Aristotelian political philosophy and its implications for contemporary Ghana

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Abstract: No human society if free from socio-political challenges. However, developing countries tend to face more challenges than developed ones. Ghana is a West-African country that faces a lot of socio-political challenges such as poverty, poor infrastructure, local currency depreciation, high inflation, corruption, and high unemployment rate, among others. This paper used a literature-based research approach to explore what political lessons Ghana can learn from the political philosophy of Aristotle. The study draws political lessons for Ghana based on three thematic areas; namely, the reality of diversity and the need for political inclusiveness, the need for educational reforms and community-mindedness of the citizenry. The main thesis of the paper is that political activities must be geared toward the wellbeing of the society rather than the selfish interest of political actors. The paper serves as a foundation upon which a more detailed and comprehensive political theology could be formulated for Ghana and Africa at large.

Keywords: Aristotle, Ghana, Politics, State

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INTRODUCTION

This paper explores how contextual application of Aristotle's political philosophy might contribute to the solution to Ghana's political challenges. The introductory section examines the background of Aristotle's political thoughts. Aristotle was born in 384 BCE in Stagira, in northern Greece (Aristotle 2013). His father, Nicomachus, was a court physician to Amyntas III of Macedon. After the death of Amyntas III in 370/69 BCE, a political struggle ensued in which Amyntas's brother-in-law, Ptolemy of Alorus, murdered the king's eldest son and successor, Alexander (Aristotle 2013). The dynastic struggle could only be resolved with Philip's ascension to power in 359 BCE. It is likely that Aristotle's migration to Athens in 367 BCE was motivated by the political turmoil in his community.

Aristotle was a student of Plato. He went to Plato's Academy in 367 BCE at the age of 17 and later left to continue his philosophical pursuit. Different reasons have been assigned for Aristotle's departure from Athens. The traditional view is that Aristotle left Athens in 347 BCE after Plato's demise because he had philosophical disagreements with the disciples of Plato especially Plato's nephew Speusippus who succeeded Plato as the head of the Academy (Aristotle 2013). Another school of thought challenges the traditional view and holds that Aristotle left Athens after the murder of Socrates and before the death of Plato when he felt that the political leaders at the time were against philosophy and so he had to leave Athens to be safe (Aristotle 2013). Whatever one's opinion, it is clear that Aristotle did not spend all the rest of his life in Athens after he left his hometown and attended Plato's school. He left Athens at a point in time to develop and spread his philosophy further.

Aristotle spent the next five years in Asia Minor after he left Athens, first settling at Assos in the Troad where two graduates of the Platonic Academy had established a school (Aristotle 2013). He later left Assos for nearby Mytilene on the island of Lesbos before he was summoned by King Philip II of Macedonia to educate Prince Alexander (the Great), who later became the conqueror of the Persian Empire (Aristotle 2013). Alexander was thirteen years old when Aristotle began to teach him. Philip was interested in the education of the children of other royals. Therefore, Philip invited Aristotle to teach Alexander and the children of other Macedonian nobles. Many of Aristotle's students later became Alexander's friends and generals. Classes were held in the Temple of the Nymphs near Naoussa. The main focus areas were medicine, philosophy, morals, religion, logic, and art. Aristotle taught Alexander until the latter's ascension to the throne in 336 BCE. The influence that Aristotle had on Alexander informed most of Alexander's political strategies.

Different systems of government emerged in ancient Greece in the Greeks' quest to answer such questions as who should rule and how should people be ruled? The question of where sovereignty should lie—whether in the rule of law, the constitution, officials, or the citizens—was key in this regard. Four of the main systems of government that Aristotle encountered include: democracy (rule by the people, usually male citizens), monarchy (rule by an individual who had inherited his role), oligarchy (rule by a select group of individuals) and tyranny (rule by an individual who had seized power by unconstitutional means) (Aristotle 2013). Aristotle studied all these political systems and wrote extensively about them. Aristotle's concept of politics comprises matters related to the affairs of the state—the nature of the state, the way the state is administered, and the role of the citizens in the wellbeing of the

state, among others. Some of his major works on political philosophy/ethics are *Politics*, *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Eudemian Ethics*.

