  

66 (1279a21, 3.6.3) Ruling well involves ruling without the use of force.

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66 Tyranny is in fact defined as a despotic monarchy over the political community, at 1279b16, 3.8. See also p. 38 fn. 33, above.

67 See 1270b20, 2.9.22 and 1294b37, 4.9.10 as opposed to 1296b15, 4.13.7 and 1309b17, 5.9.5. On the principle of unanimity and the principle of superiority, see Miller (1995) p. 269 ff.
hence there is competition for power. In his *ethical* works, Aristotle notes that justice is spoken of in two ways, particular and general. In the *Nichomachean Ethics*, concerning general justice, Aristotle writes that …

This type of justice, then, is complete virtue, not complete virtue unconditionally, but complete virtue in relation to another. … for many are able to exercise virtue in their concerns, but unable in what relates to another. And hence Bias seems to have been correct in saying that ruling will reveal the man, since a ruler is automatically related to another and in a community. (*NE* 1129b26, b33-30a3, 5.1⁶⁸)

General justice has two dimensions. First, it encompasses all of the virtues: a just person should be moderate, courageous, and so on. (“In justice all virtue is summed up.” (*NE* 1129b30, 5.1)) Second, it has a political aspect to it, in the broad sense that a just person is one who does not cause harm to others as a result of failure to be moderate, courageous and so on.

What is just in the general sense, the citizen’s role in promoting the common good, is defined, as far as is possible, by the law, which regulates the citizens’ actions towards one another with respect to all of the virtues. Since the laws have the good life as their aim, “[a]nd so in one way what we call just is whatever produces and maintains happiness and its parts for a political community. Now the law instructs us to to the actions of a brave person …; of a temperate person …; of a mild person …; and similarly requires actions that express the other virtues, and prohibits those that express the vices.” (*NE* 1129b17 ff, 5.1) Being an office-holder means promoting the common good, or, as expressed above, promoting what is just in the general sense. When faced with a

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⁶⁸ Translations of and references to the *Nichomachean Ethics* (*NE*) are from the edition of Irwin (1985).
difficult or novel situation, the citizens of the state must interpret the law and apply it to the situation at hand. Their decision should be made in the common interest.

The office-holder makes decisions that affect others. Each person should be treated by the regime according to merit. The government judges badly when it judges in a way that shows undue favoritism towards some person or group of people, typically the rulers themselves. Holding a position of power is a test, perhaps the ultimate test, of justice in the ‘particular’ sense. Particular justice will be examined later (in Chapter 4) but, in brief, injustice is an inappropriate desire for certain goods – security, wealth and honor (which includes public offices) – at the expense of others. Aristotle is aware of the temptation of office. People wish to hold office continuously, “because of the benefits to be derived from common [funds] and from offices.” (1279a12, 3.6.3) Those who lack the ability to rule in the common interest have an incomplete conception of the aim of the state. If someone aims excessively at wealth and sees political power as a means to wealth, this desire will cause him to maltreat others.

If those in power are abusing their power, there will be a desire to re-establish the government. The most important political ‘decision’ of all, and the most important exercise of justice, is the decision as to how power will be distributed. (I put decision in scare-quotes because in a sense the decision as to how power shall be distributed is prior to the existence of a decision-making body.) If power is in the hands of those who will use it well, then justice with respect to the particular decisions is assured. It is no wonder, then, that justice in the Politics is discussed primarily with reference to this ‘original decision’.
Ruling correctly means ruling in the common interest. Ruling in the common interest means ruling justly. The fundamental act in accordance with justice is to grant power to those who deserve it. This justice comes from having the correct aim. If self-interest is one’s goal, then one not will attempt to monopolize power. Those who then deliberate and/or adjudicate will not take improper advantage of their power.

Those in pursuit of wealth or freedom grasp only a part of justice. Distribution of power according to merit, not according to wealth or freedom, is just. Justice requires grasping that the purpose of citizenship is to make good decisions, decisions aimed at virtue, and so any person or group capable of this should be admitted. In the first instance, citizenship should go to native, wealthy, virtuous inhabitants. Failing to rule and to allocate rule according to this justice is failing to rule in the common interest. Would-be citizens disputing for power must not focus on just one feature, because this will mean the incorrect exclusion of others. Those who acknowledge and can put forward all three claims have a valid claim.

If the citizens privately pursue wealth, the polis will, incorrectly, aim at wealth. If the citizens privately pursue freedom, the polis will, incorrectly, pursue freedom. What then of the aim of polity as a reflection of its citizens?

6. The Aim of Polity and Military Virtue

As a correct regime, polity presumably aims (in some sense) at virtuous activity provided with material goods. The difference between individuals and the group must be recalled, as it poses a problem in being more specific. Perhaps as a group the aim is different (and better) than in the case of the individual. A
related problem is whether or not military activity befits one for office. If the end of the polis is military activity, then those who have military virtue and expertise would have a good claim to office. If the aim of the polis is otherwise, however, they might not have the only claim or the best claim. These issues are considered in this section.

Military activity is accorded a high status by Aristotle. He ends a discussion of the parts of the polis with the conclusion that “Farmers, artisans and the entire laboring element must necessarily be present in cities; the armed element and the deliberative element are parts of the city.”

We can conjecture that those who have the means to defend the polis are more important to it than those who provide the necessities of life, and so are said to be ‘parts’ rather than necessities. In an earlier discussion of the parts of the polis (1290b21-91b12, 4.4.7-19), Aristotle writes that hoplites are “no less necessary” than the productive classes “if they are not to be the slaves of whoever marches against them.”

Thucydides remarks at the beginning of the History that everyone used to carry arms, for villages were frequently the subject of attack by land and by sea. Alfred Zimmern, describing how the villagers would retreat to a high place during an attack, notes that this place is the original polis and so “[t]he word Polites (the later ‘citizen’) originally meant “citadel-man,” i.e. look-out man.” Eventually everyone lived by the polis, and became a polites.

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69 This discussion is from book 7, so the conclusion being reached here is not about what passes for important within regimes generally, so one cannot reply that military activity is important only in deviant regimes. Indeed, in the list of parts in 4.4, the hoplites are said to be a ‘necessary’ part. (1291a33, 4.4.15)

70 Zimmern (1961) p. 74, n.1, p. 78. Constant (1988) writes that war “was the constant interest, the almost habitual occupation of the free states of antiquity.” (p.312-3)
Aristotle echoes comments like these when describing the military part of the city, but in neither discussion of the parts of the polis does Aristotle state that performing the important function of fighting on behalf of the city is sufficient for citizenship, yet it is clear that, in a polity at least, the decision-makers are the warriors, with military virtue. Aristotle makes only one explicit comment on the character of citizens of polity. After describing polity as a rule of the many in the common interest, he goes on to say that “in this regime the warrior element is the authoritative.” (1279b1, 3.7.4) This military virtue is presumably courage, accompanied by physical strength and endurance, and skill with arms. It perhaps also includes a willingness to obey orders. Further, the multitude who can participate in military activity also have a certain wealth since weapons and armor typically came from one’s private purse. Thus a certain level of wealth is also to be found alongside military virtue. If we assume free birth on the part of these people, then they will individually satisfy the Aristotelian Standard in the sense that they have (some) virtue, (some) wealth and birth.

Aristotle describes the virtue of the citizens of polity as being ‘military virtue’. If we take our cue from this, the aim of polity would be “the imperfect virtue of the citizen-soldier.”  

If polity aims at military activity, then it would seem to lack theoretical wisdom, and culture more broadly, as a goal. The other practical virtues would then be regulated by the military aim and deliberations will have a military cast. 

A reason for thinking that this is the goal of polity is

71 Bradley (1991) p. 46. Miller (1995) writes that military virtue is the basis of citizenship (p. 156) but also writes that the aim of the regime “presumably includes the military virtue associated with polity.” (p. 157, emphasis mine.) Taking his cue from polity as a mixed regime, Mulgan (1977) suggests that the aim of polity is “a certain amount of wealth combined with a certain amount of personal freedom.” (p. 64)

72 An alternative view is to hold that the multitude, collectively, aim at the whole of virtue. If the end of polity is military activity alone, then when (in 3.11) Aristotle says that the
that, as examples of polity or regimes closely resembling polities, Aristotle provides various characterizations of Sparta, according to which it is a regime aimed at military activity.73

One could also argue that the goal of polity is broader. I present an argument that Aristotle does not construe polity as aiming at military activity. Rather, polities properly speaking will aim, at least in practice, at peace, peace which allows the citizens to pursue private ends which are not contrary to justice.

In order to see this, we must consider the connection, if any, between one’s military excellence and one’s fitness for governance. The government may be founded upon those of military ability, but are such people fit for government because of their military ability? When we suggested that at least moderate virtue is required of citizens, it was on the principle of relevancy: the quality being used as the basis for a claim to office must represent a contribution to the polis. Native birth and wealth are indirectly relevant to the prosperity of the state, but what it really needs, Aristotle says, is good governance. War is an activity different from deliberation about (and in) the interests of the polis. It may be more important than native-born people or wealth, but does military virtue make one fit for deliberation and adjudication, the types of citizen activity mentioned in book 3, or is it only an indicator of these other qualities?

multitude together can be better than the best few, he would mean that, given their respective ends, the multitude can deliberate as well towards their end as or better than the best few can towards theirs. This problem is addressed (somewhat) in the next section, and in Chapter 6.

73 See 2.9 and 7.2 and further references below. The Spartan regime sometimes appears to be a so-called aristocracy. Polity and so-called aristocracy are close cousins, however, in that they are both mixed regimes.
Aristotle says that the virtue of the warrior is not practical reason, and this is the virtue of deliberators. Military and deliberative tasks, Aristotle says in 7.9, should be given to different people because deliberation requires practical wisdom while military activity requires physical strength, for which reason military tasks should be given to the young.\textsuperscript{74} When Aristotle writes that those with weapons will not stand to be ruled continuously and so must be granted a share in government, it is not clear that those with weapons are actually fit for office, for Aristotle’s solution is to divide the political activities according to age. The promise of office when older seems a device to forestall their desire for office based on their weapons until such time as they have the requisite virtue.

This represents an ideal separation of tasks which the ideal regime will be able to implement. The citizens of the hoplite regime, however, need not be only the young. Thus we can suppose that the individuals of the hoplite class thereby do not (completely) lack practical wisdom when it comes to common affairs. Does this wisdom arise from military training? Aristotle later (7.14) turns to the question of how the citizens are to be made good and revisits the distinction between the young warrior and the older rulers. He again\textsuperscript{75} endorses the principle that one must have been well ruled in order later to rule well but nothing he says here suggests that military activity is preparatory for political activity. In the earlier discussion, in 3.4, the idea is that one becomes a cavalry commander by serving under one, and one learns to be a good ruler by being

\textsuperscript{74} See also 1277b25, 27, 3.4.17-18: “Prudence is the only virtue peculiar to a ruler ... prudence is not a virtue of one ruled, but rather true opinion.”

\textsuperscript{75} It was first endorsed at 1277b13, 3.4.14. Reeve \textit{ad loc} suggests that it is a saying of Solon, given in D.L. 1.60.
ruled. There is no further specification of what qualities the individual learning to be a good ruler aspires to or of what tasks he undertakes to achieve them. Indeed, Aristotle says that good rulers must first be ruled, just as the would-be general must first serve under a general. The relationship between ruled and ruler is quite specific.

We should be clear that ruling well requires both virtue and a certain wisdom, and so it is unfair to say that military activity in no way makes one fit for office, especially if we take it that the hoplite class are not all young people. Even the young soldier develops into an older citizen and will come to understand (rather than merely having a correct belief about) the purpose of military activity in relation to the polis as a whole. The soldier having acquired this knowledge can thereafter deliberate well at least to the extent that he knows that the polis must defend itself. When Aristotle says that polity is the regime where the hoplite class is in power, this might lead us to think that the only virtue and wisdom developed is military ability, and that military activity is the aim of the state. A polity of such people – limited strictly to military virtue and wisdom – would perhaps be quite like the Spartan regime. Since military activity would be the aim of such a polis, citizens would be admitted on their military virtue, rather than virtue generally.

Military activity, moreover, requires more than just military virtue. Aristotle says that “once they [the Spartans] were at leisure they could place themselves in the hands of the legislator having been well prepared by the soldiering life—for it involves many of the parts of virtue.” (1270a3, 2.9.11) In response to this claim we want to know ‘Which parts?’ An answer is provided when Aristotle writes that “courage and endurance are required with a view to
occupation; philosophy, with a view to leisure; moderation and [the virtue of] justice for both times, and particularly when they remain at peace and are at leisure." (1334a23, 7.15.3) Aristotle here points to the key social virtues, omitting others such as generosity and gentleness. Generosity, and especially justice, have been and will continue to be our main concern throughout this work. The moderation and justice that are required for a polis at war, Aristotle implies, are the same moderation and justice that are useful in peace-time, though there they are no longer directed only to military activity but to other matters.⁷⁶

Although Aristotle here says that the moderation and justice that accompany military activity stand one in good stead during peace-time, he thinks that ‘philosophy’ is also necessary if the good life is to be secured. Here the root sense of ‘philosophy’ is appropriate – the citizens must have a ‘love of wisdom’ rather than a love of honor. Ideally, the citizens recognize that there are other goals in life. If a polis lives in accordance with this belief, then it will be able to live well through both times of war and of peace and prosperity. The difference between the moderation and justice enforced by war and the moderation and justice of peace-time is, or should be, that culture and learning replaces war as the activity of choice. In the best regime, military activity is said to be subservient to the goal of the (best) polis. Military activity is chosen for the sake of something better. “It is clear, therefore, that all of the concerns that are with a view to war are to be regarded as noble, but not as the highest end of all, but rather as being for the sake of that.” (1325a5-7, 7.2.17) Activity internal to the

⁷⁶ At Topics 117a34, 3.2 Aristotle writes, “Also, that is more desirable which is more useful at every season or at most seasons, e.g. justice and temperance rather than courage; for they are always useful, while courage is only useful at times.” Pickard Cambridge, trans.
Aristotle berates the Spartan legislator for having overlooked the need for virtue and a goal above and beyond military virtue and aiming even peace-time activities (such as education) towards military activity. Aristotle cautions that while at war the Spartan regime flourishes “but they lose their edge, like iron, when they remain at peace.” (1334a8, 7.14) Aristotle continues a little later “War compels men to be just and behave with moderation, while the enjoyment of good fortune and being at leisure in peacetime tend to make them arrogant.” (1334a25, 7.15.3) A polis at war is engaged in securing something that is good – its own survival – but when there is peace, a polis that takes military action (or worse, the spoils of war) to be the end then becomes arrogant and unjust – it must continue to wage war in order to lead what it perceives to be the good life.

77 At 1271b1 2.9 Aristotle writes: “Yet while they [the Spartans] preserved themselves so long as they were at war, they came to ruin when not ruling [others] through not knowing how to be at leisure.”
The level of prosperity envisaged is very high (at least at 1334a30, 7.15.4) and so the lack of philosophy might not be fatal in regimes less prosperous than this. I suggest that polity as conceived of as the regime of the moderately wealthy has an implicit recognition of the ideal. They do not realize the need for philosophy *per se*, but they at least acknowledge that war is not undertaken for its own sake, but for the sake of peace. Although each virtue involves (or can involve) interaction with others and may be therefore be said to be social, military activity is the first occasion on which a young citizen is asked to perform a political role, fighting on behalf of the entire polis, not for himself or his friends and family, drawing in particular on the virtue of courage. What he needs in order to be a good decision-maker, in addition to his military experience, is a broader purpose of the polis, even if it is not philosophy specifically. At any rate, the virtues that military activity requires allow him to judge concerning matters of other types. In Chapter 6 we shall see that Aristotle thinks the citizens of polity are capable of decision-making equal to that of the ‘best few’. We shall there discuss the virtue and wisdom of the best few in order to get clearer on the virtue and wisdom of the multitude, but one difference between them, and one way in which the multitude is lacking, is their failure to actively promote philosophy or culture more broadly speaking. Rather, when the polis is at rest each person is left to pursue his private interests in accordance with justice.

The regime has the name ‘polity,’ which is the word for common to regimes generally. The reason for this name being applied to polity is because military virtue is common to all of the citizens. The hoplite multitude

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78 1334a15, 7.15.1. Cf. Defourny (1977)
individually satisfy the AS, at least in part, because of their military virtue and, as we now see, their justice and moderation. It thus seems that Aristotle designates polity as the hoplite regime because the military virtue of the multitude is more distinctive than their other virtues. Aristotle seems to be distinguishing between grades of virtue. They do best when confronted by military danger. In the face of other challenges, such as challenges to moderation or justice, they do less well. I suggest that we distinguish between military virtue, on the one hand, and justice and moderation, on the other, in that the former is a partial virtue and the latter two are habitual virtues. This distinction will be taken up in detail in Chapter 6.

Of those without philosophy and education, however, the moderately wealthy are in the best position to resist immoderation and injustice. That the multitude of polity are the moderately wealthy will be the subject of the next Chapter and that such people are best positioned to resist the arrogance brought on by prosperity will be the subject of Chapter 4.
CHAPTER 3

POLITY AND THE MIDDLE REGIME

Each of them [every city other than the kallipolis] consists of two cities at war with each other, that of the poor, and that of the rich.

Plato, Republic, 422e-423a, Grube/Reeve trans.

‘And now I think,’ said he, ‘that the best plan would be not to let those decide who would push matters to an extreme either way, but rather to find a middle way between them, so that each had something of his case and we all have one law and one belief. For it is a fact that if we sever the law, we shall sever the peace also.’ And he ended in such a manner that both parties agreed to have one law for all, and it should be as pronounced.

A Tale of Icelanders, Alan Boucher trans.

1. Introduction

Polity is variously described. We have already seen that polity (i) is a regime of the many, (ii) that it is a correct regime and so aims at the common interest and (iii) that it is the regime in which the hoplite (or: warrior) class has authority. Polity is also described (iv) as a mix of oligarchy and democracy.
Finally (v) it may also be the middle regime, where the moderately wealthy are influential. This last description (v) is particularly interesting, for Aristotle provides (what is for Aristotle) a detailed characterization of the moderately wealthy. If we can show, as I believe we can, that the middle regime (and its forms) are polity (and its forms), it will allow us (in the next Chapter) to add Aristotle’s intriguing discussion of the connection between moderate wealth and political reasonableness to our picture of the citizens of polity. He makes three attributions. First, moderately wealthy citizens are said to be “readiest to obey reason.” (1295b6, 4.11.5) Second, they are able to both rule and be ruled. Third, they do not covet the goods of other citizens. The three characteristics are considered in the following Chapter, under the heading of an examination of the role of wealth, as wealth provides a competing vision of the good life of which Aristotle is particularly wary. The current Chapter, however, is only concerned to establish the identity of the middle regime and polity.

The classification of the middle regime is a disputed matter. The majority of commentators claim it is polity. I share this view. However, both polity and the middle regime have a multitude of forms. This raises the further issue, much less examined in the literature, of whether there are middle regimes that are not polity or polities that are not middle regime. I shall argue that the two are identical: wherever we might wish to speak of different forms of polity we can speak similarly of different forms of middle regime, and vice versa.

For our purposes – investigating the quality of the citizens of polity which enable the regime to be a correct one – all we need is the claim that ‘every polity is a middle regime’ or more precisely (since polity takes many forms), an understanding of who does and does not participate in the various forms of
polity. We shall find that polities can involve the middle class, the rich, and those of the poor who are closest to the middle class. (In Chapter 5 I explain how the class of the poor near the middle class – the farmers – are admissible because similar to the middle class.) We will be especially concerned to refute the perception that polities can be a mix of rich and poor by themselves – without the middle class. The middle regime, on the other hand, seems to depend for its stability on a large middling group. The two notions, of mix and middle, seem contrary. As one commentator has put it: Not every middle is a mix, and not every mix is a middle.\footnote{Johnson (1990) p. 149} But if it is true that there are mixed polities lacking a middle class, then whatever we might learn about the middle class could not be directly applied to our understanding of the citizens of polity.

I shall also argue for the claim that ‘every middle regime is a polity’. This is not strictly necessary for our larger purposes, but it is nonetheless of interest where the relationship between polity and the middle regime are concerned. One might think that there are middle regimes that are not polities. One piece of evidence for this claims is that Aristotle says that those in the middle prevent ‘the extremes’ from coming into being, and this is taken to mean extreme democracy and oligarchy. On this ground it would seem possible that the middle regime can take the form of moderate oligarchies and democracies. I argue instead that the ‘non-extreme’ regimes are in fact polities.

The category of ‘mixed regime’ provides a bridge between the middle regime and polity. I shall argue that polities which are a mix of oligarchy and democracy require a middling group, even if the mix may lean towards
democracy or towards oligarchy. I shall explore the relation between mixed polity (of book 4) and then, coming full circle, hoplite polity (of book 3) and argue that the mixed polity is a hoplite polity. I shall argue for the ‘superfluous’ claim that a mixed ‘middle’ regime is a polity. That is to say, wherever the middle class prevent ‘the extremes’ from coming into being it in fact brings a polity into being. All of these will allow us to conclude not only that every polity is a middle regime, but that polity and the middle regime are the same.

2. The Middle Regime Introduced

The middle regime is introduced as the answer to the following question:

What regime is best and what way of life is best for most cities and most human beings, judging with a view neither to virtue of the sort that is beyond private persons, nor to education, in respect to those things requiring [special advantages provided by] nature and an equipment dependent on chance, nor to the regime that one would pray for, but a way of life which it is possible for most to participate in, and a regime in which most polises can share?

(1295a25-31, 4.11.1)

After discussing the moderate virtue associated with moderate wealth Aristotle answers that the best regime (for most – not the best unqualifiedly) is the middle regime (hê mesê politeia) or the regime through or by the middle people, (dia tôn mesôn 1295b35, 4.11.10) those of a midding and sufficient wealth (ousian echein mesên kai hikanên b40), those of a moderate and middle wealth (to metrion ... kai to meson b4), whom I shall refer to simply as ‘the moderately wealthy’ or ‘the middlingly wealthy’. ‘Through the middling people’ is an obscure phrase. Rackham translates it as “administered by the middle class” which suggests that

80 Alternatively (1288b34, 4.1.5), the regime that is ‘most fitting for all polises.’
the moderately wealthy is sovereign. Reeve translates it less decisively as “which depends on those in the middle”. What does ‘through those in the middle’ mean? Can we be more explicit than saying simply that a substantial number of the moderately wealthy are involved?

Even though it is supposed to be the best regime for most polises, the middle regime is rarely seen; “the middling regime has either never arisen or has done so infrequently and in a few [cities].” (1296a37, 4.11.19) This is perhaps because the group of moderately wealthy is often small, (1296a24) which is one of the causes of the middle regime’s infrequency and the prevalence of oligarchy and democracy. In describing the middle regime’s economic or class structure, Aristotle adds a middle group to his usual schema of rich and poor. Typically Aristotle speaks only of the rich and the poor, as though these were exhaustive. The rich and poor typically contest for power and the winner takes sovereign power “as a prize of victory”. (1296a31, 4.11.17) In discussing the middle regime he talks both about rich-middle-poor (1289b30, 4.3.1) and of exceedingly (sphodra) rich, middlingly wealthy, and exceedingly poor (1295b1, 4.11.4).

Oligarchy or democracy is formed by either the rich or poor, respectively, being dominant over the other, with a negligible middle class. In an oligarchy for example, the distribution of wealth among the population might look like this:

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   Rich                     Middle                        Poor

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81 However, Aristotle does call mention various polities, such as Sparta in 2.9 and a number of regimes in the examples of regime change in book 5.

82 A reason for the usual bipartite account is given at 1291b7, 4.4.18: no one can be both rich and poor, and since the rich are typically few and the poor many, polises appear to be comprised of these two opposite camps.

92
Remember that what Aristotle calls ‘the majority’ or ‘the superior’ group is not simply the one with the greatest number. Quality must also be taken into consideration. (1294a11, 4.8.7) Hence although in this diagram there are the same number of rich as there are of poor, the rich are dominant in this population.

A democracy on the other hand might look like this:

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Rich       Middle                                Poor

Again, the poor need to have a large numerical majority in order to be dominant within the polis.

The middle regime is described not in terms of rich and poor but in terms of the (exceedingly) wealthy and the (exceedingly) poor, along with the moderately wealthy. A middle regime might look like this:

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(Very) Rich Middle (Very) Poor

The middle group is singly dominant in this regime. Aristotle writes that a well-governed polis is possible when the middle class is superior to both of the other groups (the rich and the poor), but also possible when the middling group is superior to at least one of the other groups. The moderately wealthy, by throwing their weight into the political equation, can tip the scale and prevent ‘the extremes’ from coming into being, (1295b35, 4.11.10 prostithemenon gar poiei rhopên; cf. 1296b38, 4.12.4: “Where the multitude of middling persons predominates either over both of the extremities together or over one alone, there a lasting polity is capable of existing.”) The middle class may only be larger than one of the other two groups, as follows.

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83 This instance of ‘politeia’ I think does means polity in the specific sense, rather than
(Very) Rich       Middle       (Very) Poor

Here, the middle is superior to the poor but inferior to the rich. The middle and poor together, however, are a match for the rich.

Our next task is to explain how Aristotle thinks the middle class has its political effect. A caveat about these diagrams, before moving on, concerns the clean cut-off points between groups. There are, in reality, no clearly defined groups of rich, middle and poor. Graphs with a scale of wealth on the horizontal axis might be less misleading in this regard because there could be a larger number of points. By the ‘moderately wealthy’ Aristotle has in mind a group of a particular level of wealth. As with the doctrine of the mean, although the spectrum can be described by detailing the extremes and the mid-point, this does not mean that these are the only points. On Aristotle’s theory of citizenship the quality of citizens of moderate democracy and moderate oligarchy are close to the moderately wealthy.

Further, when discussing regimes in terms of (very) rich, middle and (very) poor, Aristotle is not simply re-describing the populations of given polises to point up a group of moderately wealthy that existed previously. Many polises do not have a substantial middle group and one cannot simply be fabricated by including the rich (from among the very rich) and the poor (from among the very poor) in the middle class. Moving from an oligarchy to a middle regime, if this is possible, would involve some of the very rich or very poor becoming middle class.

government generally, but I do not rely on this.
3. How The Moderately Wealthy Promote a Stable Regime

How does the middle group have its political effect? If the middle group is weaker than each of the other groups, it will not have any political effect: the polis will divide into poor and rich and these will see themselves as contestants for power. A polis which is evenly balanced between rich and poor, but with few people in the middle, cannot be a middle regime, as the middle regime requires a sufficiently large number of moderately wealthy people in order to be influential. Populations where the populace is widely separated in terms of wealth give rise to extreme forms of oligarchy and democracy, and thence to tyranny.⁸⁴ (1295b40, 4.11.11)

The more uniform the population, the less explicit the account that will have to be taken of the other groups. This is true of the middle regime just as it is true of deviant regimes. If the populace were mostly poor, a democracy would naturally form, with no explicit recognition of the rich, or the middle class, necessary. The first way in which the middle class can have political influence is when the middle class is singly dominant. We may distinguish two cases of dominance. Even though we (and indeed, in order to) speak of the middle regime based upon the middle class, there must also be rich and poor among the population, so the population will not be entirely lacking in (e.g.) poor. The rich and poor, however, may both be small enough to be politically insignificant. Here there would be least need to make special consideration for other groups.

⁸⁴ This claim will be important later on, for one argument that the middle regime can at most be a species of polity is that polities can be formed from populations evenly balanced between rich and poor and without a substantial middle class.
Democracy or oligarchy will be more extreme the more homogenous the population. Likewise, the ‘extreme‘ middle, which we can call the ‘middle middle,’ is the regime where the population is homogenously middle class, or as close to this as possible. This is the middle regime par excellence; the others fall away from it insofar as the diverse populations of the polis necessitate variegated institutions.

Populations that are entirely middle class must be thought very rare. Slightly more likely is a population where, in addition to a single dominant middle class either the rich or the poor are significant. The rich may have to be given special consideration. In the hoplite regime of Drako, the hoplites hold many offices themselves and they fill the most prestigious offices by election from among the rich and very rich. (Ath. Pol. 4) Where the poor are significant, though not more powerful than the middle, they are justly excluded, or the top part of them may be folded into middle class by, in particular, reducing the property qualification for offices. This is difficult to do without changing the regime into a democratic-leaning polity or a democracy, because the number in each class is typically inversely proportional to its wealth.

Such is the middle middle, where the middle class is singly dominant. We note in passing the situation where the middle group is superior to each of the other two individually but inferior to the two together. This is, in effect, the same situation as when the middle is greater than both combined, for there is no fear, Aristotle says, of the rich and poor unifying against the middle class. (1297a1, 4.12.5)

Let us move to the polises in which the middle is superior to only one of the two other groups. How does the middle class make its presence felt under
these conditions? There are two candidate explanations, only one of which I shall accept. One way in which a middle class larger than only one of the other groups could have its effect is that the middle class are *themselves* the contrary force. If the middle is superior to the rich, for example, then the political debate might be between the poor and the middle. On this reading, when Aristotle says that the middle group is bigger than one of the other groups, he simply means that where the rich and poor are typically in opposition, the poor (e.g.) and the moderately wealthy will instead have to come to a political agreement. This situation is like the situation, above, where the middle is singly dominant but either the rich or the poor (or both) are significant, except that the roles are reversed. The rich, or the poor, will have to acknowledge the middle. In the case of the rich, they can extend themselves to include (at least some of) the middle. In the case of the poor, they might account for the middle by giving them special honors. Whether the regime formed in each case is some form of democracy or a polity, I leave open for now. Such regimes are the reverse of those where the middle class is dominant. There, the population was weighted solely in the middle (or mostly in the middle and spreading out to one or both sides). The weight now is towards one end or the other, but extends into the middle. Call this role of the middle class described in this way its ‘moderating’ function.

Alternatively, Aristotle’s idea may be that the minor group and the middle class join together and are *together* more powerful than the singly dominant group. The middle and the poor (e.g.) are together powerful enough to move the more powerful group of the well off to come to some agreement and keeps an extreme regime of that (dominant) kind from coming into being. Again, whether this mixed regime is a moderate oligarchy or a polity, we leave open.
We note at this point only that causing the dominant group to mix is different from causing it to moderate; if the middle and poor join together, there must be something in it for the poor. Call this the ‘mixing’ function of the middle class.

The middle group certainly seems to have at least the mixing effect. Aristotle’s comments on the adjudicative role of the middle (1296a18, 4.11.15) and of how rich and poor won’t find a better deal and can avoid mutual enmity (1297a3, 4.12.5) suggest that the middle group somehow serve to bring rich and poor together. Solon, who is one of the three mediators mentioned as having had a middle class background, is said to have broken down an unmixed oligarchy, not only by liberating those who had sold themselves into slavery, but by establishing popular power over the courts, a move that was eventually to lead to full-blown democracy.

