Pobrane z czasopisma Studia Iuridica Lublinensia **http://studiaiuridica.umcs.pl**
Data: 14/11/2026 18:32:38

Articles

Studia Iuridica Lublinensia vol. 31, 3, 2022
DOI: 10.17951/sil.2022.31.3.105-122

Olgierd Górecki
University of Lodz, Poland
ORCID: 0000-0001-6852-3092
ogorecki@wpia.uni.lodz.pl

Human Freedom According to the Views of Aristotle of Stagira: Analysis of Its Doctrinal Category Using Gerald MacCallum's Extended Formula of Freedom

Wolność człowieka w poglądach Arystotelesa ze Stagiry. Analiza kategorii doktrynalnej z wykorzystaniem rozszerzonej formuły wolności Geralda MacCalluma

ABSTRACT

Among contemporary researchers of the concept of freedom, there is complete agreement about the importance that Isaiah Berlin's October 31, 1958, inaugural lecture "Two Concepts of Freedom", given at the University of Oxford, has contributed to science. Published later and reprinted many times, it reorganized reflection on the concept of freedom by introducing the terms positive and negative freedom. Despite the appearance of numerous critical voices in the literature on the subject, it is certainly impossible to practice science today without recalling the aforementioned dichotomy. Nine years later, Gerald MacCallum – inspired by, i.a., Berlin's theory – presented his own triadic model of freedom. In my research, I use this model, but extend its scope with an additional dimension of internal and external freedom. Therefore, the aim of this article is to reconstruct the category of human freedom present in the views of Aristotle of Stagira, carried out precisely by applying the extended formula of MacCallum and building its model with the use of the introduced research instruments. The adopted multidimensional perspective of observing human freedom allows for a comprehensive approach to various planes of human life, on which we can see the manifestations of this enigmatic and ambiguous concept that we call freedom.

Keywords: views of Aristotle; human freedom; triadic model of freedom; positive and negative freedom

CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS: Olgierd Górecki, PhD, Assistant Professor, University of Lodz, Faculty of Law and Administration, Kopcińskiego 8/12, 90-232 Lodz, Poland.

Pobrane z czasopisma Studia Iuridica Lublinensia **http://studiaiuridica.umcs.pl**
Data: 14/11/2026 18:32:38

INTRODUCTION

Among contemporary researchers of the concept of freedom, there is complete agreement about the importance that Isaiah Berlin's October 31, 1958, inaugural lecture "Two concepts of freedom", given at the University of Oxford, has contributed to science.[1] Published later and reprinted many times, it reorganized reflection on the concept of freedom by introducing the terms positive and negative freedom. Despite the appearance of numerous critical voices in the literature on the subject, it is certainly impossible to practice science today without recalling the aforementioned dichotomy. Nine years later, Gerald MacCallum – inspired by, i.a., Berlin's theory – presented his own triadic model of freedom. In my research, I use this model, but extend its scope with an additional dimension of internal and external freedom. Therefore, the aim of this article is to reconstruct the category of human freedom present in the views of Aristotle of Stagira, carried out precisely by applying the extended formula of MacCallum. To systematize the presented issues, I first define the concept of positive and negative freedom used by Berlin, then I synthetically present MacCallum's model, paying attention to my own modification. This will allow me to focus on discussing the most important assumptions of the Stagirite doctrine and finally on analyzing the categories of freedom and building its model with the use of the introduced research instruments. The adopted multidimensional perspective of observing human freedom allows for a comprehensive approach to various planes of human life, on which we can see the manifestations of this enigmatic and ambiguous concept that we call freedom.

FREEDOM ACCORDING TO BERLIN AND MACCALLUM

Berlin originally defined negative freedom by stating that it answered the question: "What is the area within which the subject – a person or group of persons – is or should be left to do or be what he is able to do or be, without interference by other persons? (…) Political liberty in this sense is simply the area within which a man can act unobstructed by others".[2] It is worth noting that Berlin, under the influence of later reflection, slightly modified the cited definition, pointing out that the typical approach to negative freedom refers to the lack of obstacles in fulfilling human desires. This may lead, in logical reasoning, to the conclusion that the limitation of freedom perceived in this way is to give up all wishes, which is close to

[1] C. Kukathas, *Liberty*, [in:] *A Companion to Contemporary Political Philosophy*, eds. R.E. Goodin, F. Pettit, New York 2007, p. 685.

[2] I. Berlin, *Liberty*, Oxford 2002, p. 169.