With the above contextual background, the paper now examines selected aspects of Aristotle's political philosophy, starting with his view on the state.

ARISTOTLE'S VIEW ON THE STATE

Aristotle argues that humans are political animals that desire to live in communities to derive benefits from one another (Kraut 2002; Mijuskovic 2016). Each person is born into a family which is the first human institution. Aristotle's concept of the state is analogous to an organism that has many organs which function together for one purpose, the survival of the organism. His organic theory compares the state to an individual made up of organs/parts such as head, arms, legs and face, among others. Here, the state is the body and the individual citizens are the organs/parts. For Aristotle, the state should restrict its interference in the affairs of the individual. The state should give some degree of liberty to the citizens to operate freely to be able to develop their potentials and contribute meaningfully to the progress of the society.

Since the family is the first human institution, it must be the starting point of development and the state, last (Elecbi 2018). Thus, the development of the society depends on the development of the family. This aspect of Aristotle's political theory is key to the Ghanaian society where many people leave the training of their children in the hands of institutions like the school and the church. The school and the church have their role to play in the upbringing of children. However, the family must take greater responsibility in the training of children. The society's role is to supplement the family's efforts. The society and the individual need each other to flourish.

Aristotle argues that although, the family, villages and tribes can fulfill most needs, one needs the state to address greater needs (Elecbi 2018). The state's key tasks include economic development, protection of human rights and liberties, and the formulation of political structures that enable citizens to use their capabilities for the common good of the people. The individual is free to develop their potentials. Yet, a proper development of one's potential is achieved through one's membership in and subordination to the state (Elecbi 2018). Similarly, one's liberty must be exercised within the sovereign power of the state just as human freewill is exercised within the sovereignty of God. The state works toward self-sufficiency—in such things as food, arts, and arms—because dependence on other states has many disadvantages. For a nation to be self-sufficient, there must be sufficient farmers to produce enough food, artists and artisans to provide art, army to protect the state, and priests to undertake religious functions. Simply put, the state must have sufficient resources to address its internal needs and to protect itself from any external aggression.

Aristotle argues that the state is not an ordinary community. It is the highest of all communities whose ultimate aim is to make its members achieve the highest/supreme good. Therefore, though the state is an association like other human associations, its purpose differs from those of other associations. The state satisfies the needs of the inhabitants and aims at providing the means to good life (Mijuskovic 2016). Its constituents include villages consisting of households which in turn are made up of individuals. The household is built upon two key relations; namely, male-female and master-slave relations. In the natural order of things, the state comes before the household and the individual. Thus, communal interest is prioritized over individual interest.

Aristotle opines further that citizenship is not defined merely by being a resident in a state. Rather, a citizen is one who participates in the political processes of the state—including, casting of vote, partaking in the administration of justice and legislation, contesting elections, attending the assembly and the council, or sitting on juries.

Aristotle notes further that one has to be trained to be able to partake in the various political activities (Mijuskovic 2016). Therefore, like Plato, Aristotle considers education as key to the progress of the state. Whether one rules or is ruled, one needs to be educated. Given this understanding, it can be argued that though children live in the state and are an integral part of it, they cannot be considered as "citizens" because they lack the ability to participate in political activities. The mentally ill are also not qualified as "citizens" because their infirmity makes them incapable of performing their political responsibilities (Mijuskovic 2016). Also, a person who is exiled from the state losses his/her citizenship.

Plato argues that people who are being trained for leadership career in future should not be allowed to own private property, else they will be corrupted by wealth and so favor those who can offer them material benefits. Contrary to Plato's abolition of private property among the guardians (leaders), Aristotle argues that one needs to have a personal property to be able to attain managerial skills required to manage public property. Thus, to be a leader or to qualify to be entrusted with the management of a public property, one should first of all be accustomed to managing private property. Without such managerial skills, one cannot be deemed qualified to "manage" the state. This means leadership positions should be given to people based on their track records and not based on their political affiliation, gender or ethnicity. Aristotle,

however, acknowledges that different people may have different sets of managerial expertise. Therefore, different people must be given different roles based on their individual aptitudes.