The group with which the middle group joins must benefit to some extent in the compromise struck with the singly dominant group. In the case of Solon, the poor were released from debts and given access to juries. Setting a moderate property qualification, for example, will exclude the very poor who fail to meet it but allow in those who do meet it. The frequent rotation of offices, or filling offices by lot, are other democratic features, for they bespeak greater equality between citizens. Similar things can be said on the oligarchic side. Such middle regimes are mixed regimes, involving rich, moderately wealthy and (some) poor.

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85 In order to have any political effect, the middle class and the group with which it joins are, combined, politically influential relative to the remaining group. For we can imagine a polis with (e.g.) not many very wealthy individuals and not many of moderate wealth yet a larger group than the wealthy, both of whom are dwarfed by the poor. In such a situation it would do little good to add the moderately wealthy to the very wealthy. The middle class and the weaker group must together be politically significant.

86 See 2.12.1-6 and 2.7.6. For Lycurgus and the mixed Spartan regime, see 2.9. For Charondas see 4.13.2 and 2.12.6-7, 11
Above we saw that the middle regime is spoken of as that ‘by the middles’ but this does not mean that the middle group is the only group in the polis or in power. (Similarly, when Aristotle speaks of polity as the regime in which the hoplite class is dominant, he need not mean that only hoplites are involved in government.)

Does the middle regime also cause what we have called moderations? These would be when, for example, the rich extend power to the middle, perhaps by lowering the property qualification, but not by so much as to include any of the poor. Recall that Aristotle says that the middle class has its influence, even when larger only than one of the other groups, because the rich and poor will never join together against the middle. Aristotle here focuses squarely on the adjudicative role of the middle class and assumes that the rich and poor are both active, at least potentially, even though one of them is smaller than the middle. The rich – or poor, whichever is singly dominant – does not propose to moderate themselves. Rather, the middle class prevents the rich from abusing the poor and ensures a regime that is agreeable to both. If, contrary to the agreement, the singly dominant group attempts to take power exclusively or to abuse the other group, the middle will join with the poor to enforce it. Since both of the other groups are involved, the effect of the middle class seems to be to mix the regime rather than moderate it. When the single dominant group is the rich, the polity will be an oligarchically leaning polity; when the singly dominant group is the poor, the polity will be a democratically leaning polity.

The important element in this analysis is the just character (or at least, the just behavior) of the middle class. In the next Chapter we shall examine in greater details the ethical character of the middle class. Here, we see that their
political purpose is to bring justice to the political regime, establishing what is fair between rich and poor. It is because of these effects that (as we shall explore further) the resulting regime can be called a polity and a correct regime.

In summary, then, there are mixed middles as well as middle middles. Depending on the strength of the middle class relative to the other groups, the resulting regime might either make no special provision for any group other than the middle class, or it might cause a mixed regime, differentiating the rich from the middle and poor, or the poor from the middle and rich. The precise nature of the regime will depend on the relative weight of the different groups. The advantage is a diminution in faction. Where the middle class is singly dominant, there is least factional conflict. (1296a7, 4.11.12)

4. Hoplite Polity

What kinds of regime can be brought about by the influence of the middle class? Democracy? Oligarchy? Polity? In this Section I introduce polity.

The factors by which regimes are judged in book 3 are the number eligible for office – one, few and many – the correctness of the regime – ruling in the common interest or not – and the goal of the regime – virtue, wealth or freedom. Speaking of the aim of the regime serves to define more exactly the incorrect regimes of oligarchy and democracy, so that even if the numerical majority were wealthy, the regime would still be an oligarchy. With the correct regimes, however, the aim of the regime is virtue, regardless of number, and so number may still be used to differentiate them from each other. Thus polity is a regime where a multitude who are not as virtuous as the virtuous of aristocracy rule in the common interest. Aristotle describes this regime as the regime where the
The hoplite class holds power, for military virtue is the virtue that the greatest number can have.

The hoplite class are the least well-off of the classes of the wealthy. In Solonian Athens, (Ath. Pol. 7.3 cf. 4.3) there were three categories of the wealthy: those producing over 500, 300, and 200 measures, respectively. Those producing over 300 were called the ‘cavalry’, though the name was largely ancestral rather than descriptive.\(^8\) Those producing more than 200 measures were called the zeugites and these are also the hoplites. They are those who are able to provide their own military equipment, heavy armor and weapons as opposed to light arms or horses.

The richer cavalymen are obviously able to contribute to the polis, as are the very rich. But Aristotle thinks that the very rich are likely to act hubristically towards others, and so their power should be limited even though the offices they fill are more important. Where the middle group forces a compromise between rich and poor (and itself holds office along with these), there will be a regime of the many, but not of the democratic many - indeed some or all of the democratic multitudes are excluded - and so a polity. If present, the very poor can be excluded entirely by imposing a property qualification, but the power of the very rich must be constrained in other institutional ways. Polity is best when the population naturally lacks both extremes, of very rich and very poor. Hoplite polity properly speaking would be where this class is singly dominant.\(^8\)

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\(^8\) Aristotle does say that some terrains are suitable for cavalry and so elevate in status those who are able to keep horses. 1321a8, 6.7.1

\(^8\) Johnson writes (1990) “Species classification is established by looking at the arrangement of the various ‘parts’ or socio-economic groups of the state. ... The basic question Aristotle asks is simply, which ‘parts’ hold the political power?” (p. 147) E.g. Is the democracy one based on the agricultural multitude or the laboring? There is no specific answer to this question, however, in the case of polity – all we get is that both rich and poor hold office.”
Those who hold arms are counted among the rich. Indeed, the hoplite regime is said to be a form of oligarchy at 1321a12, 6.7.1 because the “heavy-armed element is made up of the well off more than the poor.” (cf. 1293a15, 4.6.8) It is difficult to know what to make of this statement, as it directly contradicts the claim that polity is the hoplite regime. Perhaps we should be relieved to find that Aristotle almost contradicts himself in the opposite direction too, calling what appears to be a middle regime by the name ‘democracy’: At 4.6 Aristotle writes that one kind of democracy is “when the farming element and that possessing a moderate amount of property have authority over the regime.” (1292b24, 4.6.2) When he then goes on shortly afterward to say that one kind of oligarchy is “when a larger number of persons owns property, but in lesser amounts and not overly much” we may safely (if there was any doubt before) consider ourselves thoroughly confused. Nor can the confusion be (straightforwardly) alleviated by thinking that it is the presence of farmers that makes the regime democratic and not a polity, because (1291a30, 4.4.15) “it often happens that the same people bear arms and farm.” The middle middle or the hoplite regime thus seems to be a form of polity, a form of democracy and a form of oligarchy.

The precise specification of the middle middle is thus unclear. But the general idea seems to be that there is a certain level of wealth required for political moderation. In politics, wealth is prominent in the form of the ‘property qualification.’ The property qualification or assessment is the most important of the features distinguishing democracy from oligarchy. There are other features, such as whether offices are filled by lot or by election, and whether the class that votes is the same as the class from which the nominees come. But, for example, to have a high property qualification is a mark of an oligarchic regime, even if the
positions are thereafter decided by lot. One kind of democracy is where there is a low property qualification. (1291b38, 4.4.24) Oligarchy has an assessment “of such a size that the poor do not share [in the regime]” (1292a40, 4.5.1) and the oligarchy becomes more extreme as the amount rises. Finally, one way of forming a polity is to set the level at “the mean between the assessments” of oligarchy and democracy. (1294b5, 4.9.3) The middle middle as a polity is the regime comprised predominately of those of moderate wealth.

The ‘middle middle’, the middle regime spoken of simply and without reference to the rich and poor (some of whom will likely also exist among the inhabitants), is easily reconcilable with the hoplite polity of book 3, which is spoken of in a similarly simple fashion. The middle is polity and not aristocracy or kingship. The middle regime is certainly not kingship because the ‘moderately wealthy’ or the ‘middle class’ is much too big to be a monarchy. As the level of virtue rises, the fewer are the number of individuals who possess it. Similarly, the middle is also not aristocracy (or even a so-called aristocracy) either, the reason being that the level of virtue of the middle class does not match that of those who form an aristocracy. The virtue of the moderately wealthy is not the virtue of the aristocracy. As Aristotle says in 3.4, only in aristocracy is the virtue of a good citizen the virtue of a good man. This line is repeated in 4.7 (1293b5), at the outset of his discussion of the lesser aristocracies, which mix the virtuous with either the wealthy and/or the poor. The virtuous in such regimes are the ‘notables’ among the population. Often the rich are called by the same names, but Aristotle confirms (at the end of 4.8) that a regime can only be a so-called

89 For a list of democratic features, see 6.2.5-8, and 9 for a statement that admission based on free-birth vs. a property qualification is most important.
aristocracy if the regime allocates some offices on the basis of excellence as opposed to wealth. A regime that does not do this but mixes only wealth and freedom is a polity. Thus while some of the notables will be among the rich, others may not. So the excellence of the middle class is not that of the virtuous of so-called aristocracies. Aristotle begins 4.11 by explicitly putting aside people of the caliber of virtue necessary for aristocracy. Johnson contends that Aristotle here is asking what is the best regime if we assume that the people are not divinely virtuous. While this is a possible reading of this passage in isolation, it is clear that this discussion in 4.11 is meant to answer the question posed at the opening of the book, as to which is the best regime for most. (1288b24, 4.1.3)

The ‘mixed middles’ which we are about to investigate are also, in a way, hoplite regimes. Extreme democracy is democracy that includes the vulgar (artisans, laborers, traders). The other democratic classes are farmers and herdsmen. A ‘mixed middle’ including the poor includes farmers and herdsmen, because, as we shall see in Chapter 5, they are close to the hoplite class in terms of military ability (and also with respect to justice and moderation.) Thus a polity including them can be thought of as a hoplite regime. It is comprised of the hoplite class and those who are like them.

Both polity and the middle regime take different forms, depending on the population. As we know, beginning in book 4 Aristotle provides a much more detailed analysis of what is, in book 3, described simply as ‘rule of the rich’. There are a plurality of forms of oligarchy. Similarly with democracy: rule of the poor has in fact four (and in one analysis, five) different forms. Similarly with

90 Johnson (1990) p. 159.
polity, we will see that there can be variations in the blend of institutions in order to accommodate a wealthier or poorer populace. In the cases of oligarchy and democracy, the different variations of each are tied to a different type of group being dominant within the polis. The moderately wealthy may be singly dominant and produce what I have called the middle middle, which is what Aristotle means in book 3 by the hoplite polity. As the population moves away from a concentration of hoplites, either on both sides or by having a concentration of the rich or poor – i.e. where the middle class is smaller than one of the rich or the poor – the regime is less stable because the mix of institutions must more explicitly acknowledge the different classes and divide the powers of government between them. Mixed middle regimes are our next item of concern.

5. Mixed Polities

Aristotle speaks of polity mainly in two ways. The first is found initially in book 3 (3.7.3-4), where polity is described as a rule by a multitude in the common interest. The multitude in question is the hoplite class, comprised of those able to provide themselves with heavy arms and armor. The second is found initially in book 4, polity described as a mix of oligarchy and democracy (1293b33, 4.8.3) and of these two only and not including the virtuous (1294a23, 4.8.9). Polity is not a familiar term, Aristotle says, because people tend to call oligarchic-leaning polities ‘aristocracies’. This is incorrect, because the mixture involves only the virtues of the middle class in so-called aristocracy. The regimes that in 4.2 are ‘aristocratic but not widespread’ are so-called aristocracies. At the beginning of 4.11 Aristotle writes that some (τα μεν) forms of so-called aristocracy fall outside the grasp of most cities, while others (τα δὲ) approximate to polity. I take Aristotle to mean by the latter the oligarchic form of polity which is said to be a so-called aristocracy (1293b34, 4.8.3) and by the former the other forms of so-called aristocracy, i.e. those forms of government explicitly allocating (some) offices to the virtuous.

91 The virtue of the middle class is not the virtue of the virtuous in so-called aristocracy. The regimes that in 4.2 are ‘aristocratic but not widespread’ are so-called aristocracies. At the beginning of 4.11 Aristotle writes that some (τα μεν) forms of so-called aristocracy fall outside the grasp of most cities, while others (τα δὲ) approximate to polity. I take Aristotle to mean by the latter the oligarchic form of polity which is said to be a so-called aristocracy (1293b34, 4.8.3) and by the former the other forms of so-called aristocracy, i.e. those forms of government explicitly allocating (some) offices to the virtuous.
wealthy and the poor and not (also) at the virtuous, in which case the regime would rightly be a (so-called) aristocracy, an aristocracy based not solely on virtue, as in an aristocracy proper, but one which allocates some offices based on virtue.

We might well wonder at the relationship between the two descriptions of polity. Indeed one might suppose that the word was being used differently in different books, thus suggesting that their meaning is dependent on context – ideal versus non-ideal theory – or that the respective books come from different periods of composition. However, Aristotle repeats the definition of polity as the hoplite regime in book 4, indicating that he sees no contradiction between the two. Somehow, the mixed regime and the hoplite regime are the same.

Polity is first described as a mix in the treatment of it in book 4. “Simply speaking, polity is a mixture of oligarchy and democracy” (mixis oligarchias kai démokratias, 1293b34, 4.8.3) It is worth giving Aristotle’s thought at length, here.

In order to construct a polity, we must distinguish democracy and oligarchy, he says, and form a composite by taking features from each. There are three suggestions by which oligarchy and democracy may be mixed in order to produce (elements of) a polity: to adopt the principles of both, to adopt a mean between the two, or to mix some features of each. Aristotle provides an example of each in turn. If oligarchy fines the rich for refusal to serve on juries while democracy pays people to attend, then a mix of both will include both provisions.\(^2\) Or again, if democracies fill offices by lot, while oligarchies do so

\(^2\) Aristotle does not make it clear whether absent jurors are to be fined while jurors in attendance are to be paid, or wealthy jurors are to be fined for non-attendance (but receive nothing for attendance) while poor jurors are to be paid for attending (but do not suffer a fine if they are absent.)
by election, we could mix the two and make some offices elected but without a property qualification (or by lot from the wealthy, though Aristotle does not mention this possibility, calling the one mentioned “characteristic of aristocracy and polity” 1294b11, 4.9.5). Lastly, if participation in the assembly is regulated by a property qualification in oligarchies, but not at all (or by a low one) in democracy, then a mean value somewhere between the two may be used.

Aristotle advises the mixing of institutions in order to accommodate mixed populations. The offices of a regime are of three types: deliberative, executive and judicial. By employing these three modes on different aspects of the constitution, a thorough mix can be generated such as will make it difficult to tell whether a single regime is a democracy or an oligarchy. For example, to pay for jury and assembly duty is democratic; to fine for non-attendance is oligarchic. To have a deliberative body that has no property qualification is democratic, to have one is oligarchic, and the higher the level of assessment the more oligarchic the regime. To elect people to offices is oligarchic; to fill positions by lot is democratic. To give the young the same education regardless of the wealth of the family is democratic. And so on. Given, that there are eight kinds of juries and five deliberative functions, and very many executive offices, a thorough mix of institutions can be established.

These modes of mixture, I shall argue, require a middle class in order to work. But before moving on, we can see with this last mode how the hoplite polity is itself a mixed regime: The property qualification is set at an intermediate level between that of oligarchy and democracy, and produces the hoplite polity or middle middle. This explains how Aristotle can simultaneously speak of polity as the hoplite regime and as a mix of oligarchy and democracy. Such a
regime is possible, as we might expect, only where there is a dominantly middle population – the middle middle. If there is to be little distinction between citizens and their offices, the majority of the citizens must be similar. If the offices are filled by lot only or by election only even this hoplite polity will have a democratic or an oligarchic leaning. The more difficult argument to make is that any mixed polity requires a middle class. As Aristotle says in 4.9, a good mixture can be spoken of as either an oligarchy or a democracy. “The mean too is of this sort: each of the extremes is revealed in it.” (1294b18, 4.9.6)

The idea of a mixed regime opens up the possibility that the rich and poor may equalize their share of the sovereign powers, thus being neither an oligarchy or democracy, but do so without the need of a middle class. Such regimes would be polities – in the sense of a mix of oligarchy and democracy - but not middle regimes. This possibility is examined in the next section, where I shall argue that in order for a mix to produce a stable government, a middle class must be present.

6. All Mixed Polities Require a Middle Class

In this section I argue that if a regime is a mixed polity, it is a middle regime, that is, it requires an middle class greater than at least one of the other classes. Some commentators allege that there can be mixed polities that do not require a middle class. Rejecting this claim is the purpose of the present section. Much work toward this end has already been done in the foregoing Sections, which is reinforced here.

A main problem standing in the way of identifying the middle regime with polity is that polity is described in book 4 as a mix of oligarchy and
democracy while the middle regime is described as the regime where the middle class – those with a “middle and sufficient” \( (\text{ousian ekhein mēsēn kai hikanēn,} \)
\[1295b40, \ 4.11.11 \) amount of wealth - is politically influential. Polity as a mix suggests that polity may be a regime stably mixing only rich and poor, while any middle regime involves the moderately wealthy. Thus even if all middle regimes are polities, not all polities are middle regimes.

This is Curtis Johnson’s main argument against the identity of polity and the middle regime.\(^9\) In arguing for the conclusion that the middle is not polity, Johnson argues that a mixture of rich and poor will not make a middle group. While the income of the citizens taken together may be said to be moderate, he says, the rich and the poor individually retain their respective levels of wealth. The middle regime, by contrast, is comprised largely of moderately wealth individuals. Similarly, in the middle regime offices are distributed to the middle class, while in a polity they are awarded to both rich and poor. Polity somehow manages to balance the rich and the poor and from their union produce a correct regime. Johnson seems to think that there are mixes of rich and poor which cannot plausibly be called middle regimes which are yet polities.\(^9\)

To put the challenge another way: If the poor hold the sovereign offices, the regime is a democracy, while if they are held by rich, the regime is an oligarchy. Perhaps a mixed regime is polity when both rich and poor are sovereign or when neither the rich nor the poor are sovereign. The latter case


\(^9\) Kraut (2002) in 12.3 takes the view that the middle regime of 4.11 is the hoplite polity of book 3, and that the mixed regimes (including so-called aristocracies) are so-called polities, and are deviant. This gives the result that “the constitution that is ‘most suitable for all cities’” (item D in Kraut’s list on p. 428 in section 12.1) is the hoplite polity but not the mixed (so-called) polities.
involves the middle class. The group who are neither the rich nor the poor are the moderately wealthy and moderately virtuous. But the first allows the possibility that a polity can be created without a middle class.

Aristotle often speaks of polity as a mixed regime without mentioning the middle class, (as, for example, at 1294a16, 4.8.8) but some mentions also suggest that it is a middle regime. Aristotle kicks off the discussion of regimes towards the beginning of book 4 by reviewing the distinction between correct and incorrect regimes made in book 3. He criticizes the popular view that there are only two forms of regime, oligarchy and democracy. Rather, he says, the full classification is better, which has two well-formed regimes (kingship and aristocracy, regimes based on virtue provided with material goods, 1289a33, 4.2.1) while the others are deviations, either from the best or from the “well-blended harmony” (eu kekramenês harmonias, 1290a26, 4.3.8). Given that this passage seems to be an expansion upon the previous discussion of the three correct regimes and their respective deviations (at 1289a38 ff, 4.2.2 ff.) ‘well-blended harmony’ seems an obvious reference to polity, suggesting that polity is a mix and also, and more importantly right now, that polity is a middle between oligarchy and democracy which fall away from polity on either side and can be judged as inferior compared to polity.\footnote{We saw above that both descriptions of polity – hoplite and mix - are employed in 4.11.}

This quotation makes an initial case for the claim that mixed polities are middle regimes and are the same because both are middle between oligarchy and democracy. Perhaps, however, the sense of ‘middle’ being employed here may be different from the sense of ‘middle’ in ‘the middle class’. The first sense
talks of polity as *middle* (perhaps ‘midway’) *between* oligarchy and democracy; the second talks of the middle class as middle between rich and poor. Are ‘the middle (midway) regime’ and ‘the regime by the middle class’ co-extensive for Aristotle?

Another passage suggests more strongly that the regime middle between oligarchy and democracy is the middle class regime. At 1265b28, 2.6.16 Aristotle writes that the regime of Plato’s *Laws* is intended to be neither a democracy or an oligarchy, “but the one midway between them which is called polity: for it is based on those who bear [heavy] arms. Now if he institutes this as being the most attainable of all the regimes for cities, he has perhaps spoken rightly.” Here the term ‘middle’ is applied to polity as lying between oligarchy and democracy. The phrase ‘most attainable’, furthermore, repeats the question in 4.11 by which the middle regime is introduced and described as the regime having a substantial middle class. Thus, when Aristotle says that polity is a middle between oligarchy and democracy, he has in mind the regime of a middle number of middlingly wealthy but of stability greater than oligarchy and democracy; in a democracy the poor many are dominant and in an oligarchy the rich few; between these one would find a regime of a large number of moderately wealthy individuals – the middle regime. Here we should note that while Aristotle does speak explicitly of the hoplite regime, he does not speak of a mix, only of middle, and so it is possible that Aristotle means ‘polity’ only in the

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96 There is also the idea of the middle as admitting as citizens a middling number of people, those who are moderately wealthy being greater in number than the rich but not as many as the democratic multitude.
sense of the middle middle. Alternatively, he may by speaking of polity generally and thus that any polity is a middle regime.

These quotes make an initial case that polity as a mix of oligarchy and democracy is a middle regime. Textual evidence aside, my theoretical argument (i.e. an argument for the claim as required by or fitting into Aristotle’s broader theory) is that just as the institutions of democracy and of oligarchy fit democratic and oligarchic populations (respectively), so mixtures of those institutions are possible only with a middle population. Any attempt to mix rich and poor or democratic and oligarchic institutions of government will not succeed unless there is a middle class.

Aristotle thinks this because of the antagonistic relationship between rich and poor. Their adversarial relationship is built in the very classification of regimes: If a population favors oligarchy or democracy, that is the regime likely to come about and the more oligarchic or democratic the population, the more extreme the form of oligarchy or democracy. In polises where either the rich or the poor are dominant, a mixed regime will be rejected by the dominant group. A rich majority would reject, for example, both elements of Aristotle’s advice that a polity could fine the rich for failing to serve on juries and pay the poor for their participation.

Perhaps polity as a mix of oligarchy and democracy is possible where the population is evenly divided, that is, where there is a negligible middle class, but the population is evenly balanced – neither the poor and the rich are clearly

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Further textual evidence is that two of the modes of producing a polity employ the word ‘middle’. The first mode, of implementing the procedures from both oligarchy and democracy is said to be “common and middle”, while the second itself recommends finding a middle ground between the procedures of the two, for example, by establishing a middle property qualification. (1294a42, b2, b5, 4.9.3-4).
superior. However, this situation is, for Aristotle, scarcely better where one
group is clearly dominant and may even be worse, as it may mean frequent
changes in government. A mixed regime cannot be formed out of two factions
because of the partisan nature of the extremes. Where evenly balanced, the rich
and the poor will continue to struggle for complete power. Aristotle thinks that
the very wealthy and the very poor are pitted against one another and will not
consent to share government with each other. There is no fear, he writes in 4.11,
that the rich and poor will join together against the middle class. The factions of
rich and poor mean continued instability. “Regimes”, Aristotle writes later on,
“undergo change also when parts of the city that are held to be in opposition,
become equal to one another— for example, the wealthy and the people—and
there is nothing or very little in the middle.” (1304a38, 5.4.11) The large
difference between the two groups will mean that each does not see the other as
a legitimate partner in government.

The absence of a middle class is a cause of continued partisanship:
without a substantial middle group what might have been considered simply a
spectrum of individuals ranging from rich to poor is easily divided into two
groups, the rich and the poor, and these set at odds with one another. As
Aristotle says in 4.11, only where there is a large middle group can stability be
achieved between the two. Mixes of oligarchy and democracy must have a strong
middle class, since if there is either a large class of wealthy or poor, they will take
power. Thus it is impossible for rich and poor to be mixed without a middle
group.

*All* polities, therefore, whether hoplite or mixed, are middle regimes.
Polity as the hoplite regime is most obviously a middle regime in that it is the
regime where a multitude who are moderately wealthy are singly dominant. Polity is also described as a mix of oligarchy and democracy, but even here, as we have just seen, the regime involves a middle class.

7. Mixed Middles are Polities

In this final section I return to cases where the middle class is not singly dominant, but, by being greater than one of the two groups, is still politically influential.

We are concerned with the mixed regimes that result from the influence of the middle class. Not every mixed regime is a middle regime or a polity. For example, in 3.11 Aristotle suggests that when there is a large number of poor people it is necessary that they should be allowed to elect and audit magistrates, (and perhaps also are admitted to collective offices, that is, to juries and the assembly,) while other offices should be filled (individually) by the wealthy or the virtuous. Such a regime requires an institutional differentiation of rich and/or virtuous from poor. Even so, this regime is a democracy. It is a democracy because the poor are sovereign. They do not hold all the offices, but they hold the most important ones. The deliberative branch itself has multiple functions. Its functions are to decide about war and peace and alliances, the laws, the filling of (other) offices, the auditing of officials, and cases involving death, exile or confiscation of property. (The latter two being the most important judicial matters.)\(^9\) (See 6.4 for a full discussion of this form of democracy.)

\(^9\) 1279a25 (3.7.2) ““[R]egime” and “governing body” signify the same thing, since the governing body is the authoritative element in cities.” See also 1264b33, 2.6.2; 1299a2, 4.14.16; 1316b31, 6.1.1.
Similarly, Aristotle speaks of mixed oligarchies, which are near to polities but different from them. (1320b19, 6.6.1) Such mixed regimes, however, are not brought about by the presence of the moderately wealthy but by the presence of a large body of the poor.

What of the regimes where the middle class is influential? In virtue of what are the resulting regimes polities? Regimes resulting from the influence of the middle class involve the mixing of political institutions. Polity is likewise a regime where the powers of government are shared between rich and the many, so much so that, as Aristotle says, it is difficult to tell whether the regime is an oligarchy or a democracy, as it appears to be both.

As we saw above in our discussion of the influence of the middle class, the effect of the middle class when it is only superior to one of the groups is to mix them. If the middle joins with another group, then it forms an opposing force to the singly dominant group and all three groups, in the form of these two opposed groups, share power. The middle joins with the weaker of the two groups and forces a differentiation in powers. This sharing of powers is supposed to satisfy the interests of both sides in the dispute between the few and the many. What is important in deciding which name to give a regime is not simply whether rich or middle or poor are involved, but rather, who is sovereign. Where the rich or the poor are sovereign there is an oligarchy or democracy, respectively. If a regime is to be identified most of all with the authoritative offices, then these must be shared equally. It won’t do much for stability if some of the middle-plus-poor are made officers (as may happen in the most moderate oligarchy, in 6.6, though Aristotle’s meaning here is not entirely clear). Similarly, it won’t much stabilize the regime or be satisfactory to the rich-
plus-middle if some of their number are admitted to individual offices but a powerful assembly is left in the hands of the poor, who may then legally vote to abuse the rich, as in the mixed form of democracy in 6.4. The compromise is made possible by the presence of the middling group, which prevents both the rich or the poor from carrying out its own agenda exclusively.

These mixed middles are not moderate oligarchies and democracies. Recall above the adjudicative role of the middle class. Imagine an oligarchic element in the polis attempting to take control. If there is no middle class, then there is simply a struggle between rich and poor, and the winners take government as a prize, establishing it in a democratic or oligarchic form. Those in the middle will recognize the injustice that the oligarchic element is attempting, and join with the poor in resisting the rich. In order for them to be effective, of course, there must be a significant number of them, enough to make the rich see sense, and also to prevent the democrats from establishing a regime towards the other end of the spectrum. This is why Aristotle includes the remark that there is no fear of the rich and poor joining together, for this impossible combination is the only one that would overthrow the influence of the middle. Instead, terms are settled which are agreeable to all sides. The regime is not established in the self-interest of either one of the groups but in the common interest.

That mixed middles are polities only and not also moderate oligarchies or democracies has the salutary consequence that the middle regime is a correct regime. One consequence of allowing that the moderated regimes are moderate democracies and oligarchies would be that it is possible for the middle regime to
be a deviant regime. Aristotle does not explicitly state that the middle regime is a correct regime, only that the middle regime as the best for most polises.99

There is a similar line of thought in the argument ‘from the mean’ which Aristotle gives in order to settle the question of which is the most fitting regime for most polises. Aristotle employs the doctrine of the mean from the ethical works. When it comes to the ethical virtues, virtue consists in feeling and acting in a mean between extremes. Each application of the doctrine of the mean in the ethical works is to a single impulse or emotion, such as an the instincts to be generous, the inclination to be friendly, the ease with which we become angry, or our response to dangerous situations in terms of confidence or fear. In the ethical works ‘the mean’ is best understood as ‘appropriately’ rather than as any arithmetic mean. What is appropriate lies between extremes on either side, though what may be appropriate in different situations may vary, and need not be at the precise mid-point between extremes. If courage is appropriate confidence in the face of fear, then being inappropriately confident would be rashness, while being inappropriately fearful would be cowardice.

On this line of thought, the ‘mean’ regime would simply be whichever regime fits the population of the polis. Aristotle often states his awareness that the regime must fit the population – indeed he does so at the end of 4.11 - but this cannot be the meaning of ‘the mean’ or the most extreme democracy or oligarchy may be the mean. So too in the amount of property one owns, as an excessive relationship with wealth inhibits virtue, as we shall investigate in

99 Fred Miller directs me to 1296a27, 4.11.17, which says that the rich and poor cannot establish a regime that is “common or equal.” By implication, the regime established by the middle class is fair, and this is akin to saying it is correct.
Chapter 4. The best regime – the best for ordinary people – is, correspondingly, the regime with a large population of moderately wealthy individuals. Aristotle does not say here specifically that the middle class or middle regime is a correct regime but his comparison with the mean of the ethical virtues indicates that the middle regime is in some sense virtuous or correct.

Just as the middle class are the mean on a spectrum of wealth, so the middle regime is, ideally, the mean on a spectrum of distribution of wealth. At one end, if very many of the people are very poor, then an extreme democracy will result. At the other, where very much of the wealth is concentrated in the hands of a few, extreme oligarchy is the regime. Between these lie other possible distributions, at the middle being the middle regime. Just as the mean of each disposition is the correct functioning of the emotional soul, so the middle regime is the correct mean between the extremes. At the conclusion of the discussion, Aristotle writes that since the middle regime is best, it should be clear how the forms of oligarchy and democracy rank in comparison. (1296b7, 4.11.21) Again, the suggestion is that the middle regime is correct.

