Recognition and Redistribution in Aristotle's Account of *Stasis*

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Abstract

In *Politics* 5.1–3, Aristotle sees different conceptions of proportional equality and justice as the fundamental causes of *stasis* and *metabolē* (constitutional change). His account shows what happens to notions of ‘particular’ justice when they become causes of individual and collective action in pursuit of moral and political revolution. The whole discussion of the causes of *stasis* should be read through the filter of individual/group motivation – as a reflection of what goes on in the heads of those who engage in *stasis*. Movements towards political change are motivated by ingrained conceptions of proportional equality and fair distribution of honour and wealth. Aristotle’s approach, therefore, may be compared to Axel Honneth’s, that social justice should be seen in terms of the distribution of dignity and respect as well as of material resources.

Keywords

recognition – redistribution – *stasis* – honour – *axia* – justice

1 Introduction

One of the most thought-provoking philosophical debates of the last two decades has been that between Nancy Fraser and Axel Honneth on the concepts of redistribution and recognition.¹ This debate has addressed explicitly the progressive transformation of the key concepts and preoccupations of modern political philosophy: from a concern with confronting economic inequalities that could not be rationally justified (typical of Marxism and connected with social democracy) to a growing preoccupation with the evils of humiliation and disrespect. In Honneth's formulation, the key categories in play are ultimately not distributive and economic equality but rather equality of dignity and respect.² These developments have been linked to the rise of identity politics and the realignment of left-wing political theory, from socialism to liberalism. Against these developments, which she associates particularly with Charles Taylor and Axel Honneth, the two most prominent theorists of recognition, Nancy Fraser has reaffirmed the centrality of 'redistribution', arguing that struggles concerning redistribution are qualitatively different from those over recognition and cannot be reduced to them; therefore, she argues, the new centrality of recognition has in fact side-lined concerns with equality that should instead still be at the centre of the left-wing political agenda.

While Fraser's analysis is broadly compatible with Taylor's understanding of a transition from 'redistribution' to 'recognition' as the focus of political struggle as well as political theory, Honneth's approach is radically different in that it denies that redistributive and recognition struggles are qualitatively different and argues instead that redistributive struggles are in fact always conceptualized by the agents as struggles for recognition. A proper focus on recognition, therefore, does not undermine redistributive struggles, but has the potential to strengthen their claims.³ Building particularly on the work of E.P. Thompson

1 N. Fraser and A. Honneth, *Redistribution or Recognition? A Political-Philosophical Exchange*, transl. by J. Golb, J. Ingram, and C. Wilke (London and New York: Verso, 2003), with A. Honneth, 'Reconnaissance et reproduction sociale', in J.-P. Payet and A. Battegay (eds.), *La reconnaissance à l'épreuve: Explorations socio-anthropologiques* (Villeneuve d'Ascq: Presses universitaires du Septentrion, 2008), pp. 45–58, which re-engages with the debate and brings new arguments. See also C.F. Zurn, *Axel Honneth: A Critical Theory of the Social* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2015), pp. 127–154 for a summary and an assessment of the debate between Fraser and Honneth.

2 Honneth, 'Reconnaissance', pp. 45–46.

3 For Honneth's theory of recognition, see in particular A. Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts*, transl. by J. Anderson (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), as well as the essays collected in A. Honneth, *The I in We: Studies in the Theory of Recognition* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012), and now A. Honneth, *Anerkennung: Eine*

and Barrington Moore,⁴ Honneth has argued that the redistributive struggles of the working class have always involved the construction of a class identity with a distinctive normative notion of a fair recognition order, on the basis of which workers judge the current distribution of wealth to be unfair, and stake their claims not merely for a greater or an equal share, but more precisely for what they are due, for what they deserve. In Honneth's argument, redistributive claims, insofar as they are political claims, are in fact recognition claims grounded on distinctive conceptions of a just order of recognition, challenging the existing order of recognition that underpins the current distribution. For Honneth, redistributive claims, as manifested in political struggles, need to be subsumed under, and conceptualized and presented as, struggles for recognition between agents who have internalized and attempt to institutionalize different orders of recognition, involving different conceptions of value and desert and creating different and competing obligations.

Our contention in this article is that in Book 5 of the *Politics*, in discussing the 'causes' of *stasis* and constitutional change (*metabolē*), Aristotle engages with similar debates about the value frameworks and motivations of those involved in struggles over redistribution and political, moral, and social revolutions. We argue that his line of argument, despite its different normative, cultural, and political framework, has considerable similarities with Honneth's, in that it denies that redistribution struggles are qualitatively different from recognition struggles: they are not exclusively about the allocation of resources nor are they conceptualized as such by their participants. Rather, Aristotle contends that *stasis* always originates from and is justified by different conceptions of what is normally translated as 'proportional equality' or 'proportional justice', but which is literally equality or justice 'based on worth', 'based on value' (κατ' ἀξίαν).⁵ Different ideas about the just distribution of wealth and honour are,

europäische Ideengeschichte (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2018) for an investigation of the history of the concept of *Anerkennung*.

4 In particular on Thompson's masterpiece *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: Gollancz, 1963), but see also E.P. Thompson, *Customs in Common: Studies in Traditional Popular Culture* (New York: New Press, 1992); B. Moore, *Injustice: The Social Bases of Obedience and Revolt* (London: Macmillan, 1978).

5 M. Schofield, 'Sharing in the Constitution', *The Review of Metaphysics* 49 (1996), pp. 831–858 also stresses the centrality of ἀξία ('worth') to Aristotle's theory of justice and political thought, against F.D. Miller, *Nature, Justice, and Rights in Aristotle's Politics* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1995) and his contention that central to Aristotle's theory of justice is a notion of (natural) rights. Our position is that the notion of ἀξία ('worth', together with the notion of τιμή ('honour'), which responds to claims based on ἀξία) can express the notion of 'rights', but its semantic range is not limited to it. In ordinary Greek, the word τιμή is normally used to indicate both one's subjective worth and the external signs

for Aristotle, based on different basic ideas about what constitutes value and produces worth (ἀξία), and, for him, competing redistributive claims both originate from and are typically justified in terms of competing ideas about the correct grounds for value or worth. These are, in Honneth's terminology, the competing recognition orders that come into conflict when struggles for recognition emerge. Aristotle's analysis of the causes of *stasis* paints a picture of *stasis* that is akin to what Honneth describes as a struggle for recognition, and presents *metabolē* as the transition from one recognition order to another.

Aristotle's argument is particularly valuable for two reasons. First, it anticipates modern work on the importance of unpacking the orders of recognition and theories of value underpinning the distribution of wealth, income, and respect in modern society, as highlighted not only by Honneth, but also, for instance, in recent work on capitalism and inequality by Mariana Mazzucato.⁶ Second, it puts into stark relief how abstract notions such as 'numerical equality' *per se* never serve as grounds for moral and political struggles, and never succeed *per se* in motivating political and social agents to undertake these struggles. In line with much research in social and developmental psychology and in behavioural economics that has shown that 'intuitive justice' is to a large extent concerned with proportionality rather than equality *sensu stricto*, with self-respect and dignity rather than with mere utility,⁷ Aristotle argues that in order for social and political agents to perceive the distribution of wealth and respect as unequal and unjust, and, accordingly, to act towards changing it, they need to possess alternative notions about what constitutes worth and value, underpinning a different framework of claims and obligations, according to which the current distribution is perceived as unjust. In other words, political agents do not fight for a different distribution of wealth simply because that would make them better off. They fight for it because they believe that they *deserve* more, that what they are allocated in terms of wealth and respect is in the current system *unjustly* misaligned with their actual worth and value, while others *unjustly* get more than they deserve. The struggle for redistribution is thus an aspect of the wider struggle for recognition.

that acknowledge that worth; Aristotle normally uses τιμή only in the second sense, and prefers words such as ἀξία or ἀξίως to indicate the first, see Ø. Rabbås, 'Virtue, Respect, and Morality in Aristotle', *The Journal of Value Inquiry* 49 (2015), pp. 619–643, at pp. 633–634. For the crucial point that claims to consideration on the basis of ἀξία are claims to τιμή, see *Pol.* 3.12.1283a14, 16, 3.13.1283b13–14.

6 M. Mazzucato, *The Entrepreneurial State: Debunking Public vs. Private Sector Myths* (London and New York: Anthem Press, 2013) and M. Mazzucato, *The Value of Everything: Making and Taking in the Global Economy* (London: Allen Lane, 2018).

7 See below, section 3.

In the following sections, we start by providing some context for Aristotle's discussion of *stasis*, showing how it fits within the wider programme of Books 4–6. We then proceed to analyse in detail the argument of *Politics* 5.1–3: we argue that Aristotle sees different conceptions of proportional equality and justice ('in accordance with worth') as the fundamental causes of *stasis* and *metabolē*, and we show what happens to notions of 'particular' justice when they are no longer standalone concepts (as in *Eth. Nic.* 5), nor simple final (and formal) causes of particular constitutions (as in *Pol.* 3), but become causes of individual and collective action in pursuit of moral and political revolution. To anticipate our conclusions, the discourse of causation moves to a psychological level, so that the whole discussion of the causes of *stasis* is better read through the filter of individual/group motivation – as a reflection of what goes on in the heads of those who engage in *stasis* (στασιάζουσιν). *Stasis*, as argued by Skultety, is described by Aristotle as an action undertaken by members of a political community for specific reasons, not as a 'thing' or a state of affairs.⁸ The investigation into its causes is, therefore, an investigation into the motivations of those who engage in *stasis* (στασιάζουσιν), which involves: (a) the particular subjective disposition (διάθεσις) of the revolutionary agents, which rests on notions of distributive justice and proportional equality; (b) a concern for honour and profit, τιμή and κέρδος, as the aims behind the distribution; and (c) an appreciation of particular patterns of behaviour and occasions that both originate from and are assessed in accordance with this διάθεσις. *Stasis* is represented by Aristotle as fundamentally about honour and profit, and finds its origins (ἀρχαί) in particular occurrences and forms of behaviour, yet all of these are inflected by notions of proportional equality and its basis in worth (ἄξια) – the agents' own 'theories of value'. Particular notions of proportional justice are the filter through which reality (in this context the distribution of honour and wealth) is apprehended and assessed by political agents.

8 S.C. Skultety, 'Delimiting Aristotle's Conception of *Stasis* in the *Politics*', *Phronesis* 54 (2009), pp. 346–370, at pp. 348–349; *Conflict in Aristotle's Political Philosophy* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2019), pp. 5–33, particularly pp. 6–7; see also M. Wheeler, 'Aristotle's Analysis of the Nature of Political Struggle', *American Journal of Philology* 72 (1951), pp. 145–161, at pp. 145–146, on various modern translations of *stasis* (see E. Rogan, *La Stásis dans la politique d'Aristote: La cite sous tension* (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2018), pp. 369–372, for a tabulated list of all the occurrences of *stasis* in Aristotle). A. Lintott, *Aristotle's Political Philosophy in its Historical Context: A New Translation and Commentary on Politics Books 5 and 6* (London and New York: Routledge, 2018), p. 14, for example, understands *stasis* in Aristotle's account as 'division', not as an action (cf. K. Kalimtzis, *Aristotle on Political Enmity and Disease: An Inquiry into Stasis* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2000), pp. xiv–xv, 3–8, who understands it, unconvincingly, as physical arrest, in medical terms).

