THE POLITICS OF EXCELLENCE: AN INVESTIGATION OF THE MORAL GROUND OF POLITICS IN ARISTOTLE.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis analyses Aristotle's Political Theory. According to Aristotle, political leadership must be based on a strong moral foundation. A political leader's role is to dispense justice in all its aspects, and this includes distributive, commutative, and restorative justice. A political leader without a good moral character is a bad leader. The State, is primarily a moral institution, whose main role is to train citizens in moral virtue, and to ensure that each person's character accords with the demands of virtue. For this reason, leaders must educate citizens to desist from pursuing the base pleasures, and should themselves lead by example. State power is for the service to all citizens, and only a person of virtue has the disposition to make this happen, as well as to ensure that wealth is used for what it is really meant for, that is for the physical wellbeing of citizens, and to dispose them for virtuous life. A person who is not trained in virtue cannot, therefore, be a good political leader. For Aristotle, therefore, politics is not for people with questionable moral character, but is for those whose moral aptitude has been tested and proven. Without this, any leader is bound to destroy the state he is supposed to protect and nurture.

Keywords: moral virtue, the state and the individual, education