In sum, we would be wrong to assume that when Aristotle says that the presence of the middle group prevents the extremes from coming into being he thereby means that the middle regime can be a moderate oligarchy or democracy. Just because the extremes do not come into being it does not follow that moderate oligarchies and democracies come into being through the presence of the moderately wealthy. Rather Aristotle means that polities are formed as a result of the mixing.

Aristotle’s discussion of mixed polity is intricate and confusing and the text is in places very uncertain. The sovereign element is the deliberative branch
of government. The first question Aristotle asks is, ‘Will decisions falling to the deliberative branch be made by everyone or not?’ There are three basic options here. One is for all matters to be decided by all; another is all being decided by some (in the sense either of all matters by a single some, or, as we shall see concerning Crete, a division of decisions among different ‘someones’); and a third is some matters being decided by all and others by some. (1298a4-9, 4.14.3) The first is democratic\textsuperscript{100} while the second is oligarchic.\textsuperscript{101} The third is mixed – either in the manner of a (so-called) aristocracy or of a polity. In a mixed polity the deliberative functions will be allocated to the rich and the poor.

In polity the sovereign offices are shared. Aristotle describes various forms of mixed polity, and in each case he describes a distribution of powers that balances the rich and the poor. He writes (at 1298b9, 4.14.10) that a regime could choose some people by lot and some by election. When these officers sit in a common (authoritative) body, this is an element of polity. Aristotle distinguishes this mixture from a similar mixture producing a so-called aristocracy, where those chosen by lot and by election form two distinct bodies making decisions on different matters.

Again, in 6.3 we find Aristotle adjudicating between the competing claims of the rich and the poor, advising that both rich and poor must approve of a

\textsuperscript{100} Democratic modes: everyone ruling \textit{in turn} or meetings of the assembly for matters concerning the structure of government and the laws only, other matters being handled by the (executive) officials (which are filled \textit{in turn}) meeting together; second, general assembly concerning laws, war, offices and audits with officers deciding other matters, chosen either by lot or by election, acting independently; third, the same as this, but with offices filled by election as far as possible; fourth, the extreme democratic practice of all decide about all matters.

\textsuperscript{101} Oligarchic modes: the number is quite large (because of a moderate assessment) and the laws are not violated; only some of these, chosen by election, deliberate; when there is self-election and there is hereditary succession and the laws are violated.
measure if it is to be passed. If they disagree, each vote should be weighted by
the property of the person casting it. For example,

if there are ten of the former [i.e. the rich] and twenty of the
latter [i.e. the poor], and something was resolved
[differently] by six of the wealthy and fifteen of the poorer,
four of the wealthy had joined the poor and five of the poor
the wealthy. Whichever [group’s] assessment predominates
when those of both on either side are counted up, then—this
is authoritative. (1318a33, 6.3.5)

Aristotle does not call such a regime polity, but the similarity in the advice
makes it clear that polity is under discussion. More generally, we find Aristotle
advising that to be justly mixed, all (that is, both rich and poor) must be
encouraged to participate. (1297a38, 4.13.6)

Another form of power-sharing is if the few are allowed to veto any
measure approved by the many. (1298b35, 4.14.16) The contrasting regime here is
a mixed oligarchy, where the few set the agenda for the popular body, who are
only allowed to accept or reject the motion, or merely give advice. The Cretan
regime has a popular assembly which serves only to ratify proposals made by
the fifteen senators (1272a10, 2.10.7) who are chosen only from certain families.
(1272a33, 2.10.10) Aristotle goes on to criticize both Sparta and Crete for placing
too much power in the hands of too few, especially as they are not audited.102

Having two groups (preliminary council and popular council) deliberate
about the same matters is a variation of the first of Aristotle’s three answers to
the basic question ‘Who deliberates on which matters?’ All deliberate about all,
in some sense, but the device of splitting the ‘all’ who deliberate into few and

102 Similarly and most damningly with Cathage, at 1273a21-b17, 2.11.8-14. Aristotle
suggests that the rich buy their way into office and then proceed to profit from it.
many, which is distinctive of polity, is an additional wrinkle.

The third option that Aristotle provides is to have all deliberate about some matters and some about others. Aristotle’s own example of a mixed regime (in 4.9) is Sparta,\footnote{In book 2, Sparta is a mix of all three groups and so a so-called aristocracy rather than a polity strictly speaking. Similarly with Carthage. In book 2 Aristotle begins by saying it is inclined in some ways towards democracy and in others towards oligarchy. (1273a5, 2.11.5) In book 4, however, Carthage is described slightly differently, as a mix of the excellent, the wealthy and the people. 1293b16, 4.7.4} which follows this pattern to some extent. There were two kings, five ephors (overseers), a senate of 28 elders and a popular assembly which, however, could only vote on given motions in addition to electing the other officers. The regime seems oligarchic, in that only allowing the assembly to vote on proposals is a device of a moderate oligarchy. (1298b31, 4.14.15) On the other hand, Aristotle criticizes the regime for placing too many powers in the hands of the overseers, for since the body is open to everyone, sometimes a very poor person is admitted. This person, who has a lot of power as one of the five, can be bought off. Given this possibility and the power of the overseers, the regime suffers, and “from an aristocracy it has become a democracy.” (1270b16, 2.9.20)

Another similarity to democracy is that regimes where the election of other offices is given to the many, such as in the Spartan regime, are close to a mixed democracy, in which the poor perform the functions of filling (and auditing) offices while others deliberate on other matters. (Aristotle regrets that the Spartan senators are not audited. (1271a5, 2.9.26; 1272a35, 2.10.11) Whether the overseers are audited is not clear.) However, whereas in democracies the multitude are sit on every jury, in Sparta different bodies judge different cases, the senators judging those involving murder. (1275b10, 3.1.10; 1294b32, 4.9.9)
Most importantly, however, the many are described as being “of an average sort.” (1270b28, 2.9.23) Aristotle is worried that such people are not suitable for the offices other than the assembly – the Spartan ephors is said to decide, individually, important lawsuits (1270b28, 2.9.23; 1275b9, 3.1.10) – but the average person is a good basis for the assembly. This average goodness is secured by the separation of citizens from the periokoi (free but non-voting farmers and artisans) and the helots (public slaves) and by their common education and upbringing, and their overall similarity.\(^{104}\) (1269a36, 2.9.2; 1271b40, 2.10.5; 1294b22-8, 4.9.7-8) Thus even though powers of the assembly are quite similar in both cases, the multitude of polity is different from that of democracy, and again we see that the quality of the citizens is crucial, rather than the distribution of offices.

Another example of this point is the regime of Solon, which also demonstrates the importance of the courts. Solon is said to have founded a democracy by leaving an oligarchic council and the aristocratic practice of elections for office in place but adding popular courts to these. (1273b33 ff, 2.12.2-3) This regime was originally “finely mixed” but degenerated into a democracy. Although the deliberative functions are typically most important, the regime was altered by granting too much power to the courts. From the *Ath. Pol.* (9) we learn that in Solon’s regime that courts were, in the long term, influential, because there was a right of appeal to the popular body and the laws, being of necessity open to interpretation, were interpreted by the courts in a democratic manner. Once admitted to juries, the poor began pushing for further changes in the other

\(^{104}\) For further detail, see Ober (1998).
branches of government and gradually transformed the regime into a democracy. This history demonstrates the importance of the middle class and the primacy of the economic description of the polis. What is most important, more important than the mix of institutions, is the population of the polis and whether or not any one group will be able to dominate the others.

Each of the various institutional forms of power-sharing that have been discussed is a polity and reasonably so, for neither the rich nor the poor have control of the sovereign offices. In this way, such regimes are neither oligarchies nor democracies. If the rich allow some poor into the assembly, (and the assembly is sovereign) then the sovereign office is in the hands of neither rich nor poor (exclusively), but of both or of neither. ‘Neither’ may be more appropriate as we must not forget the presence of the middle class. The different examples of mixed regimes demonstrate how the mix may lean towards democracy or oligarchy (1293b20, 4.7.5; 1293b34, 4.8.3; 1300a31-b4, 4.15.19-21).

Each of the three groups – (very) rich, middle, and (very) poor can be of a different size and the resulting middle regime will vary in the compromise struck. In both cases, however, there is a sharing and/or a division of powers required in order to satisfy both sides. Since the specific functions of power can

105 1300a31, 4.15.19 may provide another example concerning the distribution of executive offices, but the text is very uncertain. For helpful discussion, see Miller (1995) Sections 5.3-5 and Todd (1941). The first democracy mentioned in 4.4.22-23 (1291b29) might be a (democratic) polity.

106 Miller (1995) writes that there are two forms of polity, an oligarchic form, where “there is a slight tilt in favor of wealth”, a democratic form, where there is a tilt in favor of freedom. (p. 257, section 7.2, cf. 5.2)

107 And perhaps even aristocracy, as at 1300a42, 4.15.20. The idea seems to be that use of election is aristocratic, even if no specific value is accorded to virtue. Miller (1995) includes an ‘aristocratic polity’, where the claim of virtue is recognized in addition to wealth and freedom. This kind of regime would seem instead to be a kind of so-called aristocracy. (p. 165)
be separated and established using one of the three modes for constructing a polity, there are many ways to structure a polity.

To summarize the foregoing Chapter: The middle regime is either a uniform or a mixed regime, generated in both cases by ‘mixing’ democracy and oligarchy. By investigating the middle regime as a mixed regime we were able to see how Aristotle is adding to the discussion of hoplite polity with his discussion of mixed polity in book 4. Just as there is a uniform and mixed middle regime, so there are uniform and mixed polities, and, most importantly, neither uniform nor mixed regimes will work unless there is a politically significant group of moderately wealthy. As either a middle middle or a mixed middle, polity involves more people as citizens than are involved in oligarchy or aristocracy and the sharing of power, along with the concentration of moderately wealthy, ensures that the regime is a just one.

In this way, there is no conflict between two different views of polity. When the middle regime is first described it is described as the regime of the moderately wealthy. Such a description makes it easy to think of the middle regime as akin to polity in the book 3 sense, as the regime where the many rule in the common interest. However, we then saw that the middle regime is typically a mixed regime, and this suggests thinking of the middle class as being of a piece with polity in the book 4 sense, as a mixed regime. There appears to be a conflict between two descriptions of polity, as a mixed regime and as a regime of the hoplite multitude. What we have just seen, however, is that polity as a regime of the many is a mix or a blending of oligarchy and democracy.
The moderately wealthy multitude have certain qualities which speak to their ability to hold office and be citizens and members of the common interest. These are examined in the next Chapter. We will see that a regime is better off without the very rich, because of their arrogance, and also without the very poor, who can be unreasonable, covetous of the goods of others, and, like the rich, in constant search for office which they will abuse.
CHAPTER 4

WEALTH AND VIRTUE

Money is human happiness in the abstract: he, then, who is no longer capable of enjoying human happiness in the concrete devotes his heart entirely to money.
Schopenhauer, *World as Will and Representation* 2.26.320

He who has his thoughts upon taking, never thinks of what he has taken; covetousness has nothing so properly and so much its own as ingratitude.
Montaigne, *Of Coaches*, Essays XVI (III.VI)

1. Introduction

In the previous Chapter we saw that for Aristotle the middle regime and polity are the same. This allows us to add his description of the qualities of the middle class to the citizens of polity. Not only does Aristotle think that moderate wealth is useful for military activity (as we saw in Chapter 2), he also thinks it brings with it several other features – obedience to reason, non-covetousness and a willingness both to rule and be ruled – that are perhaps more germane to political decision-making than military excellence. I begin this Chapter by showing how the three features are related in Aristotle’s mind. I describe what I
think is for Aristotle the underlying problem, namely the pursuit of wealth, and show how it is connected to the failures of generosity and justice, two virtues having to do especially with wealth. The task then is to explain why Aristotle thinks moderate virtue has any relation to moderate wealth. At this point, I turn to Aristotle’s thoughts on how people come to have these (defective) attitudes to wealth due to their upbringing.

While we may be willing to grant that people of moderate virtue have a beneficial effect on the regime, we might be skeptical of the connection between moderate wealth and moderate virtue. R. G. Mulgan writes that there is no reason “to believe that those who hold a moderate amount of wealth will be any more prepared to share their rule with members of a class whose interests are as diametrically opposed to their own as those of the rich are to those of the poor and vice versa.”108 The reason for the middle class’s moderate ambition, Mulgan thinks, is that there is no group to which they are opposed as the poor and the rich are opposed to one another. They are thus likely to treat the poor better than the rich do and the rich better than the poor do. Fred Miller appears to maintain a similar view when he writes that the stability the middle class can bring to a regime is due not to any superior virtue but rather to the “strategic relationships among the classes”, with the middle class serving as a “buffer”.109 Both scholars seem to think that Aristotle is correct in pointing to the moderately wealthy as vitally important, but incorrect in thinking that they play this role because of moderate virtue. They thus are criticizing Aristotle’s position, which is that there

108 Mulgan (1977) p. 109
is a tendency\textsuperscript{110} for those brought up in excess or deficiency of wealth to adopt a
defective attitude towards it which is then carried over into their attitude
towards political justice.

Miller claims that while the middle class face fewer obstacles to the
development of virtue than either the rich or poor, one does not become
moderately virtuous just by being moderately wealthy. Aristotle, Miller writes,
“argues that moral virtue is the result of proper moral habituation rather than of
level of personal wealth” and “recognizes the importance of education even for
the deviant constitutions.”\textsuperscript{111}

It is certainly true that Aristotle values education highly and he
recommends it for deviant regimes as well as correct. In criticizing the proposal
of Phaleas to equalize property, Aristotle writes that it is more important to level
desires. Redistribution of land will not make unjust people just.\textsuperscript{112} However, he
is well aware that education is underutilized. Deviant regimes, he says, should
look to education, but at present they do not do so. The same is true for correct
regimes. The kind of education Aristotle has in mind is a public education,
regulated by the state and not the parents. In the absence of such education the
individual receives a private education; not ‘private’ in the sense of attending a
private school, but rather that the growing citizen is educated by the people

\textsuperscript{110} Aristotle, I think, would be willing to recognize cases of very rich or very poor
individuals who are nonetheless act justly, and would undoubtedly allow that some individuals
who grow up in moderate wealth nonetheless act unjustly. There is more to the development of
virtue than one’s economic conditions.

\textsuperscript{111} Miller (1995) p. 268

\textsuperscript{112} When Aristotle criticizes the proposal to communize land made by Plato in the
Republic he is in not criticizing the idea that land or property will aid in virtue, but the idea that
\textit{holding the land in common} will make people just and friendly.
around him, beginning with his parents and others in the household and later by
the community more broadly.

Thus, what Miller calls an ‘absence of obstacles’ is more important to
Aristotle than it might seem. I agree with Miller that right relationship with
wealth does not by itself produce or cause virtue, but the absence of a negative
relationship is extremely important, as the individual is receiving a private
upbringing which transmits the values of the parents and the broader society to
the child. Aristotle’s claim, then, is one gets one’s attitude towards wealth from
one’s parents and that one’s attitude towards wealth has a political impact. In the
absence of a public education, one’s attitude towards wealth is the next most
important feature of one’s upbringing. This is what Aristotle means, when he
introduces his discussion of the middle regime, by saying that we must judge
“with a view neither to virtue of the sort that is beyond private persons, nor to
education.” (1295a26, 4.11.1)

In this way I think it is not surprising that when Aristotle turns to the
ideal constitution (in books 7 and 8) education comes to the fore, but elsewhere,
and especially throughout the ‘practical’ books of Politics (4-6), he works with the
factor of wealth rather than education. When talking about average citizens,
those without any specific education in virtue, there are two important factors:
wealth, (considered in this Chapter), and occupation, (considered in the next).

Mulgan and Miller might agree that a middle class person is taught
certain values at home, but deny that these values make him virtuous. They seem
to suggest (and even if they in particular do not, someone might object) that the
middle class is not morally superior, but that it is a self-interested group like the
rich and poor are. Miller’s claim that the stability of the middle regimes can be
explained by strategic considerations alone suggests that the middle class can be just like the rich and poor as far as virtue goes. Mulgan takes the middle class to have interests opposed to rich and poor. Thus any cooperation between them would simply be a union of convenience and not motivated by justice. The middle class, this objection goes, have certain interests and realize that in order to achieve them most effectively requires compromise.

From my analysis of how the middle class has its political effect (in the previous Chapter), it is clear that I think there is more, for Aristotle, to the role of the middle class than strategic position. If, as on the view of Mulgan and Miller, the middle class is just as self-interested as the rich and the poor, then the middle regime is a correct regime comprised of ‘deviant’ interest groups and the regime is only correct because the opposed forces within it each participate in power. But this means that where the middle is singly dominant – hoplite polity or the middle middle - the regime is a deviant regime. Further, to insist that the middle class is morally equal to the very rich and very poor is to claim that the hoplite class, which is moderately wealthy, is not, even partially, a virtuous group, and the regime again is not a correct one.

In what follows, the transformation of what might merely be called ‘the values of the middle class’ into moderate virtue occurs via the claim that the moderately wealthy do not pursue wealth as the good. As a result of their upbringing, the moderately wealthy do not pursue wealth as the good. If we like, we can call the aim of the middle class its ‘interest’ and even its ‘self-interest’, but this is not the operative sense of ‘interest’. Not pursuing wealth as an end means that the middle class are morally superior to those who have an extreme relationship with wealth, at least in this one, very important, respect. Rich and
poor people lack the virtues of generosity and justice, while moderately wealthy people have them, or, at least, act in accordance with them. When political conditions are right, they can prevent either of the dominant groups from taking power.

2. Character of the Moderately Wealthy

With the identification of the middle regime and polity, and the identification of hoplite class with the middle class on the spectrum of wealth, we can now turn in detail to the character of the moderately wealthy. In the discussion of the middle regime, Aristotle writes:

Since, however, it is agreed that what is moderate and middling is best, it is evident that in the case of the goods of fortune as well a middling possession is the best of all. For it is readiest to obey reason, while for one who is overly handsome, overly strong, overly well born, or overly wealthy—or the reverse of these things, overly indigent, overly weak, or very lacking in honor—it is difficult to follow reason. The former sort tend to become arrogant and base on a grand scale, the latter malicious and base in petty ways; and acts of injustice are committed either through arrogance or through malice. Moreover, these are least inclined either to avoid ruling or to wish to rule, both of which things are injurious to cities. In addition, those who are preeminent in the goods of fortune—strength, wealth, friends, and the other things of this sort—neither wish to be ruled nor know how to be. This is something that marks them from the time they are children at home, for the effect of living in luxury is that they do not become habituated to being ruled even at school; but those who are excessively needy with respect to these things are too humble. So the ones do not know how to rule but only how to be ruled, and then only in the fashion of rule of a master, and the others do not know how to be ruled by any sort of rule, but only how to rule in the fashion of rule of a master. What comes into being, then, is a city not of free persons but of slaves and masters, the one consumed by envy, the others by contempt. ... Also, of citizens in cities these most particularly preserve themselves. For neither do they desire the things of others, as the poor do, nor others their [property], as the poor desire that of the wealthy; and as a result of
not being plotted against or plotting against others, they pass their
time free from danger. On this account, the prayer of Phocylides
was a fine one: “Many things are best for the middling; I would be
of the middling sort in the city.” (1295b4-23, 28-34, 4.11.4-7, 8-9)

There is much of interest here. In these paragraphs Aristotle claims that excessive
wealth or poverty tends to breed arrogance and malice respectively, both of
which cause injustice, and on both the personal and the political level.
Moderation in wealth, on the other hand, is linked to reasonableness, justice, and
the ability to obey reason.

Let us begin by looking at willingness to both rule and be ruled, as it is the
obviously political effect of moderate wealth. It can be connected to covetousness
and obedience to reason, I believe, via some comments Aristotle makes
elsewhere in the *Politics*. Writing about the difference between correct and
incorrect regimes, Aristotle writes that where ‘previously’ people naturally took
turns in office, they ‘now’ wish to hold it continually. (1279a10, 3.6.3) Those who
want to hold office continuously are in pursuit of wealth and honor for
themselves, and it is in this way that the distinction between correct and
incorrect can be made along the lines of ‘rulers ruling in the common interest’
and ‘rulers ruling in their self-interest.’

Where before there was nothing to be gained from holding-office, ‘now’
there is profit to be made. It is difficult to know to what Aristotle is referring
when he says ‘previously’ and ‘now’. He explicitly mentions access to public
funds. (a13) Presumably then, there was a time in the past when either there
were not public funds or they were not accessible to those in office. The two may
be conjoined by the advent of currency. Prior to the invention of money, we
might suppose, the wealth of the community was privately held in the land and
material goods of individuals. In a time of war, citizens could be expected to
produce their own armor, and in peacetime to support themselves while sitting on a jury or attending the assembly or executing some office. With money, however, individual wealth can be moved, (perhaps in advance, that is, not in response to particular emergencies), from private possession to public stores where it is under the control of, and accessible to, various officials. Perhaps, then, Aristotle is saying only that it is easier for the unjust impulses of people to manifest themselves, rather than that people ‘previously’ would not have taken from the common purse. On the other hand, he also seems to suggest that holding office was previously detrimental to one’s purse and that those who held offices worked for the good of others.

A similar train of argument is found in the discussion of kingship. Aristotle writes that “when it happened that many arose who were similar with respect to virtue, they no longer tolerated [kingship] but sought something common and established a polity. As they became worse and did business at the expense of the common [funds,] it was reasonable that oligarchies should arise as a result, for they made wealth a thing of honor.”

Those in power pursue wealth for themselves. The democrats in their pursuit of freedom want to share individually in the wealth of the polis, which under an existing oligarchic regime is in the possession of the oligarchs. The oligarchs similarly wish for the polis to acquire wealth, and they take themselves

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113 Further effects of the advent of currency are considered at the end of section 3, below.

114 One remarkable thing about both passages is that not only is wealth dangerous to virtue, but ruling is dangerous to virtue, since it puts one in charge of, or at least gives one access to, the common funds. Hence Aristotle’s insistence (5.8-9) that for treasurer a polis needs someone especially virtuous, that transfer of funds should take place in public, and, in general that “a very great thing in every regime is to have the laws and management of the rest arranged in such a way that it is impossible to profit from the offices.” (1308b32, 5.8.13; cf. Von Leyden (1985) p. 53)
particularly to be the polis; thus their wish for wealth, for themselves, comes at
the expense of others. As we saw in Chapter 2, the aim of the polis is virtue
equipped with wealth. Pursuit of wealth thus is not only a distortion of the
polis’s proper goal but is incompatible with virtue and with acting in the
common interest.

People in general “are bad judges concerning their own things” (1280a14,
3.9.2). Some people know this and manage to counter-act it. For example “sick
doctors bring in other doctors for themselves when they are sick, and trainers
other trainers when they are exercising, the assumption being that they are
unable to judge what is true on account of judging both in their own case and
while they are in a state of suffering.” (1287a40, 3.16.8) But its seems that in
politics many people do not realize that they are ‘in a state of suffering’, that is,
they do not realize that the temptations of office can have a corrosive effect. As
we saw in Chapter 2, the rich and poor think that they have grasped the whole of
justice and so are blind to their own malfeasance.

I bring forward these passages on the reasons people pursue public office
in order to link the political willingness of the middle class to rule and be ruled
to the other features of the middle mentioned by Aristotle in the long quote,
above, namely arrogance or malice, and coveting the goods of others. Public
office gives one the opportunity to profit from others by means of one’s public
office, rather than by private theft. This opportunity is embraced by the poor and
the rich, but not, Aristotle thinks, by the moderately wealthy. The desire to take
only their turn in office indicates that the middle class are not possessed by the
same greed which afflicts others. They are not obsessed by wealth like the very
rich or very poor and so do not seek office to aggrandize themselves at the expense of either the rich or the poor.

The political life of the middle class is not defined by wealth and its acquisition. They recognize that the injustice that each of the two groups attempt to carry out against the other and, as we described in the previous Chapter, use their clout in order to prevent an oligarchy or a democracy. The middle class is willing to join with either of the other groups to prevent injustice. The rich and poor, on the other hand, will never join together; they are naturally enemies and do not care if one is being treated unjustly. The middle class have a different aim for the polis, one which prohibits the kind of treatment that the rich and poor would like to give each other.

Thus even if the middle class, as someone might say, is out for its own interest, this ‘self-interest’ is not the same as that of the rich and the poor. Aristotle does not think that the goal of the middle class is to abuse either the rich or poor, either by itself or with one of these groups against the other. Rather, it realizes that, to carry out its vision for the polis, both rich and poor must refrain from abusing one another, and acts as a negotiator between the two.

By noting the purpose of those who try to stay in power continuously the willingness of the middle class to rule and be ruled is linked to the other qualities, most obviously to non-covetousness, but also to obedience to rule. With respect to the non-covetousness, the middle class are sufficiently well off that they do not covet the goods of others, (and nor do people envy their wealth, since there are more conspicuous examples of wealth as targets.) The fact that they are not exceedingly wealthy or poor also allows them to obey reason. We are reminded here of the division of rational soul, in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, into
a part that has reason in itself, and a part which obeys the rule of reason “as one would listen to a father.” (1103a3, 1.13; 1098a3, 1.7) Just as a child will have trouble obeying the reason of his father if he is headstrong, so within the individual, the emotions must be willing to obey reason. At the political level, those who are hyper-beautiful or hyper-strong or hyper-wealthy, Aristotle says, become arrogant, while those who are extremely deficient become malicious. Aristotle seems to be advertsing, again, to the desire of both the rich and poor to dominate the other. Those who are unequal by exceeding others think themselves incomparable in every respect to others. Those who are grossly deficient desire to be equal in every respect with others. Neither is thus willing to listen to reason or justice and each fails to recognize the need for contributions (perhaps of different kinds) from others in a common endeavor. Both those of great wealth and those of exceeding poverty try to seize power and use it to benefit themselves. This desire is contrary to reason, which (attempts to) directs us to decide on actions that are just and virtuous, that is, in the common interest. Aristotle’s idea is that some part of the soul has outgrown its proper bounds, fed by the surrounding circumstances.

I think that, for Aristotle, the pursuit of wealth is at the basis of all of these remarks. The pursuit of wealth, which we now briefly examine, is linked with the pursuit of the wealth of others, which in turn is linked to the pursuit of wealth in political life. Their ‘failure’ to pursue office continuously is a reflection of the satisfaction of the middle class with their wealth in general, outside the (narrowly) political domain as well as within it.115

115 In their willingness both to rule and be ruled the middle class has the natural Hellenic character. Greeks are alone said to have both independence and intelligence. (1327b27, 7.7) The northern races have only spirit, eastern races have only wisdom. This combination of attributes
3. Wealth as the Goal of Life

Wealth, as we saw in Chapter 2, is a necessary condition for virtuous activity. It is not the proper aim of the polis or of the individual, though it must be provided for.

A main debate in the literature regarding Aristotle’s view of eudaimonia (or: flourishing, happiness) concerns whether happiness is to be identified ‘exclusively’ with the exercise of a single intellectual excellence, theoretical wisdom, or ‘inclusively’ with the activity of all of the virtues. For my part, I think we should say only that eudaimonia is rational or virtuous activity and then note that this means different things for different entities. God engages in only one rational activity while human beings demonstrate rationality in many ways, not all of equal quality. What is more, for human beings what it is to be rational changes at different stages of one’s life. In Politics 7.9 Aristotle explains how ‘time’ solves the political problem of allocating offices in the best regime. The young should perform military activity, because their physical nature is at its peak, (though their young education includes music, drawing, etc.), and when this has passed, become citizens in the full sense of deliberating over civic matters in the assembly and on juries. When older still, the citizens retire into priesthood supported by the polis, which is, one might conjecture, Aristotelian-speak for ‘political philosopher’. In short, Aristotle is more than aware that the human intellect develops throughout life and suggests that the better exercises of rationality come later in life. So while there will often be a need to exercise the makes Greeks capable of both ruling and being ruled.
ethical virtues and practical wisdom, we should try to maximize the better rational activities.

On both inclusive and exclusive interpretations, at any rate, the activity of virtue is given pride of place. For our purposes this is as detailed as we need be. We shall be focusing here on that part of Aristotle’s philosophy of living well which concerns the role of material goods in the happy life, without advancing to the further issue of the relation between contemplation (the best rational activity) and the activity of the other virtues. Regardless of what we say about the tension between contemplation and other virtues, every theory of Aristotelian happiness makes the activity of the virtues central. I take the remarks in the remainder of this section to be uncontroversial.

Wealth is not sufficient for happiness (nor indeed are all of the external goods combined.) Pursuing wealth as the good ignores the greater good of political action and scientific thought. A person who happens to lack no external good is not thereby happy if he lacks the best goods, namely the correct activity of the rational faculties. Wealth is an external good. It is chosen both for its own sake and for the sake of other things. It is chosen for the sake of the excellent actions of generosity and magnificence (to which we shall turn in a moment) which are impossible without money or property. It is also necessary, at the political level, for public works, such as choruses and triremes. It stands in general for the freedom from labor and the satisfaction of the appetites and preservation of the body and household which is necessary for political participation (and also contemplative activity). All of these activities are impossible without wealth. The former examples – generosity and liturgies –
demonstrate wealth in use as an instrument employed in virtuous action,\textsuperscript{116} while the latter – freedom – attributes to wealth the role of pre-condition.

Wealth fails the formal criteria placed on \textit{eudaimonia} in \textit{NE} 1.5 and elsewhere. We have just noted that it is not the most complete or final good, for it is chosen for the sake of other goods, whereas \textit{eudaimonia} is chosen always for its own sake alone. (\textit{NE} 1097a24 ff) Being chosen for the sake of other goods also indicates that wealth is not self-sufficient. (b7 ff) Further, wealth is subject to fortune. In 1.5 Aristotle criticizes the idea that honor is the good by saying that honor is given to us by others, “whereas we intuitively believe that the good something of our own and hard to take from us.” (\textit{NE} 1095b26, 1.5) A similar criticism might be lodged against wealth as the good. While it’s true that we are dependent on external goods such as wealth - anyone who claims that a virtuous person lives well even on the rack is talking nonsense – wealth is subject to fortune in a way that virtuous action is not. Further, wealth is not a activity, whereas happiness is living well, not just the possession of some thing or personal quality. (\textit{NE} 1095b32, 1.5; 1098b13-22, 1.8; 1098b34)

The acquisition of property, and our enjoyment and proper use of it, is only one of the tasks of living well. The ultimate goals of life – practical activity and leisure activities such as cultural pursuits and scientific inquiry – determine our material needs and we should organize our acquisitions accordingly. At a certain point, our pursuit of material goods is useless in terms of leisure and in fact consumes some or all of the leisure time that could be spent on more worthwhile activities. Wealth, though naturally a good, is not at all the greatest

\textsuperscript{116} Or, as Tuozzo (1995) puts it, an ontological constituent of the action. (p. 303)
good. A natural limit is placed on wealth by its position as an aid to other, better, activities. Virtue determines how much wealth is required, not the other way around: the pursuit of wealth does not determine how many or what quality of actions we take. It is a mistake to think that wealth is the proper goal of life. There are such people who pursue money or wealth as though it were the greatest thing in life, and there are states where such people have power and direct the energies of the polis towards this end. Those who pursue wealth beyond the limit set by the better activities do so at the expense of those other, better, goods.