This reading contrasts to varying extents with those offered by some of the most extensive treatments of *stasis* in Aristotle, particularly Kostas Kalimtzis' and Ronald Weed's, which argue from very different standpoints that the basis of *stasis* is a 'disease' or a 'vice' that consists in identifying honour or wealth as the highest human good.⁹ It also undermines accounts such as that of Ryan Balot that read the dispositional cause of *stasis* (a particular notion of proportional equality) as a pretext (a foil used by revolutionaries), the fundamental (final) cause of *stasis* being material gain.¹⁰

2 The Context of the Argument

Aristotle's treatment of *stasis* is set within the wider programme of investigation of constitutions developed in Books 4–6. This programme is set out in the proem to Book 4 (Chapters 1–2), where Aristotle significantly widens the scope of the 'art of politics', τέχνη πολιτική (here promoted to the status of a 'science', ἐπιστήμη), to include not only (as in his predecessors, Plato *in primis*) the definition of the ideal constitution that can assure the good life (εὖ ζῆν – this is in fact the programme of Books 7 and 8, and the baseline on which the discussion of constitutions in Book 2 and the taxonomy between 'correct' and 'deviant' constitutions in Book 3 are built), but also a consideration of how the existing constitutions can be fostered or preserved (βοηθεῖν/σώζειν). In accordance with this widening of the scope of πολιτική ἐπιστήμη, Aristotle describes his new programme at *Pol.* 4.2.1289b12–26, and this programme is in effect followed to the letter in the remainder of Book 4 and in Books 5 and 6. The last

9 Kalimtzis, *Aristotle on Political Enmity*; R. Weed, *Aristotle on Stasis: A Moral Psychology of Political Conflict* (Berlin: Logos Verlag, 2007). Cf. also E. Garver, *Aristotle's Politics: Living Well and Living Together* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2011), pp. 137–139, 156, who argues that the formal causes of *stasis* for Aristotle are by definition 'mistakes'.

10 R.K. Balot, *Greed and Injustice in Classical Athens* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), pp. 22–57. Our reading, of course, does not amount to the claim that Aristotle does not find the condition of misunderstanding the true value of honour or wealth problematic and potentially dangerous for both individual and communal life (this is clear from passages such as *Eth. Nic.* 1.5.1096a5–7 and the discussion of wealth in *Pol.* 1.8–10), or that individual or collective greed can *never* be a political factor (this is e.g. Thucydides' interpretation of the civil strife in Corcyra, 3.82.8). It does suggest, however, that when it comes to the description of *stasis* in *Pol.* 5, Aristotle takes the different conceptions of distributive justice, not sheer greed or a misinformed conception honour and wealth, as the fundamental cause of *stasis* and the basic explanatory framework through which *stasis* can be analysed (thus, with Rogan, *La Stásis*, pp. 214–215, 'La stásis n'est pas un conflit entre des intérêts égoïstes').

point of this programme (4.2.1289b22–26) is to examine the causes of the preservation or the failure of existing constitutions, and Book 5 is in fact dedicated to this topic.¹¹

The matching of the theme of Book 5 with the last point of the new programme laid down by Aristotle is clear also from the terminological parallels. In *Pol.* 4.2 we read:

We must attempt to go through what destroys (τίνες φθοραί) and what preserves (τίνες σωτηρίαι) constitutions, both in general and for each constitution separately (καὶ κοινῇ καὶ χωρὶς ἐκάστης), and the causes on account of which (διὰ τίνος αἰτίας) these [i.e., the destructions and preservations] tend most to come about.

Pol. 4.2.1289b23–26

The analysis is to be concerned, then, with the destruction and preservation of the various constitutions (as analysed at length in Book 4), and in particular with the αἰτίαι (the ‘causes’) of these phenomena. The opening of Book 5 (*Pol.* 5.1.1301a19–25) recalls the programme outlined at *Pol.* 4.2, and addresses its last point directly: it claims that most of the other points of the programme have been discussed,¹² and what must follow is an investigation, indeed, of ‘what destroys each constitution’ (τίνες ἐκάστης πολιτείας φθοραὶ) and also (ἔτι) of ‘what preserves’ them (σωτηρίαι τίνες), which must be studied ‘both in general and separately’ (καὶ κοινῇ καὶ χωρὶς). The theme of the investigation is also described as an enquiry into the causes of constitutional change (ἐκ τίνων δὲ μεταβάλλουσιν αἱ πολιτεῖαι καὶ πόσων καὶ ποίων), and the sources of destruction and preservation (φθοραὶ and σωτηρίαι) are described and investigated as such.

11 For the widening of the scope of the τέχνη πολιτική as well as the centrality of ‘preservation’ (σωτηρία) in *Pol.* 5–6, see particularly L. Bertelli, “Salvare la città” in Aristotele, in S. Cataldi, E. Bianco, and G. Cuniberti (eds.), *Salvare le poleis, costruire la concordia, progettare la pace* (Alessandria: Edizioni dell’Orso, 2012), pp. 281–295, reprinted in L. Bertelli, *Politica en logoi: Studi sul pensiero politico greco*, ed. by G. Besso and F. Pezzoli (Alessandria: Edizioni dell’Orso, 2017), pp. 195–212. On the structure of these three books, see synthetically the introduction to G. Besso, M. Canevaro, F. Pezzoli, and M. Curnis, *Aristotele, La Politica: Libro IV* (Rome: L’Erma di Bretschneider, 2014), and *passim*.

12 *Pol.* 5.1.1301a19–20. This is correct: *Pol.* 4.2 introduces five topics of discussion, three of which have already been covered in Book 4 (varieties of existing constitutions; the most common and most choiceworthy constitution after the ideal one; which constitution is most appropriate for whom), one is to be covered in Book 6 (measures to establish particular constitutions), and one is the topic of Book 5 (causes of destruction and preservation of existing constitutions).

3 *Politics* 5.1: Conceptions of Proportional Equality as Motives of Those Who στασιάζουσιν

After declaring at the beginning of *Pol.* 5.1 that his aim is to investigate the causes of constitutional change for each constitution, in general and separately, Aristotle states that the origin or starting principle (ἀρχή) of his investigation is that there are multiple constitutions because everyone agrees on justice as proportional equality (πάντων μὲν ὁμολογούντων τὸ δίκαιον καὶ τὸ κατ' ἀναλογίαν ἴσον),¹³ but they make mistakes about it (*Pol.* 5.1.1301a25–28). This formulation goes back to earlier discussions, particularly in *Pol.* 3 and *Eth. Nic.* 5 (see further below). It establishes a necessary presupposition for any discussion of the particular causes of *stasis* and *metabolē*, that is, the basic understanding that any political conflict is fundamentally about justice and equality. This is the foundation (ἀρχή) of the entire analysis: the causes of *stasis* and *metabolē* should be understood within the framework of a shared understanding of equality and justice as proportional.¹⁴ The rest of *Pol.* 5.1 is dedicated to justifying this statement and to unpacking it for the purpose of discussing the causes of *stasis* and *metabolē*.

13 W.L. Newman, *The Politics of Aristotle*, vols. i–iv (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1887–1902), vol. iv, p. 283, and D. Keyt, *Aristotle, Politics: Books V and VI* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 57, rightly observe that καὶ is explanatory here.

14 Aristotle highlights the general validity of this fundamental principle with the repeated use of generalizing language throughout *Pol.* 5.1: see 1301b5 (ὡς εἰπεῖν), 1301b26 (πανταχοῦ), 1301b28 (ὅλως) in combination with στάσις/στασιάζουσιν to reiterate the argument that the perceptions of different groups about equality and inequality are the cause of *stasis*. Balot, *Greed and Injustice*, p. 47 argues that ‘this cause is advanced as merely the most general cause of *stasis*; it is not intended to apply necessarily to every specific case’. It seems, however, that Aristotle is making the opposite point. Conflicting notions of inequality may not be the *only* cause of *stasis* (as the more detailed discussion of *Pol.* 5.3 will show, e.g., 1302b33–1303a20), but they are the cause of *stasis* ‘broadly speaking’ or ‘in a general sense’, in the sense that this is the main or basic reason behind *stasis*. In other words, the future statesman or lawgiver who reads the *Politics* needs to know the full gamut of causes that bring about *stasis* in all its details (5.1–3), but if one wanted to have a broad grasp of why *stasis* is caused, the discussion of conflicting notions of equality and inequality between social groups in 5.1 provides the basic explanatory framework and the fundamental cause of *stasis* (see also Miller, *Nature, Justice, and Rights*, p. 295; P.L.P. Simpson, *A Philosophical Commentary on the Politics of Aristotle* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), pp. 363–365, 369; Skultety, ‘Delimiting’, pp. 348–351; *Conflict*, pp. 7–10; Lintott, *Aristotle’s Political Philosophy*, pp. 11–14). The metaphorical use of πηγαί (‘sources’) at *Pol.* 5.1.1301b5 (borrowed from Plato’s *Laws* 690d, according to Newman, *The Politics*, pp. iv.285–286) seems to convey the same effect. Keyt, *Aristotle, Politics*, p. 67, notes the general character of this cause of *stasis*, but does not elaborate on its relative weight *vis-à-vis* the causes of *stasis* discussed in *Pol.* 5.2–3.

Aristotle immediately provides examples to illustrate his contention (*Pol.* 5.1.1301a28–35). Democracy comes into being because those who are equal in one respect (ἐκ τοῦ ἴσους ὅτι οὖν ὄντας) believe themselves to be equal absolutely (οἷσθαι ἀπλῶς ἴσους εἶναι): because they are equal in so far as they are free (ὅτι γὰρ ἐλεύθεροι πάντες ὁμοίως), they believe they should also be equal in all other respects (ἀπλῶς ἴσοι εἶναι νομίζουσιν).¹⁵ Oligarchy, on the other hand, arises because those who are unequal in one respect (ἀνίσους ἐν τι ὄντας) believe themselves to be unequal in every respect (ἐκ τοῦ ... ὅλως εἶναι ἀνίσους ὑπολαμβάνειν): because they are unequal in wealth (κατ' οὐσίαν γὰρ ἄνισοι ὄντες), they are convinced that they should be unequal absolutely, in all respects (ἀπλῶς ἄνισοι ὑπολαμβάνουσιν εἶναι). Thus, the former, as (allegedly) equal, believe they should share equally in everything; the latter, as (allegedly) unequal, attempt to 'have more' (πλεονεκτεῖν) in all matters.¹⁶

The argument, as mentioned above, is similar to that of *Pol.* 3, which identified the final (as well as the formal) causes of the particular constitutions

15 This is correct in principle, but fundamentally reductive of (e.g.) the Athenian democrats' claims to equality. On the one hand, it is true that Athenian citizen identity can be traced back to a significant extent to Solon's ban on the enslavement of Athenians: Athenians are born free and can never be slaves, and they are equal at least in this (see M. Canevaro, 'Social Mobility vs. Societal Stability: Once Again on the Aims and Meaning of Solon's Reforms', in J. Bernhardt and M. Canevaro (eds.), *From Homer to Solon: Continuity and Change in Archaic Greek Society* (Leiden: Brill, 2022)). On the other, in Classical Athens the power of the *demos* was justified by a rather more complex network of ideas about prominence, intelligence, φιλανθρωπία, and shared excellence of character, rather than by the simple notion that all are equal because all are free. This is particularly in display in the Funeral Speeches, but is clear more generally both from the orators more widely and from tragedy, particularly Aesch. *Eum.*, Soph. *OC*, and Eur. *Supp.* On the Funeral Orations, see particularly N. Loraux, *The Invention of Athens: The Funeral Oration in the Classical City*, transl. by A. Sheridan (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986), and now M. Barbato, *The Ideology of Democratic Athens: Institutions, Orators and the Mythical Past* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020). On the orators, see, e.g., M. Canevaro, *Demostene, Contro Leptine: Introduzione, traduzione e commento storico* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2016), *passim*, for the construction of the Athenians' character in Dem. 20.

