THE PRE-POLITICAL AND THE POLITICAL IN ARISTOTLE'S *POLITICS*

Vilius Bartninkas

Vilniaus universitetas
Filosofijos istorijos ir logikos katedra
Universiteto g. 9/1, LT-01513 Vilnius
El. paštas: vilius.bartninkas@stud.fsf.vu.lt

Abstract. *The paper argues that the distinction between the pre-political and the political in the form of the household and the state is essential to the understanding of Aristotle's communal projects. The analysis with the help of this distinction reveals the structure and principles of Aristotelian communal projects and removes tensions, which are rooted in different and frequently incompatible statements of Aristotle. In the course of the paper, it is showed that the household and the state can be defined as separate and yet interdependent communities and how these definitions affect the understanding of concrete constitutional communities.*

Keywords: *Politics, the political, the pre-political, state, household.*

This paper aims at conceptualizing two notions – the pre-political and the political. Whether they are definable, integral or even existent in Aristotle's *Politics* is the main question of the essay. These concerns are raised due to several problems: (1) Aristotle does not draw explicit definitions of the pre-political and the political; (2) he does not give a full set of criteria for definitions; (3) there is no word 'pre-political' in his work. Taking this question into contemporary context, modern political thought would separate the political from the pre-political, while understanding the latter as a kind of state of nature and a part of the non-political. However, that is not the case with the ancients. Aristotle time and again emphasizes political analogies in spheres which seem as not yet political (*Politics* (*Pol.*) 1259a37–1259b1)[1], and the concept of non-political, as some authors suggest (Yack 1993: 239–241), is altogether missing from his texts. At first glance, the Aristotelian human condition seems to be entirely political. Such view would affect the reading of the main Aristotelian political concept the 'community' (*koinōnia*), which diverges into 'the state' (*polis*) and 'the household' (*oikia*). If community as such is political, then the difference between the state and the household can only be in size and thus both communities would not have different defining components. This view is compatible with Aristotle's claim that the household is a constituent of the state (1252b27–28), but it contradicts the chief thesis of the Book I that the difference of both communities is essential (1252a9–16). Thus, the household appears in the threshold of the political and the non-political. It has substantial differences from the state, but it is also not autonomous and leads

---

[1] Aristotle is cited by the standard pages and lines of Bekker (1831). All translations are mine.

to the political community. To mark the ambiguous character of the household, we prefer to call it 'pre-political' rather than 'non-political', which would modernly mean a completely separate sphere. Further analysis will concentrate on elucidation of the defining components of both communities in the form of the pre-political and the political and will also show the impact of these definitions to Aristotle's examples of political communities. Along with the formal analysis of Aristotle's work, we will also seek to clarify conceptual problems of the distinction for which Aristotle's thought is an appropriate example.

I. The pre-political

In the Book I of *Politics,* Aristotle introduces the household science, *oikonomia epistēmē*, which covers the organization of household and its purpose, which lies in the art of ruling and the accumulation of wealth. The household science starts in the search for the primary particle of human condition, which is found in the household[2] that encompasses various forms of organization – from the communities of shepherds or husbandmen to the associations of brigands, fishermen or hunters (1256b1–2). All of them are based on the relations between husband and wife, father and child, master and slave. Aristotle claims that these binary relations are not reducible to their single components due to their lack of self-sufficiency. People are incapable of living separately in a human way. The one living solitary is 'either worse, or better man' (1253a3), i.e., 'either a beast or a god' (1253a28–29). But even binary components still lack sufficiency due to their different roles – procreation, succession of humanity, provision of resources. It appears that only a full set of these functions completes sufficiency in the form of household.