Aristotle's teacher, Plato, also taught that marriage should serve the purpose of producing offspring with high administrative and philosophical expertise to lead the society. To achieve this purpose, marriage should be arranged between most talented males and most talented females. The children born out of such marriages are to be raised together without letting them know their parents. This strategy is expected to increase the communal bond that exists among the people in the state. Contrary to this view, Aristotle argues that the abolishing of the family system will not increase people's bond with others in the community as Plato assumes, because it is impossible for people to have deep affection with a larger group as they have with their immediate family (Kraut 2002). He argues further that making the raising of children a completely communal task will end up leaving children uncatered for. There is an Akan saying that "A man who has many wives goes hungry." The wife of a monogamous man knows that she is the only one responsible for providing the man with food and so she does not assume that another person will cater for the man's need for food. She, therefore, ensures that there is always food on her husband's table. The wives of polygamous man, on the other hand, may assume that one of them will cook for the man. This results in a situation whereby no one cooks for him. This Akan saying, therefore, supports Aristotle's view that children will not be catered for if they are entrusted in the hands of the entire community. People will assume that others will cater for the children and when that assumption does not become a reality, the children will not be catered for. Individual parents must take the primary responsibility of

raising up their children with the support of the community.

Aristotle wants material resources to be owned privately in order to ensure that they are properly taken care of. He wants land to be owned collectively by the state and then allotted to individuals to cultivate and make their produce available for communal use (Kraut 2002). This view agrees with the theology of land in ancient Israel where individuals owned land entrusted to them by their families (see the story of Ahab and Naboth in 1 Kings 21, read especially v. 3). Aristotle's advocacy for the private ownership of property is also meant to encourage generosity. People can easily share with others what belongs to them as individuals than what they own with others (Kraut 2002).

ARISTOTLE'S PERSPECTIVES ON POLITICS

The term "politics"—a derivative of the Greek word "*politikos*" which pertains to the "*polis*" (city" or "state")—was introduced into the academic circles by Aristotle as the title of one of his lectures (Elecbi 2018). Ancient Greeks did not dichotomize what was sacred and what was political (Mijuskovic 2016). The non-dichotomization of secular and religious affairs is also found in Ghanaian traditional worldview.

Aristotle espoused different dimensions of politics. A few of these perspectives are considered briefly below.

Politics as art

Aristotle (2013) considers politics as an art of ruling. He compares the politician to the flute player (for example), who (owing to his/her skill) is given preference over the wealthy or say, the brilliant in the distribution of good flutes (Aristotle 2013). The flute player improves upon his/her talent by constantly playing. Similarly, the use of political power helps one to develop his/her capacity in the political landscape of the state (Elecbi 2018). Aristotle argues further that only those who have the pre-requisite skill should be allowed to partake in politics, just as the flute is played only by the one with the needed skills (Aristotle 2013). In this sense, one may consider politics as a task belonging to the most skilled and rationally-deserving or sound persons— "the well trained and responsible individuals" (Elecbi 2018, p.189). As an art, politics provides service to the society.

At the beginning of his *Politics,* Aristotle (2013) models politics after gymnastics which he says is applicable to shipbuilding, medicine, tailoring, and all other arts. He argues that just as gymnastics (physical education) involves the study of the kind of training that is naturally best for the body to adapt, so the study of politics needs to consider what constitution is best for the state. Determining what kind of constitution is best for a particular political body (or what constitution is best for the average society) requires a critical analysis of the origin and nature of existing constitutions to arrive at an informed decision (Aristotle 2013).

Aristotle groups constitutions into three and urges politicians/legislators to familiarize themselves with each of these kinds of constitution. They are the ideal constitution, which is unconditionally best; the best constitution under certain circumstances; the constitution that serves the purpose of a particular group of people (Miller Jr. & Biondi 2015). Aristotle acknowledges that though the ideal constitution is preferrable, there are cases where one has to adopt an inferior type of constitution based on prevailing circumstances.