A central feature of both groups – the very rich and the very poor – is that they fail to recognize that wealth is not the best goal, either for the individual or for the polis. This mis-valuation of wealth is aided by currency. Aristotle describes the advent of money in book 1 of the *Politics*, as part of his discussion of household management. People pursue money because it is a place-holder for the goods that can be bought with it, either now or in the future. But while the acquisition of goods has a natural limit, (perhaps a very high one depending on one’s tastes and ability to indulge them) the acquisition of money has no limit. Money is the goal of the art of money-making, and this art pursues money as its good, without limit. Money-makers come to pursue money beyond what is necessary and what is natural.

The material needs for life are provided for mankind by nature – crop, grazing animals, hunted animals, fish, other humans. These goods are perishable and it does not benefit one to have more than one can use. Even when they can be stored acquisition is constrained, Booth says, by the aim of the household –
goods must be useful for needs and by the storage capacity of the house.\textsuperscript{117} Money overcomes both of these natural preventatives to acquisition. It detaches the limited, specific need attached to items and solves the storage problem. Money does not necessarily serve unlimited desire.\textsuperscript{118} There are two uses for each product: one its actual use, second, to be exchanged. It is only when the exchange is not for needed goods that it, and the money which facilitates the exchange, is problematic.\textsuperscript{119}

4. \textit{Generosity and Justice}

The aims of life being other than the accumulation of external goods, those who pursue wealth as their goal do not have the virtues involving wealth and thereby commit injustices. Injustice in two senses is committed. As was mentioned in Chapter 2, Aristotle distinguishes between general and specific justice. Justice and injustice in the specific sense, to which we shall return in a moment, concern the taking and possessing of the goods of fortune – also called external goods – simply in order to be better off than others and regardless of what use they might subsequently be put to.

Justice in the general sense is the ‘political’ aspect of all of our actions, the effect we have on others. We not be intend to do injustice to others but nonetheless our actions have that effect, and they end up with less than is their rightful share. If we are too afraid, we might leave others in the lurch. If we are

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{117} Booth (1981) p. 221, 3
\item \textsuperscript{118} Brown (1982) p. 185
\item \textsuperscript{119} Ibid., p. 183
\end{itemize}
profligate, we might steal from others. If we are overly ambitious we might deprive others of honor. Justice is a part of other virtues insofar as they involve the taking of wealth, honor or security from another and possessing it for oneself in order then to use or enjoy it in some way.

Of particular interest to us in this regard (justice in the general sense) is the virtue concerned with the giving (which includes spending) and getting (which includes taking and receiving) of wealth, generosity (*eleutheriotês*), along with its grander form, magnificence. The generous person gives in the right amount and for the right purpose, and so on, in accordance with the doctrine of the mean. Indulging oneself, for example, is not a generous act, and tyrants who spend beyond their means are not generous. At the other extreme, it is possible to be too giving, for while “our living depends on our property” (*NE* 1120a1, 4.1) “it is proper to a generous person not to look out for himself.” (*NE* 1120b6, 4.1 cf. 1136b20, 5.9) The generous and the magnificent look to the good they can do for others while at the same time being mindful that property is required for their own good life.

Of the ungenerous, conversely, selfishness is prominent and the selfish person looks to his own interests, thinking that the possession of material goods is a greater good than the virtuous act of giving it away. Stinginess – a failure to give and a tendency to take and keep – is more common among humans than its opposite: people are more likely to love their goods excessively than not enough.

120 Young (1994) describes various other ways in which the two differ from one another. (p. 314 ff.)

121 For the doctrine of the mean see *NE* 2.6-8.

122 At 1265a30 Aristotle writes that there are two desirable qualities relating to wealth, that it be used temperately (*sôphronôs*) and liberally (*eletheriôs*).
Generosity is especially about the giving of wealth, but in order to give wealth one must acquire it previously. Thus the getting of wealth is a necessary condition for the giving part of generosity. (NE 1120b1, 4.1) When the defective giver feels compelled to *take* in order to give to others, he causes harm to others by taking their property. Here especially failures of generosity can cause us to act unjustly. A person might do something shameful in order to profit. In the discussion of generosity, Aristotle gives as examples owning a brothel and loan-sharking. (NE 1121b35, 4.1) These, with the possible exception of the usurer, are not activities that at first appear unjust, only shameful. Aristotle’s idea, however, is that such people, because of their desire for more, take more than they ought from these activities. The usurer lends at high rates; the pimp takes an exorbitant cut. These unjust activities fall within the general schema of justice and injustice, involving the distribution of goods among different people. At the heart of justice and injustice is a decision about who deserves what, which people in the grip of some vice fail to reflect upon.

We turn now to specific justice. Whether or not justice or injustice is a distinct motivation in the human psyche is a difficult question. According to David K. O’Connor,\footnote{O’Connor (1991)} there is no specific injustice but only the consequence of bad behavior of some specific kind. Injustice is always the symptomological perspective on an unvirtuous action of a particular kind. Those who take excessively *act* unjustly, whether it is in order to hoard it or to give it away, but while they bring about injustice, they themselves *are* not unjust, for there is no such distinct motivation. In general, the idea is that injustice is simply a matter of

\footnote{O’Connor (1991)}
when some (apparent) good is sought to such an extent that others are harmed. There is never a case of vicious action caused by unjust intent and so all injustice falls under general injustice. In talking about particular justice and injustice, Aristotle is simply focusing on particular goods. In short, every time a person acts unjustly it is to gain more of a certain good for a certain purpose, and this purpose is the motive of the action and reveals the character of the man.

It is certainly true that where a subsequent motive is mentioned, we are able to say that the person is not unjust but that the action was unjust. The prodigal person gives without regard for the source (NE 1121b2, 4.1) and may in addition commit shameful acts in acquiring the goods that he needs in order to give to others, since his desire to spend wealth exceeds his capacity to receive or acquire it. If he cannot acquire it in legitimate ways, he will be tempted to acquire it by means of shameful acts. However, even if the extravagant person steals he is not unjust, though his action is unjust. If the shameful act is theft, we may think that we have crossed over into injustice from prodigality. But although the distribution that results from such an action is an unjust one, we would not say, speaking strictly, that the action was an unjust one, and certainly not that it was motivated by a (vicious) desire for gain and from an unjust character but rather from a extravagant person’s desire and character. Thus we can distinguish the unjust person from the unjust act and the unjust distributions.

Aristotle provides the example of two adulterers, one who acts in order to profit and another who does so out of desire. The latter is intemperate; he acts

\[\text{\footnotesize \{124\} Aristotle lists theft, adultery, poisoning, enticement of slaves, assassination, bearing false witness, assault, imprisonment, murder, violent robbery, defamation and character-smearing (NE 1131a6, 5.2). And these are merely the private injustices.}\]
out of an uncontrolled desire for pleasure. The former, Aristotle says, is unjust. Similarly with two thieves. In stealing from another an injustice is committed, but this is only one element of what happens. When we learn that the purpose of the theft was to give to another, we say that the person is wasteful (overly generous) rather than unjust. Thus, only when the inappropriate taking is for the sake of gain to oneself and not also for some further end that a person is unjust. Whether or not a person is unjust as opposed to having some other vice depends on his motivation.125

However, I believe that even if the desire for more is a desire for more of a particular good, for Aristotle, one’s just or unjust actions can be the result of an aspect of character distinct from all the others. Aristotle says we blame people who gain more for a baseness that we call injustice. (NE 1130a19, 5.2)

Choice is the end result of deliberation (NE 1112b15, 3.3) which concerns the means we must take in order to achieve some end. Only when the agent acts unjustly as the result of a choice is the person unjust. (NE 1135b19, 36a1, 5.8) Those who are weak of will do not choose (NE 1111b13, 3.2) for despite whatever deliberations they may go through indicating the contrary course of action, they are ultimately overcome by desire. (See also Aristotle’s account of *akrasia* in NE 7.3) Someone who chooses, on the other hand, deliberates on a plan to acquire some good by theft and chooses his decision and acts on it. Such a person is ignorant of the wrongness of theft, but this is not exculpatory ignorance, rather it indicates wickedness. (NE 1110b27, 3.1) Deciding to act on a pattern of practical

125 According to O’Connor, both the person who takes inappropriately in order to give and the person who takes inappropriately in order to keep for himself are unjust. For Aristotle, however, only the latter is unjust because the motivation is gain.
reason that results in the unfair distribution of goods indicates viciousness of character, in particular, an unjust character.

The greedy spendthrift does not intend to deprive another of his property. He intends only to have enough wealth to give to others. The injustice caused is accidental to this intent. At the trial, the victim of course will say that he has been the victim of an injustice, and rightly so. However, the criminal might elicit the pity of the jury by describing his overwhelming desire to give or spend the property. What does the adulterer who acts not out of lust but in order to gain want to do with his gain? We are not told. It is not likely that he doesn’t want to do anything with it at some time in the future, but whatever further use he makes of it is not included in the focus on injustice. Indeed, his adulterous action is said to be for the sake of profit. What is clear, then, is that at the time of his adulterous action, he intends to extort money from another by means of adultery. This is true of the wasteful person too, but his intent overleaps the injustice and sees only the possibility of giving to others. However, although the object – money, let us imagine – is the same in both cases, Aristotle thus thinks it is possible for someone to form an intention and make a choice to act directed at profit itself, without knowing what they will do with what they gain. (If a wasteful person foresaw the injustice he would cause and chose to act in any case, he would be unjust in addition to wasteful.)

Thus, I claim, that for Aristotle there are two causes of unjust actions. We can act unjustly and cause unjust distributions as a result of the other vices. We also act unjustly because we are unjust, that is, when we desire to have more and take it from others.\textsuperscript{126}

\textsuperscript{126} The desire for more can manifest itself in many innocuous forms. One may work extra
Justice and injustice concern the distribution of goods among a plurality of individuals. Justice and injustice specifically are concerned with the goods of fortune (or: external goods), three of which are security, wealth and honor, (though security is often omitted.) The goods of fortune being external goods, they might have gone to someone else rather than to oneself. Thus they are, at least, potentially the object of competition. Thus far we have focused on wealth, but injustice can also be caused by those whose quest for honor leads them to seek it at the expense of others. Friends are also external goods, but Aristotle does not mention them as a locus for injustice. Presumably this is because a friend is not the kind of thing one can gain at the expense of another. Or at least, whether stealing a friend is not often attempted and not always successful when attempted. Aristotle confirms, in book 5 the Politics, which concerns civil unrest, that wealth and honor are the most common sources of conflict.

In the political context, particular justice and injustice comes to the fore. As a ruler, one must consider the competing merits of many different people with many different aims and decide how each is to be treated with respect to the goods of security, wealth and honor, regardless of how these will be used. The temptation is to favor oneself inappropriately. Aristotle writes: “One species [of partial justice] ... is found in the distribution of honors or wealth or anything else that can be divided among members of a community who share in a political system; for here it is possible for one member to have a share equal or unequal to another’s.” (NE 1130b30, 5.5) Here, precisely the question at hand is who should have how much of a certain good, and the just ruler gives to each according to hours in order to gain more property. A person who always pursues external goods in this and similar ways is just.
his merits.

The rich and poor, those who have an extreme relationship with wealth, are liable to commit injustices and be unjust. This is because they have wealth as an aim and not virtue. The rich and poor claim not to be doing an injustice – they are merely distributing power in accordance with justice as they (respectively) see it. For Aristotle, however, having the wrong goal in life means that each group will act unjustly.

5. Moderate Wealth and The Pursuit of Wealth

Our question now is the connection, if any, between having extreme wealth and pursuing wealth (and so being unjust) and between moderate wealth and justice. Can we say, plausibly, that the moderately wealthy, by comparison with the rich and poor, aim at (moderate) virtue and so, in the debate over the distribution of power and the subsequent administration of powers, act justly? Aristotle says, as we have seen, that the moderately wealthy are able to obey reason, that they do not covet the goods of others and that they are willing to rule and to be ruled. Why should the moderately wealthy be any better off, in terms of excellence, than the rich or the poor? Here we look to other elements in the long quotation given at the beginning of the Chapter.

For Aristotle, the process begins in childhood. I quote again the middle third of the long quotation from the beginning of the Chapter:

In addition, those who are preeminent in the goods of fortune—strength, wealth, friends, and the other things of this sort—neither wish to be ruled nor know how to be. This is something that marks them from the time they are children at home, for the effect of living in luxury is that they do not become habituated to being ruled even at school; but those who are excessively needy with respect to these things are too humble. So
the ones do not know how to rule but only how to be ruled, and then only in the fashion of rule of a master, and the others do not know how to be ruled by any sort of rule, but only how to rule in the fashion of rule of a master. What comes into being, then, is a city not of free persons but of slaves and masters, the one consumed by envy, the others by contempt. (1295b13-23, 4.11.6-7)

Aristotle’s inclusion of the poor is confusing, particularly with respect to political participation. For who are these ‘humble’ types but those who insist on participation in extreme democracy? In the discussion of regimes (3.6-9) both the rich and the poor alike attempt to secure wealth at the expense of the other, both wishing to take political power for themselves. Moreover, the very poor are those who, just a few lines before, were said to be willing to commit injustices to benefit themselves. There is a prima facie tension between saying that the very poor are humble (b18) and that they are malicious (as at b11).

Perhaps Aristotle means to be talking only about the poor who do not make a political contribution. A reason for the inclusion of the very poor in (extreme) democracy is that there is pay for military duty. The poor make a claim for citizenship on the basis of this activity. Without this activity, however, (and without the financial support that they receive for it – it is not a contribution made solely by themselves) the poor would not involve themselves in politics. The means of their political involvement being absent, the very poor would have to concern themselves with satisfying their basic needs in some other fashion.

Further, Aristotle seems to be thinking that the poor commit their injustices in an underhanded fashion, and not flagrantly, as is the case with the very rich. Though when many of the population is poor, the problem rears its head openly and politically. The gain of the unjust acts is slight. Because of their dire situation, the impoverished try to gain even a little to improve their
situation. The acts of injustice that the poor commit are said to be petty,\textsuperscript{127} (b10) since their appetites or tastes are meager in comparison with the extravagance of the very rich. Even when they join together, the dividend to each individual from redistributing wealth of the rich is small. When not oppressed by their poverty, the poor are content to stay out of politics and are content to be ruled. In this way, what appear to be immediately contradictory views can be made consistent.

We turn now to the relationship between wealth and the pursuit of wealth and injustice. By returning to the childhood of the individual, Aristotle takes a similar approach to Plato when he charts the degeneration of regimes and of character in books 8 and 9 of the \textit{Republic}. The effects of one’s circumstances on character are not be fully revealed until the next generation. Aristotle in book 2 criticizes Phaleas’ proposal to re-distribute land by saying that desires should be leveled, but, here, Aristotle himself seems to allow that desires are a function of one’s long-term relationship with wealth. Thus there would seem to be some merit to Phaleas’ proposal at least for the children of the citizens.

There are two interesting lines of development. One is the desires one has, while another is one’s relationship to others. We will begin with the second. Aristotle thinks that the children of the very wealthy are spoiled at home, so much so that by the time they go to school they are already unwilling to be ‘ruled’ by their instructors. (1295b16, 4.11.6) When young, the wealthy are not used to going without and so, as adults assume that their desires ought to satisfied even as they grow older. Since their desires have been continually and unquestioningly satisfied, the rich come to think that their desires must be

\textsuperscript{127} Aristotle also says that they are due to envy. (b22)
satisfied and they are never wrong in wanting some thing. Such a person cannot be reasoned with, as he thinks his desire is correct. Such a person is too proud to be ruled because he has ruled all his life. The tyrant, Jason, for example, is said to be unable to live as a private citizen. (1277a24, 3.4.9) In political life, the rich person thinks nothing of pursuing office continuously in order to satisfy those continuous desires by the most hubristic form of theft – luxurious living at the expense of the public purse. The arrogance of the very wealthy takes the grand form (‘major vice’) of exploiting public funds for private gain.

By contrast, the very poor lack material goods to an extreme degree. They (presumably beginning from childhood) are used to not getting what they want, and if the analogy with the rich holds, become used to being in a position of need. Although their desire for material goods presumably continues unabated, they become used to being in an inferior position relative to others who possess the goods they lack and do not know how to be equals with others, in the opposite sense from the rich who act as masters over others. The very poor are in a way like the rich in being continually desirous of goods, but they are opposite from the rich in that they learn that simply demanding them from others will not produce them and so their abuse of others in the pursuit of goods is smaller and less hubristic. This inferiority then carries over into political life, and when the city has a large number of very rich and very poor there are two classes, the poor envious of the rich and the rich contemptuous of the poor, (b23) willing to do injustice to the other.

The middle class are in an intermediate position with respect political attitudes. In political life, the mean between being arrogant on the one hand and humble on the other is a proper relation to other people: I suggest that the ‘mean’
of neither ruling like a master nor being ruled like a slave is being an equal and appropriately ruling and being ruled. This conjecture is confirmed by Aristotle’s statement here that the polis wishes to be comprised of equals. (b24) The mean is not a mix, of being sometimes domineering and sometimes servile, but rather of treating others as equals and being so treated by them, even though, at one time, one may be power and, at other times, others. One might object that since the desires of *children* are always satisfied by others, so moderate wealth does not lead to an attitude towards others of equality with others. Aristotle seems to be thinking that even at an early age, children not only observe their parents but are treated by them in a way which indicates to the child that goods are to be provided by one’s self-sufficiency.

Let us turn now to desire. It is worth noting that in addition to taking themselves to be of importance, the very wealthy are used from childhood to demanding *material goods* and getting them. As adults, their desires continue to be for material goods, and when in office it is these that abuse their power to get. Recall from above that people pursue office continually, Aristotle says, in order to take advantage of the profit that can be gained from it. Thus the pursuit of wealth, rather than the desire for honor, is the corrupting factor in regimes.\(^{128}\) It seems as though the early satisfaction of their material desires has meant that the desires of the very wealthy have not progressed beyond the desire for material goods. In the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle writes that “the wealthy are insolent and arrogant, being mentally affected by the acquisition of wealth, for they seem to

\[^{128}\text{At NE 1.5 Aristotle writes that “men seem to pursue honor to assure themselves of their own worth; at any rate, they seek to be honored by sensible men and by those who know them, and they want to be honored on the basis of their virtue.” (1095b27)\]
think that they possess all good things; for wealth is a kind of standard of value of everything else, so that everything seems purchasable by it.” (Rh. 1390b39, 2.16.1-2\(^{129}\)) Although their relationship to wealth is different, the poor are slavish in the sense, as with the rich, of being slaves to material goods, as well as in the sense of only being able to relate to others in an excessively humble fashion.

Both the very rich and the very poor take wealth rather than virtue as a goal and so will tend to stinginess with their own property and injustice when it comes to common property or property held by others, as both of these vices maximize one’s wealth. Both the rich and the poor are tempted to injustice. Aristotle says (at 1293b38, 4.8.4) that some people “think the well-off to have that for the sake of which the unjust commit injustices: from which they apply both the names ‘gentlemen’ and ‘notables’ to these [the rich]” but Aristotle clearly thinks that the continued pursuit of wealth is a problem that can afflict the rich as well as the poor, though the very poor have no choice but to pursue necessities while the rich pursue luxuries. Once one has become accustomed to a lifestyle of wealth or poverty, such habituation has lasting effects on one’s character.

If we take the middle class to be a mean of the rich and poor then Aristotle seems to have in mind that the wealth of the moderately wealthy will perhaps be sufficient for moderate desires but not for unlimited or extravagant requests. The moderately wealthy cannot indulge every desire, but nor are they so badly off that they must look for help from others in living a decent life. As Aristotle (citing Plato) remarks in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, it is important that we are brought up from infancy to associate pain and pleasure with the correct things,

\(^{129}\) This translation is by Freese (1926). The poor, at the end of chapter 17, are said to be opposite in character. 2.15 concerns the well-born; 16 the wealthy and 17 the powerful.
otherwise we will find ourselves conflicted when reason demands otherwise. (NE 1104b11, 1105a1, 2.3)

For the moderately wealthy only the desires necessary for living well are satisfied, and without unlimited wealth it will be impossible for extravagant desires to be satisfied. Whether or not this moderate desire itself encourages a reflectiveness about wealth and a turning towards virtue and wisdom, is difficult to say. It is here that education would enter the picture, perfecting what upbringing has prepared. A critic such as Miller will suggest that moderate wealth can only do so much in the production of virtue, and its effect is more like clearing the way and avoiding the pitfalls of wealth than any positive effect. The moderately wealthy avoid the problems of those who grow up with an unhealthy relationship to wealth. It is important, Aristotle thinks, that one have sufficient material goods to perform virtuous actions but not so many that the pleasures afforded by those material goods becomes ends in themselves.

Something else besides moderate wealth is needed if justice of the moderately wealthy (or indeed of anyone) is to be ensured. Ideally, an education in virtue does this work. But Aristotle is explicitly dealing with the kind of person who has no special education or virtue and thinks that the limits placed upon a person by their wealth is the next most important factor in determining their character. Moreover, if we assume, as I argued in the beginning of this Chapter, that in place of any specific education Aristotle is assuming (when discussing non-ideal constitutions) the kind of uncoordinated yet powerful civic ‘education’ typical to Greek polises, then the effects of moderate wealth are combined with a certain culture of independence and equality to which it naturally gives rise.
The justice of the moderately wealthy is not firmly engrained in their character by an education specifically aimed at virtuous action. Rather, they are molded by the circumstances of their upbringing, their occupation, (which is investigated in the next Chapter), and the culture around them, backed up by the law and the fear of punishment. At the end of the *NE* (1179b10, 10.9) Aristotle notes that most people are moved by a sense of fear rather than of shame, but the ‘education’ of the uneducated cannot consist merely in fearing the law, for the semi-virtuous multitude is not the bad sort that can be moved *only* by fear. In the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle notes that young people are “guided by their character (êthos) rather than by calculation (*logismos*).” (1289a35, 2.12.12) The virtue of the moderately wealthy is presumably like these groups, but perhaps somewhat better, even if they share with the young that fact that they “have been educated solely by convention.” (a29)

Although we have been talking throughout this Chapter about the *virtues* (of generosity and justice), the middle class in whom we are interested is not completely virtuous. The previous Chapter involved the claim that the middle regime, though a correct regime, could not be kingship, aristocracy, or even so-called aristocracy because the virtue required for these regimes is beyond most cities. Rather, from the introduction of the middle regime in 4.11 we know that the middle regime is the regime based on people who have only the virtue of a private citizen, virtue not resulting from education or being well-provisioned with the goods of fortune. In what way this ‘virtue’ of the moderately virtuous is like and unlike virtue properly speaking is considered in Chapter 6.

In summary, the very wealthy are used to getting whatever they want and come to believe that whatever they think on a given matter should come to pass.
What they want to do is gain wealth for themselves. The goal of their hubris is their relation to wealth. Thus wealth causes hubris which causes the form of injustice that consists in failing to recognize that others will be negatively affected. The reverse condition is true of the very poor, who are used to being in a subservient and powerless position, but the cause is the same. Like the rich, the very poor are very concerned with the wealth that they lack. Moderate wealth is beneficial because those who have become accustomed to either too much or too little wealth, Aristotle thinks, take on certain attitudes towards their relationships with others. Further, making wealth the goal and not virtue can make one susceptible to injustice. If wealth is one’s goal then one is inclined to pursue it at the expense of others. Aristotle has given us a plausible psychological story about the effect of one’s relationship to wealth, but he is not an economic determinist. He does not say that these levels of wealth will necessarily result in the vices described. Nor does he think that all those who are unjust or ungenerous will necessarily be either very rich or very poor.

6. Justice in Politics

The ruler is concerned with all aspects of life, interpreting and enforcing the law in order to ensure harmony between the inhabitants. In every decision, whether it concerns going to war, admitting new citizens, establishing a new office or passing judgment on a capital crime, the decision involves what will happen to other people. That is to say, every decision, whatever other virtues it draws upon, must always involve justice, for justice is the common interest. In

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130 Cf. NE 1103b6, 2.1 concerning the legislator.
the assembly, the citizen must decide about common matters; in the law-courts he must settle private disputes. In both types, private or public, one person profits at the expense of others.

Justice concerning common goods is, after the original ‘decision’, the key form of political justice. The citizen has power over the distribution of external goods, such as wealth and honors, as well as over other people, by which security may be assured. Aristotle states that “doing injustice is awarding to oneself too many of the things that, [considered] unconditionally, are good, and too few of the things that, [considered] unconditionally, are bad. This is why we allow only reason, not a human being, to be ruler; for a human being awards himself too many goods and becomes a tyrant, but a ruler is a guardian of what is just and hence of what is equal.” (NE 1134b1, 5.6; cf. 1130a3, 5.2) Anyone who is unjust towards his peers and takes more than his share of common goods (which must be shared equitably) is a tyrant over them. (NE 1134a36, 5.6)

Positions of power provide a golden opportunity for particular injustice, and justice, in the political arena, means being unwilling to exploit one’s position for one’s own gain. Some of those who pursue wealth lack it (the very poor), and some of those who pursue wealth have it (the very rich). Aristotle is wary of each type. When each is dominant in a regime we have democracy or oligarchy, respectively. Both groups seek wealth but are unable to do so to their hearts’ content and pursue in turn the political influence that will enable them to establish society in a way that satisfies their desire. The chronically poor seek to appropriate it from those who have it and attempt a democracy, while the rich

131 Cf. 1302b8, 5.2: Sometimes their acquisitiveness is at the expense of private properties, sometimes at that of public funds.” (Reeve, trans.)
wish to exploit the poor to gain further wealth and attempt an oligarchy.

To say that a man is a just citizen, then, means that he is the kind of person who is not self-interested and is able judge and act properly concerning the polis. The citizens of polity are expected both to have (specific) justice to refrain from abusing their power in order to profit themselves (either collectively or individually) and to have sufficient (general) justice to promote the common interest more generally. To rule according to justice is promote the interests of all who are capable of virtuous living. At the political level this connection between wealth and self-interest explains why regimes are defined both in terms of for whom the rulers rule - in correct regimes they rule for the common interest, in derivative regimes they rule for their own interests - and the goal or principle that each regime takes. The deviant regimes do not aim at virtue and so not at the common interest.

The account of how the multitude of moderately virtuous deliberate will be considered in detail in Chapter 6. Before we examine the ‘collectivity argument’, however, we pause to determine the social groups and occupations that Aristotle thinks are admissible to citizenship. Aristotle’s thought in these matters is tied to various conditions of life in ancient Greece, in ways that will be explained. The nature of various occupations may have changed between then and now, and Aristotle may be wrong about what a certain occupation means for the virtue of the person who performs it, but his admission to citizenship of various individuals or groups still turns on the qualities we have unearthed. Whatever we think about Aristotle’s sociology, the qualities we have determined in our examination of the citizenship of polity up to this point require refutation on their own merits.
CHAPTER 5

SOCIAL CLASSES AND CITIZENSHIP

Sir, I am a true labourer: I earn that I eat, get
that I wear, owe no man hate, envy no man's
happiness, glad of other men's good, content with my
harm, and the greatest of my pride is to see my ewes
graze and my lambs suck.
Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, Act III, Scene 2

The reluctance of the public to press its opinions on the
government concerning a great multitude of issues is really not as
bad a thing as we may have been led to think; it is a mark of
reasonableness and common sense. The public is far too sensible to
attempt to play the preposterous role assigned to it by the theorists.
Schattschneider, *The Semisovereign People*

1. *Introduction*

The citizens of polity have military virtue and, even if they do not have
the *virtue* of justice, at least act justly towards others (what exactly ‘virtue’ means
here will be taken up in Chapter 6.) In the previous Chapter we examined the
role of wealth in citizenship, noting that in 4.11 Aristotle puts aside education
and discusses the virtue of a private citizen, whose character is especially at risk
from the effects of wealth. The case of artisans drives us to consider also the role of occupation. If, in the absence of education, moderate wealth would make one a citizen, then artisans would be citizens, since artisans are often wealthy. But Aristotle does not attribute to them the characteristics he attributes to the middle class. Instead, he focuses on their occupation and disqualifies them on that ground. Only some occupations are suitable, even for the moderately virtuous citizens of polity. Like one’s relationship to wealth, one’s livelihood is a natural education which schools the citizen heart. A proper livelihood is a necessary element in citizen virtue. Some people are wealthy but acquire their wealth by inappropriate work and this disqualifies them from citizenship.

Aristotle has different lists of parts of the polis and of professions found within the polis. In 4.4 he gives the following list of functions which all cities require: farming, crafting, trading, manual laboring, military, provision of capital, filling of magistracies, and judging and deliberating. In 7.3 he also provides a list of occupations, as follows: farmers, artisans, military, the wealthy who supply of money, priests, governors. Our question in this Chapter is whether groups such as farmers, artisans and laborers, have sufficient wealth and virtue to qualify as citizens.

The most obvious place to look for an answer to this question is chapters 3.4 and 3.5 of the *Politics*. Immediately after giving his definition of citizen Aristotle discusses the best citizen (3.4) and the citizenship of artisans and hired laborers (3.5). However in 3.4 Aristotle says that in the best regime the citizens are also good men. Perhaps only such people are good citizens, or perhaps the

132 Other occupations in the *Politics* include herdsmen, (6.4) fishermen, ferriers and (military) oarsmen. (4.4)
citizens of other regimes are lesser men. It is not clear that just because the citizens of the best regime are good men that the citizens of any correct regime are good men. Similarly, in 3.5, Aristotle says that in the best regime artisans and laborers will not be citizens. Perhaps they will be citizens in other regimes.

I think in fact that Aristotle’s sentiments concerning the citizen status of artisans and laborers are meant to apply generally, even though they are made within the context of a comparison with the model citizen and the best regime. In 3.4 and 3.5 Aristotle describes the kind of person at the upper and lower limits of citizenship, extolling the virtue of the best man while disenfranchising artisans and laborers. Now that we have gathered together a picture of the qualities of citizens of polity we can support these claims. The sentiments expressed in these chapters of book 3 are consistent with those expressed in other contexts. Regimes which admit artisans and laborers err in doing so.