The account of human nature is also explicated by the following discussion of naturalness of the pre-political communities. Aristotle summarizes the pre-political conditions by claiming that 'firstly there necessarily couples [...] a male and a female in order to procreate [...], natural ruler and ruled for the sake of security' (1252a26–1252b31). This defence of household naturalness invokes three principles: primacy, necessity and finality. As mentioned above, the household is not primer than a human being or the state; in fact it is quite the contrary (1253a18–19). However, the household is primer if primacy is understood as initial, natural state[3]. Contrary to modern theories *à la Hobbes*, natural state is held to be not hypothetical, but actual and present[4]. The barbarian tribes (*ethna*) still live

---

[2] Cf. 1252a18–20 with 1253a18-20. After 1252a20 Aristotle continues to discuss 'simple elements' and 'least parts of the whole' by presenting marriage and master-slave relations. Trevor Saunders (1995: 65-66) argues that in 1252b9-15 Aristotle presents 'a genuinely historical pre-household period', where husband-wife and master-slave associations operated 'more or less independently, perhaps only occasionally', and thus formed households later. This makes sense especially if we consider that the majority of Greek households were not based on slavery, making their households appear rather incomplete in Aristotelian picture. Despite this, I argue below that the three relations are reducible to governmental relations. Then it does not matter whether the household is structured on tribal ties, marital oaths or slavery. The household in its core is a governmental structure.

And contrary, larger conglomerates of households (villages, military or commercial unions) are also pre-political in their nature. On villages see 1252b15–22; on military and commercial unions see 1261a24–27; 1280a31–1280b5.

---

[3] Nature can be understood both as an end (*telos*) and as a beginning (cf. Annas 1996: 734–735; Kraut 2002: 242).

[4] On Aristotle's historical narrative see Saunders 1995: 59–61.

in the pre-political stage (1252b19–22) and every community which ceases to have the necessary conditions for the political will return to the ranks of barbarians. Similarly, the end (*telos*) of the pre-political communities is not as complete as of the political associations. They seek to fulfill the needs of life, not of *good* life (cf. 1252b27–30)[5]. The needs of life incorporate two human inclinations (*hormē*): (a) desire to survive and (b) to live together (1278b17–30)[6]. The inclinations are grounded on the principle of necessity, because without (a) there could be no life, while without (b) there could be no human life. The inclination (a) leads to the forming of household, since cooperation allows satisfying daily needs, obtaining goods, ensuring security. The inclination (b) causes to satisfy various psychological needs (safety, communication, comfort, love etc.). This is impossible if human beings live solitary and do not develop stable, continuous relationships with each other. In this sense people seek to live together 'even when they do not require one another's help' (1278b20–21).

Efficient causes of the pre-political order lead to practical issues. These mainly focus on the inclination (a) and the methods of fulfilling its demands, i.e., modes of resource acquirement. Aristotle divides the household management into the art of acquiring property (*ktētikē technē*) and the art of acquiring wealth (*chrēmatistikē technē*), and then questions the naturalness of each of them. It is noteworthy that Aristotelian economics are introduced in the discussion of the pre-political, although its significance stretches to the political (1256b37–39). More importantly, economical theory is very much concerned with property (*ktēsis*) and tools (*organa*), along with the effective use of them. The question of use overlaps with the explanation of household relations, thus revealing the most important idea of the pre-political: the governmental. The rule is a method of rational management of useful tools, living or not; it is also a relation of organization of household structure. Since the master and the servant have no bonds apart from those grounded in force, their governmental relation is purely explicit, while the same character of parental and marriage bonds are introduced only towards the end of Book I (1259a37–1259b1) and are more ambiguous. The question then is on what grounds Aristotle presents the theory of management. As we will shortly see, Aristotle continues to explore human nature and its neediness, but now a new example of deficiency is found not in the body, but in the soul.

What we see in Book I are only summaries of the theory of the soul, but they are eloquent: the law of rule is inherent in both living and non-living things, thus it is in the core of nature (1254a31–33), being necessary as well as expedient (1254a22). Fundamentally, the distinction between the ruler and the ruled in household is between the mind and the body (1252a30–34), those who do not have deficiency in soul and those who have. Those capable of rational plan-

---

[5]   At 1253a15-18 Aristotle claims that 'the sense of good and evil, of just and unjust' leads to establishing 'a household and a state'. It might look as if communities, even the pre-political ones, are founded upon the purpose of good life, but this is not the case, since even political communities originate 'for needs of life' and only then continue their existence 'for the sake of a good life' (1252b29-30). Saunders (1995: 70) and Miller (2000: 229-230) interpret the mentioned senses as not fully developed capabilities, which make Aristotle's remark consistent with his further account of ends of state. For further discussions of ethical life in household see Pangle 2003: ch. 4; Price 1989: ch. 6.