Aristotle also uses the metaphor of a craftsman to explain politics. Take the production of a clay artifact like a ceramic cup, for example. There are four causes; namely, the material cause, formal cause, efficient cause, and final cause. The clay (material cause) is molded into a roughly cylindrical shape closed at one end (formal cause) by a potter (efficient or moving cause) so that it can contain a beverage

(final cause). All these are done according to specific principles. Similarly, the politician produces, operates and maintains a legal system according to universal principles. The state exists based on four causes; the material cause being the individual citizens; the formal cause being the constitution; the efficient cause, being the ruler, and final cause being the aims (or the vision) of the state (political community). Like the craftsman, the politician must fashion the society in a way that will help to achieve the final/ultimate goal. This makes politics a form of art.

Politics as science

Politics is also a form of science. Aristotle is the first political scientist. As a field of study, politics (or political science) is the study of the nature and affairs of the state and members; that is, how the state is organized or administered. Political science focuses on the general socio-political characteristics of human nature. Politics deals with systems of governance and political power, and the analysis of political activities, political thought, political behavior, and associated constitutions and laws.

Modern political science has three subdisciplines; namely, comparative politics, international relations, and political theory (Boix & Carol 2007). Comparative politics has to do with a comparative study of the various approaches to politics both within and between countries (Boix & Carol 2007). Some of the parameters used in the comparative study include how best a political system provides order, equality, freedom, or economic security and welfare of citizens. The field of international relations explores why states and non-state international actors like the United Nations and multinational corporations interact the way they do (Boix & Carol 2007). Political theory deals with the foundations of the political community and institutions. It focuses on human nature and the moral purposes of

political association (Boix & Carol 2007). Political theorists study the development of varying political doctrines, their basis, origin, form, and structure as well as the political culture of the people of a state. Political science is an interdisciplinary subject that relates to and draws upon, economics, law, sociology, history, philosophy, human geography, political anthropology, and psychology.

Aristotle considers politics as belonging to one of the three main branches of science, which he distinguishes by their ends or objects. The three branches of Science are contemplative science, productive science and practical science (Elecbi 2018). Contemplative science (comprising theoretical sciences like Algebra, Metaphysics and Physics) deals with truth or knowledge for its own sake. Productive science (including painting and sculpture) deals with the manufacture of useful or beautiful objects (Elecbi 2018). According to Aristotle, only human beings have rationality and are capable of engaging in productive science. Practical science (including Ethics and Politics) focuses on good action (Elecbi 2018). Aristotle considers politics as practical science because political activities prescribe what is good. Politics has to do with noble action or happiness of the citizens. It involves everyday practical activities in the state, including the formulation of laws. For Aristotle, all practical sciences are means to the end of politics, that is, human ultimate good/happiness.

Politics as ethics

Aristotle also considers politics as the moral principles that govern a person's behavior (Mijuskovic 2016). As ethics, politics is concerned with making laws to improve the wellbeing and happiness of the members of the society. In other words, politics defines ethical actions aimed at addressing physical, political, emotional, social, intellectual, and spiritual needs. Politics (like ethics) is, therefore, both prescriptive and

normative in that it indicates the right way humans need to act or behave in order to build a perfect state (Mijuskovic 2016). Thus, in Aristotle's opinion, ethics and politics are inevitably interrelated. He demonstrates the ethics-politics link in his two major works, *Politics* and *Nicomachean Ethics*. The interrelationship between Aristotelian politics and ethics is noted by Ross (2005, 197) in the assertion that Aristotle "does not forget in the *Ethics* that the individual man is essentially a member of society, nor in the *Politics* that the good life of the state exists only in the good lives of the citizens" (emphasis original). It is obvious that, in Aristotle's thought, one cannot understand politics without understanding ethics (Aristotle 2013). Similarly, it is not possible to understand ethics without understanding politics.

In Aristotle's opinion, the quality of one's political activities depends on how much benefits the society derives from those activities (Aristotle 2013; Mijuskovic 2016). It follows, therefore, that the quality of the lives of the citizens of a state depends on the quality of the political activities taking place in the state. Like Plato, Aristotle considers politics as means of achieving the common good of the state rather than the use of power for individual gain. With this understanding, political leaders are expected to seek the welfare of the people in the society. To sum up, Aristotle believes that one's true political nature must guide their practical life; thus, the quality of one's political life is measured by their contribution to the wellbeing of the society.