16 Cf. E. Schütrumpf and H.-J. Gehrke, *Aristoteles, Politik: Buch IV–VI* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1996), p. 438, who list and distinguish passages in which political conflict aims at more equality and passages where political conflict aims at more inequality. We should also note in passing that this passage is one of several in the immediate context that demonstrates that Balot, *Greed and Injustice*, p. 64, n. 21 (and *passim*), is wrong to claim that 'especially in the *Politics*' πλεονεξία is 'focused on power and material goods, rather than on honor': πλεονεκτεῖν 'in all matters' includes πλεονεξία in respect of honour. Cf. *Pol.* 5.2.1302a24–34, 1302a38–b2, 5.10.1311a5–7; elsewhere, see 2.7.1266b37–38; 4.6.1293a23; 4.12.1297a11–13. See further D.L. Cairns, 'Aristotle on *Hybris* and Injustice', in C. Veillard, O. Renaut, and D. El Murr (eds.), *Les philosophes face au vice, de Socrate à Augustin* (Leiden: Brill, 2020), pp. 147–174.

by applying to them the different conceptions of proportional equality identified in *Eth. Nic.* 5.¹⁷ An absolutely equal distribution of all things, in *Pol.* 3, was the end (the final cause) and the shape (the formal cause) of democracy, while an unequal distribution of all things was the end (the final cause) and the shape (the formal cause) of oligarchy.¹⁸ In *Pol.* 5 Aristotle situates these considerations within the context of the discussion of the causes of *stasis* and *metabolē*, marking these different kinds of proportional equality as the cause on account of which people resort to *stasis* (καὶ διὰ ταύτην τὴν αἰτίαν ... στασιάζουσιν, 5.1.1301a37–39): people enter into conflict when they participate in the constitution not in accordance with the *ὑπόληψις* they happen to have (ὅταν μὴ κατὰ τὴν ὑπόληψιν ἣν ἑκάτεροι τυγχάνουσιν ἔχοντες μετέχωσι τῆς πολιτείας, 5.1.1301a37–38). *ὑπόληψις* is never really defined in the Aristotelian *corpus*, but, in Fine's words, Aristotle 'seems to use *ὑπόληψις* as a general term for any cognitive condition that involves taking something to be true' – it is normally used

17 These appear to be at the same time final and formal causes of democracy and oligarchy. *Pol.* 3.9 sets out to examine the *ῥοι* of democracy and oligarchy, which Newman, *The Politics*, p. iii.198, renders as 'mark' or 'distinguishing principle', in preference to LSJ's 'end' or 'aim'. Those different conceptions of proportional equality give to each constitution its distinctive 'shape' or 'form', as well as being the end to which each constitution tends. And, as Aristotle remarks, the final and the formal causes often coincide – in nature at least – (*Ph.* 2.7.198a22–26). For a discussion of the use of the four causes in the *Politics*, see now C. Natali, 'Il materialismo politico di Aristotele', in C. Viano (ed.), *Materia e causa materiale in Aristotele e oltre* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2016), pp. 77–98 (cf. D. Keyt, 'The Four Causes in Aristotle's *Politics*', in K.I. Boudouris (ed.), *Aristotelian Political Philosophy* (Athens: International Center for Greek Philosophy and Culture, 1995), pp. 101–107).

18 For Aristotle's conception of proportional equality as it is articulated particularly in *Eth. Nic.* 5 and *Pol.* 3, see D. Keyt, 'Aristotle's Theory of Distributive Justice', in D. Keyt and F.D. Miller, Jr. (eds.), *A Companion to Aristotle's Politics* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1991), pp. 238–278; Keyt, *Aristotle, Politics*, pp. 56–62; M.E. De Luna and C. Zizza, *Aristotele, La Politica: Libro V–VI* (Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 2016), pp. 264–278; and M. Knoll, 'The Meaning of Distributive Justice for Aristotle's Theory of Constitutions', *ΙΙΗΓΗ/ΦΩΝΣ* 1 (2016), pp. 57–97. See also (synthetically) Lintott, *Aristotle's Political Philosophy*, pp. 12–14. For discussions of this passage, see in particular Simpson, *Philosophical Commentary*, pp. 362–365, who correctly stresses the focus here on the motivation of the 'revolutionary' (accordingly, the remarks about mixing different conceptions of distributive justice in the constitution in Schütrumpf and Gehrke, *Aristoteles, Politik*, p. 435, L. Bertelli and G.F. Gianotti, *Tra storia e utopia: Studi sulla storiografia e sul pensiero politico antico* (Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 2012), p. 75, and De Luna and Zizza, *Aristotele, La Politica*, pp. 276–277, are correct in general (and there is a degree of purchase for them at 1302a7–8), but not particularly pertinent to this discussion of the causes of *stasis* of *Pol.* 5.1–3).

of a judgement, a belief, or an impression that is taken by the agent to be correct, regardless of whether it is actually true.¹⁹

This is a key step of his argument, with implications for the rest of the discussion of the causes of *stasis* and *metabolē*: different (mistaken) conceptions of proportional justice and equality are indeed the ἀρχή (origin) of the analysis, but not, as at *Pol.* 3, as the final cause of the different constitutions. They are not the final cause of a 'substance' (οὐσία) or of an 'association' (κοινωνία), but rather the cause of a decision that results in an action: *stasis*.²⁰ They are the frameworks operative in the minds of the revolutionary agents – they take these conceptions to be true and therefore these govern their perception of the world around them, and therefore their actions. The idea that the ὑπόληψις of each group is not just a theoretical or abstract concept, but one that is likely to be transformed into action in the appropriate circumstances, is highlighted by the use of the verb ἀξιούσι ('think it right', 'consider themselves worthy') in the opening of *Pol.* 5 (5.1.1301a34, b2) – this sense of entitlement is offered as an explanation of each group's ὑπόληψις (εἴτα, 5.1.1301a33). Each group does not merely have a particular belief about proportional equality and just distribution, they also 'deem themselves worthy' of particular shares on the basis of this belief, which suggests that they are likely to seek to act upon, and fulfil, this belief about themselves:²¹ ἀξιούν, claiming for oneself a particular share, derives from οἶεσθαι (5.1.1301a29) and ὑπολαμβάνειν (5.1.1301a32), that is, from having a particular belief about the nature of just distribution.

19 J. Moss and W. Schwab, 'The Birth of Belief', *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 57 (2019), pp. 1–32, at p. 13; similarly, J.O. Urmson, *The Greek Philosophical Vocabulary* (London: Duckworth, 1990), p. 78 (sense 4). Some connect it to the Stoic notion of assenting to an impression, taking it to be true, see e.g. Themistius (*In Aristotelis libros de Anima paraphrasis* 5, 3.89.6, 14, 21, 23) and R.D. Hicks, *Aristotle, De Anima* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1907), p. 460. M. Schofield, 'Aristotle on the Imagination', in M. Nussbaum and A.O. Rorty (eds.), *Essays on Aristotle's De Anima* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), pp. 249–277, translates it as 'supposition' (p. 261) but notes that its critical feature is 'taking something to be the case' (p. 273). See particularly M. Wedin, *Mind and Imagination in Aristotle* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988), pp. 103–105.

20 For attempts to fit this account of the causes of *stasis* into the Aristotelian four-cause framework, see e.g. Weed, *Aristotle on Stasis*, pp. 52–60; Kalimtzis, *Aristotle on Political Enmity*, pp. 103–178 (cf. Keyt, *Aristotle, Politics*, pp. 75–78 and Garver, *Aristotle's Politics*, pp. 137–144). Skultety, 'Delimiting', p. 349, and Rogan, *La Stásis*, pp. 71–73, rightly doubt whether this scheme can be applied here. For our reconstruction of Aristotle's overall account of the causes of *stasis*, see now esp. D. Cairns, M. Canevaro, and K. Mantzouranis, 'Aristotle on the Causes of Civil Strife: Subjective Dispositions, Proportional Justice and the "Occasions" of *Stasis*', *Maia* 20 (2020), pp. 551–570.

21 See Schofield, 'Sharing', p. 851: 'thinking oneself deserving of something is often expressed by laying claim to it, whether in word or action or both.'

This is not true, Aristotle remarks, only of democrats and oligarchs (5.1.1301a39–b4): the mechanism would govern in principle also *stasis* towards aristocracy, as virtuous people would adopt a conception of proportional justice by which wealth and honour should be distributed in accordance with virtue. (As it happens, they do not, because, being virtuous, they avoid *stasis* altogether.)²² And, likewise, those who are superior by lineage (κατὰ γένος ὑπερέχοντες) entertain a conception of proportional justice by which wealth and honour should be distributed in proportion to ancestral prominence and wealth.

It is in this sense, Aristotle reiterates, that different (mistaken) notions of proportional equality are the real origins (ἀρχαί) and sources (πηγαί) of *stasis* (5.1.1301b4–6). They are sources of *stasis* inasmuch as they are the real reasons why people behave in ways that lead to *stasis* (ὅθεν στασιάζουσιν). For the next few lines Aristotle goes through the different kinds of μεταβολαί that can originate from these mechanisms (5.1.1301b6–26): μεταβολαί from one constitution to another; μεταβολαί towards the same constitution but with a different group in charge of it; μεταβολαί towards more or less extreme, more or less temperate forms of the same constitution; μεταβολαί towards changing one particular part of the constitution, such as an office and its powers.²³ Ultimately, all these forms of *stasis* occur for the same reason (5.1.1301b26–29): because of inequality (διὰ τὸ ἄνισον). Unless, that is, this inequality expresses proportionality (οὐ μὴν εἰ²⁴ τοῖς ἀνίσοις ὑπάρχει ἀνάλογον). Thus, behind *stasis* there always lies a quest for equality (ὅλως γὰρ τὸ ἴσον ζητοῦντες στασιάζουσιν). The inequality which causes *stasis*, moreover, is inequality as perceived by the revolutionary agents, on the basis that the prevalent distribution of wealth and honour does not align with their ὑπόληψις of correct distributive justice, based on the preponderance of one particular feature (wealth or freedom) over all others.²⁵

At this point, however, there is an apparent problem. Aristotle has stated that it is specifically notions of proportional equality that are behind *stasis*, because all agree that a just distribution is fundamentally a distribution

22 Arist. *Pol.* 5.4.1304b4–5 clarifies that the virtuous do not rebel also because of practical reasons: they are much fewer than the many, and even than the wealthy (cf. Schütrumpf and Gehrke, *Aristoteles, Politik*, p. 429 and De Luna and Zizza, *Aristotele, La Politica*, pp. 267–268). For this (potential) kind of *stasis*, see Rogan, *La Stásis*, pp. 111–113, 116–120.

23 See De Luna and Zizza, *Aristotele, La Politica*, pp. 268–273.

24 Following Newman's suggestion accepted by Ross and Curnis.

25 Lintott, *Aristotle's Political Philosophy*, pp. 12–15, 27, speaks of 'ideologies' in this respect, and indeed a cluster of ὑπόληψις can be understood as an 'ideological position'. Yet he says little of how these 'ideologies' act within the agent as motivational causes, or of their relation to the further causes listed by Aristotle.

according to worth (*Pol.* 5.1.1301a26–27: πάντων μὲν ὁμολογούντων τὸ δίκαιον καὶ τὸ κατ' ἀναλογίαν ἴσον). He reiterates this later in the same chapter, at 1301b35–36 (ὁμολογούντες δὲ τὸ ἀπλῶς εἶναι δίκαιον τὸ κατ' ἀξίαν).²⁶ This is fully in accordance with the approach of the *Nicomachean Ethics* (5.6.1131a25–29),²⁷ and that view is specifically endorsed, with cross-reference, as the correct one at two points in *Pol.* 3 (3.9.1280a7–25, esp. 17–19, καθάπερ εἴρηται πρότερον ἐν τοῖς ἠθικοῖς, τὴν μὲν τοῦ πράγματος ἰσότητα ὁμολογοῦσι, τὴν δὲ οἷς ἀμφισβητοῦσι, 3.12.1282b14–23, esp. 18–20, δοκεῖ δὲ πᾶσιν ἴσον τι τὸ δίκαιον εἶναι, καὶ μέχρι γέ τινος ὁμολογοῦσι τοῖς κατὰ φιλοσοφίαν λόγοις, ἐν οἷς διώρισται περὶ τῶν ἠθικῶν).²⁸ Yet, in the very same passage in which Aristotle reiterates this point (that all who engage in *stasis* are motivated by a perception of inequality and that all agree that the relevant form of equality is that which is based on worth), he also introduces the distinction between numerical (or arithmetic) and proportional equality (5.1.1301b29–35): one is equal by number or size (λέγω δὲ ἀριθμῶ μὲν τὸ πλῆθει ἢ μεγέθει ταῦτ' ὅσον), the other by worth (κατ' ἀξίαν δὲ τὸ τῷ λόγῳ). In terms of numerical equality, the difference between three and two is equal to that between two and one; but 'by worth', that is, proportionally, the difference between four and two is equal to that between two and one.