[6]   Miller 1995: 35–36; Kraut 2002: 242.

ning, administrating, supervising others' lives, drawing their objectives and distributing their tasks are given the role of masters, and those incapable of thinking and rational living, those who depend on others' orders and sensual pleasures are given the role of subjects. The rule over pleasures is understood as royal, constitutional (1254b5–6), which means that it is for the good of the subject, not the ruler; it even implies a sort of friendship (cf. 1255b12–14). But most of the time ruling is for the living of the ruler and relies on instruments of coercion (1253b22–23, cf. 1255a3 ff.); it is despotic (1254b4–5). The master subordinates the body of a subject, transforming it entirely into a part of the possessor and using it as a tool to satisfy daily needs[7]. Therefore, the management is introduced as a device to satisfy the deficiency of some human beings in the pre-political condition.

The analysis of concrete cases is needed in order to see whether the theory is consistent. While a slave is under complete domination of the master, a wife and a child are managed in a gentler manner due to their higher rationality, as Aristotle claims. Despite that, Aristotle expresses reservations on their intellectual capacities, considering woman's mind 'without authority' (*akuron*) and child's mind – 'immature' (1260a13–14), yet both capable of imperfect reasoning. Aristotle also regards them as free (1259a39–40) and having some excellences (1260a20–24). This, along with the excellences of a slave, poses a threat to Aristotle's speculations on governing: 'if

they have excellence, how they will differ from freemen? If they do not, that is strange, since they are human beings and share in reason' (1259b26–28). Let's consider the case of slaves: (1) if slaves do not have reason, as Aristotle argues in 1254b22–23 and 1260a12, then slaves (1.1) belong to other species than human, as they lack essential human capability[8]; (2) if slaves do have reason, as argued in the cited passage, then (2.1) the master cannot claim to rule, since slaves mentally do not differ from other free-men who partake in manual work and are servile in character. Of course, Aristotle enjoys grading mental capabilities of human beings and he could argue that rationality of slaves is so meagre, even scantier than that of workers, that they should be ruled. But the result of (2.1) is that either both manual workers and slaves ought to be governed or neither of them, since they only differ socially, not mentally. Aristotle does not give any examples of their mental differences. His willingness to restrict the slaves to the household and the workers to the citizenry shows inconsistence. And this breaks the argument for the governmental apparatus in the household.

The solution to the problems of slavery sheds its implications to the general understanding of *Politics*. There are two alternatives, the first of which is based on the option (1) above, while second is based on the option (2) above. Option (1) would lead to an expansion of the membership in slavery, depriving huge segments of society of a relatively independent social status. Since slaves clearly do have certain rationality, although considered insufficient,

---

[7] Aristotle's argument on the purpose of a slave is rather inconsistent: he starts by claiming that a slave is designed for matters of action (*praxis*), not production (*poēsis*) (1254a1–8), yet ends by discussing productive works of slaves (1255b22–35).

[8] It would also mean that slaves are incapable of both actions and productive works, which questions the need of their presence in the household.