Politics as education

Education forms a major part of Aristotle's understanding of the subject of politics. Like Plato, Aristotle argues that the progress of the society depends on the level of education of its citizenry. In *Politics,* Aristotle argues that one of the reasons why the *polis* is more perfect than the family is that the *polis* provides the environment for the exercise of human faculties to completion, and in so doing, it promotes happiness. Reason and speech—that is, moral deliberation and collective discussions about justice— define human nature (Aristotle 2013). The *polis*, therefore, needs to develop the moral intelligence of the citizens to bring about transformation. Aristotle (2013) taught that the family's major concern is to provide recurrent needs and the village to serve mainly the purpose of exchange.

Therefore, it is important to educate all the citizens without discrimination. The education of the citizens is a function of the state. The pedagogical function of the state begins with the education of children in public institutions, but it culminates in the production of politically active adults (Aristotle 2013). Education equips one to exercise his/her political power and in doing so, they perfect the virtues of justice, moderation, courage, and prudence (that is, practical wisdom) (Aristotle 2013). Aristotle believes that an effective way of ensuring moral and prudential development is to be in charge of the wellbeing of others. He advocates rotation through office so that the opportunity to develop prudential and moral capabilities can be given to all. It is by so doing that the state can fulfil the natural political desires of its citizens (Aristotle 2013). Aristotle's idea that every citizen must be given the opportunity to participate in the political activities of the state points in the direction of participatory democracy. However, his contention that not all people qualify as citizens underlines that he is not a democrat. Aristotle considers mechanics, merchants, and farmers as people whose occupations do not allow them to have the leisure required for active participation in politics (Aristotle 2013).

Education is good but different people need different kinds of education. Aristotle proposed three stages of schooling—Primary ages, 7 to14 years; Secondary ages, 14 to 21 years and Higher

education, above 21 years. Aristotle does not subscribe to gender equality, arguing that women lack the intellectual capacity for the administration of the state. He argues that women are to be excluded from higher education because they are not capable of undertaking such complex studies. He criticized the Spartan government for giving their women excessive freedom (Tetlow 2005). In his view, women are to submit to the head of the household, the husband.

Aristotle (2013) argues that there are some people who lack the natural capacity to think on their own. Such people need guidance in every aspect of their lives. He advocates that they should be taught simple craft skills because they cannot be proficient in higher forms of practical reasoning (Kraut 2002). Such people always need others to supervise them. Aristotle (2013) opines that their supervisors can legitimately have them as slaves. In other words, people may be so inferior and brutish that it will be better for them to be under the control of a master rather than to be left on their own to mess things up. Aristotle, therefore, justifies slavery in certain circumstances. But even in circumstances where one becomes the master of one who is a slave by nature, the slave must be treated on humanitarian grounds. Aristotle (2013) condemns slavery that involves injustice and considers it as a contradiction to nature. He encourages slave masters not to treat their slaves cruelly.

From the foregoing discourse, people must only be allowed to rule if they have political expertise. Learning to become a politician is not an easy task, and so some people may not be capable of partaking in the political process of the state. One may argue that appointing political leaders based on intellectual capacity rather than one's willingness and integrity may not only lead to corruption but also to a situation where the knowledgeable few will ignore the ignorant majority. Thus, while Aristotle's

suggestion that politicians must have adequate knowledge about their work is laudable, such a requirement may lead to the creation of social classes among the people in the state.

Politics as means to attaining the highest good

Aristotle (2013) argues that everything has a goal or an end toward which it moves naturally. Again, everything has a unique function that makes it different form others. One has to understand nature and proper function of a thing before gaining adequate understanding of that thing. For Aristotle (2013), the highest good in a thing is achieved when it is able to perform its characteristic function, and the virtue or excellence of a thing includes whatever qualities enable it to perform that unique function well. For example, a seed, when sown, germinates and grows into a plant because it is the purpose and function for which the seed exists. In fact, everything naturally fulfills the purpose for his they exist.

Applying this principle to humankind, Aristotle (2013) argues that the proper end (*eudaimonia*) of human life is to flourish (live well) (cf. Pakaluk 2005). In other words, *eudaimonia,* the highest human good or the state of human flourishing, is not just a good moment or even a good day. Rather, it is a good life. *Eudaimonia* is not an event but a lifelong experience. Human flourishing or the state of blessedness is, therefore, the only human good that is desirable for its own sake as the ultimate end rather than for the sake of something more desirable (that is, as a means to some other end).