That this is not just a vaguely relevant theoretical aside is shown by the fact that Aristotle immediately goes on to associate numerical equality with democracy and equality κατ' ἀξίαν with other forms of constitution, especially oligarchy (5.1.1301b35–1302a8):

Although all agree that justice in absolute terms is justice according to worth (κατ' ἀξίαν), they disagree (as was said before), some because they think that if they are equal in some respect they are wholly equal, others because, if they are unequal in some respect, they consider themselves worthy of inequality in all things. This is why on the whole two constitutions come about, democracy and oligarchy; for noble birth and virtue are found in few, but those things [sc. freedom and wealth] in more: for nowhere are there a hundred noble or virtuous people, but the rich and the poor are numerous. For the constitution to be based absolutely and in all respects according to either kind of equality [sc. numerical or

26 On this specific point, see e.g., Rogan, *La Stásis*, pp. 192–194.

27 'For all agree that justice in distributions must be according to some form of worth (τὸ γὰρ δίκαιον ἐν ταῖς νομαῖς ὁμολογοῦσι πάντες κατ' ἀξίαν τινὰ δεῖν εἶναι), although they do not all mean the same sort of worth: democrats say it is freedom, oligarchs wealth, others nobility of birth, and aristocrats virtue. Justice, then, is a kind of proportion (ἔστιν ἄρα τὸ δίκαιον ἀνάλογόν τι). Cf. 5.7.1131b16–17, 5.9.1134a1–6.

28 Cf. 3.13.1283a26–31, 3.16.1287a8–23, 3.17.1287b41–1288b5.

proportional] is bad. This is clear from events, for of such constitutions not one is long-lived. The reason for this is that it is impossible that some misfortune should not in the end result from an initial error. That is why one should use numerical equality in some things and equality according to worth in others (διὸ δεῖ τὰ μὲν ἀριθμητικῇ ἰσότητι χρῆσθαι, τὰ δὲ τῇ κατ' ἀξίαν).

In a single passage, then, Aristotle states that democrats, like oligarchs and others, base their claims to justice on equality according to worth; yet in rejecting both democratic and oligarchic principles as mistaken and partial conceptions of justice he presents the democrats' version as numerical or arithmetic equality. In making the first claim, he echoes *Pol.* 3, with its cross-references to *Eth. Nic.* 5. There, the focus of the discussion was how to balance different claims to worth and so different conceptions of proportional equality, of justice. Now, in Book 5, though all still agree that justice is based on proportional equality, it is two different notions of equality, numerical and proportional, that need to be accommodated.

The latter point is taken up extensively in Book 6, where the democratic notion of justice is explicitly said to be based on numerical and not proportional equality κατ' ἀξίαν (6.2.1317b3–4: καὶ γὰρ τὸ δίκαιον τὸ δημοτικὸν τὸ ἴσον ἔχειν ἐστὶ κατὰ ἀριθμὸν ἀλλὰ μὴ κατ' ἀξίαν),²⁹ the claims of democrats are based substantially on their greater numbers (6.2.1317b5–6, 6.3.1318a18, 1318a24–26, 1318a29, 6.6.1321a1–2), and a stable arrangement, it is suggested, might accommodate both principles, numerical and proportional equality (6.3.1318a27–33; cf. our passage, 5.1.1302a7–8).

The point is, however, that the tension between proportional and numerical equality as the basis of democratic notions of justice is not a tension between *Pol.* 5 and other parts of the *Politics* (whether Book 3 or Book 6), much less (as Knoll argues) between the *Politics* and the *Ethics*;³⁰ it is right there at the heart of our passage in *Pol.* 5.1. This is a tension that cries out for explanation as a deliberate move on Aristotle's part.

29 Cf. 6.2.1318a3–10, 6.6.1321a1–3.

30 See M. Knoll, review of De Luna and Zizza, *La Politica, Gnomon* 92.7 (2020), at p. 591: 'Unlike in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, in the *Politics* democratic justice is no longer presented as one interpretation of justice according to merit, but as an application of "numeric" or "arithmetic" equality.' Cf. Knoll, 'The Meaning of Distributive Justice', p. 73: 'While in the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle seems to use "worth (ἀξία)" [*sic*] as a generic term or an open concept which can assume different meanings, in the *Politics* he uses it in a non-egalitarian sense pointing to the idea of an unequal rank, merit or desert of citizens.'

First, let it be noted that any interpretation of the democratic notion of numerical equality that deprives it of any reference to worth altogether is doomed to failure. Not only does Aristotle state quite plainly, at the very point at which he begins to describe their principle in terms of numerical equality, that democrats too base their claims on a notion of ἀξία, but the democratic criterion of ἀξία (namely free birth) remains relevant and operative even in the context of Book 6's emphasis on mere numbers.³¹ The democratic principle of numerical equality itself entails a claim that (Aristotle reiterates) should be accommodated (5.1.1302a7–8, 6.3.1318a27–33), insofar as it is just in one respect, even though it is unjust in failing fully to recognize other claims.³² The democratic principle is thus still based on ἀξία, but insufficiently attentive to it. The oligarchic principle is insufficiently attentive to ἀξία in other ways, but at least accommodates differences between individuals. In practice, this means that those who want equality for all on the basis of free birth (one form of ἀξία) are pursuing numerical equality, but only because this is what their concept of ἀξία dictates. The democratic notion of equality is 'numerical' only by contrast with positions that differentiate between individuals and groups in terms of ἀξία. Underlying Aristotle's approach here, in all relevant passages, is (a) the view that both democrats and oligarchs are ultimately wrong about what ἀξία really consists in, but also (b) a pluralist approach that seeks to accommodate to an appropriate degree each of the different criteria of worth. Thus democratic equality is indeed based on worth, but in insisting on the equal worth of all free individuals it effects an undifferentiated numeral equality that overlooks claims deriving from real differences between individuals and makes numerical preponderance the central principle of government. Or, to put the same point in other terms, Aristotle is quite clear that in pursuing what is, in one sense, numerical equality democrats do in fact, like everyone else, base their claims on a notion of justice 'in accordance with worth' (κατ' ἀξίαν).³³ It is possible that Aristotle's emphasis in this regard developed over

31 See 6.2.1317b10–11 (ἐν μὲν οὖν τῆς ἐλευθερίας σημεῖον τοῦτο [sc. the democratic notion of numerical equality], ὃν τίθενται πάντες οἱ δημοτικοὶ τῆς πολιτείας ὅρον); cf. 1317b16–17; 1318a8–10 (κατ' ἀριθμὸν· οὕτω γὰρ ἂν ὑπάρχειν νομίζοιεν τὴν τ' ἰσότητα τῇ πολιτείᾳ καὶ τὴν ἐλευθερίαν).

32 See e.g. 6.2.1317b7, where the use of δεῖν indicates a normative claim (φασὶ γὰρ δεῖν ἴσον ἔχειν ἕκαστον τῶν πολιτῶν). As Aristotle notes at 6.3.1318a21–22, both democratic and oligarchic views involve inequality and injustice (ἀνισότητα καὶ ἀδικίαν) with regard to the claims of their opponents. On this general point, cf. 3.9.1280a22–31, 5.9.1310a28–36.

33 See also Simpson, *Philosophical Commentary*, p. 367: 'for numerical equality will be the result if all are equal according to merit'. Keyt, *Aristotle, Politics*, pp. 56–59, 73–74, also notes the apparent tension in Aristotle's presentation of democratic justice and rightly (a) sees no discrepancy between *Pol.* 5.1 and *Eth. Nic.* 5 (*pace* Knoll) and (b) locates the

time: but we should note that both the *Pol.* 6 position and the *Pol.* 3 and *Eth. Nic.* 5 position are present in *Pol.* 5.1. That the democratic notions of equality and justice should be in one sense κατ' ἀξίαν and in another κατ' ἀριθμόν is a characteristically Aristotelian stance that makes due allowance for different perspectives. By the same token, it emerges that there are marked and unmarked senses of equality and justice κατ' ἀξίαν: in the unmarked sense, any criterion of worth counts, while in the marked, it is characteristic of 'worth' that individuals should manifest it to different degrees. It would be misleading to claim that these positions are not to some degree in tension, but it would be equally wrong to say that the tension is resolved in favour of an absolute denial that democrats base their own claims (their ὑπόληψις) on ἀξία.

τὸ κατ' ἀξίαν ἴσον in its marked, non-democratic sense distributes unequal shares according to (real or alleged) differences in desert between participants (one to the member who is worth/deserving of one, two to the member who is worth/deserves twice as much). This is in fact our own principle in distributing both burdens (e.g., taxation) and benefits, while a flat tax (such as Margaret Thatcher's poll tax) is an application of the principle of numerical equality. Aristotle holds that all (including democrats) agree that justice *simpliciter* is κατ' ἀξίαν, while still holding that democrats in practice seek numerical equality and that there is another kind of equality, i.e., proportional equality, at which oligarchs (as well as the virtuous and the nobly born) aim, but which only a genuine match between share and desert would achieve.

To sum up, this dense chapter makes two important and interlocking points, which underpin the rest of Aristotle's analysis of the causes of *stasis* in *Pol.* 5.2 and 5.3. First, that the fundamental causes of *stasis* and *metabolē* are notions of distributive justice at work in the minds of social and political agents and governing their perception of the world around them – of the allocation of goods and honour – as just or unjust. They are causes of *stasis* insofar as they lie behind their understanding of social reality, and therefore they are the basic motivations behind their revolutionary actions. Second, the relevant notions of distributive justice at work as a ὑπόληψις of the revolutionary agents are fundamentally about equality, and more specifically about equality in accordance with worth – proportional equality. This is true of oligarchs and aristocrats, but also of democrats, who simply adopt a more inclusive criterion to define what they regard as worth. Political agents, for Aristotle, do not

tension in the fact that the democrats' preferred standard of merit (i.e. freedom) 'does not come in degrees' (p. 59); as a result, given that 'the freedom of one man is equal to the freedom of any other, the democratic conception of justice reduces to a numerical equality' (p. 73). Cf. De Luna and Zizza, *Aristotele, La Politica*, p. 8: 'due false interpretazioni della giustizia secondo il merito'.

challenge unequal distributions of wealth and honour simply because they are unequal – because they are unequal from a numerical point of view – and are not moved by an ideal of absolute numerical equality. This is never the form of equality that lies behind social and political demands. These demands rather arise from the perception of unsatisfied claims based on desert: revolutionary agents initiate *stasis* because they feel that they are not getting their due, while others are receiving more than they deserve (as a result of the application of what they regard as a mistaken criterion of worth). Accordingly, their claims and struggles are always grounded in distinctive conceptions of proportional equality, based on competing (and, for Aristotle, unilateral) ways of assessing desert.³⁴

As for Honneth, so for Aristotle, social and political struggles emerge when the agent's internalized order of recognition clashes with the institutionalized order of recognition, and the agent feels that s/he is not getting the recognition (and the corresponding allocation of resources) that s/he deserves. This is an important insight, confirmed by modern research. Ordinary, or 'intuitive' notions of justice focus especially on distributive justice 'in accordance with worth' ('the perception that people are getting what they deserve')³⁵ rather than with notions of absolute equality. Experimental research on fairness in children, reviewed and summarized by developmental psychologists Christina Starmans, Mark Sheskin, and Paul Bloom, has established that 'humans naturally favour fair distributions, not equal ones', and 'when fairness and equality

34 Cf. 5.3.1303b3–7, 5.4.1304a33–1304b5, 5.6.1305b2–22, 36–39, 5.7.1306b22–1307a7, 17–27. Cf. also Rogan, *La Stasis*, pp. 165–166 and 133–222 *passim*, who stresses that *stasis*, for Aristotle, is essentially about justice (and therefore about the claims this gives rise to). Rogan rightly stresses the multiplicity of competing claims due to the multiplicity of the 'parts' of the city, but is less clear about the actual link between particular qualities, the construction of worth and self-worth, and corresponding notions of proportional justice. A. Hatzistavrou, 'Faction', in M. Deslauriers and P. Destrée (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle's Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 275–300 distinguishes between 'injustice-induced', 'greed-induced', and other forms of *stasis*, but recognizes that the first is the 'paradigmatic type of faction' (p. 281). In identifying some of the other causes, however, he insists on classifying the behaviour of the ruling element as a type of cause that is distinct from the resentment of those who initiate *stasis* on account of it (e.g. pp. 278–279 on 5.7.1307a18–20; cf. pp. 286–287, 293) and categorizes as distinct causes factors that are better seen as enabling one or other faction to put its own claim to equality κατ' ἀξίαν into practice. As Aristotle puts it at 6.3.1318b4–5, equality and justice are the constant motives of those excluded from power, but no concern to those who hold the upper hand (ἀεὶ γὰρ ζητοῦσι τὸ ἴσον καὶ τὸ δίκαιον οἱ ἥττους, οἱ δὲ κρατοῦντες οὐδὲν φροντίζουσιν).