such reasoning would also apply to poorer classes, along with women and children. In other words, this line of argument would be compatible with Aristotle's initial thesis on deficiency of soul and would remove the inconsistency mentioned above. However, option (1) requires a hypothesis which is too strong even for Aristotle, who throughout Book I explicitly holds slaves *to be* humans, thus *having* some sort of reason. Then we are lead to the option (2). When Aristotle agrees that women and children are rational creatures, he starts justifying their rule in political terms: wife is ruled in constitutional fashion, child – in royal (1259b1). This forbids despotic rule with force and coercion, and brings us to a politicized form of family, where family is governed with persuasion (in the case of wife) and anticipation of common good (and not the good of the ruler). If this train of thought is extended to the third case of ruling – that is, slavery – this would mean that in practice slaves deserve the status of free-men, since they do not have deficient souls and their capability of rational thinking forbids despotic management. Theoretically, option (2) means that governing in the household and the state differs only in scope and thus both communities are political. But Aristotle takes neither of these options. He neither radicalizes the household, which would then seem as truly non-political, nor does he merge the household with the political. The household remains as pre-political, which, on the one hand, arises from the deficiency of human body and soul, which is defined by the governmental ties, hierarchical stratification and interest of rulers, but, on the other hand, extends into the political as its constituent.

And though household is a foundational element of the state, Aristotle never concep-tualizes its political function. He mentions household several times in the succeeding books (e.g. Book II 1268b1, Book III 1277b24, 1278b38), but the significance of household is entirely dependent on the discussion in Book I, it never assumes a new meaning apart from the pre-political. The only instance where household is shown in a wider panorama of state is rather economical and contrasted with the political: 'Some offices are political [...]; other offices belong to household management (for corn measurers are frequently elected)' (1299a20–23). This leads us to conclude that household is included in the political for its foundational role and simultaneously quietly excluded from the discourse, because its definition, as we will see, contradicts the content of the political. Therefore, one is lead to avoid defining household either as 'political' or as 'non-political'. Its inclusive-exclusive character is sharply revealed only through the notion of 'pre-political'.

II. The Political

There is a sharp contrast between the very forms of discussion of the pre-political and the political. The pre-political had a negligent delivery on human nature and contradictions which concerned the assumptions of Aristotle. Accordingly, we had to reconstruct the account of human nature in order to formulate the definition of the household. The political has compatible assumptions and an explicit set of defining components, but divergent readings of the definition and distinct data might be used to discuss the political community. Thus, our tactics differ from the part I: in part II we will focus on the clarification of the definition, and in part III – on relation of the definition with data. Since Malcolm Schof-

ield had already presented a vast picture of interpretations of the definition of political community (Schofield 1999b), I shall give a brief summary of it. Then I will move on to analyse the necessary parts of the definition and their relation.

Schofield claims that approaches to the political in Aristotle can be reduced to a 'conceptual map' which contains several different *models* of understanding the political community. First, there is the rational model. It defines a political community as an association of equal freemen, seeking common good, i.e., virtuous life, and governed by political rule, i.e., ruled by law and taking offices in turns (Schofield 1999b: 90–94). Then follows the political model defined by factional strife and class conflict on the standard of distributive justice. Notably, Schofield (and Aristotle) does not present here a new definition for a political community. The political model works in the frame of the rational, trying to specify some of its contents, namely, who are regarded to be the equals and the rulers. In the end, the political model is nothing more than democratic and oligarchic specifications which distort the definition of the rational, but their accounts are held as expressions of class interest rather than analytical rivals of the rational model. They represent perverted constitutions, which make up the majority of empirical cases, but they are defined through the rational model. Finally, we are brought to the sociological model, the matrix for an analysis of social strata and their functions. This model divides a political community into two groups, first of which supplies 'private economic needs' (farming, labouring and marketing), while the second promotes 'public well-being' (judicial, religious, military and political activities) (Schofield 1999b: 97). The sociological paradigm does not deny the rational model; it serves the same purpose as the political model, i.e. to specify some parts of the rational model (in this case – the functions of private and public enterprises).