One very interesting result from this reading comes from making the additional assumption that in 3.5 Aristotle excludes all of those with whom there is a problem about citizenship. He does not discuss slaves, of course, because there is no doubt that they are not citizens. The interesting omission is that of farmers. Farmers are often mentioned alongside manual laborers in other contexts – they are excluded from the regime of books 7-8, for example - but are not mentioned in 3.5. I am thus led to believe that they are not to be excluded from polity alongside artisans and laborers. This claim fits well with a result already uncovered in Chapter 3, namely that some of the poor are admissible in mixed polities. Further, Aristotle’s description of farmers makes them similar to the hoplite class of moderately wealthy. Farmers, then, are close to the middle class and so are admissible as citizens.
2. Citizenship and the Best Citizens (Politics 3.4)

Aristotle begins book 3 by asking ‘Who is a citizen?’ In his discussion of citizenship, (book 3, chapters 1-5) Aristotle is concerned to consider citizenship generally, even in deviant regimes, but also, (as we saw in Chapter 1) at the same time and in one definition, to point out what it is that an individual must do well in order to be a good citizen. He finds that those are called citizens who actively hold, or are eligible to hold, the offices that involve deliberation and adjudication. (1275b18, 3.1.12) This definition applies equally to incorrect regimes and correct regimes, though the type of person that each regime admits to citizenship will differ. Correct regimes will admit only those who are capable of performing these tasks well, while incorrect regimes will admit either too few or too many as citizens, because they use an incorrect standard of admission. What is the correct standard of admission? Who is capable of holding judicial or deliberative office?

In 3.4 Aristotle discusses good citizenship. Just as there are citizens in every regime, there we can speak are good citizens in every regime. What it is to be a good citizen vary relative to the constitution in place; we must speak of good democratic citizens, good oligarchic citizens, and so on. All that is required for good citizenship in this sense of ‘good’ is that the citizens preserve and promote the constitution which makes them citizens. (1276b28, 3.4.3) Since the regime may differ but the good citizen preserves the kind of regime in which he lives, it is clear, Aristotle says, that it is not possible for there to be one complete (teleian) virtue of the good citizen (1276b32, 3.4.3). Further, just as all of the sailors with different tasks on a ship aim at the safe passage of the ship, so the citizens,
although they all aim at the preservation of the constitution, have different tasks. (1276b26, 3.4.2). The variability of the constitution and the tasks within a polis prevent any further specification of good citizenship. The virtue of a good man and a good citizen are not unqualifiedly the same. (1277a13, 3.4)

‘But,’ Aristotle continues, ‘is the virtue of some particular good citizen the same as that of the good man?’ The answer is affirmative regarding the citizens of the best regime. In some polises the good man and the good citizen are the same, and only in the statesman (politikos), who is in charge (kurios) or is capable of being in charge of the cares of the community, either by himself or with others. (1278b3, 3.5.10) The virtues of good man and good citizen match when the man is a ruler, ruling with phronēsis (practical wisdom). Aristote (1277b25, 3.4.17)

Aristotle does not mean that any good citizen e.g. in a democracy or an oligarchy and who rules, is a good man. Since phronēsis is (the capacity for) deciding well concerning the political good (i.e. justice), then we can only be talking about correct regimes and perhaps the best regime, the citizens of which are fully virtuous individuals. Rulers in deviant regimes, because they fail to rule in the common interest, cannot be good men, yet they are decision-makers of a sort. A citizen is said to be one who shares in ruling and being ruled, or at least, Aristotle adds a twist in saying that the good man will know how to be ruled as well as how to rule (1277b17, 3.4.15) for this suggests that the need for good citizenship subordinates the need to be a good individual, where this is exhibited by ruling rather than being ruled. Thus paradoxically the good man spends some of his time not being a good man, i.e. he spends some of his time being ruled. Good men, in order to live politically, must sometimes not be involved politically. Although he does not say it, the time out of office is to be spent being a good man in a second (and better) sense - in philosophical and cultural activities.

Aresme (1979) for one seems to suggest that all good citizens have prudence: “There is a certain virtue, however, that is common to the good man and the good citizen, and this virtue is prudence.” Elsewhere, though, he says one can be a good citizen without being a good man. (p. 68) (However cf. “For prudence is of two kinds: (1) political and architectonic prudence, required of every citizen who may become a prince, or is worthy of the office” (p. 70))
in the best regime the citizens will rule and be ruled with a view to the life according to virtue. (1283b42, 3.13.12) The addition of the final clause – ‘with a view to the life according to virtue’ – suggests that there are other goals looking towards which citizens can rule and be ruled.

It is only when a person rules over free persons of the same race (1277b8, 3.4.13) that the good citizen and good man will coincide. A good citizen is one who is able to rule and be ruled in turn, but only while he rules is he also a good man. But rulers in deviant regimes are not good men, even when ruling, for they fail to rule in the common interest. That is, they espouse only partial justice and not the ‘Aristotelian Standard’ of justice discussed in Chapter 2. In deviant regimes there is an element of force, and the rule is not over free persons. And so it is reasonable to think that the rulers of deviant regimes cannot be good rulers.135 Further, since the virtue of a good citizen is shown both by ruling and being ruled well (1277a29, 3.4.10) the rulers of deviant regimes are not good men, since they wish to remain in power constantly and are unable to let others govern.

Being good men, the good citizens of the best regime provide a standard of comparison for the citizens of other regimes. The citizens of the best regime are good citizens relative to the purpose of political community unqualifiedly. They are, we might say, good good citizens, though from now on I shall simply speak of ‘good citizen’ and mean this normatively good citizen, a citizen who rules well and not just in accordance with the regime. The best regime, we know, has good citizens. It is the regime which manages to organize its members in

135 Cf. 1288a38, 3.18.1: “in our earlier discourses it was shown that the virtue of a man and citizen is necessarily the same in the best polis.”
such a way that, by being good citizens, they can also be good men. Are there any other normatively good citizens?

Aristotle’s depiction of the best or complete citizen as practically wise person can be taken in different ways. One way is to think that only good individuals are good citizens. Curtis Johnson appears to argue that the only citizens, properly speaking, are the virtuous rulers of aristocracies and kingships, and these people are political experts. Johnson (correctly, in my view) supposes that the issue of rightfully ruling depends on the kind of virtue which entitles one to rule. Since Aristotle then argues that the good citizen and the good man are the same, Johnson claims that the good men are those who are rightfully citizens. Johnson thinks that what it is to be rightfully a citizen requires the virtue of the good man. That is, Johnson thinks that in this section of the text Aristotle is providing us with a criterion for rightful citizenship, and the criterion is being a good man.

It need not be that by discussing the citizens of the best regime Aristotle means to provide a minimal criterion for all citizens. Aristotle’s explicit aim here is only, as Johnson himself puts it, to determine the conditions under which the goodness of a good man is the same as that of a good citizen. Describing the circumstances under which the good man and the good citizen match up leaves it an open question as to whether any good citizen, (i.e. any normatively good citizen) must be a good man, whether being a good man is required for being a good citizen. Aristotle at this point is restricting himself to a particular good

\footnote{Johnson (1984) p. 83}

\footnote{ibid., p. 81}
citizen, that is, the good citizen who rules using phronêsis, the ruler in the best regime. (1277b25, 3.4.17) As I read him, Aristotle’s best citizen is not a minimal standard but a paradigmatic case against which others can be judged to be citizens to a lesser extent. Aristotle’s overall point in 3.4 is to provide a model of citizenship, a maximal description rather than a minimal one. Taking Aristotle to allow for degrees of good citizen would mean that, despite a preference for the best regime, he does not close off the possibility that there are others, of lesser excellence, who may count as good citizens. The interesting question is just how far from perfectly excellent a person can be and still be a citizen in a normative sense.

3. Artisans and Laborers (Politics 3.5)

3.4 concludes that only in the best regime, and only while ruling, will a citizen be a good man. The good citizens of other regimes are not so good as men. But how poor can they be, as men, and yet still be citizens? It might be thought that this issue is settled in the next chapter, 3.5, where Aristotle considers whether even artisans (banausos tekhnitês) and laborers (thêtès) can be citizens.

Aristotle begins the chapter by posing the problem that if artisans (he talks mainly about artisans in this section) do not share in office but are citizens, then the definition of citizenship as those eligible for office is threatened, while if no artisan is a citizen, they are difficult to classify, for they are neither resident aliens or foreigners. (1277b38-40, 3.5.1) The answer to the latter question is easy, for it is really only the matter of a name: we can call them citizens in some qualified sense, as is familiar from the prologue to the definition of citizenship in
3.1, where children were said to be undeveloped citizens and the elderly emeritus citizens. In this way, manual laborers need not be called ‘public slaves’ (1277a36-8, 3.4.12, 1278a12-3, 3.5.4), but can be called citizens of a sort. ‘Ruled citizens’ (1278a17, 3.5.5) may be better if we wish to indicate their difference from slaves and in particular acknowledge the fact that (some of) these individuals are natives rather than foreigners. (1277b40, 3.5.1; 1278a5, 3.5.3; 1278a37, 3.5.9) This decision about names also solves the first problem, which was that the inactive (non-office-holding) citizenship of artisans would threaten the definition of citizenship as decided in book 3 chapter 1. If artisans are only citizens by extension, then the definition is preserved.

A more important problem is the possibility of artisans active in office. If one is expecting a discussion on minimal criteria for citizenship it is odd to be initially confronted with a passage on artisans in terms of inactive citizens rather than the possibility of politically active artisans. This problem would directly bring on the issue of who is properly a citizen and is considered in the next line, (1278a9, 3.5.3) where Aristotle writes “if this sort is a citizen, then the virtue of a citizen, as we have been discussing it at any rate, cannot be spoken of as belonging to all.”

\[138\] Note that Aristotle does not say that if artisans are admitted that not every citizen will have the excellence of a good man, but that if artisans are admitted, not every citizen will have the excellence of a good citizen. The ‘virtue of a citizen’ that Aristotle is talking about is the citizen virtue discussed in 3.4. As we saw, initially in that chapter it is said that what it is to be a good citizen will vary relative to the constitution in place. The virtue of a citizen generally is to preserve the regime (like the different sailors all preserve the ship). Aristotle also introduces the best citizen as a standard, and I think it is ‘good’ in this sense that manual laborers are being disqualified as citizens. This is what the phrase ‘as we have been discussing it at any rate’ indicates. He is making a general claim, not one relative to any particular regime. The fault is not just that artisans cannot be good citizens as the citizens of the best regime are good, but they cannot be good citizens at all. Otherwise Aristotle would be saying that manual laborers cannot be good citizens even in extreme democracy. No regime, never mind the correct ones, ought to give the franchise to artisans. When Aristotle says that admission of artisans will mean that not all of the citizens are excellent citizens, he would mean that they are not capable of ruling and being ruled.
Aristotle seems to be claiming, in protest at their admission, actual or potential, that artisans ought not to be citizens because their occupation is incompatible with ruling. (1278a11, 21, 3.5.3, 5) The text at 1278a11 and a21 indicate that artisans have no virtue and so are not fitting citizens in any correct regime. At a21 it is said that someone living the life of an artisan is not able to practice the things of virtue. If this phrase means that the life of an artisan is in no way virtuous or in no way allows for the practice of virtue (which is a disputable claim) then artisans will not be like the best citizens to any extent. Similarly at a11, artisans are excluded from having the virtue of citizens and the reason given here is that citizens must be released from necessities. If the claim can be made out that being released from necessities (whatever that means) precludes one from being like the best citizen to any degree, then Aristotle is here giving us (some) minimal criteria on citizenship.

Behind many of Aristotle’s comments lies a disgruntlement with the admission of artisans and laborers into democracies. Thus, for example, there’s the remark that in ancient times in some polises the vulgar class was of slaves or foreigners, on account of which many artisans are such (foreigners or slaves) to this day. (1278a6-7, 3.5.3 cf. 1277b2, 3.4.12) The background which prompts this comment is the knowledge that in many contemporary polises, free persons are artisans and laborers, and in democracy the claim of free birth is enough to see them into office, and the wealth of artisans will win them office in oligarchies. Such people are not truly free, in the sense Aristotle desires. However we will not know without the discussion of claims to office whether shared heritage is

in accordance with whatever (kind of) constitution is in place.
enough to make the vulgar citizens. On the one hand we note that they may be free natives, but on the other that their occupation makes complete excellence impossible.

The foregoing is, I claim, a statement of Aristotle’s view on artisans and laborers. A difficulty is that Aristotle is comparing the virtue of artisans and laborers to the virtue of the best citizens. Even if the good man is being held up as a model and a maximal citizen of which lesser imitations are possible while still being correctly citizens, to compare the virtue of artisans and laborers with the maximal instantiation of citizen virtue makes it difficult to say anything definitive about the citizen status of artisans and laborers under a polity.

The comment that admitting artisans will mean that not every citizen has the virtue of a citizen (a11) appears immediately after mention of the best regime - the best polis will not make artisans citizens. Reeve in fact uses a semi-colon where Rackham uses a full stop. So perhaps Aristotle’s point is only that if artisans are admitted as citizens in the best regime (as opposed to being admitted as citizens in any regime at all) then the virtue of a citizen – to rule and be ruled in turn – cannot be ascribed to all citizens. Even though being able to rule and be ruled can be accomplished to greater or lesser extent, Aristotle may be here saying that the admission of artisans into the regime will mean that not every citizen (office-holder) will have the virtue of a citizen as the citizens of the best regime have it. This is different from the (preferred) reading that artisans and laborers are never properly citizens.\footnote{That the discussion does not move from the citizen in the best regime to citizenship in general at 1277a25, 3.4.10 might be inferred from praise (in “But also he is praised who is able to rule and be ruled …”) suggesting best. Thus Aristotle is here continuing his description of the ideal citizen.}
Similarly, the context for a21 (where Aristotle says that the vulgar life makes practice of the things of virtue impossible) is the best regime: the first half of the clause describes how in an aristocratic constitution that awards office on merit, artisans will not be citizens. This aristocratic regime is the best regime (or possibly also a so-called aristocracy, though the implication here is that virtue is the claim upon which all offices are awarded.) Thus the virtue under discussion is the complete virtue of the citizens of the best regime. It may or may not be that any regime would be in error to admit artisans as citizens, but as yet all we know is that in the best regime they will be permanently ruled. The clear context of line 21 might be taken to reinforce the claim that the best regime is also in mind just above at line 11. Thus the supposition that artisans do not participate in office follows from the claim that in the best constitutions those who are citizens are good men. Artisans are not excellent humans, therefore, if all the citizens of the best regime are good men, artisans cannot be citizens.\footnote{Further, there is the beginning of the chapter, where (as mentioned above) the opening question has been framed in terms of inactive rather than active artisans. This suggests that Aristotle is thinking of the best regime for, as he repeats after noting that there artisans might be citizens-by-extension like the young or the elderly, the best polis will not make artisans citizens. (1278a8, 3.5.3) The opening problem thus seems to be about the citizen status of those who perform the tasks of artisans and laborers in the best regime.}

A final consideration is that, whereas in 3.4 Aristotle discussed good citizenship relative to the regime before introducing the best citizen, he works in reverse manner in 3.5, initially continuing to talk about the best regime, before returning in the middle of the chapter to a regime-relative discussion. Following 1278a15 (in 3.5), Aristotle goes on to describe the regimes in which manual laborers \textit{will} share in office and those in which they will not (and in which they may be called ruled citizens). He notes for example that while in oligarchies
laborers cannot become citizens because their income is too low, nothing prevents artisans from accumulating the wealth that is necessary for political participation, for many (*hoi polloi*) of the artisans are wealthy. (1278a24, 3.5.6)

Some polises even admit foreigners for want of native inhabitants. “That there are several kinds of citizens, therefore, is evident from these things, as is the fact that one who shares in prerogatives is particularly spoken of as a citizen—thus, for example, Homer’s line “like some vagabond without honor.” For one who does not share in prerogatives is like an alien.” (1278a34-8, 3.5.9)

Describing what goes on 3.5 in this way also helps explain the conclusion of 3.5 and draws strength from that ability. The conclusion of 3.5 begins “As to whether [the virtue] which constitutes the good man (*agathos*) and the excellent citizen (*spoudaios*) is to be regarded as the same or different, then, is clear from what has been said.” (1278b1, 3.5.10) As such, the conclusion of 3.5 looks as though it has been misplaced from the end of 3.4 and indeed the language of that chapter’s conclusion is very similar: “Whether the virtue of the good man and the excellent citizen is the same or different, then, and in what sense it is the same and in what sense different, is evident from these things.” (1277b31, 3.4.18)

If we can think that 3.5 continues a consideration of the citizen of the best polis, it can be more easily be construed as a continuation of the discussion of the relation between the good man and good citizen.

Thus, it is difficult to demonstrate conclusively *internal to 3.4 and 3.5* that Aristotle’s discussion of vulgar artisans and laborers is intended to apply to all regimes and not just to the best. When the comparison class is the best regime, phrases which might otherwise appear to state that ‘artisans have no virtue’ instead say that artisans lack the virtue of best citizens. Aristotle is clear that
manual laborers are citizens in some regimes, but not in the best regime. But beyond this it is not clear whether he is speaking ideally of the best regime, or of correct regimes in general. Aristotle’s opinions about the inability of artisans to cultivate excellence and their ill-fittingness for office does not clearly exclude them from (active) citizenship in every regime but only in the best regime. It is possible that artisans are among those who are citizens of a polity, the third of the correct regimes. Polity is an unknown middle-ground.

Supporting my preferred reading of this chapter (3.5) requires the application of the criteria we have unearthed concerning the citizens of polity. My claim concerning 3.5 is that Aristotle provides a lower limit on citizenship by ruling out the vulgar from office. The obvious purpose of this chapter seems to be to move to the other end of the spectrum and discuss those who are least well-fitted for citizenship because least excellent as men. For Aristotle, artisans and laborers are so low in citizen virtue that they ought not be admitted in any correct regime.

4. Occupation

We have just looked at 3.5, where Aristotle discusses the admission of artisans and laborers to citizenship. There, artisans and laborers were said to be unfit for office, at least in the best regime. Why can artisans and laborers not even be part of the multitude admitted to citizenship in a polity? I shall answer this question by demonstrating the connection between the attributes of the life of an artisans and the attributes of the middle class which we have unearthed to this point.

Those of sufficient wealth have the time and freedom to participate in
politics. One first thought is that lack of leisure time is by itself fatal to political participation. “It is impossible to pursue the things of virtue when one lives the life of a vulgar person or a laborer.” (1278a20, 3.5.5; cf. 1260a38, 1.13.13; 1328b40-9a1, 7.9.4; 1337b4-21, 8.2.3-6) Xenophon says that artisans are so busy at their work that they have no time to take an interest in friends or the state, and so make bad friends and citizens. Different livelihoods provide more or less leisure time. If the people are not so good, Aristotle thinks that less leisure can be a benefit for the regime. Farmers and those of moderate means cannot be at leisure and so put the law in charge. Likewise, the best oligarchy is comprised of those who “have neither so much property that they can be at leisure without concerning themselves with it, nor so little that they must be sustained by the city” and so “will necessarily claim to merit having the law rule for them rather than ruling themselves.” (1293a17, 4.6.8)

Is the artisan at leisure to participate politically? The land-owner has leisure provided him by ruling over (managing) others. He can give commands for others to carry out and can temporarily suspend administration of the household in order to be politically active. One thought, then, is that artisans are simply too busy earning their keep to participate in politics. But it seems possible for manual laborers to labor at jobs that make them wealthy and provide them with the free-time necessary to participate in politics. Artisans (though not laborers) are typically well-off financially (1278a24, 3.5.6) and this would allow them to be politically active, both in terms of meeting any property-requirement and in terms of being able to take the time to deliberate and sit on juries.

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141 Economics, IV.2, quoted by Bolkestein (1958) p. 71
Aristotle goes on to note explicitly that artisans may become office-holders in oligarchies because they have accumulated the level of wealth necessary for office. Further, it is possible that political participation can be sponsored by the state. In Periklean Athens, although all hereditary citizens were eligible for office, pay was given for participation in the assembly and juries, thus solving the problem of leisure not just for artisans but also for laborers. (Ath. Pol. 27.2) In summary, then, leisure might be available to artisans. Whether or not they avail of the possibility, and use it for political purposes, is another matter.

Perhaps the occupations of manual laborers somehow diminishes or restricts political aptitude for office. If this were so, then simply having the wealth to sustain some free time would make no difference to one’s ability to participate and to practice excellence. Even if artisans had the time and wealth to participate in politics, there is something about their occupations that makes them unfit for ruling. What virtue, if any, have artisans and laborers? And does it meet the criteria for participation in a polity?

From the first description of polity as the hoplite regime we learned that the citizens have military virtue. Aristotle thinks that artisans and laborers perform tasks detrimental to military activity. This is what he means when he says that any task which degrades the body is to be called ‘vulgar’. (1337b10, 8.2.5) It seems, then, that manual laborers do not have military virtue.

However, we have seen that even for Aristotle, military virtue is not the primary function of citizens. Military activity is important to the ancient Greek state, but the special functions of the citizen, as specified by the definition in 3.1, are deliberation and adjudication and those who have passed their physical
prime are thought especially suited for decision-making because of their advanced mental development.

Artisans and laborers can take themselves to be of political importance. A more successful view of what it is to be qualified for politics would be to show that while artisans and laborers may take themselves to be equals with others, they are *incorrect* in doing so. With respect to capacity for decision-making, a fault leveled against manual laborers is their slavishness. We find here one of the two concerns that we noted were present in Aristotle’s discussion of (the upbringing of) the very rich and the very poor, namely, their relationship to others. (The second is that they pursue wealth as the good, and this will come to the fore in a moment.)

The democratic character equates freedom with not being a slave. Aristotle writes that one mark of democracy “is to live as one wants. For this is, they assert, the work of freedom, since not living as one wants is characteristic of a person who is enslaved.” (1317b12, 6.2.3) The sentiment expressed by democrats is precisely that each person should be able to determine his own life - no expertise in virtue and no stronger claim to office is recognized, as to be ruled by someone else is to give up this all-important freedom to do as one wishes.

But artisans and laborers are slaves of a certain kind according to Aristotle. (1277a37, 3.4.12) Slaves need a little virtue to allow them to perform their work. The same is true of artisans, and, though slavish, manual laborers are different from (private) slaves. They are not as tightly bound to those for whom they work. Aristotle goes on to say that, while some people are slaves by nature, no one is a shoemaker by nature. This suggests that the artisan chooses his craft and executes it himself. While all there is to the virtue of a slave is the ability to obey
and carry out orders, with the artisan there may be more, the virtue of the artisan qua individual. (1260a37-b3, 1.13.12-13)

The charge against artisans is that their labor is devoted to products which are used not by themselves but by others. Slaves work for the sake of the master’s ends. Artisans are not private slaves, but slaves of the public. (1278a13, 3.5.4). Aristotle thinks that artisans and laborers are slavish in the sense that they provide the goods that others need in order to lead the good life. If what is important here is not the name ‘slave’ but the respective positions, one man giving his labor for the sake of another, then if someone is fit to work for another it indicates that the worker’s nature is limited, even if it exceeds that of a natural slave. If he were capable of pursuing the good life he would not fittingly be a slave of any sort.

However, the problem cannot merely be working for another. Aristotle’s principle is not simply that if a man is in a subservient position in his private life, then he should take a subservient position in public life. For to take turns ruling and being ruled is to work in the interest of others. Recall the passage where Aristotle describes how political office is naturally employed to look after the interests of all of the citizens but becomes corrupted by love of the benefits that can be wrought from positions of power. “With respect to political offices, too, when [the regime] is established in accordance with equality and similarity

\[\text{142 Mulgan (1970) writes that “Like the slave, they work not for themselves but for others, in their case the class of fully virtuous citizens,” (p. 97) He seems to be considering aristocracy here. I do not think that the ‘master’ population need be so virtuous, as it is not in polity.}\]

\[\text{143 There is also the case of the young learning to rule by first being ruled (in the military) which we investigated at the end of Chapter 2. The further case of people performing menial tasks for the right end shows that the kind of task is not necessarily determinant of its value or effect on character.}\]
among the citizens, they claim to merit ruling in turn. Previously, as accords with nature, they claimed to merit doing public service by turns and having someone look to their good, just as when ruling previously they looked to his advantage.” (1279a8, 3.6.3)

The cases might differ, in a number of way. First, the ruler considers his own interest along with the interests of the ruled. “The trainer or the pilot looks out for the good of the ruled, and when he becomes one of them himself, he shares accidentally in the benefit; for the one is a sailor, and the other becomes one of those engaging in gymnastic, though still a trainer.” (1279a5, 3.6.3) The artisan, however, presumably makes product for himself too. He differs, perhaps, in trying to make money for himself in addition to making (e.g.) shoes for others. The good ruler does not try to make money for himself by ruling.

Second, shared rule is appropriate in politics because rule is shared by equals. Master-slave relationships are not between equals and the roles do not rotate. The roles do not rotate because there is a disparity of excellence between the two. The citizen is capable of virtue and performs excellent activities, the artisan is not and performs menial tasks. Ruling is a virtuous and hence noble occupation. The slave and the artisan, however, are engaged in the production of material goods, producing necessities and luxuries which assist in the virtuous action of others.

This labor has detrimental effects on one’s ability to rule. Xenophon says that not only does manual labor take up all one’s time, but as the body

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144 The locution ‘according to nature’ suggests that the policy of rotating office comes not just from the equality of the citizens but also from the desire not to hold office.

145 *Economics*, IV.2, VI.5

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degrades, so does the soul. In the same vein, Aristotle writes that …

One should consider a vulgar task, art, or sort of learning to be any that renders the body, the soul, or the mind of free persons useless with a view to the practices and actions of virtue. Hence we call vulgar both the sorts of arts that bring the body into a worse state and wage-earning sorts of work, for they make the mind a thing abject and lacking in leisure. … It makes a difference, too, for the sake of what one does or learns something. What is for one’s own sake or for the sake of friends or on account of virtue is not unfree, while the person who does the same thing on account of others would often be held to do something characteristic of the laborer or the slave. (1337b8 ff, 8.2.4)

We learn from this passage that a free person can perform the tasks of an artisan, but only for himself of his friends, who, presumably, are engaged in virtuous activity. Thus, as Bradley puts it, “even the most menial services need not be ignoble, and that the slavishness of a pursuit lies not in the things that are done, but in the spirit in which they are done, and their object.” The artisan, however, always engages in production; he does not go beyond these in his own life. This means that he does not practice virtue.

The problem is thus not simply being ruled by another, but in (i) always (ii) performing productive work (iii) for others (iv) for a certain end.

These features of the artisan life are inter-related. Practicing a trade, as we have already seen, has implications for the artisan’s relationship to others. To practice virtue is to be involved with others as equals, deciding and acting jointly. But because they are engaged in productive tasks, they are governed by, or work for the sake of, those who purchase the product. Thus there is a connection between the kind of activity artisans undertake and the charge of 1277b1, 3.4.12 expresses the same view.

Bradley (1991) p. 28
slavishness in the sense of not relating to others as equals. The artisan aims at producing material goods, which he makes at the behest of another and sells to him at a price.

Artisans aim at the production of goods and, beyond that, at the generation of wealth. That is, artisans takes the good life to consist not in political and cultural activity but in the production and acquisition of material goods. They are engaged in production rather than the activity of virtue that constitutes living well. The necessities for living well must of course be present and a practically wise person will take care that they are provided, but the life of artisans and laborers is devoted to, in the sense of limited to, material goods.

That artisans are producers is enough to indicate that their exclusion from citizenship is fundamentally on the grounds that they have an incomplete picture of the proper aim of the city. But while artisans may lack a complete vision of the aim of the polis, does their undoubted focus on material goods mean, further, that they are unjust in the specific sense? Does a life producing material goods and aiming at acquiring material goods make it more likely that one will act unjustly? Cannot one pursue material goods justly and moderately? Aristotle, so far as I can tell, does not explicitly impugn the justice of artisans, but the common Greek prejudice against them is evident in his remarks. This case will be made more fully in contrast with farmers.

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148 Most modern-day people and certainly city-dwellers would qualify as manual laborers, being (often) sedentary, working for others and without ownership of our own means of independence. We (moderns) take it to be possible for those who work for others to participate politically. We think we can be educated and politically active even though we are artisans, (and many countries no longer require military activity in order to be a good citizen.) What is more, we take citizenship to be about the negative rights which secure freedom. Active citizenship is a means only to securing these rights. See Constant (1988).
5. Farmers

Farming is the most common form of sustenance-getting\textsuperscript{149} and included olives, vines and figs, in addition to cereal crops. A proposal to restrict citizenship to landowners would have disenfranchised only five thousand people\textsuperscript{150} which indicates that a large portion of the native people owned land. Those who worked the land themselves, perhaps with one or a few slaves, were farmers, while those with more extensive land and more help did not have to work the land themselves but merely oversaw it. These formed the hoplite and wealthier classes.

It is not clear precisely what Aristotle thinks the difference is between agricultural labor and the labor of tradesmen though an even finer distinction is made by Aristotle. In an early chapter, concerning forms of wealth getting, Aristotle praises as ‘according to nature’ the rearing of livestock and tending of crops (1258a37, cf. 1256a20 ff, especially 1257b7) while denigrating exchange. (Presumably worst of all exchanges is selling of one’s body as a hired laborer.) A third form of acquisition is a mix of both, trades such as mining and logging and these may be characterized as more or less vulgar: “the most vulgar [are] those in which the body is most damaged; the most slavish those in which the body is most used; the most ignoble, those which are least in need of virtue.” (1258b37, 1.11.6)

Farmers are specifically excluded from citizenship in the best regime (at

\textsuperscript{149} Others who provide sustenance include nomads, pirates, hunters, and fishermen. (1.8) What follows may reasonably be applied to all of these save pirates.

1328b40, 7.9.4) for while the artisan life is “contrary to virtue,” leisure is needed for virtue and political participation. But we have already noted that farmers are not explicitly excluded from citizenship in Aristotle’s discussion of proper citizenship in 3.4 and 3.5. If we are correct in thinking that the exclusion of artisans and laborers in 3.5 provides a lower limit on what type of person is suitable for citizenship, then other groups which are said to be among the necessary groups of polis will qualify. Farmers, for example.