Pobrane z czasopisma Studia Iuridica Lublinensia **http://studiaiuridica.umcs.pl**
Data: 14/11/2026 18:32:38

the Stoic concept of internal freedom.[3] According to Berlin, this approach is not in line with his perception of negative freedom, which has a more practical dimension and does not correlate with the lack of internal frustration, but only with the lack of obstacles ("freedom from something") in making choices and taking action.

The second concept taken up by Berlin was the concept of positive freedom, commonly referred to in the literature on the subject as "freedom to something".[4] The Oxford professor expressed the following position: "The 'positive' sense of the word 'liberty' derives from the wish on the part of the individual to be his own master. I wish my life and decisions to depend on myself, not on external forces of whatever kind. I wish to be the instrument of my own, not of other men's, acts of will. I wish to be a subject, not an object; to be moved by reasons, by conscious purposes, which are my own, not by causes which affect me, as it were, from outside. I wish to be somebody, not nobody; a doer – deciding, not being decided for, self-directed and not acted upon by external nature or by other men as if I were a thing, or an animal, or a slave incapable of playing a human role, that is, of conceiving goals and policies of my own and realising them".[5]

The aforementioned position is related to the perception of a human being as a rational being, aware of his own existential uniqueness, who makes decisions and actions referring to the ideas he professes and the goals he set for himself, and bears the consequences of these actions on his own.

Berlin, in order to better understand the concept of positive freedom, introduced the distinction of the higher human self from the lower human self.[6] The first of these is identified with reason, higher nature, reality, autonomy, or the ability to construct plans that will be realized in the future; he identified the other with irrational reflexes, uncontrolled desires, and passions for immediate gratification.[7] Only strictly disciplining lower nature can give man the opportunity to rise to the higher plane – his true nature. Thus, in order to be fully master of oneself, one must

[3] The Stoics held the position that the rejection of apparent goods combined with the limitation of bodily needs allows a person to achieve a state of self-sufficiency, consisting of complete independence from anyone and nothing. Such a state deserves to be called true freedom – *autarkeia* and is synonymous with happiness. See J. Gajda-Krynicka, *Paradoks wolności w filozofii stoickiej*, [in:] *Wolność człowieka i jej granice. Antologia pojęcia w doktrynach polityczno-prawnych*, vol. 1: *Od Starożytności do Monteskiusza*, ed. O. Górecki, Łódź 2019, p. 81.

[4] B. Polanowska-Sygulska, *Doktryna wolności Isaiaha Berlina*, [in:] *Wolność człowieka i jej granice. Antologia pojęcia w doktrynach polityczno-prawnych*, vol. 3: *Od Nietzschego do współczesności*, ed. O. Górecki, Łódź 2019, p. 232.

[5] I. Berlin, *op. cit.*, p. 178.

[6] J. Zdybel, *Między wolnością a powinnością. Filozofia polityczna Isaiaha Berlina i Alasdaira MacIntyre'a*, Lublin 2005, p. 225.

[7] I. Berlin, *op. cit.*, p. 179.

Pobrane z czasopisma Studia Iuridica Lublinensia **http://studiaiuridica.umcs.pl**
Data: 14/11/2026 18:32:38

free oneself of passions, which may lead to the logical conclusion that the essence of higher freedom is the control of lower impulses.[8]

In 1967, Gerald MacCallum, inspired by the theories of Isaiah Berlin and Felix Oppenheim,[9] presented an innovative concept of freedom, which was to cover all possible statements, about the nature of negative as well as positive freedom. He defined freedom as a triadic relationship: "Such freedom is thus always of something (an agent or agents), from something, to do, not do, become, or not become something; it is a triadic relation. Taking the format 'X is (is not) free from Y to do (not do, become, not become) Z', X ranges over agents, Y ranges over such 'preventing conditions' as constraints, restrictions, interferences, and barriers, and Z ranges over actions or conditions of character or circumstance".[10] Compared to Berlin's theory, MacCallum's concept is neither unequivocally negative nor unequivocally positive.[11] This is because, in MacCallum's view, freedom is the ability to decide for oneself, which always takes the form of the logical model described above, because always: first, freedom is a feature of some subject (or subjects); second, it is freedom from some external restrictions and interference by other people and from powers that forbid or force one to behave in a certain way, or forbid or order one to become something specific; third, freedom is the real possibility of making self-determined choices and actions.[12] It follows that the concept of freedom becomes understandable only when we combine it with a specific subject, pointing out the factors that limit it and the goals it wants to achieve.