Schofield's analysis proves that there is only one explicit *definition* of a political community in *Politics*, though one may believe this was not the intention of his paper. Its formulation, almost the same as mentioned above in the rational model, is consistently repeated by Aristotle: the state is a community of (A) equal and free citizens, (B) built on political friendship, (C) organized in constitution, and (D) seeking good life and happiness (1252a4–7, 1274b41, 1276b1–2, 1279a21, 1280a31–32, 1295b23–26, 1328a36–37). The element (A) is based on a natural premise and in such way determines the remaining formulation. In Book VII Aristotle affirms once again that being a man presupposes having reason (1332b4–5). Human beings achieve mental and moral excellences through laws, habits and, most importantly, through education; naturally they do not excel each other 'in their minds' as 'gods and heroes' do compared to human beings (1332b16–25)[9]. If this is so, then (A.1) 'all citizens alike should take their turn of governing and being governed' (1332b26–27), since they are naturally equal, (A.2) 'education should be one and the same for all' (1337a22–23), since it ensures their further mental similarity required for governing, and (B) the bonds of the citizens should be based on political friendship. A discussion of the element (B) is absent in *Politics* and the main source on political friendship is *Eudemian Ethics* (*EE*), where it is claimed that political friendship rests on numerical

---

[9] *Contra* doctrine of slavery.

equality and legal utility (*EE* 1242a9–11, 1242b22–23, 1243a31–33). Appealing to Aristotle's famous triptych of friendship (pleasure, advantage, virtue), political friendship would belong to the part of advantage and in such way would appear to be a quasi-commercial association rather than a political community. Clearly, political friendship lacks living together, intimate relations, active communication and ethical life that make up virtuous friendship (*Nicomachean Ethics* (*NE*) 1172a1–8). Some authors claim that there is no need to define political friendship in terms of ethical: they either think that there is no contradiction between the advantage and the political (Schofield 1999a: 78) or they hold that the good life is confined to smaller associations than political friendships and other activities than political (Mulgan 1990; Yack 1993: 114). Others tend to define political friendship in terms of ethical (Irwin 1988: 389–404; 1990; Cooper 1990). Solution lies in the purpose of the political, since if it is ethical rather than utilitarian, then *EE* contradicts *Politics*[10].

Book III of *Politics* continues to argue in the spirit of utility: human beings establish states for the sake of survival (*Pol.* 1278b24–25), living together (1278b20–21) and common advantage (1278b21–23). But we are also assured that common advantage brings everyone 'a share of good life', which is the language of excellence rather than utility. Book VII confirms it by claiming that (D) is virtuous life[11] equipped

with external goods (VII. 1) being the best for 'both the individual and the state' (1323b41). In this way, common advantage becomes common good and makes the element (B) closer to ethical relations rather than utilitarian. Combined together, (A), (B) and (D) elements shape the nature of (C): 'the best constitution is such arrangement under which everyone can act best and live happily' (1324a23–25). Martha Nussbaum reads this passage in a way that would be very close to the capability approach[12]. According to Nussbaum, the purpose of constitution is '*broad*, in that it is concerned with good lives of many people', and '*deep*, in that it is concerned with the totality of the functions that constitute a good human life' (1990: 156). Such conception is in agreement with our account of the common good and what I have said above on human nature and its development. This is a normative pattern which Aristotle calls the *ideal* state rather than the state *itself*. The contrast of these predicates is misleading, which seems to be denying the inclusiveness of these concepts. That would return us to our initial question on how to interpret different models of the state. But there we found that the rational account defines the state. Thus

---

[10] Cf. Price 1989: 195. It would prove even more that author of *EE* is not Aristotle (Schofield 1999a).

[11] Which is both practical and contemplative (VII. 3), sharply contrasting with the conclusions of *NE* X. 7–8. Aristotle praises contemplation since it is (i) *self-sufficient*, but this supposition is doubtful as both contemplative and practical life need external goods and

leisure (*scholē*); (ii) *chosen for itself*, but (ii) also applies to practical life as it seeks common good, which teleologically has the same status of perfection; (iii) *mostly defining human beings*, 'but if, for Aristotle as for Plato, the *ergon* of anything is that which it and it alone can do, and if the life of practical moral and political activity is *also* something in which only human beings can participate, then the life of practical moral and political activity ought to be the *ergon* of man just as much as *theoria* is, and accordingly just as much the *agathon* of man, and just as conducive to his *eudaimonia*. After all, the reason for refusing to ascribe *eudaimonia* to cattle, horses, and children (1099b32 ff.) is that they are incapable of life of practical moral and political activity.' (Adkins 1978: 302)