Given this understanding, it follows that all human decisions and activities must be geared toward *eudaimonia* (Pakaluk 2005)*.* In other words, human flourishing is the purpose, function, or final goal of all rational human activities. Aristotle's ethics underline degrees of goodness, that is, if good A is for the sake of good B, then B is good ''to a higher degree'' than A. Thus, good A is

the means of getting to the end, good B. The ultimate happiness, however, is the end and not the means (Pakaluk 2005). It is not momentary pleasure but an enduring contentment. This kind of happiness lacks nothing that is due to it; it is perfect in that it occurs in its fullest form (Pakaluk 2005). There are, therefore, degrees of happiness and one has to strive for the ultimate/highest happiness through political activities.

Aristotle's political philosophy holds that the sustainability of the state requires citizens to act in accordance with virtue that he identifies with happiness. That is, one has to live the best they can through active involvement in the political activities of the state that bring out the best in humans for the common good of the society (Halper 2007). As stated earlier, the main reason why government exists is to promote and foster virtue in a way that leads to the good life of its citizens.

The various aspects of Aristotle's political philosophy have implications for contemporary Ghanaians. The following section examines three of such implications based on the themes: the reality of diversity and the need for political inclusiveness, the need for educational reforms and community-mindedness of the citizenry.

IMPLICATIONS OF ARISTOTELIAN POLITICAL IDEAS FOR CONTEMPORARY GHANA
The reality of diversity and the need for political inclusiveness

According to Aristotle (2013), politics must lead citizens to realize the highest good in life. Such a task cannot be performed without political inclusiveness because no one knows it all. Political inclusion is vital to sustainable democracy. It is the idea that every citizen, regardless of class, age, gender, sexual orientation, ability, ethnic or religious must be given equal opportunity to take part in the nation's political activities (Asante 2007).

To achieve political inclusiveness, there is the need to accept diversity as God-given gift to every human society. That the human reality is diverse is evident in the fact that "humanity can only be defined and informed by diversity defined in terms of race, stock, physiology, culture and others and expressed in the oneness of being human" (Asante 2010, p. 5-6). Therefore, Ghana's gender, socio-cultural, political, economic, linguistic, and ethnic diversity comes from God. The obvious conclusion is that diversity is an inevitable reality in the country's political life.

The significance of inclusive government that takes the issues of political and ethnic diversity seriously and provides equal opportunities to every citizen in the nation is underlined by Nelson Mandela's assertion, "I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die" (Cohen 2009, p.77). Based on Mandela's assertion, political appointments should be made based on one's track record and competence.

The principle of diversity in politics underlines the need for interdependence (Asante 2007). The value in diversity and the need for interdependence in governance is expressed in the Ghanaian proverb "Wisdom is not the preserve of one person." Everybody is endowed with some kind of wisdom; therefore, everybody has some useful contribution to make in respect to governance. The ruling government needs to recognize that the ultimate good of the society cannot be achieved without tapping all the skills in the country regardless of their sources.

The political diversity in Ghana also brings to the fore the need for political tolerance and consensus building. Political tolerance has to do with the ability or willingness to endure political

opinions or attitudes that one dislikes or disagrees with (Asante 2010). A tolerant leader protects the rights of all, including those he/she dislikes or with whom he/she strongly disagrees. Toleration indicates "the permission of, or patience in the presence of opinions or practices that are not regarded as really good or of persons identified with such opinions and practices" (Rule 1960, p.525-526). Therefore, to be tolerant means to have "the capacity to accept what one considers to be acceptable even though substandard or imperfect" (Asante 2010, p.14). One can be tolerant and still hold on to his/her beliefs. Tolerance does not mean condoning evil. Evil must be exposed at all cost.

Consensus building and political inclusiveness require the ruling government to subject proposed policies to the scrutiny of the opposition party. The success of the Ghana's democracy depends to a great extent on the constructive role of the opposition party. Every opposition party must check the ruling government from becoming authoritarian. The opposition party must also constructively criticize the policies of the government and make such criticisms known to the public through the press. It must also check expenditure of the government and vehemently oppose reckless borrowing and spending. Policies that are meant for the good of the society must be supported by all parties. Should the opposition decide not to support such policies, both God and the citizenry will hold them accountable.