MacCallum's revision of the concept of freedom – as well as the original concept of Berlin – was positively received by both numerous respected scientists as well as critical audiences.[13] In my research I have modified it, additionally introducing a distinction between the dimensions of internal and external freedom.[14] It is impossible to reduce negative freedom only to interpersonal relations, and positive freedom only to the level of internal human experiences. Of course, the

[8] B. Polanowska-Sygulska, *Filozofia wolności Isaiaha Berlina*, Kraków 1998, p. 36.

[9] F.E. Oppenheim, *Dimensions of Freedom*, New York 1961.

[10] G.C. MacCallum Jr., *Negative and Positive Freedom*, "Philosophical Review" 1967, vol. 76(3), p. 314.

[11] B. Polanowska-Sygulska, *Między filozofią polityczną a filozofią prawa*, Kraków 2012, pp. 62–63.

[12] J.W. Maynor, *Republicanism in the Modern World*, Cambridge 2003, p. 18.

[13] J. Rawls, *Theory of Justice*, Cambridge 1999, p. 177; J. Feinberg, *Rights, Justice and Bounds of Liberty*: *Essays in Social Philosophy*, Princeton 1980, p. 19, 28; T. Gray, *Freedom*, New York 1991, pp. 2, 7–8, 10–17, 30, 49, 171, 174; S.I. Benn, W.L. Weinstein, *Being Free to Act, and Being a Free Man*, "Mind. New Series" 1971, vol. 80(318), pp. 194–195; W.T. Blackstone, *The Concept of Political Freedom*, "Social Theory and Practice" 1973, vol. 2(4), pp. 423, 430–432; I. Carter, *Positive and Negative Liberty*, [in:] *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/liberty-positive-negative (access: 1.11.2021).

[14] A similar modification was proposed by J. Feinberg (*op. cit.*, pp. 6–7).

Pobrane z czasopisma Studia Iuridica Lublinensia **http://studiaiuridica.umcs.pl**
Data: 14/11/2026 18:32:38

above methodological assumption modifies the original meanings of freedom used by Berlin, but allows for a precise approach to the analyzed category in as many as four different perspectives.[15]

ARISTOTLE AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF ATHENIAN DEMOCRACY

The sources of political and legal reflection can be found in the intellectual cradle of Western civilization – that is in ancient Greece, where in the years 384–322 BCE lived Aristotle of Stagira.[16] However, before recalling its assumptions, let us recall the specificity of Athenian democracy in its golden period in the 5th century BCE. First, let's specify what the ancient Greek *polis* was. The most common answer is the not very precise term "city-state". If we really relied on the visual impressions, we would see a city surrounded by defensive walls along with adjacent agricultural areas. We should remember, however, that the essence of the ancient state was not the territory, but its citizens. Aristotle directly proclaimed that "state is a kind of partnership, and is in fact a partnership of citizens in a government".[17] It was the institution of citizenship that appeared in the period of ancient Hellas that was a milestone in the development of social and political relations. Citizenship is a legal bond that means a free person belongs to a specific policy, which results in granting an individual certain freedoms, rights, and obligations towards the entire political community. The essence of citizenship was expressed in the public activity of an individual, as Stagirite wrote: "A citizen pure and simple is defined by nothing else so much as by the right to participate in judicial functions and in office. But some offices of government are definitely limited in regard to time, so that some of them are not allowed to be held twice by the same person at all, or only after certain fixed intervals of time; other officials are without limit of tenure, for example, the juryman and the member of the assembly".[18]

Therefore, for the ancient Greeks, citizenship was an intrinsic value because it was of an elite character. From this point of view, *polis* appears to us as a politically, economically, and militarily independent community of citizens who govern themselves without creating state structures detached from society. However, *poleis*

[15] O. Górecki, *Granice wolności jednostki – problemy metodologiczne i klasyfikacja pojęcia*, "Studia Erasmiana Wratislaviensia" 2016, vol. 10, pp. 61–77; idem, *Typologia granic wolności jednostki w doktrynach polityczno-prawnych*, [in:] *Wolność człowieka i jej granice. Antologia pojęcia w doktrynach polityczno-prawnych*, vol. 3: *Od Nietzschego…*, pp. 515–536.

[16] D. Pietrzyk-Reeves, *Tradycja republikańska, respublica, republikanizm*, "Horyzonty Polityki" 2013, vol. 4(7), p. 51.

[17] Aristotle, *Politics*, transl. H. Rackham, London 1959, III, I, 13, p. 185.