[12] Cf. Nussbaum 1992.

we find that these concepts – political community, state and ideal state – are inclusive and identical. Truly then the political is the ideal. To summarize, the contrast between the pre-political and the political is that the latter is founded when the former has satisfied the natural neediness. The political is defined by natural (in the terms of rational abilities) and political equality, friendship ties and common good, which seeks to complete citizens' capabilities. How this definition concretely applies is the topic of the next section.

III. Constitutional problems

Our last section deals with the application of the given definitions of the pre-political and the political to the notorious six-fold constitutions[13]. Analysis of constitutions is needed not only to see whether the data of constitutions is compatible with the definition of the political community, but also to show that the conceptions of the political and the pre-political assist in removing tensions that are characteristic of constitutions. The first impression is that there is considerable tension between what Aristotle says on the concept of the political in general in Books III and VII–VIII, and his other reflections on constitutions in Books IV–VI. The former Aristotle argues for a normative and rational account of politics, while the latter uses broad definitions of constitutional phenomena that would neatly fit his six-fold classification of them. The latter Aristotle is more of a political scientist, searching for notions that would suit the political reality of Greeks. In other words, he uses a kind of

induction: he holds a premise that what he sees in Greek politics is political and only then abstracts and generalizes it. The former Aristotle, more of a political philosopher[14], uses the opposite, deductive tactics. He begins with premises on human nature, the pre-political and inclinations which lead to the political. Then Aristotle deduces the concept of the political and analyses what phenomena fit his matrix. So far I have argued that Aristotle prefers the former strategy. But I believe that both schemes are compatible if concepts of the pre-political and the political are properly applied.

The political scientist works with three correct (monarchy, aristocracy, polity) and three deviant (tyranny, oligarchy, democracy) regimes and defines constitution as 'the arrangement of offices in a state, determining their distribution, the highest authority and the end of each community' (1289a15–18). Here we find four aspects of constitution: question on who will belong to the state – (i) citizens; question on how they will get offices – (ii) distributive justice; question on who will rule – (iii) authorities; question on what they will seek – (iv) purpose of the state (see table 1). These are roughly parallel to the components of the normative paradigm. Let's begin with component (iv) as it most explicitly divides constitutions: the correct forms govern for the sake of the ruled, while the three deviant govern for the sake of the rulers. Now (iii) reveals that governors are either one ruler (monarchy and tyranny), or few of the ruling class (aristocracy and oligarchy), or many

---

[13] A careful analysis suggests more constitutions than six: Miller 1995: 153–165, 256–269, Rowe: 2000: 370, Kraut 2002: 412. For convenience I will use the traditional six-fold scheme.

[14] There is no proposition for sharp and modern distinction between political philosopher and political scientist in Aristotle. These notions seem simply suitable to illustrate differences between Aristotle's ways of reasoning.

TABLE 1

Constitutions					
Correct			Deviant		
Monarchy	Aristocracy	Polity	Democracy	Oligarchy	Tyranny
(i) Citizens One	Few/Many	Many	Many	Few/Many	One
(ii) Distribution Virtue	Virtue	Virtue	Freedom	Wealth	Force
(iii) Authorities One	Few	Many	Many	Few	One
(iv) Purpose Good of Ruled	Good of Ruled	Good of Ruled	Advantage of Rulers	Advantage of Rulers	Advantage of Rulers