Further, although the dominant multitude cannot be a multitude of farmers, for such a regime would be an agricultural democracy, there is room in Aristotle’s account of polity as a mixed regime for the moderately poor alongside the moderately wealthy and the wealthy. We noted in Chapter 4 that the moderately wealthy causes polity to come into being by joining either with the rich or the poor to temper the power of the other and share the sovereign office. This sharing requires a compromise on the part of both the rich and the poor. Not all of the poor can be involved in the sovereign office. The very poor are to be excluded while those closest to the hoplite class may be included. Farmers are closest to the hoplite class. Indeed, Aristotle says that “it often happens that the same people bear arms and farm.” (1291a30, 4.4.15) and, (at 1321a12, 6.7.1) that some poor bear arms.

If 3.5 disqualifies only artisans and laborers from office, we need to explain why farmers are not also barred. They are said to lack the leisure to develop the virtue required for citizenship in the best regime. Do farmers have the requisite political virtue? Aristotle writes that after farmers and herdsmen, the various other multitudes are “almost all much meaner than these: their way of life is a mean one, with no task involving virtue among the things that occupy the
multitude of human beings who are vulgar persons and merchants or the multitude of laborers.” (1319a25, 6.4.12) By implication, Aristotle suggests that there is some virtue in the life of farmers and herdsmen.

Farmers and herdsmen are clearly well-qualified when it comes to military activity. Agricultural work is not physically degrading to the body while craftwork is. The work of farmers and herdsmen, being outdoors, makes them hardy and of sound constitution such as is required of a soldier. Speaking of herdsmen Aristotle writes that their life has many similarities to farming life, “and especially in regard to military actions such people have a conditioned constitution and useful bodies and are able to endure outdoors.” (1319a20, 6.4.11) This lifestyle makes them fit for military activity.

We have noted already, however, that military activity is of secondary importance where citizenship is concerned. One might therefore be concerned about their political ability. We said above that the problem with artisans is they (i) always (ii) perform productive work (iii) for others (iv) for a certain end. But this description appears to apply in every aspect to farmers. Their political engagement of farmers is limited. They perform productive work. They need goods other than the crop they grow and so would be producing for others. And this basic living and acquisition of material goods would be their goal.

We might thus be tempted to think that the only claim farmers have on proper citizenship is their suitability for military activity. However, Aristotle thinks that farmers and herdsmen have something to recommend themselves when it comes to decision-making. I quote at length the passage from which several short quotes in this section have come:

After the farming multitude the best sort of people (dêmos) exists where they are herdsmen and live from livestock. These are in a
condition very similar to farmers, and in what relates to military activities they are particularly well exercised with respect to their dispositions as well as useful with respect to their bodies and capable of living in the open. The other sorts of multitude out of which the remaining sorts of democracy are formed are almost all much meaner than these: their way of life is a mean (phaulos) one, with no task involving virtue among the things that occupy the multitude of human beings who are vulgar persons and merchants or the multitude of laborers.

Further, on account of their always frequenting the marketplace and town, nearly all persons of this type can easily attend the assembly, while those engaged in farming, on account of their being scattered in the country, do not come together in this way and have no need of doing so. But where it happens that the position of the territory is such that the country is far removed from the city, it is easy to create a decent democracy or a polity. For the multitude is compelled to have its dwelling places in the fields; so that even where there is a mass of merchants, one should not hold assemblies in democracies without the multitude from the country.

Aristotle’s admiration for the agricultural classes is obvious from this passage, though of course the compliment is paid in contrast with others whom he takes to be much worse. Aristotle begins by asserting the fitness of farmers (and herdsmen) for military activity, which we have just been describing. But Aristotle is also commending them for their virtue. It should be noted that Aristotle is not simply trying to make the best of democracy as is possible. An agricultural population is said here also to be consistent with polity, in which, as we shall see in the next Chapter, it is possible for the multitude – inclusive of farmers – to make good decisions. Indeed, Aristotle here advises that even though there may be enough merchants present in the city for a quorum in a democracy, it is better for the polis to ensure that farmers be included. On what grounds does Aristotle make this assertion?

There are significant differences between farmers and artisans. To begin, it is true that farmers have little leisure time and so almost (i) always (ii) perform
productive work. Nature dictates when they must work, and so regular participation in assembly or jury is impossible. Their response is to put the law in charge and have infrequent meetings. They are generally happy to let things go on as normal as they must tend to their crops and vines. Thus farmers would paradoxically be fit for government because they do not want to be proactive. Farmers wish to participate only reactively, getting involved if they are abused. They can also play a part in resisting such an attempt by the rich to establish themselves by joining together with the middle class, as we described in Chapter 3.

While artisans and farmers alike devote the majority of their time to production, when they participate in politics they do so, Aristotle thinks, to different effects. When Aristotle remarks of artisans that they reside in the city and are willing to meet in assembly, he is not praising artisans for their civic engagement, but suspicious that they wish to influence power. (1319a28, 6.4.13) Presumably, then, he thinks that there are farmers are superior to artisans with respect to working (iii) for others (iv) for a certain end.

It is not the case that farmers are as dependent on others as are artisans. The farmer’s production (like the artisans) is not completely comprised of his crop as he is the head of a household which can produce basic goods (see 1.3) but the food the farmer produces is essential to life. It is possible for farmers to produce excess crop and to sell it to others, but because they are engaged in the most fundamental of occupations, they need never be at a loss for a basic living.

The products of the artisans are not so basic, and so the artisan must work for others, while the farmer need not. This asymmetry gives the farmer an independence that the artisan lacks. Artisans and farmers are alike not engaged
in virtuous activities, yet Aristotle never charges farmers with slavishness. They typically own their own land and so they are their own masters. There is no one to tell them what to do and when, except nature, upon whom they rely to bring the harvest to fruition and cannot afford to be away from the land when the time is right.

This independence is also important for the following reason. Given that he is producing what is essential to his own household, the farmer is not in competition with others. Artisans, however, do better when other artisans of the same type do worse. It is to the advantage of an artisan to have a monopoly on the market. Aristotle recounts the story of Thales (who bought up olive presses in advance of a bumper crop) in order to demonstrate the principle of monopoly. (1259a5, 1.11.8) The point of monopoly, Aristotle says, is to generate funds. (1259a22, 1.11.10) The artisan is thus naturally ill-disposed to his fellows, while the farmer is not. The farming community rises and falls largely together, with the vagaries of the weather.

Turning to the goal of farming, we turn to a passage (in 1.8) where Aristotle claims that nature provides each creature with sustenance and goes on (in the following chapter) to contrast the natural ways of getting sustenance – farming, fishing and so on - with the unnatural ways of getting wealth. Every product has two uses, one proper to it and its retail value. Exchange and barter are natural because such transactions are aimed at “natural self-sufficiency” (1257a30, 1.9.6) but profiteering – the concern simply to make the exchange of highest value – is not. As mentioned in the previous Chapter, the advent of money makes wealth-getting potentially unlimited. If farmers aim at a natural self-sufficiency, then they are isolated from the corrosive effects of currency.
An implication from the discussion of mixed forms of wealth-getting is that farming, for Aristotle, does not involve trade, even when he has a surplus. (There were surpluses: Attica as a state, for example, had to import corn in exchange for its excess grapes and olives.) Artisans, by contrast, set up shop in the city and so there is no distance between the site of production and the customer. More importantly, even if they need to leave their place of work, they are able to do so, given that the they need not be there at a certain time to attend to a product that dictates its own development. Though Aristotle does not say as much himself, the retailing aspect of the artisan’s trade was generally looked down upon and sellers were distrusted for their profiteering.\footnote{See Ehrenberg’s (1962) description of the kapelos p. 114, 119, 144. On p. 119 he writes: “Again and again, the comic writers allude to the insidious machinations of the flour-dealers, the innkeepers, the bird-sellers, the wool-merchants, or the fishmongers – all of them kapeloi. ... war-profiteers were most unpopular.” See p. 125 ff for the claim that crafting and selling were typically two parts of one operation.}

In a way, farming would be akin to being at war. The stingy Attic soil (especially with respect to the cereals that comprised the main part of the diet) demanded hard work and constant attention.\footnote{See Ehrenberg (1962) p. 79 for a description of the toils of the farmer.} This natural moderation makes the farmers moderate in their desires generally and for political activity\footnote{In a similar vein, Aristotle thinks that holding high office should be expensive, in order that one does not come to think of it as a means to line one’s pockets and to discourage the poor from wanting such offices.}. It is true that farmers fail to pursue virtue, but this failing is due to the circumstances and not a fault of character. Farming thus seems to be a difficult but wholesome life, and a promoter of basic virtue and social stability. “It is clear that most men will endure much harsh treatment in their longing for life, the assumption being that there is a kind of joy inherent in it and a natural sweetness.” (1278b26, 3.6.3)
In sum, although they are said to lack the leisure to develop virtue, it does not seem that farming is ‘contrary to virtue’ to the same extent that manual labor is. Artisans, on the other hand, are suspect of the same pursuit of wealth that was attributed to the very rich and very poor in Chapter 4. Their occupations are not only devoid of the practice of virtue, but they encourage the unrestricted desire for wealth that leads people to act unjustly.

As hinted at in Chapter 2, the qualities once naturally found together were coming apart. Even though some laborers are free born and artisans may in addition be moderately wealthy, in their cases, the natural association between birth, wealth and virtue breaks down. Wealth and even free-birth are becoming divorced from justice. With open borders, foreigners can enter the polis and become wealthy. But foreigners, even if they are wealthy and excellent, are not free-born and so cannot be admitted as citizens. Given economic developments, some of the free-born are artisans and laborers. But Aristotle thinks that these trades jeopardize even basic political character, even if a person is free in the sense of ‘not a slave.’ Free-birth and wealth no longer indicate the virtue they once did. Before the advent of foreigners and the move of free persons away from the land and into trades, at least some measure of the three qualities would naturally be found together, but livelihoods have come into existence which break the natural association of the three which agricultural life promotes. Farmers were going to market and becoming traders, making it hard to uphold the traditional, aristocratic, prejudice in favor of agricultural wealth. The position of the aristocracy was itself under attack: Artisans were getting rich and becoming politically influential, while notable families were becoming overseas
merchants.\textsuperscript{154} Today, we are as suspicious as Aristotle and his contemporaries of those who are out for themselves, especially in politics, but it is increasingly difficult to attribute self-interest to distinct groups of the population, as Aristotle was (barely) able to do.

\textsuperscript{154} So Ehrenberg (1962) p. 144
THE VIRTUE AND WISDOM OF THE MANY

When he examined at leisure, the life he had chosen, however, he beat his breast and bemoaned his choice. ... He was one of those who had come down from heaven, having lived his previous life under an orderly constitution, where he had participated in virtue through habit and without philosophy.

Plato, Republic, 619c, Grube/Reeve trans.

This left me even more dismayed. I thought that I had fished the hole perfectly and just the way my brother had taught me, except he hadn’t told me what to do when a fish goes up a tree. That’s one trouble with hanging around a master—you pick up some of his stuff, like how to cast into a bush, but you use it just when the master is doing the opposite.

Norman Maclean, A River Runs Through It

1. Introduction

Polity is a correct regime where the many or the multitude, who are individually not as good as kings or aristocrats, have power. How can a multitude of such people adjudicate and deliberate in the common interest and so be a correct regime? In chapter 11 of book 3 of the Politics, Aristotle considers
an argument, or rather, a series of analogies, purporting to establish the claim
that “the many (the plêthos or polloi), of whom none is individually a good man,
nevertheless can, when joined together, be better – not as individuals but all
together – than those [who are best]” (1281a41-b2, 3.11.1) Or more exactly, that
some multitudes, when they ‘come together,’ may collectively achieve virtue and
wisdom equal or superior to the ‘best few’. That not every multitude can make
good this claim stems from the fact that collective virtue is predicated upon a
certain moderate virtue of the individuals who make up the group.

Our goal is to understand, by analogy with the examples of collectivities
Aristotle provides, how the share of virtue and wisdom possessed by each
person can produce a collective that is better than the few.

What is the nature of the ‘share of virtue and wisdom’ which each needs
to have? In the previous Chapters of this work we have investigated the
moderately virtuous character of the multitude of polity. This moderate virtue
plays an important role in collective deliberation and adjudication. I will
differentiate three senses in which the share of virtue and wisdom of the
individuals of the multitude falls short of complete virtue. The first – the strength
of their virtue in the face of temptation – emerges in a discussion of the claim that
the multitude are partially virtuous and partially vicious and that coming
together makes them hide their viciousness. We will discuss this sense of
partiality, however, only to put it aside, since there are other ways in which the

155 But not, initially, the dêmos. The dêmos is not mentioned until later in the chapter
(1281b16, 3.11.5) when Aristotle makes the objection that not every multitude is the subject of the
collectivity argument. See section 4 on the ‘Purgation’ account, below.
virtue of the multitude of polity is partial. The second is that the virtue and wisdom of the multitude is not fully rationalized. The intellectual virtue of practical wisdom is not fully developed, and thus even those who habitually act correctly can go wrong in difficult cases. The individuals of the multitude are not the best at planning a response. The third is that the individuals of the multitude do not have all the virtues developed completely.

How does ‘coming together’ enable the multitude to make good decisions? I argue, by looking very closely at the analogies presented, that something along the lines of the commonly rejected ‘Summation’ account is the correct account. This is a very minimal account, on which the individuals of the multitude make a judgment in accordance with whatever virtue they might have. This by itself, and not necessarily any public discussion, is sufficient to improve the decision of the group.

To set the scene, recall that the context of the collectivity ‘argument’ is the discussion of competing claims. In 3.10 Aristotle asks where sovereignty would lie if each of the different groups were present in the polis. As we saw in the second Chapter, there are three qualities relevant to the distribution of political honors and different people exhibit these three qualities to different extents. The collectivity ‘argument’ is the strongest argument that could be made on behalf of a multitude. Aristotle is prepared to grant that the argument is sound, at least with respect to some multitudes.
2. Initial Analysis of the Analogies

The collectivity ‘argument’ is given in the following continuous piece of text. Titles for each part (‘The Dinner’ and so on) are provided for the purpose of future reference.

The Claim: “The many, of whom none is individually a good man, nevertheless can, when joined together, be better – not as individuals but all together – than those [who are best] …” (1281a41-b2, 3.11.1)

The Dinner: “… just as dinners contributed [by many] can be better than those equipped from a single expenditure.” (b3-4; see also, 1286a28)

The Parts of Virtue, The Corporation: “For because they are many, each can have a part (morion, share) of virtue and prudence, and on their joining together, the multitude (plêthos) with its many feet and hands and having many senses, becomes like a single human being, and so also with respect to character and mind.” (b4-7)

The Artistic Judges: “Thus the many are also better judges of the works of music and of the poets; some [appreciate] a certain part, and all of them all of the parts.” (b7-10)

The Painting and The Handsome Man: “But it is in this that the excellent men differ from each of the many individually, just as some assert beautiful persons differ from those who are not beautiful, and things painted by art from genuine things, by bringing together things scattered and separated into one; for taken separately, at any rate, this person’s eye will be more beautiful than the painted one, as will another part of another person.” (b10-15)

The first analogy is the Dinner: “dinners contributed [by many] can be better than those equipped from a single expenditure.” Pressing upon this analogy will reveal some of the assumptions that are made in using a joint dinner as a useful analogy for virtue and wisdom.

One obvious supposition that must be made about the analogy is that the single contribution is by itself not sufficient for a complete meal. A very wealthy person could, either for himself or even for a greater number, provide a complete meal. But just as the virtue of the individual members of the multitude is said to
fall short of complete virtue, so the contributions of any one individual must be assumed to be lacking.

Another likely assumption is that each contribution to the dinner provides something edible and not something rotten or poisonous. (For the time being I am assuming that each guest makes an alimentary contribution, rather than contributing his money directly to a central purse.) Most, if not all, know what is good and bad with respect to food and will provide this when he contributes to the meal. A person could, if he were so inclined, deliberately provide a dish that is stale or harmful, but the analogies all assume that each person contributes something beneficial. Hence, in the Parts of Virtue, Aristotle writes that each contributes a part of virtue, not of vice or of both together. This feature of the analogies will be examined further in the next section.

Another feature one might wish to extract is that a central planner is required. Not all meals to which a plurality of people contribute are successful. If we think of our own term for such gatherings, ‘pot-luck’, we realize that few pot-luck dinners in fact are completely a matter of luck. Without planning, there might be an overabundance of salads and not enough sides or desserts. While this might ensure that the meal lacks nothing in quantity, it is lacking in quality.

Whether the necessary variety of contributions can be left to luck or must be the result of communication between participants or of a central planner, I shall consider later. I shall argue that no such planning is intended. However, at this point we can say that in order for the collective meal to be better than the meal provided by the individual, it must be that not everyone provides the same dish and that a variety of dishes are provided. Analogously, if complete virtue
and wisdom or something close to it is the goal of decision-making, it must be
supposed that when Aristotle says that each person can have a share of virtue
and wisdom he means that the individuals do not all have the same share of
virtue and wisdom, and further that between them, the individuals provide a
variety of contributions and indeed all of them, so that their collective virtue and
wisdom equals or exceeds that of the best few.

To summarize the three points that have been made so far: (i) no one is
individually capable of achieving the goal; (ii) everyone contributes something
good; (iii) (at least some of) the contributions vary.

Let us briefly see that these points hold in the other analogies. The
suppositions are made in the Corporation, except that it is more difficult to
imagine what the benefit might be. In the case of the Dinner the advantage of
multiple contribution is a complete meal with different courses and dishes; in the
case of the Corporation the result is a single person with many feet, hands and
senses. What good is an entity of this kind? Any individual has two hands and
two feet and five senses and this seems enough for a single person. Perhaps
Aristotle has in mind the physical activities that the polis or the many can take
on only when gathered together, military activities, for example, such as battle
on the field, the manning of ships and the building of walls. These things are too
great for a single pair of hands or feet. They can be accomplished by many
people working together, which is probably all that is meant by ‘a single
person’.156

156 I return to this difficulty in section 8.
A passage in the discussion of kingship may be of relevance concerning the phrase ‘a single person’. The king makes those who are friendly to his rule into aides and benefits from having their eyes and ears around and about the polis. Kings are unable to be everywhere at once and they “make many eyes for themselves, and ears, feet and hands as well.” (1287b30, 3.16.12) Here, it is clear that there is not one single leviathan, but many separate individuals. However, since all of the aides are friendly to the king they are spoken of as though extensions of him. “If they are not friends,” Aristotle continues, “they will not behave in accordance with the monarch’s intention.”

The further points made about the Dinner are very plausible in the Corporation. If a war involves a multitude of tasks, these will have to be undertaken by different people; it can’t be that everyone performs the same task since conducting a war involves many different activities. Some may be able to do multiple tasks, but no one can do them all. The king’s eyes and ears are of a benefit because they collectively report all of the information required for good governance. Some may witness multiple events, but, like the king, no one can be everywhere at once. Even if it repeats another contribution, each contribution is valuable: A good result cannot be obtained in either case by (e.g.) cowardly action or by false information.

All three points apply fairly straightforwardly with respect to the case of the Artistic Judges. The goal is the complete appreciation of each of the works and a decision as to which is best. This task may be supposed to be beyond the ability of each person individually, since there are too many aspects to the
performances for ordinary people to be sensitive to. Rather, between them all, the multitude can pay attention to all aspects of the performances.

In the other analogies, we find the third and second features – that something good is provided by each and that there is a variety of contributions – almost explicit on the page. The Painting of a man, or an actual Handsome Man, is better than most men due to its aggregation in one place of various fine features collected together. Even though the actual parts are finer than their individual painted counterparts, the fine parts are usually found in different individuals. When brought together by art or by nature, the appearance is improved. The other assumption we have extracted from the other examples is evident here too: ordinary individuals are not by themselves handsome, for they do not possess the many fine features together but only some or one of them.

Two final points to notice about the analogies are the extent of the contribution made by each, and the possibility of duplication of contributions. In pot-luck dinners we might imagine that each person brings a single dish, but of course this is not a fixed limit. The analogies differ in the goal being discussed and so also differ in the contribution that it is possible for the many to make. For example, according to the Corporation, each person contributes hands, feet, and senses to the communal goal. This suggests that all three of these parts of each individual is involved. Even in the Artistic Judges, although Aristotle speaks of each person appreciating a certain part, the individuals may be sensitive to more than one aspect of the performance. By analogy, then, an individual may contribute a plurality of what could otherwise be considered as ‘single’ contributions.
Duplication of contribution by different people also seems unproblematic in most of the analogies, especially those involving a large number of people, a number greater than the number of parts to be provided. If the number of parts is few, then it is likely that many people will bring the same contribution, especially if they contribute more than one of the parts (but not all). In short, there might well be overlap in the contribution made. In the Painting, however, only one nose and only one mouth can be copied from real life. Thus even if the painting is based on the features of as few as two people, the nose and mouth of one of them is unemployed. (Indeed, if we stipulate that there are 10 parts to a face, at most ten people will make a contribution.) When it comes to political decision-making, both plurality of contributions and duplication of contributions seem unproblematic. There is nothing which says that only a limited number of individuals can make a contribution, nor is there anything which says that a given individual can only make a single contribution. It is quite acceptable to have overlapping contributions.¹⁵⁷ These features of the analogies will prove important as we go along.

¹⁵⁷ What is more, all who are eligible will want to be included, as a matter of autonomy. Whatever number of people there are, this is the right number to represent their good. The judgment of the poem or play just is the judgment of however many judge the work, and the larger the number the better the decision will accurately reflect the work, provided they each have some competence. Likewise, those who are involved in the decision-making decide for themselves – ‘for’ in the sense of ‘decide what will happen to themselves’ – and the greater the number the more the decision will accurately reflect the relevant value-judgments of the issue. With this interpretation in mind the Corporation may be viewed similarly: The number who fight are the number who realize they have something at stake, and the greater the number who take part the better their chance of victory, provided they all have some competence. The Dinner too can be seen to depend on good contributions from many individuals. The number of mouths to be fed make necessary a contribution from everyone. By analogy, the goal of leading the good life, which is the same for polis and individual, requires that those who are capable exercise their capacity for decision-making and perform their function as a citizen.
In general when we apply these same three features to an example of collective action, we would expect to find some goal that cannot be accomplished by each of the members individually, but which can be achieved by a multitude of individuals, making (at least sometimes) non-identical, positive, contributions. Turning to political judgment, specifically, the goal is the correct decision, or at least, a decision as good as the ‘best few’. This cannot be accomplished by any one of the multitude, but can somehow be achieved by the multitude together.

Various different accounts have been discussed and proposed in the literature according to which the many might come to have virtue and wisdom:

**Summation of Interests:** Each person represents his interest. A good decision is made by each person voting for what is in his interest or what seems right to him. (Discussed by Waldron)

**Purgation:** Being in public makes each person present only his good side. (Risse\(^{158}\))

**Summation:** Since everyone has a small share of virtue and wisdom, the virtue and wisdom of the collective is as great as that of the best few. The collective virtue and wisdom is the worth of each added together. (Discussed by Keyt)

**Dialogical:** Collective deliberation encourages individuals to modify their thinking when confronted with the arguments of others. The result is a refinement of views in a fashion similar to Aristotle’s own dialectic method. (Waldron\(^{159}\))

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\(^{158}\) According to Risse (2001) this repression then allows the individuals to “embark on a process of mutual stimulation and correction” which “encourages the rational part of the soul to develop.” (p. 65) Thus the latter part of Risse’s theory appears to be a Dialogical Account – see just below.

\(^{159}\) Waldron (1995) suggests but rejects the view that what happens is that each individual finds out “from each other how each person’s well-being may be affected by the matter under consideration” (p. 568) Individuals may then vote in a manner which takes account not only of their own interests, but the interests of others. It’s not terribly clear to me how this approach differs from his favored ‘dialectical’ approach. Other difficulties with Waldron’s particular account are omitted here. Instead I discuss a generic version of the Dialogical Account, below.
Synthesizing Mind: A single person brings together all of the considerations advanced and makes a decision.

I will argue that the correct way to interpret Aristotle’s analogies is most akin to the much-maligned ‘Summation of Virtues’ account. However, I begin by discussing the Purgation account.

3. Purgation

The ‘interests’ in the Summation of Interests account could be self-interests, interests which (at least some of the time) do not in accordance with a ‘share of virtue and wisdom’ but would endorse measures that go against the common good. The Summation of Interests account would then contradict the Parts of Virtue, which, as we said in the previous section, assumes that everyone makes a positive contribution.

The Summation of Interests account, however, does raise a basic issue: If each makes a positive contribution, how does this positive element emerge from amongst the individual’s less virtuous characteristics? Aren’t we are dealing with those who are a mixture of good and bad? Speaking of the Artistic Judges, Mulgan suggests that “it makes equally good sense to say that the group misunderstands the whole.”\(^{160}\) Miller worries about collective irrationality. If we are correct in thinking that each brings something positive to the collective, as indeed Aristotle suggests when he says that each has a share of virtue, then we also need to ask how this positive element emerges from amongst the

individual’s total character, prior to asking how the virtue of each is to be combined.\textsuperscript{161}

Mathias Risse likewise assumes a positive answer to the second question – the multitude is assumed to be partly vicious – and his Purgation account is an attempt to address this problem. To this end, Risse cites a passage from the \textit{Rhetoric} (1399a29, 2.23.16\textsuperscript{162}) where Aristotle says that when in public, people approve of matters of justice and nobleness while in their hearts they prefer their advantage. Risse suggests that the public nature of the deliberation keeps whatever vices the individuals have from appearing in public. Support for Risse’s Purgation model might come from the end of the \textit{Nicomachean Ethics} where Aristotle notes that words themselves move only minds already “truly enamored of what is noble” (\textit{NE} 1179b10, 10.9) while the many must be habituated by fear and punishment rather than by shame. But the multitude of a polity is not quite like this.

Note first that since the analogies assume that each individual puts forward only something good in each case – a dish (or money), a mass of people capable (for example) of military action or of perception, sensitivity to a work or art, a fine physical feature – Purgation is a preliminary stage to what Aristotle describes with his analogies. Risse indeed goes on to add a Dialogical Account to his discussion of Purgation. But is purgation even a preliminary stage to the

\textsuperscript{161} Miller (1995) p. 262

\textsuperscript{162} The book-chapter-section reference is to Freese’s Loeb edition. A footnote directs the reader to \textit{On Sophistical Refutations} 2.12.
collective virtue and wisdom of the multitude? The Purgation account conceives of the individuals involved as a mix of good and bad, rather than imperfect in the sense of incomplete. The *Rhetoric* is discussing the democratic multitude, but Aristotle is not here, in 3.11 talking about every multitude. Only certain multitudes are capable of collective virtue and wisdom. Such multitudes, I think, are not partly vicious.

We shall examine the issue of virtue and vice in a moment (and further in the next section), but first I want to support the claim that the multitude by whom the collectivity ‘argument’ is satisfied is not any democratic multitude but the multitude of a polity. In order to see this, it is important to understand the dialectic of these middle chapters of book 3. There is, to begin, a question about the relative merits of the different groups, which Aristotle poses by imagining that the various different types are simultaneously present. The many, for their part, could claim that they ought to be sovereign in virtue of the collectivity ‘argument’. After providing the analogies, Aristotle protests (or, at least, reports a protest) that the analogies cannot be good, because some multitudes are no better than animals. Aristotle partially endorses and partially rejects the objection. “[N]othing prevents what was said from being true of a certain kind of multitude” he says, (1281b21, 3.11.5) where each individual has a share of wisdom and virtue.

He then goes on to consider a related but separate matter, namely, “over what [matters] free persons or the multitude of the citizens (these being whoever is neither wealthy nor has any claim at all deriving from virtue) should have authority.” (1281b23, 3.11.6) In order to make the case for the admission of such
multitudes, Aristotle must bolster the argument which he endorsed previously in the case of the semi-virtuous multitude. He adds further considerations to the original argument that the better few will deliberate alongside the multitude. One pragmatic reason is that if they are not included the polis will be ‘full of enemies’ (1281b30, 3.11.7). Given the presence of an unvirtuous multitude of significant political clout, Aristotle admits that a democracy is the only reasonable outcome, though one may hope to restrict the power of the multitude by hoping that the best few will in effect make decisions and by giving the assembly the power only to elect and audit officials, even though these are the most authoritative offices. (1282a24-41, 3.11.15-18) The idealistic statesman or legislator for whom this result is distressing may be consoled by the hope that the poor multitude will be too busy earning a living to pay much attention to politics. (See Politics 6.4)

Moreover, he says that adding the many will add ‘roughage’ to the decision. “For all of them when joined together have adequate perception and, once mixed with those who are better, bring benefit to cities, just as impure sustenance mixed with the pure makes the whole more useful than the small amount of the latter, but each separately is incomplete (ateîs) with respect to judging.” (1281b35-38, 3.11.9) Notice that Aristotle does not mention that the multitude, individually, have a part of virtue and wisdom, but rather that they have sufficient perception. Animals have perception and only perception, and

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163 See fn. 1, above, for another sign that the context has changed. Lindsay (1992) notices this change in tone mid-way through the passage. He continues, however, to think that both parts concern democracy, with the second supplanting the first, rather than recognizing that the
they perceive pleasure and pain and express it in their voice. Human beings have “a perception of good and bad and just and unjust and other things” (1253a17, 1.2.12) which is why they naturally have speech, rather than mere voice. Moreover, human beings express their reasoning through speech, the reason which the emotions should obey if they are not unruly. As we noted above, Aristotle registers the objection that some multitudes are little better than animals. So, the switch from virtue to perception in the course of 3.11 indicates that the multitude under consideration has changed from a multitude of individuals with partial virtue to a multitude of lesser ability. The whole ‘roughage’ passage seems to be put forward here as a concessionary advantage of the pragmatically necessary inclusion of the democratic multitude.

The multitude of polity are involved not just in elections and audits but in decision-making about substantive issues, as we saw in Chapter 3 concerning the ways of establishing a stable mixture or rich and poor. Of the democratic multitude Aristotle writes that “it would not be safe to have them participate in the most important offices, since because of their lack of justice and practical wisdom, they would inevitably act unjustly in some instances and make mistakes in others.” (1281b28, 3.11.7) The many of polity may lack complete virtue but it seems that they nonetheless have sufficient justice and wisdom to function as citizens and office-holders.\(^{164}\)

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\(^{164}\) Whether the multitude are eligible for individual offices will depend on the precise nature of the constitution, especially on whether or not the wealthier citizens are distinguished...
In the Roughage passage, the many are deliberating alongside the best few. One might think from this that the best few are necessary for the deliberation of the multitude of polity to reach acceptable standards. To be clear, while the better few will be present in the deliberation and adjudication of the partially virtuous multitude; the difference is that in their case this is not necessary for the success of their argument. We are interested in the multitude which by itself can match the virtue of the latter. This forms a polity, a rule of the many in the common interest. The other multitudes are the bases for particular kinds of democracy.