35 G. Lukianoff and J. Haidt, *The Coddling of the American Mind: How Good Intentions and Bad Ideas Are Setting Up a Generation for Failure* (New York: Penguin Press, 2018), ch. 11. Also J. Haidt, *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People are Divided by Politics and Religion* (London: Allen Lane, 2012).

clash, people prefer fair inequality over unfair equality'.³⁶ Even young children base their assessment of a 'just' distribution on proportionality of effort or merit: in one experiment children as young as two years old showed surprise when two people were rewarded equally but only one had done any work, and by the age of six children favour rewards that are proportional to hard work even when equal rewards are offered as an option.³⁷ Proportional justice is also the foundation of 'equity theory', the most important theory of distributive justice in social psychology, whose key tenet is that people perceive a distribution to be equitable or fair when the ratio of outcomes to inputs is equal for all participants.³⁸ Aristotle is right in arguing that political and social redistributive claims are always based on proportionality by desert (χατ' ἄξιαν), even in the case of the democrats and their (alleged) pursuit of an absolutely equal distribution. Otherwise, such claims would not be perceived as just, and social and political struggles are ultimately about justice.

In showing that disputes over the distribution of resources are never *just* about the material or economic value of the resources themselves, but rather about the participants' sense of fairness and of their own deserts (what one might call their dignity), Aristotle's analysis also chimes with modern theories which emphasize that material prosperity is intimately related to issues of status and social comparison.³⁹ Epidemiological and sociological studies sug-

36 C. Starmans, M. Sheskin, and P. Bloom, 'Why People Prefer Unequal Societies', *Nature Human Behaviour* 1 (2017), pp. 1–7.

37 S. Sloane, R. Baillargeon, and D. Premack, 'Do Infants Have a Sense of Fairness?', *Psychological Science* 23 (2012), pp. 196–204; W. Damon, *The Social World of the Child* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1977); P. Kanngiesser and F. Warneken, 'Young Children Consider Merit when Sharing Resources with Others', *Public Library of Science* 7 (2012), pp. 1–5. See P. Bloom, *Just Babies: The Origins of Good and Evil* (New York: Crown, 2013) for a review of these results.

38 See e.g. J.S. Adams, 'Toward an Understanding of Inequity', *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 67 (1963), pp. 422–436 and J.S. Adams, 'Inequity in Social Exchange', *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* 2 (1965), pp. 267–299; R.C. Huseman, J.D. Hatfield, and E.W. Miles, 'A New Perspective on Equity Theory: The Equity Sensitivity Construct', *Academy of Management Review* 12 (1987), pp. 222–234; E.H. Walster, G.W. Walster, and E. Berscheid, *Equity: Theory and Research* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1978).

39 See G. Brennan and P. Pettit, *The Economy of Esteem* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); M. Marmot, *Status Syndrome: How Your Social Standing Directly Affects Your Health and Life Expectancy* (London: Bloomsbury, 2004); R. Layard, *Happiness: Lessons from a New Science* (London: Allen Lane, 2005), esp. pp. 41–48, 150–153; R.G. Wilkinson, *The Impact of Inequality: How to Make Sick Societies Healthier* (New York: New Press, 2005); R.H. Frank, *Falling Behind: How Rising Inequality Harms the Middle Class* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007); R.G. Wilkinson and K. Pickett, *The Spirit Level: Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better* (London: Allen Lane, 2009); D. Dorling, *Injustice: Why Social Inequality Persists* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2010).

gest that the deleterious effects of inequality of wealth and income – at least in those contemporary societies in which absolute poverty is rare – are largely a function of the link between wealth and status, of what one's wealth and the things one can buy with it say about one's standing relative to others. There is substantial evidence to suggest that human beings' concern for fairness in the distribution of material rewards is conditioned not only by material concerns, but by the concern for status. The concern for fairness that typically manifests itself in the well-known 'ultimatum game' shows that human beings' attitudes to material gain and the distribution of material resources are inflected by a sense of one's own worth, by the notion that it would be beneath one's dignity to accept an excessively unfair share, even of a windfall.⁴⁰ We dislike excessive material inequality because its unfairness reflects a discrepancy between outcome and desert.

4 *Politics* 5.2–3: The Goals of Distribution, the Occasions of *Stasis*, and the 'Filter' of Proportional Equality

The discussion of *Pol.* 5.1 serves as preparation for the more detailed discussion of the causes of *stasis* at 5.2 and 5.3, because it is within the framework of 5.1 that the individual causes of 5.2 and 5.3 need to be understood. *Pol.* 5.2 opens with the following statement (1302a16–18):

Since we are examining the sources from which (ἐκ τίνων) factions and changes in constitutions arise, we must first grasp their origins (ἀρχάς) and causes (αἰτίαι) in general (καθόλου).

⁴⁰ See e.g., R.H. Thaler, 'Anomalies: The Ultimatum Game', *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 2 (1988), pp. 195–206; M.A. Nowak, K.M. Page, and K. Sigmund, 'Fairness Versus Reason in the Ultimatum Game', *Science* 289 (2000), pp. 1773–1775. The claim that we share this trait with other primates (S.F. Brosnan and F.B.M. de Waal, 'Monkeys Reject Unequal Pay', *Nature* 425 (2003), pp. 297–299; S.F. Brosnan, H.C. Schiff and F.B.M. de Waal, 'Tolerance for Inequity May Increase with Social Closeness in Chimpanzees', *Proceedings of the Royal Society B* 272 (2005), pp. 253–258) has been disputed (J. Bräuer, J. Call, and M. Tomasello, 'Are Apes Really Inequity Averse?', *Proceedings of the Royal Society B* 273 (2006), pp. 3123–3128; K. Jensen, J. Call, and M. Tomasello, 'Chimpanzees Are Rational Maximizers in an Ultimatum Game', *Science* 318 (2007), pp. 107–109), but there is no doubt that the link between status and psychophysical well-being, at least, is as strong in primates and other mammals as it is in human beings (Wilkinson, *The Impact of Inequality*, pp. 71–75, 87–89, 163, 268–271).

This statement establishes the connection (only implied at 5.1) between *stasis* and *metabolē*, whose causes are the theme of Book 5. Because *stasis* causes *metabolē*, the causes of *stasis* are causes of *metabolē*.⁴¹

A rather puzzling taxonomy of these causes follows, summarily divided into three kinds (εἰσὶ δὴ σχεδὸν ὡς εἰπεῖν τρεῖς τὸν ἀριθμὸν, 5.2.1302a18–19). How does this tripartite taxonomy of causes relate to the discussion of 5.1? The first cause in this taxonomy is the ‘disposition’ of those who resort to *stasis* (πῶς τε ἔχοντες στασιάζουσι, 5.2.1302a20). Aristotle immediately identifies this cause with the cause discussed in 5.1, namely the different notions of proportional equality:

The principal general cause that we must establish (αἰτίαν καθόλου μάλιστα θετέον) of people being in some way disposed (ἔχειν πῶς) towards a change in the constitution is the one which we have already mentioned.

Pol. 5.2.1302a22–24

Consistent with his discussion in 5.1, Aristotle reiterates here his claim that this first cause is the most important cause of *stasis*.⁴² This fundamental cause of *stasis* is primarily to do with the viewpoint and motivation of those who στασιάζουσι: some people resort to faction if they believe (ἂν νομίζωσιν) that they have less despite being the equal of those who ‘have more’ (τοῖς πλεονεκτοῦσιν); others revolt if they are convinced (ἂν ὑπολαμβάνωσιν) that they are unequal (i.e., superior) and yet they have the same or less (5.2.1302a24–28). And in fact, when the first two causes are later summarized at the point of introducing the third (5.2.1302a34–36), this first cause, the disposition (πῶς ἔχοντες – ἔχειν πῶς)

41 This is in fact also a discussion of the causes of μεταβολή more generally – most of the causes discussed in 5.2–3 bring about μεταβολή through causing *stasis*, but four of them, isolated at the end (5.3.1303a13–b17), can be causes of μεταβολή without *stasis*. We do not discuss these in this article, as they do not pertain to the issue of individual agents’ motivations for pursuing social and political changes. On the concept of μεταβολή, see in particular L. Bertelli, *Politeia en logois*, pp. 67–116, ‘The *Athenaion Politeia* and Aristotle’s Political Theory’, in C. Bearzot, M. Canevaro, T. Gargiulo, and E. Poddighe (eds.), *Athenaion Politeiai tra storia, politica e sociologia* (Milan: Edizioni Universitarie di Lettere Economia e Diritto, 2018), pp. 71–86.

42 Note the use of καθόλου and μάλιστα here to highlight the significance of this cause of *stasis*, which tallies with the generalizing language that Aristotle used with reference to this cause in 5.1 too, see above section 3. With regard to the taxonomy employed here, see e.g. Simpson, *Philosophical Commentary*, pp. 369–370, De Luna and Zizza, *Aristotele, La Politica*, pp. 279–280, and Lintott, *Aristotle’s Political Philosophy*, pp. 14–16. They recognize the primacy of the conceptions of distributive justice, but do not make explicit what is the relation of this cause with the following two causes, and in particular with the ‘occasional’ causes of 5.3, see below in this section.

of the revolutionary agents, is recalled with the words αὐτοί τε διατίθενται. We have seen that at 5.1 these different conceptions of proportional equality were described as ὑπόληψις ('supposition', see above). Here Aristotle clarifies in what way this ὑπόληψις colours and even governs the agent's perception of social reality: it is in fact grounded in a διάθεσις, the 'subjective disposition' of the agent – conditions by which the agent tends to act (or perceive or understand the world) in a certain way.⁴³ The varying conceptions of proportional equality, therefore, function here as expressions of the διάθεσις of the individual revolutionary, the disposition necessary for other external causes (such as the items discussed in 5.4, but also, we shall argue, the causes of 5.3 – the third kind of cause) to be catalysts of *stasis*.

At the same time, the words used here make it clear that we are talking about aims, ends, and finality: the former group of revolutionaries aim at or desire equality (ἰσότητος ἐφιέμενοι); the latter desire inequality and superiority (τῆς ἀνισότητος καὶ τῆς ὑπεροχῆς, 5.2.1302a25–27).⁴⁴ As in *Pol.* 5.1, what we have here is the account of the differing notions of proportional equality (developed in *Eth. Nic.* 5 within the discussion of particular justice), turned into the final and formal causes of particular constitutions (*Pol.* 3), in turn reworked as the disposition (διάθεσις) in which the potential revolutionary needs to find himself in order to be moved towards *stasis*, which he initiates for the purpose of turning the constitution into something more consistent with the notion of proportional equality at the basis of this disposition.⁴⁵

4.1 The Goals of Distribution

The second cause is 'the things for the sake of which' (τίνων ἕνεκεν, 5.2.1302a20–21) people engage in *stasis*,⁴⁶ and this cause is normally read by interpreters

43 On the meaning and importance of διάθεσις, see e.g., D. Achtenberg, *Cognition of Value in Aristotle's Ethics: Promise of Enrichment, Threat of Destruction* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2002), p. 111; R. Brague, 'De la disposition: à propos de diathesis chez Aristote', in P. Aubenque (ed.), *Concepts et catégories dans la pensée antique* (Paris: Vrin, 1980), pp. 285–307.

44 See above section 3 on the similar implications of the use of ἀξιοῦσιν at the opening of 5.1, which also suggests laying claim to the object one considers oneself deserving of, either in word or in action.