people (polity and democracy). Component (ii) distributes the authority according to one constant measure in the case of correct regimes – virtue, and a few different in the case of deviant ones: freedom in democracies, wealth in oligarchies, and force in tyrannies. Finally, (i) offers two definitions of a citizen: (i.i) a citizen as the one who partakes in deliberative or judicial office (1275a22–33); (i.ii) a citizen as the one who has the right or the opportunity to partake in deliberative or judicial office (1275b18–19). Choosing definition (i.i) would not add anything to what was already said since it overlaps with component (iii). Meanwhile definition (i.ii) expands citizenry to those who are ruled at the moment, but have potential to become rulers if they achieve eligible status defined by distributive justice. Does this render any changes compared to definition (i.i)? It does in aristocracies and oligarchies, since anyone who satisfies the demands of distributive justice, accordingly, virtue and wealth, will be allowed to the governing body. But definition (i.ii) does *not* change the system (1) in polities and democracies, as all citizens already partake in governing bodies; (2) in monarchies, as monarchy would cease to exist, if anyone would become as virtuous as a monarch,

turning it into aristocracy; and (3) in tyrannies, as all human beings in the regime are held to be quasi slaves. Both definitions do not differ substantially as they seemed to at the beginning. More importantly, both of them show that monarchies and tyrannies have only one citizen, namely a monarch or a tyrant.

There is a problem with the six-fold classification. A political philosopher would argue that monarchy and tyranny do not belong in the six-fold classification. It is not surprising in Aristotle's discussion on monarchies (II. 14–15) to find many allusions to the household management and primitive societies who live the pre-political life. The rule of monarchy does not simply 'correspond to the household management', it *is* the household management and it *transforms* states into households (1285b31–33). One citizen as one ruler does not constitute a state, but a household where human beings have no interrelationships apart from those with the ruler. Monarchies and tyrannies treat all other human beings as having the same status and differing only in relation with the ruler, that is to say, like in households, which along with monarchies (1288a8–9) rest on natural inequality. In order to legitimize inequality, the superior-

TABLE 2

Political community			Pre-political community
Ideal state – the state itself			
Aristocracy			Monarchy
Polity	Perfection	Perfection	
Democracy			
Oligarchy			Tyranny

ity of the monarch should exceed both any single individual and the sum total of them. Such perfection should mean that either the excelled subjects are equivalent to slaves or the ruler is godly indeed. In the first case monarchy would truly be nothing more than a household, in the second it would diminish the political replacing it with the divine rule. Then it is hardly justifiable for Aristotle to consider elections of monarchs (1285a15–16; 1285a29–31) as this rests on the premise that subjects can reasonably choose. However, if they are really so meagre and slavish compared to the ruler, monarchies can still be justified if the rule is for the sake of the subjects' advantage, meanwhile a despot governs in tyranny according to his own will only and ignores the advantage and interests of his subjects (1295a16–23). The tyrant relies on the force of mercenaries (1285a25–27), which allows him to crush the spirit of subjects, making them to live in fear and hatred (cf. 1315b4–7) and turning them altogether even more servile (1285a19–22). Aristotle assesses such regime as contrary to nature and unjust (1287a16–18; 1288a1–2), truly 'reverse of a constitution' (1293b29–30). Such critique is compatible with the data of the political scientist as it removes two regimes from political communities[15] and defines them as pre-political (see table 2)[16].

IV. Conclusions

The most fundamental distinction in *Politics* is that of the pre-political and the political, understood in the form of the household and the state. Its purpose is to grasp the pattern of Aristotelian communal projects and approach vast array of questions in *Politics* – from constituents and their relations to the founding principles and pursuing goals of communities. The distinction covers various inconsistencies and tensions. The aim of this paper was to remove inner tensions of each definition and to conceptualize them. The pre-political community rests on natural inequality, where the superior in mental powers binds with inferiors. It is a hierarchical organization for material advantage of human beings in the household. The pre-political is included into the political as the constituent but at the same time suffers

[15] Yack: 1993: 87.
[16] Horizontal distribution shows political or pre-political character of communities, vertical distribution locates communities by perfection in their nature and goals, i.e. monarchy is the pre-political community itself, its true form, and the same applies to the ideal state.

from the exclusion. A political community, which springs from the union of plurality of household heads, rests on natural equality of rational abilities. Of course, there is also potential for political hierarchy as different communities establish norms, which rank political peers. Still, the political community has the imperative to attain moral excellence and maintain the equality by cultural and political instruments – laws, habits, education. It stretches to the ideal and thus forms a normative conception. The reading through the distinction of the pre-political and the political shows that both communities can be defined separately, but it also shows that the pre-political is dependent on the political. This transfers us from the question of inner tension of the components of the distinction to the outer tension, i.e. to the tension of distinction itself, which is based on inconsistent accounts of human nature. As latter question includes wider Aristotle's corpus, it was beyond the reach of this paper.