Educational reforms

Aristotelian political philosophy highlights the need for educating all citizens in the country. As Mandela (cited in Ango & Rutoro 2020, p.143) says, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." This agrees with Aristotle's idea that education of the citizenry makes them not only law abiding but also equips them to contribute their quota to the development of the society.

Given the role of education in eliminating gender inequality, reducing poverty, preventing preventable deaths and illness, and enhancing unity and harmony in the society, one cannot overstate the relevance of education in nation building. However, it must be noted that it is not every kind of education that can impact the society positively. For education to have significant impact on the society, it must be of a good quality and what is learnt in schools must provide solutions to the problems of the society.

Ghana's literacy rate stood at 69.8 percent in 2021, meaning seven out of every ten Ghanaians can read and write (Gyesi 2021). While this figure is an improvement upon the literacy rate in 2000 (57.90%), the country keeps struggling with issue of chronic underdevelopment evident in high unemployment rate, bad road networks, poor health service delivery, high inflation, poor infrastructure, and increasing local currency depreciation, among others. It is obvious that Ghana's education system does not "provide students with high-quality education that can equip them to meet the demands of the ever-changing global, social, economic and technological environment" (Ango & Rutoro 2020, p.143). Consequently, the country keeps producing graduates who cannot find jobs and/or cannot start anything on their own. Every year students graduate from the tertiary institutions to add up to the graduate-unemployment rate.

Poor infrastructure in the education system is still a challenge to Ghana. It is common to find pupils studying Information Technology (IT) and Science without access to IT equipment (like computers) and Science equipment. Teachers keep drawing apparatus on the board and expect students to understand how they work. At the tertiary level, the story is not different. A graduate in Mechanical Engineering finds it difficult to identify the plug in his/her car let alone removing and assessing it. The reason is

that Ghana's pedagogical tradition focuses on theory more than practical training. The theoretical approach to teaching and learning encourages people to memorize concepts without actually understanding them. The demands of examination questions are usually theoretical rather than practical. The questions require students to reproduce ("chew and pour") what the teacher has given them verbatim. As a result, the student who is capable of memorizing notes usually emerges as the best student. Those who are not good at "chewing and pouring" may cheat in examination or have sexual affairs with teachers/lecturers to pass their examinations.

After graduation, the student gets employed in a company and now finds that he/she is not well equipped for the task given him/her because of the lack of practical knowledge about the task. The chew-and-pour pedagogical approach makes even the best student have nothing new—no unique skills, no creativity, no entrepreneurial skills—to contribute to the job market. Consequently, the student goes through the education system, chewing, pouring and forgetting, and eventually graduating with "nothing" in his/her head or no skills to create his/her own job, and thus becoming dependent on the government for employment. Since the government is also not creating enough job opportunities, many graduates become unemployed after school and continue to depend on their families to survive.

Obviously, there is the need for a massive reformation of Ghana's education system. The following principles can be derived from Aristotle's pedagogical tradition for Ghana's educational reform. First, the primary aims of Ghana's education system should be to nurture thinking skills to help students actualize their full potentials. By developing these skills, graduates "will be able to adopt an analytical and evaluative attitude toward their own performance and the performance of the society" (Ango & Rutoro 2020, p.147).

This leads to the second principle, namely, education in Ghana must be based on the Problem-Solving-Approach to teaching and learning. The Problem-Solving-Approach enables the student to learn new knowledge by facing the problems to be solved. This approach equips graduates with critical thinking skills, research skills and skills in creativity and innovation, and skills in questioning and reasoning. It helps students to analyze a real-life problem, break it down to its simplest form and provide solution to it. This approach requires students to observe, understand, analyze, interpret, find solutions, and apply the solution for a holistic transformation of the society.

Thirdly, the government is expected to provide the necessary infrastructure and resources to meet the demands of the country's education system. The kind of education that will transform Ghana holistically is one that inspires "students to live for greater purposes, combining academic and community-mindedness" and attending to students' all-round needs—mental, spiritual and vocational (Ango & Rutoro 2020, p.150). Such kind of education requires certain equipment, resources and infrastructure which the government must be prepared to provide.