45 Thus, while it is correct to state (with Keyt, *Aristotle, Politics*, pp. 77–78, and Garver, *Aristotle's Politics*, pp. 137–144) that these conceptions of proportional equality are the formal causes of the relevant constitutions, here they are rather the causes of *stasis*, acting within the psyche of the revolutionary agent.

46 Aristotle also uses the expression περὶ ὧν when he moves to this particular cause (5.2.1302a31) and διὰ κέρδος καὶ διὰ τιμὴν when he discusses them under the third kind of

as *the* final cause of *stasis*: Aristotle identifies it with honour (τιμή) and material gain or profit (κέρδος), and their opposites, dishonour and loss (ἀτιμία and ζημία). People στασιάζουσι to increase their τιμή and κέρδος, and to avoid ἀτιμία and ζημία (5.2.1302a31–34). Yet this cause is not independent of the first. People start a *stasis* to increase their τιμή and to acquire κέρδος, and to avoid their opposites, only under certain conditions. It is not that κέρδος (and τιμή) are absolute final causes of *stasis*, as Balot (like Kalimtzis and Weed) has claimed, in the sense that the people who στασιάζουσι see never-ending pursuit of these as the ultimate end in itself.⁴⁷ They do this in accordance with their disposition, which reflects a notion of proportional equality, and which is in fact, as Aristotle notes at 5.2.1302a23–25, the cause most worth investigating. The implication here is that people attempt to obtain more τιμή and to secure κέρδος in order that reality may match their conception of ‘just’ proportional equality. Against Balot (and this is a point to which we shall return), there is no idea of absolute acquisitiveness in play here – it is not unrestrained greed as such that causes *stasis*, but the feeling of an imbalance between the actual distribution of τιμή and material goods, on the one hand, and one’s notion of correct distribution on the other. Each group seeks τιμή and κέρδος not absolutely or unqualifiedly but *insofar as* κέρδος and a greater share of τιμή will remedy what they perceive to be an unjust distribution due to the application of (in their view) a wrong standard of distribution, a mistaken criterion of worth.⁴⁸

The tight connection between the two causes is clear from 5.2.1302a31–32 where Aristotle notes that the previous paragraph has dealt with the disposition of those who στασιάζουσιν (πῶς μὲν οὖν ἔχοντες) and announces that the things about which (περὶ ὧν δὲ) they στασιάζουσιν are honour and profit and their opposites. The περὶ ὧν marks a shift to the actual goods for which people engage in *stasis*: the issue of distributive justice is here seen from the point of view of the revolutionary, and the revolutionary is concerned with gaining or losing these goods. Now, as we already know from Aristotle’s account of

cause (5.2.1302a38–39).

47 Balot, *Greed and Injustice*, pp. 22–57; Kalimtzis, *Aristotle on Political Enmity*, pp. 8–23 and *passim*; Weed, *Aristotle on Stasis*, pp. 99–103 and *passim* (contra Rogan, *La Stásis*, pp. 214–215). See below section 5 for more discussion of these works. Keyt, *Aristotle, Politics*, p. 79, also draws no explicit connection between profit and honour as the goal or final cause of faction and the different conceptions of distributive justice outlined by Aristotle in *Pol.* 5.1.

48 Just so, though Hatzistavrou, ‘Faction’, distinguishes between ‘injustice-induced’ and ‘greed-induced’ forms of *stasis*, he nonetheless recognizes (p. 282) that at 5.2.1302a24–31, Aristotle attributes allegedly ‘greed-based’ *stasis* also to a conception of proportional justice.

proportional equality in *Eth. Nic.* 5, τιμή and χρήματα and 'whatever else is divisible among those who participate in a community' (5.2.1130b31–33; cf. 1130b2) are the objects of the distribution itself, and this is something all agree upon (*Pol.* 3.9.1280a18–19). As this is reworked into a psychological account of the motivations of those who στασιάζουσιν, particular notions of distributive justice and proportional equality (rooted in the διάθεσις of the agents), as well as τιμή and χρήματα (as the objects of the distribution), become ends of revolutionary action. In this sense, while τιμή is both the object of distribution and the aim of those who στασιάζουσιν, χρήματα as the object of distribution becomes, in the mind of the revolutionary, κέρδος as the goal of stasis. One starts *stasis* for the purpose of actualizing a different notion of distributive justice – a different recognition order, in Honneth's framework – that is, in order to bring about a different distribution of τιμή and χρήματα. One starts *stasis*, therefore, with the aim of obtaining τιμή and κέρδος. One's notion of proportional equality and the goals of τιμή and κέρδος are represented here as two separate final causes, but this cannot negate their intrinsic connectedness – τιμή and κέρδος are the object of one's conception of distributive justice, not ends in themselves, independently of that conception.⁴⁹

4.2 The Occasions of Stasis

The third kind of cause (τίνες ἀρχαί) is identified with a series of seven (or more) items (5.2.1302a34–b5). The status of this third cause is puzzling and has caused much disagreement among scholars. To give only an example of the most recent instantiations of these disagreements, Weed has argued that they are 'occasioning causes' that 'trigger or provoke' *stasis* by oligarchs and democrats – they come after the διάθεσις and right before the *stasis* itself.⁵⁰ Balot has argued that they are efficient causes of *stasis*, which 'set it in motion', independently from the διάθεσις.⁵¹ Skultety has argued that they come before

49 Thus, e.g., Simpson, *Philosophical Commentary*, pp. 369–370, and Lintott, *Aristotle's Political Philosophy*, pp. 15–16, do describe τιμή and κέρδος as 'objects' of the different conceptions of distributive justice, but fail to notice that their role, in the context of the account of the 'psychological' causes of *stasis*, is transformed into that of 'ends' for which individuals στασιάζουσιν, moved by their διάθεσις.

50 See Weed, *Aristotle on Stasis*, p. 118. Similarly, Lintott, *Aristotle's Political Philosophy*, p. 14, describes them as 'starting points or triggers for conflict and political upheaval'. Keyt, *Aristotle, Politics*, pp. 76–77, describes them as the efficient cause of *stasis*, and his formulation ('the disposition which, when sparked, leads to action', p. 77) suggests that he takes the disposition to be prior to these causes.

51 Balot, *Greed and Injustice*, p. 47.

the *διάθesis*, so they are the reason why the *διάθesis* arises in the first place (that would make them originally independent from the *διάθesis*).⁵²

The issue is rather hard to decide. On the one hand, at 5.2.1302a20–22, in introducing these causes, Aristotle lists them third, and seems to imply an order of priority in which they come last, which could translate into a logical order in which they come last – they should presuppose the previous two. And, as we shall see, in order for them effectively to be causes, these particular causes seem in fact to presuppose the relevant *διάθesis*. On the other hand, at 5.2.1302a34–36, Aristotle introduces them in the following way:

And the causes and origins of political changes on account of which people are disposed (*ὅθεν αὐτοί τε διατίθενται*) in the aforementioned way and about the things we mentioned happen in one way to be seven in number, and in another way more than seven.

This is the passage on which Skultety relies, and which indeed seems to support his thesis: these causes are described as the *ἀρχαί* from which the *διάθesis* previously discussed originates, and not as forms of behaviour or occurrences that trigger *stasis* (as an action) in those who already have a certain *διάθesis*. Yet, we want to argue, the relation between these two causes is not as simple as that – they are interconnected and mutually entailed at a more fundamental level, and while the text clearly states that the *διάθesis* takes off from them, they also do not make sense outside the framework of the *διάθesis* to which they give rise. We make this argument on the basis both of the overall structure of Aristotle's argument and of the nature of the individual causes discussed at *Pol.* 5.3.

Aristotle's assumption at the beginning of *Pol.* 5.3 (1302b6, 10) that it is easy to grasp how these causes work despite their very disparate nature (they include attitudes, emotions, social practices, demographic conditions) suggests that there is an explanatory framework already at work which enables us to understand immediately crucial details that Aristotle omits to give in his analysis, for example, which part of the population (the ruling or the non-ruling one) is the agent of *stasis*, and what kind of constitutional change (modification or alteration) is involved in each case.⁵³ This explanatory framework, we

52 Skultety, 'Delimiting', pp. 348–356 and *passim*; *Conflict*, pp. 10–13. This interpretation is endorsed also by Rogan, *La Stásis*, pp. 74–75.

53 Newman, *The Politics*, p. iv.296, argues that 'of the seven causes enumerated by Aristotle the first four [i.e., profit, honour, *hybris*, fear] affect those who are depressed in the political scale and the three others [i.e., superiority, contempt, disproportionate growth] those who are exalted' and that 'revolution as often proceeds from those who "wax fat" as from

argue, is the fundamental cause of *stasis* presented at *Pol.* 5.1, namely the different conceptions of distributive justice that form the *διάθεσις* of the different social groups and lead them to act when they see that their criterion of worth is not the one actualized in the existing constitution. In this light, Aristotle's argument in *Pol.* 5.1–3 would develop as follows. First, he introduces what he believes to be the fundamental cause of *stasis*: the different conceptions of distributive justice held by different groups (5.1, reiterated as Cause 1 in the opening of 5.2). Then he discusses the goals that people aim to achieve for themselves through *stasis* (*κέρδος* and *τιμή*, Cause 2). Then he concludes with a list of particular factors (attitudes, emotions, practices, circumstances) that in different settings and under different conditions interact with the fundamental cause to bring about *stasis* (Cause 3): these factors are conditioned by the principal cause (the *διάθεσις* of the agents) and each itself in a different way reinforces and helps actualize (and thus may be said to 'generate') this *διάθεσις*.

This is made especially evident in the discussion of the first three occasioning causes of *stasis*, namely *τιμή*, *κέρδος*, and *ὑβρις*, where Aristotle's primary focus is once again on the psychology of the potential revolutionary: these causes act within the revolutionary's psyche, as triggers, as motivations. The first two causes are, again, *κέρδος* and *τιμή*, but they are now causes of *stasis* in a different way in comparison to their earlier discussion as goals. The point is no longer to acquire more *τιμή* or material wealth for *oneself*, or not to lose them, but the fact that people see *others* getting more of them (*ἐτέρους ὀρώντες ... πλεονεκτούντας τούτων*, 5.2.1302a40–b2; cf. 5.3.1302b10–14).⁵⁴ The importance

those who are in the opposite case'. Newman is right in that *stasis* can be created both by those who are already in power and by the non-ruling part of the population (and also both by the privileged and by the non-privileged group of citizens), but the classification of causes between the 'depressed' and the 'exalted' is more complex than he allows. For a detailed analysis of this classification, see now Cairns, Canevaro, and Mantzouranis, 'Aristotle on the Causes', esp. pp. 559–569. For a discussion of complexity and variation in Aristotle's typology of *staseis* and their causes, see also Rogan, *La Stásis*, pp. 81–129 (which, however, makes a point of abandoning a 'causal' method to work out her typology, in favour of different considerations).

- 54 See Simpson, *Philosophical Commentary*, p. 370 ('as provocations and not as goals'); De Luna and Zizza, *Aristotele, La Politica*, pp. 282–283; Lintott, *Aristotle's Political Philosophy*, p. 15. Aristotle is, therefore, treating the desire to acquire *τιμή* for oneself (or the fear of losing it) and indignation at other people getting it as independent variables. Nonetheless, his remarks do highlight the relational nature of *τιμή* as a good: even though fear of losing *τιμή* is not the same as resentment of others' obtaining it, there remains an element of social comparison, as the fact that others get *τιμή* and I do not reflects on me. Aristotle's views on *τιμή* thus resemble but do not entirely replicate modern accounts of honour as the prize in a zero-sum game: see D.L. Cairns, 'Hybris, Dishonour, and Thinking Big', *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 116 (1996), pp. 1–32, at p. 32 n. 150; M. Canevaro, 'The Public

of the *διάθεσις* of the observer (his conception of distributive justice) is in full display here, as the focus is on the actualization of that *διάθεσις* in the revolutionary agents' point of view (*ὀρώντες*). Those who witness, and resent, others' benefitting in terms of honour and material gain do not observe the allocation of these goods as disinterested spectators of the workings of a particular constitution, but as members of a community with their own idea (*ὑπόληψις*) about how these goods should be distributed, based on their own idea about what constitutes the proper standard of worth (*ἄξια*). This idea provides the lens or filter through which they, as interested parties, assess a process of allocation in which their own interests are fundamentally implicated, and shapes their *διάθεσις* towards the allocation itself and the constitution that employs it. In a similar fashion, people observe and assess the behaviour of rulers, and when the latter behave in a manner which (in the subjects' eyes) manifests *ὑβρις*, the subjects react and attack the constitution that gives rulers the opportunity to arrogate to themselves more *τιμή* than they are entitled to claim.⁵⁵ It is clear that the language of *τιμή*, *ὑβρις*, *κέρδος*, and *πλεονεκτεῖν* is not used here absolutely. Rather, it is predicated upon the point of view of the potential revolutionary, who assesses the distribution of honour and material goods, as well as the behaviour that he identifies as hybriistic, through the lens of his own conception of correct distribution and proportional equality. These causes of *stasis* are what they are only because they are perceived as such in connection with a particular *διάθεσις* and its accompanying *ὑπόληψις* – a notion of proportional equality at variance with that embodied in the constitution as it currently stands.