REFERENCES

Adkins, A. W. H. 1978. *Theoria* versus *Praxis* in the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Republic*. *Classical Philology* 73 (4): 297–312.

Annas, J. 1996. Aristotle on Human Nature and Political Virtue. *The Review of Metaphysics* 49 (4): 731–754.

Aristotle 1831. *Aristotelis Opera*. Ed. by I. Bekker. Berlin.

Cooper, J. M. 1990. Political Animals and Civic Friendship. In: *Aristoteles' 'Politik'*. Ed. by G. Patzig. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, p. 220–241.

Irwin, T. H. 1988. *Aristotle's First Principles*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Irwin, T. H. 1990. The Good of Political Activity. In: *Aristoteles' 'Politik'*. Ed. by G. Patzig. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, p. 73–98.

Kraut, R. 2002. *Aristotle: Political Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Miller, F. D. Jr. 1995. *Nature, Justice, and Rights in Aristotle's Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Miller, F. D. Jr. 2000. Naturalism. In: *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Political Thought*. Ed. by Ch. J. Rowe and M. Schofield. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 321–343.

Mulgan, R. G. 1990. Aristotle and the Value of Political Participation. *Political Theory* 18 (2): 195–215.

Nussbaum, M. C. 1990. Nature, Function, and Capability: Aristotle on Political Distribution. In: *Aristoteles' 'Politik'*. Ed. by G. Patzig. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, p. 153–187.

Nussbaum, M. C. 1992. Human Functioning and Social Justice: In Defense of Aristotelian Essentialism. *Political Theory* 20 (2): 202–246.

Pangle, L. S. 2003. *Aristotle and the Philosophy of Friendship*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Price, A. W. 1989. *Love and Friendship in Plato and Aristotle*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Rowe, C. J. 2000. Aristotelian Constitutions. In: *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Political Thought*. Ed. by Ch. J. Rowe and M. Schofield. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 366–89.

Saunders, T. J. 1995. *Aristotle, Politics. B*ook I and II. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Schofield, M. 1999a. Political friendship and the ideology of reciprocity. In: *Saving the City – Philosopher Kings and Other Classical Paradigms*. London and New York: Routledge, p. 72–87.

Schofield, M. 1999b. Equality and hierarchy in Aristotle's political thought. In: *Saving the City – Philosopher Kings and Other Classical Paradigms*. London and New York: Routledge, p. 88–100.

Yack, B. 1993. *The Problems of a Political Animal: Community, Justice, and Conflict in Aristotelian Political Thought*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

IKIPOLITIŠKUMAS IR POLITIŠKUMAS ARISTOTELIO *POLITIKOJE*

Vilius Bartninkas

Santrauka. Straipsnyje teigiama, kad ikipolitiškumo ir politiškumo skirtis, išreikšta valstybės ir namų ūkio sąvokomis, yra esminga suvokiant Aristotelio bendruomeninius projektus. Mąstymas šia skirtimi atskleidžia tokių bendruomeninių projektų struktūrą ir principus bei pašalina įtampas, glūdinčias skirtinguose ir dažnai nesuderinamuose Aristotelio teiginiuose. Straipsnyje parodoma, kaip namų ūkį bei valstybę galima apibrėžti kaip skirtingas ir vis dėlto tarpusavyje priklausomas bendruomenes ir kaip jų apibrėžimai paveikia konkrečių konstitucinių bendruomenių suvokimą.
Pagrindiniai žodžiai: *Politika,* ikipolitiškumas, politiškumas, valstybė, namų ūkis.