In sum, the multitude being discussed in the analogies is not first and foremost the democratic multitude, but that of a polity, which is superior to the democratic. All of the analogies employ contributions that are positive and Aristotle does not seem to worry about repressing the vicious attributes of the members of the multitude. At the end of the Chapter I shall return (briefly) to this issue, to suggest that, given my explanation of the analogies and political decision-making by the multitude, thinking of the members of the multitude as a mix of virtue and vice raises a substantial risk of people making a decision based on vice, even though they are in public.

What are the individuals of the multitude of polity like, compared with

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165 The necessity of co-deliberation is the claim made by Lindsay (1992) who suggests that Aristotle does not simply wish to restrict the argument of the analogies to ‘certain multitudes’ but fundamentally rejects it. (p. 105) Collective deliberation cannot be achieved “absent an additional “mixing” with “those who are better”.” (p. 107) Taylor (2002) appears to endorse this position. (p. 250, 1)
those of the democratic multitude, on the one hand, and with the ‘best few’ on the other? We will discuss the share of virtue and wisdom of the many in detail in the next section. In the remainder of this section I am concerned to argue that the many are not also vicious. I do this by looking at the benefit of incorruptibility and try to show that there is more to the coming together of the multitude than the failure of the multitude to be corrupted all at the same time.

According to the Purgation account, an advantage of bringing the many together is the repression of their vices. When they appear in public, the many are not so corrupt. Aristotle explicitly addresses the possibly of corruption in a later discussion concerning kingship, but the incorruptibility there is not the same as envisaged by the Purgation Model. In the discussion of kingship Aristotle turns to the problem of law versus the judgment of human beings. Some say that law is better because it does not contain an emotional part (to pathétikon). Those in favor of kingship point out that even so, law is general and must be applied to particular situations. Aristotle next asks whether application should be by one man or by all.

Any one of them taken singly is perhaps inferior in comparison [to the best man]; but the city is made up of many persons, just as a feast to which many contribute is finer than a single and simple one, and on this account a crowd also judges many matters better than any single person. Further, what is many is more incorruptible: like a greater amount of water, the multitude are more incorruptible than the few. The judgment of a single person is necessarily corrupted when he is dominated by anger or some other passion of this sort, whereas it is hard for all to become angry and err at the same time. (1286a26-b8, 3.15.7-8)

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166 Risse (2001) p. 65
The ‘greater number’ in this discussion are not ‘the many’ but rather a virtuous multitude, and so we find Aristotle making a similar claim as in our target text – that together they may match the virtue of the few, in this case not the best few of 3.11 but an even smaller number, the would-be king – and using the Dinner analogy as before. The aristocratic multitude, being many, are collectively less corruptible, by an analogy with water.

In the Purgation model each of the many act better than they would when not in public, but there is no explicit mention, either in the collectivity ‘argument’ (3.11) or the discussion of kingship (3.15), of incorruptibility being the result of being in public. In these texts, the incorruptibility of the groups is simply a function of there being a multitude of different individuals. Aristotle says that it is unlikely that the individuals involved will be simultaneously overcome by passion. In the Purgation model, by contrast, the decrease in corruptibility comes by being in each other’s presence, which restrains vices. Incorruptibility of a group because of number is consistent with the members of multitudes being partially virtuous (3.11) or virtuous (3.15) or vicious in part. ( (Partial) virtue makes it even less likely that they are all overcome by anger or temptation (and so on) at the same time.) Thus the incorruptibility of multitudes due to number seems to be of a different type from incorruptibility of multitudes due to publicity.

Nonetheless, the individuals of the multitude are probably more corruptible than the aristocrats. As we saw in Chapter 2, philosophy is required to secure virtue. This is one sense in which the virtue and wisdom of the individuals of the multitude is partial. But this need not mean they are self-
interest people whose are restrained only by being in public. For Risse, the members of multitudes are able to express what is good and bad, but when not in public are likely to express what is good or bad for them, rather than for the whole polis. Thus Risse thinks that the benefit of coming together to deliberate lies in that fact that such people are constrained by not wanting to appear base in front of their peers. The many for whom the collectivity argument will work are superior to these.

One author suggests that even the democratic many are to be contrasted with both the virtuous and the wealthy rather than with the vicious. They are those who have no particular claim on either of these grounds (virtue, wealth), yet who can put forward the claim of native free birth. They are not “wholly bad” or directly opposite to the best but rather are ordinary or average. The multitude of polity are better yet. The characteristics of the citizens of polity that we have been able to bring together contradict the idea that the multitude of 3.11 are wolves in sheep’s clothing. We have seen in Chapters 2-5 that the individuals of the multitude in question have military virtue, as well as justice and moderation, are moderately wealthy and are not unjust because of wealth, seeking office continuously so that they might pursue their own interests. Each person is inclined to ensure that the decision made is in the common interest and not in his own interest. This is the virtue of the private citizen from the opening of 4.11, someone who lacks the peak of goods of fortune and does not have an education in virtue. The virtue of a private citizens is not adopted out of fear, but

neither out of an awareness of the goal of life as described in the NE and a concern for complete virtue. Rather it is a life of hoplite activity and peaceable pursuit of material goods, a (partially) virtuous life with limits on wealth and freedom.

Further, (and even if the foregoing distinction between types of incorruptibility is incorrect) in the discussion of kingship and law the greater incorruptibility of the virtuous number is a separate advantage from the fact that they make a positive contribution to improved judgment. The greater incorruptibility of the group is said to be a “further” consideration, indicating that corruptibility is a separate point. If we assume that the same holds in the case of the partly virtuous multitude, it would not be the case that all there is to collective virtue is the elimination of negative aspects of character, passions which might be incited to anger and lead to corruption of judgment. Thus there is something more to the benefit of collective decision-making than the fact that the collective is less corruptible.

4. The Best Few

In coming together, individuals who are neither wealthy nor excellent become a group which is both wealthy and virtuous. Aristotle notes in passing (1283b31, 3.13.10) that collectively their wealth may surpass that of the wealthy, but he is concerned here primarily with ‘virtue and (practical) wisdom’ since, as

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Reeve (1998) _ad loc_ translates ‘Besides, …’
we saw in Chapter 2, it is this that will make their argument in the debate over power strongest.

Practical wisdom is said to have three applications: concerning personal matters, concerning household matters, and concerning political matters, and within the political domain, political wisdom (as Ostwald calls it, note ad loc), covers both legislation and its application in particular circumstances. (NE 1141b25-8, 6.8) We shall assume that in polity the law rules and that the citizens only employ their virtue and wisdom to particular cases. More concretely, we can think of the citizens meeting to discuss those matters “concerning war and peace, alliances and their dissolution, laws, [judicial cases carrying penalties of] death or exile or confiscation, and the choosing and auditing of officials.” (1298a3, 4.14.3)\(^{169}\)

For a description of the individual of virtue and wisdom, we must turn to the *Nicomachean Ethics* and especially to book 6, where the relationship of the ethical virtues to practical wisdom is described. Practical wisdom involves both the capacity of seeing what is good for human beings and working out how to bring it about. Practical wisdom, looking to the overall goal of life, decides what is to be done in the particular situation and then thinks about how to bring about the result by working backwards from the state to be achieved to something that can be done in the present.

\(^{169}\) *Rhetoric* 1359b19, 1.4 lists “ways and means [i.e. sources of revenue, b25], war and peace, national defence, imports and exports, and legislation” as the most important topics of deliberation.
Practical wisdom differs from cleverness in that a person can be clever while aiming at what is base. A person’s character ensures that his cleverness aims at virtue. (NE 1144a23 ff., 6.12) It is his virtue that directs the person who is deliberating about the overall goal of life or about what to do in a particular situation so that he looks towards virtue and not to some other goal, such as honor or wealth. This overall goal is, properly, a life of virtue, both ethical and intellectual, as described in the ethical works. I suggested at the end of Chapter 2 that the aim of polity is the same, except that it lacks the intellectual and cultural aspects.

To give a pertinent example, holding office might provide one with access to common funds. The unjust or otherwise unvirtuous person will be tempted by this, and he will deliberate about how to secure (some of) them for himself. If he is clever, he will succeed. The just person, on the other hand, will ‘see’ in his position an opportunity for public good, and his deliberation (his practical wisdom) will be directed towards this.

The virtuous person, as he is described in the ethical works, because he has every virtue of character, is correctly sensitive to every aspect of a given situation and employs his practical reason to decide what action will best bring about the appropriate response to the situation, looking toward the overall good. In some sense, then, the completely virtuous person never goes wrong about what to do in a given situation.
Let this stand as a basic understanding of virtue and wisdom in the virtuous individual.\textsuperscript{170} What, now, of those to whom the multitude is compared? Aristotle reports the claim that the many can be better than “those who are best”.\textsuperscript{171} If a ‘best’ person is an excellent or virtuous person, then ‘those who are best’ are people of the quality of the citizens of aristocracy.

Is a best individual in this context a person of complete virtue and wisdom as described in the ethical works? Recall (from Chapter 5) that aristocracy is the regime where the good citizen is a good man, ruling in accordance with virtue. (1277a14-25, 3.4.7-9) This claim is repeated in 3.15, where such people are further described as being “excellent in soul.” (1286a38, b3, 3.15.9, 10) When these people deliberate together they are to be preferred to one acting as king, and the same kind of collectivity argument as is used concerning the multitude is used here to argue that more of such people is better than only one of them deliberating alone. Even virtuous individuals are subject to error and corruption. Every person, it seems, except perhaps a divine individual, is subject to passion. “Spiritedness perverts rulers and the best men.” (1287a30,


\textsuperscript{171} The comparison has just been made to those who are “best but few” 1281a40, 3.11.1, and at 1281b15, 3.11.5 we are told that “Whether this difference between the many and the few excellent (\textit{spoudaios}) can exist in he case of every people and every multitude is not clear.”
3.16.5. See also 1286a16, 3.15.5) These problems are ameliorated by having many of them deliberate together. (1286a27-35, 3.15.7-8)\textsuperscript{172}

Thus it seems that the best few are the aristocratic multitude, who are the citizens of the best regime in books 7 and 8.\textsuperscript{173} However, if the few best are individually, or even collectively, of complete virtue, then it would be impossible for the virtue and wisdom of the multitude to better the virtue and wisdom of the few. And this Aristotle does assert more than once, first in the initial claim and again in chapter 13, where he writes that “nothing prevents the multitude from being at some point better than the few and the wealthier—not as individuals but taken together.” (1283b33-5, 3.13.10)\textsuperscript{174} If the virtue and wisdom of the multitude can exceed the virtue and wisdom of the few, then (at least some) polity would be the best possible regime, not kingship or aristocracy.

In response, I take it that Aristotle is assuming that not only are there multitudes of different quality but also various ‘best few’s that can likewise vary

\textsuperscript{172} Perhaps another reason for lowering the virtue of the virtuous is that Aristotle suggests that the democratic multitude can be “mixed with those who are better” because “each separately is incomplete with respect to judging.” (1281b37, 3.11.9) (See also 1298b20, 4.14.12: “All will deliberate better when they do so in common—the people with the notables and these with the multitude.” However, the ‘notables’ here seem fairly straightforwardly to be the rich.) If the few here are the virtuous rather than the rich, then it seems that even when making decisions collectively, the virtuous few are improved, bizarrely, by the presence of a democratic multitude. Aristotle’s point seems to be that it is possible that the virtuous pursue virtue for themselves when there are others, of lesser virtue, whose interests must be taken into consideration. That these people have power enough to force their way into government is unfortunate, but acknowledgement of them is necessary for the stability of the polis, as discussed in the previous section.

\textsuperscript{173} Another reason for supposing that the comparison class here is the best few might be that a (democratic) multitude, elsewhere in chapter 11, is also ranked against experts (in this case, experts on choosing and auditing offices: “for each individually will be a worse judge than those who know, but all when joined together will be either better or not worse” (1282a16, 3.11.14)

\textsuperscript{174} Even the democratic multitude (of which more in section 4) provided it is not overly slavish, will “be either better or no worse.” (1282a16, 3.11.14)
in quality. This variability in the quality of the groups being considered makes things difficult because less determinate. I think we can interpret the claim that ‘the’ multitude can exceed ‘the’ best few as meaning rather that some (high quality) multitude can exceed some (not so high quality) best few.\textsuperscript{175} It follows that the few of lesser quality lacks, either individually or perhaps even collectively, complete virtue and wisdom.

However, it does not follow that when the virtue and wisdom of the many exceed the virtue of such ‘best few’s that they achieve the complete virtue and wisdom. I shall explain later why I think that, indeed, they \textit{can not} match the virtue and wisdom of the perfectly virtuous person.\textsuperscript{176} We shall need to investigate how the multitude can, for all their collective virtue and wisdom, sometimes go wrong.

5. \textit{A Share of Virtue and Wisdom}

In this section, I shall continue to spell out a description of the ‘share of virtue and wisdom’ which constitutes the contribution of the citizens of polity. I shall do this by continuing to discuss the relationship of ethical virtue to practical wisdom and the ways in which these can be partial. The first way in which the

\textsuperscript{175} We saw in Chapter 2 that the very best ‘best few’, the aristocracy of book 7, will espouse actively ‘philosophy’, whereas no polity does. It is doubtful the ‘best few’ with which Aristotle is dealing in book 3 are such an ideal few. For if so, then this is an immediate and striking sense in which the decision-making of \textit{any} multitude of polity \textit{cannot} exceed or even march the virtue and wisdom of the multitude of aristocracy.

\textsuperscript{176} Some commentators assume that the many must achieve complete virtue and wisdom and so argue that they must form some sort of group mind. This, I think, is a mistake. I return to this issue in a later section.
virtue of the individuals of the multitude is partial was mentioned above. The individuals of the multitude are susceptible to corruption, more so than the aristocrats, but are not partly vicious or self-interested as are the democratic multitude.

A second kind of partiality concerns the different ethical virtues as part of virtue, which is tied to the third, which is partiality of wisdom. Aristotle uses a distinction between complete virtue (or Virtue, capital-v-virtue) and the virtues (small-v-virtue): the parts of Virtue are the virtues. Thus we can say, for example, that the virtuous person has a plurality of virtues, these being the ethical and intellectual virtues as described in the ethical works. However, when Aristotle speaks of ‘virtue and wisdom’, by ‘virtue and wisdom’ he means ethical virtue and practical wisdom, and by ‘ethical virtue’ (singular) he means the ethical virtues (plural). By ‘virtues’ from now on I shall mean the ethical virtues.

As was mentioned in the previous section, on the account of the virtues from the ethical works, it is not possible, strictly speaking, for an individual to be generous (say) and not friendly. Without all of the virtues and practical wisdom, no individual virtue (either ethical virtue or practical wisdom) is complete. This is because of the mutual interdependence of practical wisdom and virtue. If we have not been properly habituated to have virtuous emotions, then we will deliberate incorrectly both about the overall end of life and, consequently, about how to achieve it. “Vice perverts us produces false views about the origins of actions.” (NE 1144a35, 6.12) Moreover, if we live by our emotions alone and have not learned to listen to reason, we will not benefit from hearing his lectures on ethics. (NE 1095a5, 10, 1.3; cf. 1179b10-19, 27, 1180a10-18, 10.9) In this way,
practical wisdom requires the virtues.

The virtues also require practical wisdom, because practical wisdom determines what our action in response should be. A fully virtuous person will reason, ultimately, from the most general (moral) principles, that is, from a knowledge of the good life for human beings. More particular moral principles are also employed in localized situations. In the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle provides the following rather specific example, from Euripides’ *Medea*:

Never should any man whose wits are sound
Have his sons taught more wisdom than their fellows.

[Aristotle comments:] Here we have a maxim; add the reason or explanation, and the whole thing is an enthymeme; thus [Euripides continues] —

It makes them idle; and therewith they earn Ill-will and jealousy throughout the city.\textsuperscript{177}

This is an example of a quite specific moral principle but the same is true for more general moral principles. It is also an example of moral reasoning being expressed *explicitly*. Being virtuous, however, is not only a matter of being presented (either by oneself or others) with reasons. If this were the case, then children could be moral geniuses, but children lack an adequate grasp of what each of the virtues requires. (*NE* 1142a15, 6.9; 1143b11, 6.12)

We can thus talk about ‘virtues (plural) and wisdom (*singular*)’ because, while the ethical virtues are distinct emotional responses, the practical wisdom that each of the virtues employs, *ideally* is the same, single, practical wisdom. As we shall see, however, practical wisdom suffers the same fracturing as the virtues.

\textsuperscript{177} Rh 1394a33, 2.21.2. The lines cited are Euripides’ *Medea* 294-7
Virtue and wisdom travel together, though Aristotle allows that there is a derivative sense of the word ‘virtue’ which indicates correct action without wisdom. ‘Natural virtue’ may be ascribed to children and beasts, and in the case of natural virtue it makes sense to speak of having one virtue without another. However, while natural virtue might be a good start, it is not infallible, as it lacks wisdom. Aristotle writes that “Without intelligence they [the natural virtues] are evidently harmful ... just as a heavy body moving around unable to see suffers a heavy fall because it has no sight, so it is with virtue.” (NE 1144b9-12, 6.13) The overall conclusion is thus that no virtue is complete without practical wisdom, but someone who possesses practical wisdom (that is, cleverness directed at the right goal) possesses all of the other virtues. (NE 1145a1, 6.13)

In the Politics Aristotle also applies the word ‘virtue’ in a looser sense, though not the sense of natural virtue. He writes that the citizens of kingship and aristocracy are said to be proficient with a view to the whole of virtue, whereas “it is difficult for the greater number to perfect every virtue”. (1279a39, 3.7.4) On the view espoused in the NE, such a sentence is impossible. If a person has military virtue, then that person has practical wisdom, and if a person has practical wisdom then he has all of the ethical virtues. When he says that it is difficult to perfect every virtue, and also that courage is the virtue that it is easiest for most to have, Aristotle seems willing to apply ‘virtue’ to individual virtues in isolation.

What is such a virtue like, compared with virtue strictly understood? We must explain what the ethical aspect is like and what the practical wisdom is like. In Chapter 2, I raised the issue of whether the military virtue that is ascribed to
the citizens of polity is somehow greater or more developed than the justice and moderation that accompanies it. It is not clear exactly what we should say in response to this question. In what follows, I give one way that degrees of virtue might be distinguished, into habitual and partial virtue.

We have mentioned already the objection in the text to the collectivity ‘argument’, that it will not work for some multitudes because they are little more than animals. (1281b20, 3.11.5) This statement reminds us of Aristotle’s famous declaration that human beings are ‘political animals’, a passage we touched on briefly above. Although human beings are gregarious like some other animal species, they are more political. Humans possess speech, by which they may articulate the just and the beneficial and their opposites, as opposed to mere voice, by which is indicated pleasure and pain “for this is particular to mankind with respect to other animals, possessing perception of good and bad and just and unjust and so on, and a community in these makes a household and a polis.” (1253a8-18, 1.2.11-12)

This distinctly human perception is distinctly moral in nature. Waldron makes a distinction between the factual aspect of perception and the moral aspect. Because of the complexity of actual circumstances, many eyes and ears can help with the former.¹⁷⁸ We may think here of the king’s ‘eyes and ears’ – friends of the constitution appointed by the king – which allow the king to be, in some sense, in many places at once. (1287b29, 3.16.12) The king, or whoever is making the decision, also perceives the situation to be of a certain value. It may

¹⁷⁸ Waldron (1995) p. 568
be a matter of fact that the enemy’s ships are reported advancing but there is also an emotional and an evaluative reaction to this news – fear and a decision about what to do.

This distinctly human perception is also distinctly social in nature. An individual does not perceive only what is good or bad for him, but what is good or bad for him in relation to others. This is most obvious in perceiving what is just and unjust, as justice is a four-part relation, involving the goods to be distributed and the parties to whom they are to be distributed. (See NE 5.3 and 5.5) By adding ‘and so on’ to ‘the good and the bad and justice and injustice’, Aristotle indicates that there is speech associated with each of the virtues.

A person’s moral development begins with his natural inclinations, which are molded by the influence of family and society. A child’s character may naturally mean the he acts correctly in some respect, but the actions that he does in life are most likely directed by others and these actions “determine what kind of characteristics are developed.” (NE 1103b30, 2.2; cf. 1104a12, 2.2 and in general 2.1-3) Following the Plato quote at the top of this Chapter, we can call ‘habitual virtue’. Habitual virtue is natural virtue for adults who have been raised in a well-ordered society, though not one which is aristocratic or philosophical. Habitual virtue includes what Aristotle is calling here ‘(moral) perception’. It is an unrationalized disposition to act in accordance with reason but not, as Aristotle emphasizes concerning complete virtue, with reason. (NE 1144b25, 6.13) Someone with a habitual virtue will be able to respond appropriately to uncomplicated cases where the habituated response is the correct one.

A well brought up person might become such that he often perceives
what the correct thing to do is and *acts* well, but still, for Aristotle, something is lacking. He does not understand the reasons which make the action he takes the correct action. In the fully virtuous person, practical wisdom involves an understanding of the good for human beings which explains *why* a given is correct, not only *that* it is correct.

Moral perception is not decision-making properly speaking, even within the individual. A person perceives the goodness or badness, justice or injustice of particular situations. From experience of these (moral) particulars a person comes to understand general (moral) principles. As we mature morally we develop from creatures who *act* (as animals are said to act) into creatures who *choose* in accordance with principles. Moral understanding depends on the individual’s (natural and/or habitual) character. As we saw in Chapter 4, for example, the child who is spoiled becomes grasping, and as his reason (or at least, his cleverness) develops, it is corrupted by his desire for gain. The rich person comes to perceive justice as involving the rich getting more, and he forms a similar moral principle. “Since the goal of life is for the rich to benefit, this action is appropriate,” he thinks to himself.

Perhaps, then, when Aristotle uses the term ‘virtue’ of those with military virtue, he means to indicate not just habitual virtue but a wisdom concerning military activity lying between perception and fully integrated practical wisdom. Call this kind of virtue ‘partial virtue’. Specifically, a person with partial virtue

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179 Waldron (1995) takes man as a speaking being to be communicating “experiences and insights”. (p. 577) But this, I believe, overstates the ability. Rather the perception is of a particular, being of the kind ‘*This* is just’. 219
will understand the ‘why’ with respect to the domain of some ethical trait or
traits but not the whole of virtue (and so the understanding that they do have is
partial both in the sense of having a limited domain and in being defective with
respect to judgment.) Those who have even a partial virtue (or virtues, but not
complete virtue), have a more sophisticated understanding of what the situation
may require. They are people who are aware of reasons behind a certain type of
action.

This understanding provides the partially virtuous person with the
potential for a more nuanced response when confronted with a given situation
which triggers a response from the partial virtue(s) he has. The citizens of a polis
may hear a report that an enemy army has set out to attack. In response to this
news, the citizens may want to march out to confront the enemy, and their desire
to fight is an indication of their courage, or so it seems.\(^{180}\) However, a better
decision in this case may not be to take the battle to the enemy – perhaps a
retreat behind the polis’ walls is best, or, if the approaching force is
overwhelming, to negotiate for surrender. If one understands (and has
internalized) that the reason for courage is (let us say) to secure the continuation
of the polis, then one will be able to respond appropriately when the typical
response of marching out to war is inappropriate.

Partial virtue is to be contrasted with the virtue of the aristocrats. The

\(^{180}\) One is reminded here of an obscure passage from the \textit{NE} (1149a25ff, 7.6) concerning
\textit{akrasia} (weakness of will) through anger. Anger listens inattentively to reason, “like over-hasty
servants who run out before they have heard all their instructions, and then carry them out
wrongly, or dogs who bark at any noise at all, before investigating to see if it is a friend.” Some
people need only to realize that they have been belittled before rushing off to seek redress,
heedless of reason.
virtue of the individuals of the ‘best few’ is better developed. They have a number of ethical virtues, if not all of them, and have a practical wisdom that integrates these virtues. Recall, however, from the previous section that the best few who are compared with the multitude cannot be perfectly virtuous individuals. The individuals of the best multitudes can be supposed to be close in virtue to individuals of the least ‘best few’s.

Whether or not we can ultimately make this distinction of partial virtue from habitual virtue, I propose that when Aristotle speaks of ‘a share of virtue and wisdom’, he means that virtue that a person has. This virtue is his virtues, both habitual and partial. Because wisdom ideally concerns all of the ethical virtues, the wisdom of the multitude (individually) is not complete, where ‘complete’ here would be the wisdom of a person decides and acts with a view to the highest good.

What virtues do the multitude, individually, have? We know that Aristotle thinks the many are competent with respect to military virtue. (1279b1, 3.7.4; see also 1265b28, 2.6.16 and 1288a16, 3.17.4) This widespreadness is perhaps because the reason for military activity is easiest to intuit from particulars: courage is necessary in order to defend the state against enemies. Everyone recognizes this and considers better and worse ways to do so and also habituates himself emotionally for military action. At the same time, (as we saw in Chapter 2,) the individuals of the multitude have justice and moderation.

The analogies suggest, however, (i) that not everyone makes the same contribution and (ii) that all of the virtues are accounted for. The Dinner is made complete by the multitude together providing the various dishes required to
make a good meal. By analogy, in decision-making the multitude individually have different shares of virtue and wisdom. It looks, therefore, as though Aristotle is (ii) talking about the complete range of virtues and (i) that these are present in (at least some) different people. The analogies suggest that since no one is capable of the goal by himself, there are different contributions from (at least some) different individuals. The main concern of the argument is that all of the parts necessary for a given goal are gathered together in one place. The goal here is the virtue and wisdom of a not perfectly excellent ‘best’ few. These, individually, present multiple virtues and collectively present them all.

Practical wisdom and the ethical virtues are intimately related, as we have just seen. There is, however, a way in which practical wisdom is independent of the ethical virtues, and we turn briefly to it. Practical wisdom works out how to act in response to the situation. Moral perception tells us whether something is good or bad or just or unjust but reason alone tells us how to achieve what virtue suggests as the goal (and wisdom endorses). We must, as Aristotle puts it, consider which ways and means will bring us most easily and most finely to the end, working backwards until we arrive at something that can be done in the present circumstances. (NE 1112b16, 3.3)

Aristotle thinks that this practical planning is an exercise of practical wisdom and that people can perform it with different degrees of success. The non-perfection of the ethical virtues can lead people to be corrupted. The non-perfection of wisdom, on the other hand, leads people into error.\footnote{Speaking of democratic people, Aristotle writes that it is not safe to have them hold power.} It is possible
to be correct in one’s moral evaluation of the situation but to go wrong in making the appropriate response. Aristotle distinguishes three varieties of practical wisdom, concerning the self, the household and the polis. (NE 6.8) Presumably the latter is most difficult, as it requires being able to see the effects of one’s actions over a greater number of people and more complex situations. One cause of error as well as corruption might be the experience needed in ethics and politics. Aristotle states that practical wisdom is not found among the young, as it requires experience of particulars and not only of universals. While mathematical objects are reached through abstraction, the wisdom that allows one to evaluate particulars comes from experience. (NE 1142a13 ff, 6.8; see also 1143b6 ff, 6.11 concerning the ‘eye’ of practical wisdom.)

Another cause of error might be dealing simultaneously with the many aspects of a situation. In both moral evaluation and practical planning, it is important that the individual be fully informed. Our judgment as to whether a situation is dangerous or requires generosity, and so on, will turn on the particulars of the case. Similarly, our judgment about what to do in response will depend on the particulars of the situation. If we have limited weapons, or limited wealth, then courage or generosity may take one form rather than another. This kind of information is shared in assembly and jury. In the court, the two sides present their cases in one or two speeches, telling the listeners what happened. The importance of the particulars is evident from the fact that the two sides (acting badly) may advance different information in the hope of promoting a individual offices, as “they would act unjustly in some respects and err in others.” (1281b27, 3.11)
favorable judgment. In the assembly, this is also the case. Those in favor of an expedition will point to the riches to be gained and omit or play down the dangers. The judges, in order to make a good decision, must know the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

Even with complete information, however, error is possible in that the person making the decision might fail to recognize a particular to be of a certain kind. That is, imperfect virtue fails to give practical wisdom the information it needs. Just as in the medical case of knowing that light meats are heavy but not knowing that this is a light meat (NE 1141b18, 6.7\textsuperscript{182}) so a person might not recognize that a certain aspect of a situation requires a virtuous response of a certain kind. Experience thus gives us universal knowledge and knowledge of the particular as falling under a certain type.

As with their ethical character, it is reasonable to ascribe a moderate wisdom to the multitude of polity. Their wealth allows them to participate politically and so they can come to see the success or failure of certain policies and acquire some experience for political action and develop an eye for seeing how the various aspects of a situation shape both the ethical response and the response in practical activity.

6. Initial Defense of Summation of Virtues Account

How is the share of virtue and wisdom of the individuals combined, and in what sense is it collectively equal to or better than the virtue and wisdom of

\textsuperscript{182} See also “all sorts of heavy water are bad” and “this is heavy water” at 1142a24, 6.8
the best few? Commentators reject the Summation account but do so, in my opinion, much too quickly. We have to guess at what is understood by summation by the attacks made upon the notion. Risse objects that summations fail to account for the insistence on the group’s coming together. Without this latter point, summation accounts allow that a group of scattered individuals all over the world would have virtue.  

Keyt also argues against calling the analogies a ‘summation argument’ on the basis that “[t]he collection envisaged is not a random collection, an unordered set of the free men in the polis, but an organized body of them.” The worth of an unordered set “is simply the worth of each of its members added to that of the others.” MacKenzie writes somewhat disparagingly that summation would mean “the rule of the masses may be just if a collection offers a larger bag and more rags and this increased excellence in sum.”

Based on these objections, it would appear that these commentators take a Summation account to involve, simply, counting together the different contributions. Risse construes summation so broadly that any collection of semi-virtuous individuals, regardless of location, can be summed. The objection is unfair. In some sense, all features which are improved by accumulation must be brought together. The contributions to the Dinner are no good if they are brought together.

183 Risse (2001) p. 64. Cf. p. 55 n. 6
185 Keyt (1991) pp. 270-1
scattered throughout the world. Similarly, wealth must be brought together and applied to a single purchase. Wealth is only increased when it can be put towards a single goal, such as providing for a feast or an expedition. No one, I submit, who proposes a Summation account could reasonably be taken to mean that the collective virtue is the sum of disparately located virtue.

Keyt and MacKenzie at least seem to allow that the citizens are all gathered together to consider an issue. They focus instead on the ordering of the citizens. They seem to say that the citizenry must be molded in some way in order to move from being a ‘grab bag’ or a ‘random collection’ into a unified body. Beyond this it’s not clear what the objection is because they do not specify what process takes place. Perhaps they think that virtue and wisdom are not the kinds of thing that can be summed, or at least, summed in such a way to yield an improvement.