The same applies to the remaining causes of *stasis*, namely *ὑπεροχή* (superiority), *καταφρόνησις* (contempt), and *ἀϋξησης παρὰ τὸ ἀνάλογον* (disproportionate growth). In each of these scenarios, a section of the population resorts to *stasis* because they feel that the provisions of the existing constitution no longer meet the principles of proportional equality based on *ἄξια*. Being unduly superior in power or number, or because they despise their opponents' weaknesses, they engage in *stasis* in order to bring about a distribution of honour(s) and wealth that is in accordance with their enhanced position in the *polis*.⁵⁶

Charge for *Hubris* Against Slaves: The Honour of the Victim and the Honour of the *Hubristēs*, *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 138 (2018), pp. 100–126, at pp. 102–106.

55 *ὑβρις* is an interactive, relational concept, which implies an excessively (and wrongly) elevated assessment of oneself entailing at least an implicit encroachment upon the *τιμή* of others, see Cairns, 'Hybris'; Canevaro, 'The Public Charge'.

56 Fear (*φόβος*) of being punished for the crimes one has committed or of being the victim of injustice presents a more complex scenario as an occasioning cause of *stasis*, but ideas of *ἄξια* are in play here as well. The example of the notables of Rhodes, who 'united against the people because of the lawsuits being brought against them' (*Pol.* 5.3.1302b23–24), may

None of these 'occasioning causes' of *stasis*, then, is in any way independent of the different conceptions of proportional equality: they are rather actions or circumstances perceived by the agent as unjust on the basis of the agent's *διάθεσις* and its accompanying *ὑπόληψις* (his conception of proportional equality and distributive justice), which also, in turn, contribute to the emergence of that *διάθεσις*.

5 Conclusions

In this paper, we have highlighted three key ideas in Aristotle's account of the origins of *stasis* in *Pol.* 5.1–3. First, we have argued that according to Aristotle the fundamental cause of *stasis* is the different conceptions of proportional equality and distributive justice entertained by political agents. These conceptions are rooted in the psychology of individuals as a *διάθεσις*, a disposition that lies behind people's assessment of reality and colours its reading, and hence colours and shapes people's reaction to the constitution under which they live.⁵⁷ *Stasis*, that is, always arises from an internalized conception of distributive justice, and from the judgement that the distribution of honour and wealth in the current constitution does not conform to that notion of distributive justice. Particular events, actions, or types of behaviour become causes only inasmuch as they interact with these conceptions, and never in themselves – they are occasions of *stasis* not separately, but by virtue of the internalized conceptions of distributive justice that underpin their perception as unjust.⁵⁸

give the impression that the grounds of this fear are purely materialistic: the notables realized that the *demos* was about to use legal procedures to target their wealth, so they united against the constitution in order to protect it. However, the interest of the notables in the material aspect of their wealth must go hand in hand with the belief that they *rightfully* possess the wealth they possess (because it has been with them for generations or because they have earned it through their personal efforts), and that therefore any attempt to deprive them of it would be unjust. The fear of the oligarchs, that is, is connected to a particular conception of justice (one cannot be deprived of one's rightful possessions) which is different from the conception of justice that the *demos* was trying to apply (presumably that wealth should be distributed more equally among the free members of the community).

57 They can even be described as 'the ideology of those who seek to change a political system', as Lintott, *Aristotle's Political Philosophy*, p. 12 does, although describing them in terms of 'ideology' underplays the fact that these conceptions are fully internalized, to the extent that they colour the very perception of reality, see section 3.

58 This is a key point, e.g., that Lintott, *Aristotle's Political Philosophy*, pp. 14–16, misses: in his account, the link between the occasions of *stasis* and what he calls its 'conditions' – the internalized conceptions of proportional justice (*διάθεσις*) – is unspecified.

More importantly, these different conceptions of distributive justice are not only, and in fact not primarily, about the distribution of material resources, but fundamentally about the distribution of esteem. Aristotle stresses both κέρδος, 'material gain' or 'profit', and τιμή, 'honour', as the aims pursued in distribution and the final goal of *stasis*, yet the discussion of the occasioning causes of *stasis* highlights the primacy of honour when it comes to the factors that trigger social upheaval. In addition to (the manner of distribution of) τιμή as an occasioning cause in itself, two more occasioning causes, ὕβρις and καταφρόνησις, consist in behaviour that is closely linked to the nexus of ideas associated with worth and honour,⁵⁹ while a fourth one, ὑπεροχή, refers primarily to a state of affairs in which a section of the community or a single individual grows to extreme prominence, but this too inevitably has implications both for that section's or individual's conception of their own worth and for the claims to honour of everyone else. Similarly, when Aristotle later refers to the 'small matters' out of which *staseis* arise (ἐκ μικρῶν, *Pol.* 5.4.1303b18), the majority of the historical examples he uses involve cases of perceived insult or disrespect, which lead the aggrieved party to enlist a group of the population (by appealing to their internalized conception of 'just' distribution) and bring about *stasis*.⁶⁰ These observations, which suggest that τιμή tends to outweigh κέρδος in the mind of potential revolutionaries both at the individual and at the collective level, tally with the view that Aristotle attests at *Eth. Nic.* 4.3.1124a17–19, namely that people wish to have power and wealth because they see them as a means to honour (τιμᾶσθαι δι' αὐτῶν βούλονται). After all, as Aristotle notes, honour has a claim to be regarded as the *telos* of the political life (the second of the traditional 'three lives', *Eth. Nic.* 1.5.1095b23). In this, Aristotle's account is fully in line with modern research particularly in epidemiology and sociology, spear-headed by figures such as Michael Marmot, Kate Pickett, and Richard Wilkinson, showing that the quest for material wealth is always entangled with issues of status and social comparison, and that the negative effects of inequality can be accounted for to a large extent through acknowledging the link between wealth and esteem.⁶¹

59 See the discussion of καταφρόνησις and ὕβρις as forms of 'belittling' (ὀλιγωρία) at *Rhet.* 2.2.1378b10–31.

60 See *Pol.* 5.4.1303b17–1304a17, in particular the examples from Syracuse, Delphi, and Epidamnus. The Syracuse case involves a love affair, a typical field where considerations of honour are at play, and in the cases of Delphi and Epidamnus one of the parties believes it had been treated with disrespect (ὡς ὕβρισθέντες, *Pol.* 5.4.1304a2; ὡς ἐπηρεασθείς, *Pol.* 5.4.1304a17). In the Epidamnus case in particular, the aggrieved party enlists 'the unenfranchised population' (τοὺς ἐκτὸς τῆς πολιτείας), that is, people by definition ἄτιμοι, people with no participation in the τιμαί of the state.

61 See above section 3 for references to some of the key studies.

Aristotle sometimes writes as if κέρδος were the aim of the masses and τιμή of the elite. In 2.7 (1266b38–1267a2), for example, we read that inequality in the distribution of τιμαί as well as in that of material goods can lead to *stasis*, the former being the concern of the χαρίεντες and the latter of the πολλοί (οἱ μὲν γὰρ πολλοὶ διὰ τὸ περὶ τὰς κτήσεις ἄνισον, οἱ δὲ χαρίεντες περὶ τῶν τιμῶν, ἐὰν ἴσαι, 1266b40–1267a1).⁶² At 4.13.1297b6–7, the poor are said to be generally content not to share in τιμαί, and in 5.8 aristocracies and oligarchies can be preserved when they ensure that they do not wrong the ambitious with regard to honour or the many with regard to gain (τοὺς μὲν φιλοτίμους μὴ ἀδικεῖν εἰς ἀτιμίαν τοὺς δὲ πολλοὺς εἰς κέρδος, 1308a9–10).⁶³ In 2.7, however, the sequel shows that concern for material possessions *versus* honour is a matter of degree – no human being is concerned only with the material necessities of life (1267a2–16), while in 4.13 the point is precisely that the poor are generally content with their exclusion from τιμαί, *as long as* they are not treated with ὕβρις or deprived of their possessions (ἐὰν μήτε ὕβριζῃ τις αὐτοὺς μήτε ἀφαιρῇται μηθὲν τῆς οὐσίας, 1297b7–8). Here, it is not just that resentment of ὕβρις indicates a concern with τιμή, but also that being deprived *either* of property *or* of honour to which one believes oneself entitled can kindle indignation at one's exclusion from the honours of the state more generally. A similar point is made in 5.8: though, in oligarchies, the many are content to be able to get on with their lives free of the burdens of office, still, if they feel that those in power are misappropriating the common property of the state, they begin to resent *both* their exclusion from τιμαί *and* being deprived of their share of the state's material wealth (1308b33–38, esp. 36–38: ἐὰν οἴωνται τὰ κοινὰ κλέπτειν τοὺς ἄρχοντας, τότε γ' ἀμφοτέρω λυπεῖ, τὸ τε τῶν τιμῶν μὴ μετέχειν καὶ τὸ τῶν κερδῶν). Though the many pursue profit more than honour (as we see in so many words at 6.3.1318b16–17: οἱ γὰρ πολλοὶ μᾶλλον ὀρέγονται τοῦ κέρδους ἢ τῆς τιμῆς), this is not because they do not care about honour at all.⁶⁴ Rather, in an insight familiar from modern behavioural economics,⁶⁵ Aristotle presents the many as loss-averse: they care less about gaining τιμή than they do about losing it. The crucial point, however, is that they also tend to construe material loss *as* loss of τιμή.

Finally, honour and wealth are causes of *stasis* only as the objects of the different conceptions of distributive justice, and not independently. Any reading,

62 The distinction between money and honour as goals is also used to distinguish tyranny from monarchy at 5.10.1311a5–7.

63 Cf. 5.8.1309a4–5 (the poor are interested in office only in so far as it brings profit). See also 5.7.1306b22–36, with Keyt, *Aristotle, Politics*, p. 80, for honour as 'a cause of faction particularly in aristocracies'.