[18] *Ibidem*, III, I, 4, p. 175.

Pobrane z czasopisma Studia Iuridica Lublinensia **http://studiaiuridica.umcs.pl**
Data: 14/11/2026 18:32:38

differed from each other. As Aristotle pointed out, there were 158 different culturally, economically, and politically just such state organizations.[19] From the speech given by Pericles after the First Peloponnesian War, we know that ancient Athens was based on three basic principles: *isonomia*, meaning equality of citizens before the law, and category; *isogoria* related to the equality and freedom of the citizen's voice to speak and submit motions at the people's assembly; and *isotimia* equated with equal access of citizens to offices, either as a result of a democratic vote or as a consequence of a lottery, as lower offices were elected in this way.

However, in order to understand what ancient Athenian democracy was, we need to ask ourselves an additional question: Who could have been its citizen? The answer, however, is no longer as obvious as a modern resident of liberal democracy might suppose. A citizen of ancient Athens could only be: firstly, an adult, that is, one who has reached a certain age and received the required education; secondly, a native Athenian; thirdly, coming from a free family; and fourthly, a man. Studies conducted by historians indicate that in the 5th century BC Athens was inhabited by about 120,000 people, of which only 30,000 to 40,000 people had the status of free citizens.[20] It should be noted that not all of them regularly participated in exercising power, but only about 6,000.[21] Another one-third of the population were free people, including women, children, and the metics – free citizens of other *poleis*. It follows that as many as one-third of all living people had the status of slaves, about which Aristotle wrote: "(…) the slave is a living tool and the tool a lifeless slave",[22] and also: "These considerations therefore make clear the nature of the slave and his essential quality: one who is a human being belonging by nature not to himself but to another is by nature a slave, and a person is a human being belonging to another if being a man he is an article of property".[23] It was characteristic for the entire era of antiquity that, from the economic point of view, the relations of production were based on the legally sanctioned institution of slavery. The Stagirite explained that slaves are by nature people destined to physical work, who do not understand the ethos of civic life.[24] Therefore, it should be emphasized that for the ancient Greeks, there was a priority of public affairs over private matters. Hence, the natural opposite of freedom is the state of slavery, identical with the subordination of the despotic power, universally regarded in ancient Greek political thought as the worst system. Therefore, the then-living Greeks believed that freedom understood in this way

[19] A. Szahaj, M.N. Jakubowski, *Filozofia polityki*, Warszawa 2005, p. 23.

[20] B. Bravo, M. Węcowski, E Wipszycka, A. Wolicki, *Historia starożytnych Greków*, vol. 2: *Okres klasyczny*, Warszawa 2009, p. 443.

[21] S. Drelich, *Perykles z Aten*, [in:] *Encyklopedia polityczna*, ed. J. Bartyzel, Radom 2009, p. 434.

[22] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, transl. D. Ross, Oxford 2009, 1161b, p. 157.

[23] Idem, *Politics…*, I, II, 7, p. 19.

[24] P. Pellegrin, *Natural Slavery*, [in:] *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle's Politics*, eds. M. Deslauriers, P. Destrée, Cambridge 2013, p. 97.

Pobrane z czasopisma Studia Iuridica Lublinensia **http://studiaiuridica.umcs.pl**
Data: 14/11/2026 18:32:38

and realized on the public plane was what distinguished them from other barbarian peoples, which functioned on the basis of the natural enslavement of the members of the community.[25]

ARISTOTLE'S BASIC DOCTRINAL ASSUMPTIONS

Moving on to the analysis of Aristotle's concept, one should begin with a brief overview of the main assumptions of his philosophy. The Stagirite rejected the objective idealism of his master, Plato, replacing it with empiricism, which presents the cognition of man as a process based on the individual gaining his own experience. In this perspective, cognition consists of two stages – sensual and rational. First, there is sensual cognition, which consists in collecting information with our senses. Then the human being subjected all the data provided to him to a rational analysis. It follows that all ideas and theories are always secondary to sensual cognition. Aristotle was also the creator of hylomorphism – the concept that every substance consists of matter and form.[26] Under the concept of matter, he understood the passive material that underlies all being and is responsible for diversity. He defined form as a shaping factor that directs a thing towards the right end, and thus gives the substance unity and is also the basis of the concepts built. Neither matter nor form can exist on their own. Therefore, only concrete groups of matter and form really exist. In his empirical cognition, man has contact only with forms, because real matter is unknowable to him.[27]