Community-mindedness

One thing that comes out clearly in the Aristotelian philosophy of politics is that one's success in the political sphere depends on the impact of that person's political activities on the society. One does not become successful based on the amount of wealth he/she has amassed. Neither does one become successful based merely on the number years he/she has been in active politics but on how beneficial one's political career has been to his/her people. Busia makes this point when he says, "the ultimate goal of politics is the creation of conditions, which will give every individual the opportunity

to be the best he can as a human being and as a member of a community" (Busia citied in Anane-Agyei, 2014, p. 37). This means a key purpose of political power is to serve fellow humans, improve the state of the society for human habitation, and make the life of citizens happier. Politicians are encouraged to use their wealth to create employment for their people, build hospitals for them, fight corruption, fight moral decadence, and construct their roads and to help alleviate poverty so that people can actualize their full potential.

For one to be successful, his/her political endeavors must promote social justice. Social justice has to do with "an ethical concept with immense social significance implies the notion of fairness, fair deal, moral integrity and righteousness in the dealings of men with one another and in the affairs and transaction of social life" (Iwe, 1985, P. 235). The politician must give everyone a fair share of the national cake without discrimination. This point collaborates Busia's assertion that political parties must aim at creating a "society which all may live a life of dignity and freedom, protected from destitution and from oppression" (Busia cited in Anane-Agyei, 2014, p. 7). Busia, therefore, expects politicians to see themselves as human beings who have reached where they are because of the support of the "ordinary" citizen. Again, a successful political career requires one to respect fellow humans are creatures who also bears God's image and needs to be dignified in all possible ways.

A successful politician also promotes unity and harmony. The reality of political diversity in Ghana has been noted earlier. Instead of denying our diversity, political actors must acknowledge it as a divine gift and use it as a tool for promoting unity in diversity. The nation should not be divided along tribal, political and religious affiliations. All the citizens must seem themselves as one people. For unity to be promoted, political actors should be circumspect in the words they utter. They must be careful not to trigger divisiveness through their political talks.

Furthermore, every Ghanaian must prioritize the interest of the community. One can infer from the Aristotelian concept of citizenship that people who are not contributing their quota to the political activities of the country are not citizens. Where ever one is divinely placed to work, one has to do all things possible to contribute to the development of the society in order to qualify as a citizen. In connection with this, religious leaders in Ghana are encouraged to teach the members to practicalize their faith by keeping the environment clean, desisting from illegal means of harnessing natural resources (such as illegal mining and fishing), and indiscriminate waste disposal. The youth should not allow themselves to be used by political bigwigs to do things than threaten human survival in the country.

The education system needs to train people to have the country at heart so that they will be willing to contribute their quota to the development of the nation no matter the circumstances. People must be taught that the value of one's education depends on the services rendered to the community. Therefore, the educated should contribute in the transformation of their society, especially in areas such as environmental crisis, unemployment and poor health delivery and others. Busia (cited in Anan-Agyei 2017, p.104) serves as well with his assertion that: "We must judge our progress by the quality of the individual, by his knowledge, his skills, his behavior as a member of the society, the standards of living he is able to enjoy and by the degree of cooperation, harmony and brotherhoodness in our community life as a nation."

Finally, Aristotle's view on the proper way of managing land has something to say to the Ghanaian society

where majority of the land is vested in the hands of traditional rulers who sell them indiscriminately and live lavishly while their subjects wallow in abject poverty. The paper calls for land reforms that will ensure that individual families (making up the community) have access to their lands for cultivation and other purposes.

Conclusion

The paper discussed Aristotle's political philosophy which is based on the idea that government exists to promote virtue in a way that leads to the good life of the citizens. On their part, virtuous citizens live harmoniously, despite their diversities, under common laws and contribute to the development of their society. Aristotle's political philosophy was then applied to the contemporary Ghanaian context based on three thematic areas; namely, the reality of diversity and the need for political inclusiveness, the need for educational reforms in the country and community-mindedness. The principles in this paper may serve to guide policy makers and to facilitate the transformation of the Ghanaian society.

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