64 Just as, at 6.7.1321a41–42, oligarchs are said often to seek profit (λήμματα) as much as τιμή.

65 See e.g., Layard, *Happiness*, p. 141; R. Thaler and C. Sunstein, *Nudge: Improving Decisions about Health, Wealth, and Happiness* (London: Penguin, 2009), pp. 36–37.

and we cite here Balot's in particular, of *stasis* in Aristotle as originating from sheer acquisitiveness is in fact incompatible with Aristotle's account of *stasis*.⁶⁶ Following Balot, one might speculate that, for instance, when the rich parade their notions of fair distribution based on merit, and a particular idea of merit in which merit seems always to come with money, their arguments from justice are purely instrumental. Taking this view would mean that we see notions of proportional equality as *a posteriori* self-serving (cynical and insincere) rationalizations that justify sheer greed. But this is not the view taken by Aristotle. In his account, people do not engage in *stasis* because of unqualified greed. They initiate *stasis* to bring about a different distribution of honour and wealth, one that is felt to be more just (regardless of whether it is or not), and which is grounded in an internalized conception of proportional equality and distributive justice. The different notions of distributive justice thus do not come later as rhetorical ploys or *a posteriori* justifications of mere acquisitiveness. They come earlier in the motivation of the revolutionary agents as dispositions which form the basis of the agents' political judgement, colour their perception of particular events or actions as unjust, and are thus fundamental to the emergence of the desire to get more (that is, to bring about a different distribution of honour and wealth, one that is – however erroneously – perceived by them as fairer).⁶⁷

On this reading, Aristotle's account on the causes of *stasis* bears significant affinities with Honneth's 'struggle for recognition'. If, following Aristotle, political struggles essentially emerge when a section of the population perceives that their degree of participation in the political economy of the *polis* does not correspond to their internalized standard of worth (ἀξία), and the desired object of distribution is not only material goods but also, and perhaps more importantly, honour in the sense of social and political recognition, then redistributive struggles are an aspect of a wider struggle for recognition. Aristotle's account does in fact explain more than explanations of redistributive struggles based exclusively on the individual's material needs or acquisitiveness, as in Balot's, but also, to a certain extent, in Nancy Fraser's account. It helps explain,

66 See Balot, *Greed and Injustice*, pp. 22–57.

67 In this respect, the complexity of the temporal relation between internalized conceptions of justice κατ' ἀξίαν and the occasional causes of *stasis*, which, as we have discussed above in section 4, is not unidirectional (pace e.g., Skultety, 'Delimiting', pp. 351–356; *Conflict*, pp. 10–13), is particularly important. These occasional causes of *stasis* can contribute to producing alternative internalized conceptions of distributive justice, but in turn are perceived as unjust already, implicitly, by virtue of these alternative conceptions. The temporal articulation is not straightforward, and the διαθεσις is in any case already necessary for the 'occasion' of *stasis* to be perceived as such.

for instance, not only why the rich are so concerned with getting richer, but also why they are, as we often hear and remark, disconnected, live in a different world, do not think like normal people. Their skewed conception of what is fair may be in some of them purely instrumental and cynical. But many actually believe that their conception of fairness is the obvious and correct one – that notion is ingrained in and colours their perception of the world, and is as such at the basis of their decisions and actions.⁶⁸ It does not come later, it comes first. And they work and lobby towards establishing their own conception of what is fair as the standard one, recognized and endorsed by all.

In her recent book *The Value of Everything* (2018), Mariana Mazzucato has argued that growing inequality, obscene bonuses for managers, and pervasive rent-seeking in our modern economies, and particularly in financial capitalism, cannot be explained and challenged without challenging the underlying 'theory of value' that justifies these phenomena – that makes them 'fair' – both in the eyes of their rapacious beneficiaries and in those of their victims. Mazzucato perceptively argues that for quite some time our notions of a 'just' distribution have been connected to the ideal of productivity – a distribution is understood as fair if it is in proportion to the individuals' production of wealth. Within this basic consensus, however, redistributive struggles have long been based on where the 'production boundary' actually lies – on what counts as 'productive'. Socialist movements endorsed and pushed the 'labour theory of value' by which only work that 'makes' things (prototypically, factory work) is truly productive. In more recent years, the growth of the financial sector and growing inequality have relied on an internalized theory of value that rewards the so-called 'risk takers' and 'wealth creators', bringing within the production boundary activities (such as banking and the financial services) that traditionally were not believed to produce value, but at most to transfer it. It is this new 'theory of value' that underpins and justifies the current (extremely unequal) distribution of wealth and resources. For Mazzucato, a new, fairer, and better economy can only come about through engaging with, and overturning, this particular 'theory of value' in favour of a new one, to be adopted and internalized by ever wider sections of the population, one which,

68 This is, in fact, the very point that Aristotle makes at *Pol.* 5.1.1301a31–35: that because the rich are superior in one respect (wealth) they believe they ought to be superior in everything else. Cf. *Rhet.* 2.16.1390b32–1391a2, where Aristotle makes the point that the rich, owing to their wealth, conduct themselves as if they possessed all good things (ἀπαντα τὰγαθά) because wealth gives them the impression that everything can be bought by it. This is the phenomenon that Michael Sandel has recently assailed as 'meritocratic hubris' (M. Sandel, *The Tyranny of Merit: What's Become of the Common Good* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2020)).

for example, will bring within the 'production boundary' caring work that has been traditionally considered unproductive, while pushing outside the 'production boundary' rent-seeking activities that merely transfer and capture wealth and value, rather than actually producing it. Mazzucato is effectively describing redistributive changes and struggles as grounded in differing internalized conceptions of proportional equality, along the lines of Aristotle's contention about the causes of *stasis*, and also in line with Honneth's idea that redistributive struggles are at heart struggles for recognition in which competing recognition orders face off.⁶⁹

This leads us to our final point. Although in our reading of Aristotle's account we stress the dispositional aspect as the most important cause of *stasis*, we do believe that recent arguments that have also stressed that aspect, particularly by Kalimtzis and Weed, go one step too far in reading the διάθεσις of the revolutionary agents as a condition of disease or vice, one which ultimately translates into conceptions of honour or profit as the ultimate goods, worth accumulating without end.⁷⁰ Thus, while they stress the dispositional aspect, their accounts end up postulating motivations behind *stasis* that do not differ greatly from those postulated by Balot. Weed, in particular, assumes that, because Aristotle clearly does not seem to approve of *stasis* and *metabolē*, the notions of distributive justice that form the διάθεσις behind *stasis* must always be defective. Yet Aristotle's account of *stasis* and *metabolē* must be read in the context of his programme for Books 4–6: Book 5 is about instructing lawgivers on how to promote (βελθεῖν) or preserve (σώζειν) existing constitutions, whatever these are (and even when they are terrible ones, which in some cases they clearly are, in Aristotle's opinion too). Stability is a value here because the means of securing stability is the theme of the book, not because stability is, in itself, always absolutely desirable (Aristotle actually gives advice on how to modify constitutions).⁷¹

69 See Mazzucato, *The Value of Everything* (and Mazzucato, *The Entrepreneurial State* for further criticism of modern capitalism and the reaffirmation of the role of the state in producing value). See also D. Graeber, *Bullshit Jobs: A Theory* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2018), who investigates various theories of value to map the developments from the almost universally endorsed 'labour theory of value' all the way to our current 'managerial feudalism' and its 'bullshit jobs'.

70 Kalimtzis, *Aristotle on Political Enmity*, pp. 8–23; Weed, *Aristotle on Stasis*, pp. 99–103 and *passim*. See also Garver, *Aristotle's Politics*, p. 156, for whom all *stasis*, even within a bad constitution for the purpose of establishing a good one, has in fact as its ultimate aims honour and profit, and should therefore be avoided.

71 On the σωτηρία of the constitution as the aim of the lawgiver, see above section 2. Garver, *Aristotle's Politics*, pp. 132–171 also stresses stability as the overarching goal that underpins the analysis of Books 5 and 6, on the basis of which we must judge how successful a constitution is. He notes, however, the tension between this criterion and the higher criterion

In such an argumentative context, it is obvious that *stasis* and *metabolē* would be treated as something to avoid – Aristotle studies the causes of *stasis* and *metabolē* so that he can later give advice on how to avoid them. But there is nothing in Aristotle's account of the causes of *stasis* to suggest that the conceptions of distributive justice behind *stasis* must necessarily be defective, and therefore that, as a διάθεσις of the political agent, they are necessarily vices. Aristotle, in fact, at *Pol.* 5.2.1302a28–29, in discussing conceptions of proportional equality and the desires they generate as the first cause of *stasis*, namely the disposition of the agents (πῶς ἔχοντες), concludes his treatment by noting that 'sometimes these desires are just, sometimes unjust'.⁷² Aristotle's account can accommodate a scenario in which, on the one hand, the existing constitution has as its final cause a distribution of wealth and honour that is absolutely wrong on the basis of a higher normative ideal of justice (e.g. that of Book 7, or that presented by Aristotle at *Pol.* 3.9, where he adjudicates between the respective mistakes of democrats and oligarchs); just as, on the other hand, it can accommodate one in which the διάθεσις of the revolutionaries (and therefore their assessment of the constitution as unjust and unfair) is by contrast absolutely justified. That short parenthetical remark is a nod to this scenario. And it is significant that here Aristotle, unlike at 3.9, does not attempt to provide and discuss absolute criteria for the definition of 'worth', to adjudicate between different claims⁷³ – he is not concerned here with providing a correct

of the good life – a stable constitution does not *per se* lead to the good life, although a constitution that fosters the good life should also be stable. But a stable constitution can still be inimical to the good life.

72 Simpson, *Philosophical Commentary*, p. 369 sees this: 'This remark serves as a reminder that Aristotle is not now interested in excusing, justifying, or condemning change ... He is interested rather in understanding its causes' (*pace* Schütrumpf and Gehrke, *Aristoteles, Politik*, p. 435, Bertelli and Gianotti, *Tra storia e utopia*, p. 75, and De Luna and Zizza, *Aristotele, La Politica*, pp. 276–277, who stress the mixing of different conceptions of distributive justice already in commenting on *Pol.* 5.1–3).

73 Conversely, at *Pol.* 3.9 the reason for the different conceptions of justice is explicitly identified in the fact that people judge badly about what justice is because 'the judgment concerns themselves, and most people are pretty bad judges about their own affairs' (3.9.1280a14–16, and 20–21). Balot, *Greed and Injustice*, p. 49, argues that 'human beings, in Aristotle's view, tend to be self-aggrandizing and to make interpretations, either of others or of situations in which they find themselves, on the basis of self-interest ... Hence, when Aristotle says that perceived injustice is the cause of revolution, he means injustice perceived by self-interested, unjust human agents, who tend to interpret others' behavior, along with the rules that govern behavior, with a view to narrow self-interest.' This attitude is translated by Balot also to the discussion of 5.1–3. But this takes Aristotle's point too far. The ensuing discussion in 3.9 suggests that the two conflicting groups tend to overemphasize their own (narrow, and so only *partly* correct) conception of justice and to believe that it amounts to justice *tout court*. The bad judgements they make about their own affairs concern their own worth and how it relates to the claims to worth of other groups with different qualities. They fail

notion of distributive justice, only with explaining the emergence of motivations leading to *stasis*.

Aristotle is not arguing, then, that the ingrained conceptions of proportional equality and fair distribution of honour and wealth that motivate *stasis* are always wrong or vicious (although he notes that they often are, or at least that they are partial).⁷⁴ He is arguing that political action towards *metabolē* is always motivated by ingrained conceptions of proportional equality and fair distribution of honour and wealth – in Honneth's word, by alternative 'recognition orders'. This is the point that he is making, and it is, we believe, a more valuable point, one with remarkable explanatory potential for understanding ancient as well as modern redistributive struggles.^{75,76}

to ask the most important question (what is the *telos* of a polis and of communal living in a polis) and as a result fail to recognize the extent to which other groups also contribute to this *telos*. Each group may indeed then believe that the recognition order they have internalized is the correct one (there is no surprise in that), but it does not follow from this that whenever they act to realize this recognition order they are, in fact, motivated by greed, and that their invocation of this recognition order is merely a way to mask their acquisitiveness to themselves and others. For one thing, as Aristotle admits, each of these groups is correct in their claims and their thoughts about justice *to a certain extent* (cf. Rogan, *La Stásis*, pp. 194–201); their mistake is that they want to take their conception of justice too far, without properly acknowledging the legitimate claims of other groups.

74 The very fact that Aristotle envisages at 5.1.1301a39–b4 the possibility of *stasis* by the virtuous is evidence of this (see Rogan, *La Stásis*, pp. 111–113, 116–120). On legitimate *stasis* as something that can be at least partially envisaged within Aristotle's account, see Rogan, *La Stásis*, pp. 185–206.

75 In this sense, in claiming that 'Aristotle believes that stability in a city is best achieved by the assignation of privilege, including political power, according to some estimate of the value of a citizen to the city. He finds it difficult to suggest how this estimate is to be achieved: he does not think that it is necessarily related to a citizen's virtue; he is sure, however, that it does not usually correspond to that citizen's concept of his own value', Lintott, *Aristotle's Political Philosophy*, pp. 13–14 misses the key point of the discussion, that *Pol.* 5.1–3 is primarily about how *stasis*, as an action, emerges and is motivated in the minds and through the eyes of political agents (see, again, Simpson, *Philosophical Commentary*, p. 369).

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