If the assumptions of hylomorphism were to be translated into the assessment of human nature, then it could be concluded that the equivalent of matter is the human body constituting human potential and containing the goals of human life. The form is the soul identified with reason, the manifestations of which are the actions taken by man. Of course, neither the body nor the soul can exist independently. On the other hand, it should be emphasized that man realizes his potentiality when he uses reason, which is related to the pursuit of happiness, understood by Aristotle as *eudaimonia* (from the Greek *εὐδαίμων* "happy", literally "having a good spirit").[28] It is a state of perfection of an individual that comes down to achieving the optimum of one's potential through the realization of the rational and social

[25] W. Miścicki, *Narodziny wolności. Rozwój idei w Grecji epoki archaicznej*, [in:] *Granice wolności w starożytnej myśli greckiej*, eds. J. Bernat, P. Biernat, Kraków 2013, p. 64.

[26] K. Leśniak, *Arystoteles*, Warszawa 1989, pp. 60–61.

[27] The concept of matter, however, does not mean a type of building material such as marble or bronze.

[28] The Greek term *eudaimonia* is not completely identical to the modern meaning of happiness, because it also included the notions of good behavior and success in life, which best reflects the ancient Greeks' belief that virtue and happiness, understood as success in life, are directly related

Pobrane z czasopisma Studia Iuridica Lublinensia **http://studiaiuridica.umcs.pl**
Data: 14/11/2026 18:32:38

nature of man.[29] The Stagirite distinguished two types of *eudaimonia*. The first is the so-called "complete *eudaimonia*", meaning the state possible to achieve due to the contemplative life consisting in the realization of dianoetic virtues, which are permanent human dispositions, such as wisdom or reason. Such a state can only be achieved by a few – the most composed, disciplined, and reflective individuals. However, this does not mean that other people are deprived of the possibility of achieving happiness in their lives. Aristotle also described "practical *eudaimonia*" – that is, a state that a person can achieve through the realization of ethical virtues, by repeating the same actions leading him to good, while maintaining adequate moderation. It follows that each human activity corresponds to a different virtue, e.g., generosity, bravery, justice.[30] The "virtue of moderation", also known colloquially as the "principle of the Golden Mean", plays a key role, because it indicates the right behavior between imperfect extremes.[31] It follows that, for Aristotle, the virtues do not suppress feelings, but subject them to the control of reason; they lead man to happiness, but are not in themselves the goal of ultimate human action.[32]

Having already outlined the internal structure of the human condition, let us now turn to the social nature of man, which finds its justification in the following words of Aristotle: "It is clear therefore that the state is also prior by nature to the individual; for if each individual when separate is not self-sufficient, he must be related to the whole state as other parts are to their whole, while a man who is incapable of entering into partnership, or who is so self-sufficing that he has no need to do so, is no part of a state, so that he must be either a lower animal or a god".[33] The reason of the social nature, then, is the lack of human self-sufficiency. It results not only from the individual's weakness in the face of the forces of nature and external enemies, and from the lack of independence in the production of food and objects necessary for survival, but also from the need to experience social relations. Hence – let us emphasize once again – only in community can an individual reach the state of *eudaimonia*. Therefore, the state is a natural being, and every person perceived as a "political animal" (*zoon politicon*) is born, lives, and dies in the state.[34]

---

to each other. See A. MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics: A History of Moral Philosophy from the Homeric Age to the Twentieth Century*, London 1998, p. 39.

[29] K. Leśniak, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

[30] It should be emphasized that the virtue of moderation can only be applied to ethical virtues, and never to vicious activities.

[31] A. MacIntyre, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

[32] "Hence when devoid of virtue man is the most unscrupulous and savage of animals, and the worst in regard to sexual indulgence and gluttony" (Aristotle, *Politics*..., I, I, 12, p. 13).

[33] *Ibidem*, p. 11, 13.

[34] A. Kasia, *Arystotelesa teoria wolności elitarnej*, [in:] *Antynomie wolności*, eds. M. Drużkowski, K. Sokół, Warszawa 1966, p. 38.