It might seem that MacKenzie and Keyt are undoubtedly correct about the claim that a group’s virtue is not just a sum of the worth of the members – in that case a group’s excellence could go on increasing ad infinitum just by adding more and more partially virtuous people. Virtue does not add up like wealth does, they might say, for it does not admit of infinite extendibility. There is an appropriate size, just as there is for the Dinner and the other analogies - imagine that there was so much food it went to waste. Similarly, the painter only adds one nose to the face and not two. This is an objection to which we must return. It is perhaps this problem which moves commentators away from Summation accounts and towards Dialogical models, but such interpretations are, I argue, unsupported by the text.
7. On the Dialogical Model

If I am correct in this diagnosis of critics of the Summation account, the driving force behind objections to Summation seem to be the incomprehensibility of a straightforward summation of virtue. The Dialogical model is an attractive alternative, but I think it can be at most part of Aristotle’s meaning.

Waldron’s Dialogical model proposes a process “synthetic or even dialectical” not concerned merely with eliminating the negative character aspects of the many and not involving a unifying mind. Rather, coming together is a way to “bring each citizen’s ethical views and insights … to bear on the views and insights of the others, so that they cast light on each other, providing a basis for reciprocal questioning and criticism, and enabling a position to emerge which is better than any of the inputs and more than an aggregation or function of those inputs.” Waldron hazards that the many engage in a testing of opinion, similar to the dialectical method pursued by Aristotle himself, which ultimately allows them to come to a satisfactory decision.

A first objection is that Aristotle thinks that deliberation is not dialectical in the sense that Aristotle’s own investigations are dialectical. Dialectic in this

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187 Waldron (1995) p. 569. The process is also said to similar to Mill’s “rough process of a struggle between combatants fighting under hostile banners”. (p. 571) He cites Mill in order to defend his account from Mary Nichols’ desire for someone to synthesize the dialectic. Other varieties of dialogical account are considered below.

188 Waldron (1995) pp. 569-70

189 He may be borrowing this idea from Mackenzie who applies the ‘dialectical’ methodology more broadly to Aristotle’s treatment of the question ‘What should be sovereign?”
sense is a way of conducting a scientific inquiry which drives towards first principles. Deliberation, on the other hand, employs a weaker form of ‘first principles’, namely, received opinion or endoxa, and uses these to drive towards a decision concerning a particular.\textsuperscript{190}

Let us put dialectic aside and consider dialogue. We can question, as a practical matter, the extent to which such give-and-take as Waldron describes went on in political decision-making in Aristotle’s times. According to the dialogical model, the different speakers trade “ethical views” and this allows what seems to be a group decision to emerge because the individuals have come to a mutual ethical view. It is not clear that an exchange of moral views took place or, further, that anyone present changed his moral outlook based on what he heard. We above followed Waldron in distinguishing between factual and evaluative perception. The information of the individuals of the many can be enhanced by the comments of others.\textsuperscript{191} In deliberation on common matters, it is

\textsuperscript{190} Cooper (1994) pp. 206-7: “Endoxa about good and bad, about happiness, about justice and injustice, about virtue and vice, and so on, are what folk who, strictly speaking, do not know anything about [the science of] ethics-politics nevertheless find believable on questions belonging to its subject-matter. … The expert dialectician (and, in the area of ethical-political questions, the rhetorician) is the person above all others who knows and has command over the endoxa on political matters.” (pp. 206-7) Arnhart (1981) emphasizes (especially in his concluding chapter) that deliberation begins from ‘ordinary opinion’. There need not be a conflict with the idea of deliberation beginning from moral perception and understanding, as Arnhart is contrasting ordinary opinion with scientific knowledge.

\textsuperscript{191} Aristotle writes in the Rhetoric (1254a26, 1.1) that it’s not for litigant to tell the jury whether the matter is just, but only to establish the facts of the case. Evaluating the information is the job for the decision-maker. Johnstone (1980) writes (p. 5) that “the function of the rhetoric art is to aid one in observing in any particular case the grounds upon which intelligent decision can be based.” Evaluating the information is the job for the decision-maker. In real-life political decision-making forums, both deliberative and judicial, speakers presumably attempted to persuade the audience. They advanced not only certain matters of fact but also make statements regarding how the audience should respond to the situation at hand, and more importantly, concerning why that particular course of action should be undertaken. His concern is in accordance with his virtue and he hopes his listeners incline morally in the same direction.
important to learn certain basic facts, such as the probable intentions of the enemy, their size and strength, how far away they are. We can certainly agree with Waldron to the extent that individuals listening can be alerted to facts which they had been overlooking.

What happens on the moral side of things? On Waldron’s account, each of the discussants (or more likely a representative sample) then share their ethical views concerning the situation. It is not clear what Waldron thinks happens with respect to the virtue and wisdom of the multitude because he does not make clear from where he thinks they start. On the one hand, he notes Aristotle’s caveat that the multitude in common cannot be debased. On the other, he holds that they have “dissonant ethical views” and also denies that they have a shared vision of the good. In keeping with his ‘dialectical’ model, he holds instead, that within the multitude “hold views at least as divergent as those canvassed as endoxa in the Ethics.”

Presumably, speakers also attempted emotional persuasion. According to the Rhetoric, the speaker’s most important task is to give a proof using claims that the audience will accept. (Rh. 1354a12, 1.1) Proof may be logical proof, a demonstration of trustworthiness, or by moving the audience emotionally in some way. Many people are not persuaded by proof, as at the end of NE when Aristotle writes that many people are moved only by fear and not by words. Given our general characterization of them, this would apply less to the moderately wealthy. Arnhart (1981) writes: “The success of rhetoric, Aristotle implies, presupposes the formation by the laws of an ethos in the community that makes people open to persuasion.” (p. 6) Similarly, sophistical devices are generally to be shunned, but may be effective when the audience is corrupt. (Rh. 1403b34, 3.1) In the case of logical proof, the premises will be general moral principles and statements about the particulars of the situation, leading to a conclusion about how to act. A virtuous audience will be moved as they should. In the case of trustworthiness, the speaker must demonstrate his virtue, which is easier to do if indeed he is virtuous and the audience to which he is speaking is also virtuous. Indeed, it may not be necessary to do so at all in a correct regime. Trained speakers, Aristotle thinks, will understand the techniques of rhetoric and gain a knowledge of their audience. We may suppose that the members of political and aristocratic multitudes, on the other hand, need only speak their minds, and, because of their similarity to each other, simultaneously exhibit their character and move the emotions of the others.

pleasure, honor and virtue), which we have rejected, in Chapter 4, as the goal of the moderately wealthy.

On one reading, Waldron might be thinking that the multitude clash in their moral views and that the virtue and wisdom of individuals, the moral principles they espouse, undergo a change so that they reach a consensus (and that this consensus is correct.) If this is the position, I think it is too much to hope for. Each member of the multitude might be hear other moral principles expressed, but this will not change his moral judgment (in the short run, at least) if he has a different moral response and understanding.

For Aristotle, in trying to convince others it is important that the speaker employ principles which he shares with his speakers. In order for just principles to carry the day, then, the audience must be willing to accept them The following passage from the *Rhetoric* (1395b1 ff, 2.21.15) is apposite, though it concerns non-virtuous appeals: “Further, maxims are of great assistance to speakers, first because of the vulgarity of the hearers, who are pleased if an orator, speaking generally, hits upon the opinions which they specially hold … the hearers are pleased to hear stated in general terms the opinion which they have already specially formed …This is one of the advantages of the use of maxims, but another is greater: for it makes speeches ethical. Speeches have this character, in which the moral purpose is clear … if the maxims are good, they show the speaker also to be a man of good character.”

193 See also 1366a8, 1.8.6: “in reference to each [form of government], the character most likely to persuade must be that which is characteristic of it.” Also 1390a24, 2.13.16. (See also the long footnote on rhetoric, above.)
Further, there is nothing in the analogies to suggest a change or improvement of this kind in the individuals. The Dinner involves either the coming together of various dishes or various funds, but neither the dishes nor the funds undergo any change for being brought together. The problem to be overcome by drawing on many people’s expenditure is that the various appetites, perhaps of a single person but certainly of the group as a whole, cannot be satisfied by the food a single individual can provide. The various dishes, even though they undergo no change, are nonetheless distinct parts of a complete meal. Similarly with the Corporation: the goal is achieved by bringing together the contributions of the individuals. The polis is able to go to war, where the individual is not, because the polis employs the many arms and legs and senses of individuals who employ whatever ability they already have to their individual tasks. And so on with the other analogies. In each case, the quality contributed remains unchanged.

There is nothing in the analogies to suggest an improvement in the individuals. As with Risse’s explanation of how any negative aspects of the many are kept at bay, so these explanations of how what is good about them is combined into a superior collective virtue conspicuously fail to draw upon the analogies offered and nor are they compatible with them or shed any light upon them.

Rather than an improvement in the individual’s virtue or the working out of a compromise, the position must be something like this (which is the beginning of my own view): Each person already has the virtue which is the basis of his judgment of the situation presented before him, and he makes his decision
in accordance with this. This person is not perfectly virtuous. On Waldron’s account, if each man has the capacity to take on the moral opinions of his fellows and manipulate them into a single and unified decision, it is not clear that he has anything less than the whole of virtue and wisdom.

8. Against the Need for a Synthesizing Mind

One might wish to insist on a unifying mind in the decision-making process just as there is practical wisdom in the completely virtuous individual. Perhaps the multitude becomes a single mind or, more plausibly, it requires the mind of a single person. The intuition is that the disparate value judgments must be synthesized in order for the decision to improve, for this requires weighing each virtue-perception against the others.

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194 Risse (2001) thinks, concerning the Parts, that the multitude form “one moral and intellectual faculty” (p. 61). Pianka (1995) suggests that with each person providing a portion of virtue “the many bring together their individual aisthesis to produce a unit superior in sensing, and hence judging, ability.” (p. 118-9)

195 Nichols (1992) writes of “the need for statesmanship, that is, for some reflection that can see a whole that the parts can form.” (p. 66) Coby (1988), speaking of the Artistic Judges, writes that the many “require a theatre critic to bring coherence to their observations.” (p. 909) MacKenzie (1986) argues against thinking of the analogies as a mere collection with the idea that only a formal unity (unity in form) will produce a well-ordered polis. (p. 157) Drawing on Politics 2.2, Mackenzie states that the polis is a unity in that it is comprised of parts which have different functions but are related to the function of the whole. (p. 163) But this kind of unity is the unity of different classes – citizens along with artisans and slaves, and women and children – who all together make up the polis in the sense of all its inhabitants. It is true that the parts of the polis must be well-ordered, and ordered by the governing body – the citizens and the law, but we are concerned, rather, with the political, citizen, capabilities of the many, with only the citizens and not the whole polis. Mackenzie needs to argue instead that summation views are wrong because only a citizenry itself ordered as a whole in a certain way will properly do the task of ordering the rest of the polis. One may indeed think that a unifying mind is needed, but not for the reason Mackenzie suggests.

196 Taylor (2002) provides the general criticism that “[t]he analogy of the feast appears ill-suited to shedding light on the matter: it is to confuse quantity with quality.” (p. 244)
Against such claims about the need for a unifying mind, I wish to argue that the analogies do not require or even strongly suggest that the assembled multitude become a unified mind or require a unifying mind. It must be admitted up front that some of the analogies do indeed suggest such a mind, but others do not, and I think we can safely conclude that in the analogies where a mind is present, it is not meant to be carried over to the political case.

Among the analogies, only the Painting explicitly involves a unifying mind – the painter who composes the Painting. Its companion, the Handsome Man, does not, unless nature may be thought a directing mind. With respect to the Dinner, it could be that the money or resources from each individual is poured into a single coffer, or it could be that each independently makes an alimentary contribution. In order to secure that a complete meal is produced we naturally imagine a co-coordinator, but this need not be necessary. If the number of diners is large, there will be enough people to produce a complete meal without direction. Each person might bring his favorite dish, just as, with the Artistic Judges, each is attuned to whatever grabs him in particular in the performance.

The Corporation initially suggests a controlling mind, but is instructive when we pay it close attention. The goal of the Corporation is a group action and many group actions are directed by a single mind. Fighting a war, an action that requires the bodies of many individuals, requires a general at its head. The Corporation passage, however, combines both unity and distinctness. When the many come together they become a single many-footed and many-handed and many-sensed human being. When Aristotle continues “so also concerning
character and mind” we are to assume that the multitude, insofar as it remains a multitude, retain their individual characters and minds but, like a single person, apply their character and minds to a single issue. The idea here seems to be the same as with the Artistic Judges, namely, that all are in one sense concentrated on a single task – judging the work – but in another sense, are engaged in different tasks – responding to the various different features of the work. In the case of collective decision-making, by analogy, the goal would be to give consideration to a single issue – whether to go to war, say, in the assembly, or whether a certain individual acted properly or improperly, in the courts – and to apply his own character and judgment to the case.

Although we noted above that the different contributions must be ‘brought together’ and cannot be summed wherever they may be in the world, we must be careful not to insist on too great a unification. In general, when we say, for example, that wealth cannot be scattered amongst different people but must be brought together and put towards a single goal, we do not say that the wealth must be poured into a single coffer or disbursed by a single individual. Each person can decide to make a contribution towards a single goal. For example, if the goal is outfitting the polis with a navy, many different individuals can sponsor a trireme. Similarly, with the king’s helpers – those whom the king appoints to be his ‘eyes and ears’ throughout the polis, each of the helpers has a single goal in mind – aiding the king – which he undertakes individually. There is a difference between many hands or purses being applied to a single issue or task or undertaking and those hands or purses being melded somehow into one – an army with a general, or a dinner prepared by one person from the resources
of many. The participation of the many in deliberation must be like the king’s helpers. Due to the nature of minds, the plurality cannot be unified into a single mind. Rather, the many minds put themselves to the task of making a decision about the polis. This, plus the sharing of information, is as much as Aristotle thinks ‘coming together’ amounts to.

Elsewhere in the *Politics* Aristotle is wary of too much unity. Many wholes are wholes necessarily comprised of distinct parts. Aristotle criticizes the communism of Plato’s *Republic* as follows: “It is evident that as it becomes increasingly one it will no longer be a city. For the city is in its nature a sort of multitude, and as it becomes more a unity it will be a household instead of a city, and a human being instead of a household … even if one were able to do this, one ought not do it, as it would destroy the city.” (1261a16, 2.2.2) Unity is also criticized concerning the extreme forms of democracy and oligarchy. “For the people become a monarch, from many combining into one.” (1292a11, 4.4.26; for extreme oligarchy, see 1292b7, 4.5.2) This kind of extreme *homonopia* (single-mindedness) is to be avoided.

9. *A Summation Of Virtues Account*

My positive proposal falls out of my analysis of partial virtue and my criticisms of the Dialogical and Synthesizing Mind accounts. I suggest that we understand collective decision-making in terms of unchanging parts of a whole and in terms of collective attention rather than dialectical deliberation. My account is extremely minimal, thus making is closest to what was above called the ‘Summation of Virtue’ account.
I propose that each individual judges the situation at hand in accordance with the share of virtue that he has. There is variety among the shares of virtue and wisdom. Each person is attuned to various aspects of the situation (both as presented and in deciding how to respond) because he has the virtues which they call forth and he judges most acutely the aspects concerning which his experience has led him to endorse principles. He will not approve of a motion unless he is satisfied that it is in accordance with the virtue and wisdom that he has. Each individual votes in accordance with his virtue and wisdom and the votes are then tallied to give the decision of the whole.

How do the parts come together? To begin, the assembled hear various speeches which provide the information of the situation and proposals and arguments about what to do. One way of understanding the Dinner is to think that the meal is better than one person could provide because a greater variety of dishes can be provided simultaneously, which results in a better experience for each person. If Deliberation were analogous to the Dinner, then we should suspect that each person ‘tastes from’ the virtue and wisdom of the others and so is a better judge himself. This is possible. We could point here to the ability of the multitude of polity to “obey reason”. The multitude of polity, because of their moderate wealth, are able to endorse the reasons of others because they share them. That is to say, they augment their imperfect virtue and wisdom with the moral principles offered by those of greater experience. This is a kind of

197 Though see Chapter 4, where this phrase was understood somewhat differently, as being the obedience of the emotions to reason.
Dialogical view insofar as moral principles are stated to the assembly, but not a
Dialogical view insofar as the multitude are conceived of as lacking principles,
rather than holding conflicting principles.

Above, in response to the Dialogical account, I argued that the analogies suggest that each of the contributions does not change. On this way of understanding the Dinner, we would say that the dinner, and not the individual contributions, has improved. The analogies suggest a way of explaining ‘coming together’ that obviates the need for the individual judges to improve morally. In the Painting and the Handsome Man, as well as in the Corporation and the Artistic Judges, the parts, just as they are, go together to make a whole. In the Painting and the Handsome Man, the figure is made beautiful because of the quality of the individual features. In the Corporation the parts are hands, feet and senses of the individuals, who are collectively able to attend to all of the various tasks involved. By each of the individuals performing its own task, they together can accomplish a greater feat. In the case of the Artistic Judges, which is the analogy closest to non-deliberative decision-making, each person is individually delighted by various of the dramatic or musical features and votes for the piece that most appeals to him.

If collective decision-making is like these analogies, then Aristotle’s view seems to be that because of the large number of people present, there is a good chance that a majority of them will come to the correct decision. They will not all go wrong at the same time. A perfectly virtuous individual could wisely respond

\[198\] Kraut (2002) focuses on this analogy in section 11.6.
to all of the various different aspects of the situation, but in the case of the multitude, each person responds to a subset of features of the situation. Each individual may not be particularly sensitive to all of the relevant features of the situation, and the reasons that he gives will likewise not exhibit a complete grasp of the situation, but his virtue is sufficient to ensure that he (often) gets it right. When the different abilities of each of the multitude are focused on a single issue, a good decision results. 199

In order to sharpen the account, we can consider various problems in deliberation. The first is when the situation is complicated (such that those of habitual virtue will get it wrong). Here, error is likely due to the inexperience or incomplete understanding of most judges.

A case of this first type might be where an atypical response with respect to some aspect is demanded by a situation. On other words, the case is one where an ethically virtuous response by itself does not get it right but deep understanding (beyond habitual or even partial virtue) is required, which the majority lack. If a foreign army is advancing, for some people, those who have only habitual virtue might want to march out to war, and typically, this is just what should be done. However, if we imagine that this case is not so simple, then

199 Cf. Condorcet’s Jury Theorem as discussed in Risse (2001) p. 72-3 and n. 36. Risse rejects the similarity, but my argument shows that Aristotle’s thought seems to be the ‘original version’: where each person has a chance greater than fifty per cent of getting it right, then the majority produces the right result with a probability converging to 1 as the group size increases. This point responds to the problem poses by Keyt and Mackenzie in section 6, above. At Rhetoric 1364b11, 1.7.21 Aristotle writes that a judgment which is thought by the wise or by all or by most or by the best, must be so. The same seems to apply to partially virtuous people. Triadafilopoulos (1999) uses this passage to argue for a Dialogical account. But the passage mentions only agreement in opinion, not contention, scrutiny and a settling of opinion. (p. 746)
the multitude will come to the wrong conclusion.\(^{200}\)

This type of problem depends on a number of suppositions. One is that
the atypical response is also just and moderate and so on. If the atypical action is
at odds with other elements of the situation, then the multitude might vote
rightly, given that many of those responding to the danger of the situation are
also responding to other aspects of the situation. As my minimal account has it,
each person deliberates and votes in response to the aspects of the situation to
which he is especially sensitive. The set of virtues in each person, developed to
different degrees, make them different judges producing differently weighted
(overall) judgments. So in the case of a situation requiring an unusual response
in terms of courage, this will likely be indicated by the fact that it clashes with
other values and over-ruled by those in whom the other virtues are weighted
more heavily.

If, somehow, the typically courageous action also appears just and
moderate, or there simply is no other dimension to the issue than what courage
requires, then the collective decision will be wrong. I am not sure what these
cases would look like, but in them it seems that the properly virtuous action will
not be undertaken. Given that in such cases the proper understanding of the
primary aspect of the situation can is only available to a subset of the multitude,
the only hope is that those of greater experience can persuade those of lesser

\(^{200}\) An analogous idea is perhaps found in what above was called ‘natural virtue’. (NE
1144b5, 6.13) Natural virtue is ascribed to children and beasts, but the point carries over to
habitual virtue. Aristotle’s idea seems to be that a mighty body, for all its strength, requires vision
in order to apply the strength properly.
understanding.

In the first kind of case we were imagining that an atypical action in respect to one virtue was consonant with the demands of the other virtues in their response to the situation. There might also be what we can call ‘tragic’ cases, in which there is no good way to satisfy the different demands of the situation. When aspects of the situation pull in conflicting directions, then the discussion and the vote are likely to be divided. Imagine a case in which courage, say, demands a certain action – marching out to war – but the aspects of the situation in the realm of some other virtue, for example, in terms of the acquisition and spending of wealth (i.e. in the realm of generosity), make the citizens unable to wage what would otherwise be a winnable war. Or imagine that the citizens are slighted by their neighbors and good temper demands a response, but in the face of overwhelming odds courage demands we not act on our anger. In such cases, as I am conceiving of them, there is no good resolution in the sense that it is impossible to act virtuously in every respect, though one action is better than another. (I.e. the case is not irresolvable, only tragic.)

In tragic situations one option must be taken and there is loss of some kind no matter which is done. Those particularly concerned with generosity will vote against an aggressive response while those focused on courage will vote for it. Everything else being equal, whether the better of the two motions carries depends simply on the number of courageous versus the number of the generous.

Aristotle, I think, is relying on the fact that in most situations, the aspects of the situation, insofar as they are distinct, all point toward the same response.
The same action is at once just and moderate and so on, and so those who are especially responsive to some features rather than others all come to a similar conclusion. They say, in their speech and with their vote, which action they think is best, as they see it. Wherever the aspects of the situation are not in harmony, error is possible.

Many actions will be unified – their various features will demand the self-same action, which is at once courageous and generous and friendly and just and so on – but it may be possible for these to come apart, in the sense that what the situation demands in terms of generosity impose strictures on courageousness. If cases such as these are difficult for the *individual* to get right because they require a completely integrated person, they are even more difficult for collective decision-makers, because the channels of communication and affect are less direct.

Such cases will be difficult for anyone or any group, even the ‘best few’. Recall Aristotle’s claim that the partially virtuous multitude can match or even exceed the virtue and wisdom of the best few. In allowing that they may exceed the few, Aristotle indicates that even some (lower quality) best fews do not always arrive at the best decision. Aristocratic assembly might be thought superior to assembly of the multitude in that the individuals have a greater share of virtue – they have more than one virtue, and greater wisdom. The decision of the multitude, however, may be better because there are many judges at work on a single situation, judging it in the light of their virtues and wisdom. Thus while the individual members of the best few may be less susceptible to problem scenarios of the second kind, they may lack the full information that both types
of problem require. It is for this reason that the king appoints friends of the constitution to be his eyes and ears throughout the state, even though he himself has perfect virtue and wisdom.

Before concluding, I would like to return briefly to the issue of whether the multitude is partially vicious as well as virtuous. Recall that Risse thinks they are, and so that Purgation is necessary in order that each person’s contribution is ‘a share of virtue’. On my interpretation, each person judges the situation it in the light of his particular virtue. He particularly responds to certain aspects of the situation rather than others. A person whose character contains a vice will be attracted by an aspect of the situation that appeals to this vice. (Think, for example, of Thucydides’ report (Peloponnesian War 6.24) of how the Athenian multitude was carried away by the thought of eternal riches in their discussion about Sicily. Vulgar listeners, Aristotle says in the Rhetoric, delight in hearing general assertions that state their own (flawed) opinions: “a man who happened to have bad neighbours or children would welcome any one’s statement that nothing is more troublesome than neighbours or more stupid than to beget children.”201) Risse, as we saw, thinks that being in public will prevent such character flaws from making themselves known, but I think Aristotle would worry about these vices if they are present within a person’s character. Even though the person is in public, if he really is in the grip of a vice, it may override his sense of shame. If challenged, he might, for example, find a plausible sounding reason, different from his own, for pursuing his preferred course of

201 Rhetoric 1395b8, 2.21.
action. There’s a further worry to be mentioned here, about the publicity of decisions. If, when talking about decision-making, Aristotle has in mind the assemblies and courts of Athens, then he will be aware that votes were cast privately. Again, if the vicious element is strong within the person, why should we think that the individual in question will have sufficient ability to quickly internalize his shame-based public-spiritedness to the extent that it will overcome his vicious traits and make him vote against his interest?

I end by saying in what ways the interpretation I have offered is, and is not, a summation account.

This account is not a Summation account of the kind Risse describes, where the virtue of the multitude can be summed even though they are in different places. It is necessary that the many be co-coordinated to the extent – and only to the extent – that they are considering the same issue. This sameness of focus, which includes listening to the same speeches, is the sense in which the multitude may be said to become unified or, as the Corporation has it, ‘a single human being.’ The analogies do not warrant too great a unification. There is nothing in the analogies which require us to think that the many become or employs a unified mind. Thus the account is not one involving a unifying mind.

This account is a Summation account in the sense that the members retain their distinct minds and characters, except perhaps when those with some understanding share it with those of habitual virtue. Even here the individuals involved do not move from non-virtuous to virtuous, for unless he shares the principles deployed, the listener will not integrate be moved by the principles advanced. There is no explicit consensus-building. Nor is there submission to an
expert opinion. Instead, each person evaluates the situation by his own lights. Even wealth, which is most easily thought summable, need not be poured into a single coffer or disbursed by a single individual: different individuals can provide a ship, or armor, and this seems to be the model Aristotle is thinking of in the analogies and with respect to collective deliberation. Similarly, with the king’s helpers, each of the individuals has a single goal in mind – preservation of the regime by conveying information – which he undertakes individually to the best of his ability. Thus the account offered is not at heart a Dialogical Account. The account offered here is best thought of as a Summation of Virtues account.

Between them, the multitude are responsive to every aspect of the situation and the decision is made by all of these people deciding and voting individually. As I have described above, this mechanism will not guarantee the correct answer. The virtue and wisdom of the multitude is not superior in any mathematical sense, it cannot simply be added together. In response to the Keyt-MacKenzie objection, (that virtue and wisdom cannot be summed to infinity, as the Summation account seems to allow) we can say that virtue and wisdom increases only towards complete virtue and wisdom (virtue and wisdom that would always produce the correct response) insofar as the individual members of the multitude successfully discern the correct decision; it does not exceed complete virtue and wisdom and would not match the combined virtue and wisdom of the truly aristocratic few. However, while the multitude will not be perfectly virtuous, some multitudes will be able to exceed the virtue and wisdom of some smaller groups.
CONCLUSION

What multitude can rule in the common interest, and how? The bulk of this work has been taken up answering the first part of this question, because the ‘how’ depends crucially on the description of the moral qualities of the citizens of polity. As a preliminary to answering either part, I considered what the functions of citizens are and what broad claims are properly put forward as giving someone a claim to participate in government. In Chapter 1 I argued that a citizen is someone who deliberates and adjudicates, and a good citizen is someone who does this well. A person rules well if they have political virtue and this virtue gives a person the only unqualifiedly just claim to a share in government. But polity does not distribute power on the basis of virtue, but on the basis of wealth. How can it then be a correct regime, one in which the rulers rule in the common interest? The answer to this question was provided in Chapter 2. The citizens of polity, although not outstanding in virtue, nonetheless have some virtue. Polity is thus at least a regime of partly virtuous individuals, (and given the collectivity ‘argument’ considered in Chapter 6, these individually moderately virtuous citizens are better as a group than any individual citizen.)
What virtue do the citizens of polity have? Aristotle says explicitly that they have military virtue, where ‘virtue’ must here be used in a looser sense than in the ethical works, which requires that a person have all of the virtues in order to have any one of them. I argued that this military virtue is not the only virtue of the citizens of polity, on the grounds that military virtue is not the political wisdom needed to deliberate and adjudicate properly. Of greater interest was the claim that military living brings with it justice and moderation, and this suggestion was confirmed in what followed.

In Chapter 3, I argued for the identification of polity with the middle regime, and the core citizens of polity with the middle class who are the core of the middle regime, despite the fact that polity is said to be a mix of oligarchy and democracy. I also argued that this middle class was the hoplite class, in order make Aristotle’s treatment of polity and the middle regime in books 4-6 consistent with his treatment in book 3.

The middle class are said to be willing to rule and be ruled, do not covet the goods of others, and are most able to obey reason. They have these traits even though they lack any education or training in virtue. There is an intimate connection between the first two features, as the desire for material goods is a main reason why people are unjust both privately and publicly, seeking to remain in office in order that they can continue to wield their power to benefit themselves at the expense of others. In general, Aristotle is attributing to the citizens of polity the justice and moderation hinted at in Chapter 2.

Polity or the middle regime can take different forms, and so it is often the case that there are others eligible for office who are not hoplites. Most of those
who are richer than the hoplites are eligible for office, but Aristotle is concerned
to formulate principles for the distribution of power which gives the rich enough
power that they do not feel slighted, but not enough that they will abuse their
position. Chapter 4 investigated the connection between wealth and injustice,
describing Aristotle’s worries that the rich become arrogant and abusive.

Of those less well-off than the middle class, Aristotle is also concerned
that the very poor are unjust. However, I argued (in Chapter 5) that he is willing
to admit as citizens of polity farmers and others who labor on the land (but are
not involved in trade.) These have a paler imitation of the hoplite class’s virtue
(which is itself not virtue in the full sense). Their occupation befits them for
military activity, and their dependence on the land makes them independent of
(and so equal to) others and also moderates their desires. Artisans, on the other
hand, are both dependent on others and in pursuit of wealth, combining both the
slavishness of the poor with the greed of the rich. Although they may have the
same wealth as the middle class, they are to be excluded, ideally, from power
along with the very rich and very poor.

Finally, Chapter 6 considered the ‘how’ part of the original question – how
do the citizens of polity deliberate and adjudicate well? We know that they have
military virtue, and some degree of justice and moderation and the analogies
suggest that the other virtues are distributed amongst the multitude, too. In the
collectivity ‘argument’, Aristotle claims that each of the multitude of polity has
some ‘share’ of virtue and by this he means the virtue and wisdom of the
individual. Where there is a debate, the individuals of the multitude, because of
their ability to obey reason and their general good character, can be persuaded.
But even where there is no discussion, the very fact that so many people are making a judgment about the case, each with a share of virtue, ensures that the decision is (often, though not always) a good one, as it is difficult for all of them to be mistaken simultaneously.
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