Pobrane z czasopisma Studia Iuridica Lublinensia **http://studiaiuridica.umcs.pl**
Data: 14/11/2026 18:32:38

Describing society from the empiricist perspective, Aristotle made many valuable observations – the two most important of which will later be used to analyze the concept of freedom. The first concerns the building of the social structure, while the second relates to class division. According to Stagirite, the smallest social cell is the family. Understanding its structure and the relations between its members allows for a much better explanation of the functioning of the entire state. Aristotle included in the broadly understood family: a man (being husband, father, and master), wife (focusing on the care of the home and raising children), children, and slaves performing physical labor.[35] The role of the father of the family is based on his natural power over the rest of the family. Despite the fact that a person living in a family is able to meet his basic needs, he is still not able to achieve complete fulfillment. This is because the family is not completely self-sufficient. The expanding family begins to create its own colony, which leads to the creation of another entity, which is the rural commune. Thanks to its growing number, people live better and become more prosperous. Still, some natural needs remain unmet. The most developed community is society, which is identical with the state. It follows from the above that: first, the state is a natural creation, chronologically primordial to the individual; secondly, a public authority is natural, so if it serves the good of the community, its obedience is almost as obvious as the obedience of children to the will of their father; third, a man, being a being unable to satisfy his needs on his own, can find fulfillment (obtain *eudaimonia*) only by living rationally only in the state; and fourth, a state composed of different people has the character of an organic community in which its different groups perform specific functions and duties. Hence, the state appears substantively as a synthesis of families, and functionally as a multiplicity of citizens.[36]

An interesting and exceptionally universal element of the observation of society was the class division introduced by Aristotle, which consisted in assigning an individual to a given social group on the basis of their wealth. This makes it possible to distinguish between three social classes. The first are the richest, who are also the best educated for this very reason. They own numerous slaves, but by living at a high level, they do not understand the needs of the lower classes. The second is the middle class consisting of citizens with so many assets that they do not have to work independently. According to Stagirite, they constitute the most stable social group. At the bottom of the social structure is a class of poor citizens who do not own any slaves and are thus forced to do their own work. It is the most numerous and poorly educated social group. It is worth noting that Aristotle – in line with the views of his era – perceived manual work as a degrading activity, because the individual devoting

[35] J. Sieroń, *Status jednostki i państwa w greckiej πόλις w świetle filozofii Sokratesa, Platona i Arystotelesa*, Katowice 2003, pp. 162–136.

[36] Aristotle, *Politics*..., III, I, 2, p. 173; III, V, 13, p. 217.

Pobrane z czasopisma Studia Iuridica Lublinensia **http://studiaiuridica.umcs.pl**
Data: 14/11/2026 18:32:38

himself to work is completely absorbed in it and focused on making a profit, and therefore does not have free time to devote to public activity.[37]

Regarding reflecting upon regimes, Aristotle is seen as one of the first representatives of republicanism. As he claimed: "It is clear then that those constitutions that aim at the common advantage are in effect rightly framed in accordance with absolute justice, while those that aim at the rulers' own advantage only are faulty, and are all of them deviations from the right constitutions; for they have an element of despotism, whereas a city is a partnership of free men. These matters having been determined the next step is to consider how many forms of constitution there are and what they are; and first to study the right forms of constitution, since the deviations will also become manifest when these are defined".[38]

As can be seen from the above quotation, Aristotle classified regimes based on the one hand on whose behalf the government is exercised, and on the other hand on assessing the number of people exercising power. To the proper systems, i.e., those whose power rules for the good of the entire community, he included the monarchy, aristocracy (the rule of the leading citizens), and the *Politeia* (based on the middle class).[39] It follows from the above that for Aristotle the concept of justice, perceived in a political context, was of a utilitarian nature. For he proclaimed that justice is what is useful to the public.[40] It should be noted that the Stagirite, being an empiricist, noticed that for a specific *polis*, each of the three cited forms of the state may prove to be the most appropriate system, since they all have the same potential of being proper. On the other hand, the degenerate forms of exercising power included tyranny, oligarchy (the rule of the richest), and democracy (the rule of the entire people, in which the poorest constitute the dominant majority).

Aristotle pointed out that the difference between oligarchy and democracy can be explained by referring to the class division of society. The oligarchy is ruled by the richest class of citizens, who are also the least numerous in the entire community. Meanwhile, the rule in a democracy based on the principle of equality of citizens before the law is in fact exercised by representatives of the most numerous group,

[37] K. Leśniak, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

[38] Aristotle, *Politics*..., III, IV, 7, p. 205.

[39] It should be emphasized that the Stagirite used the term *Politia* in two ways. In a broad sense, he used it to describe all regimes other than tyranny – from the word *polis*, which means what concerns many people. In the narrow sense, he called it the proper system under the rule of the citizens (see J. Sieroń, *op. cit.*, p. 183, footnote 97). Note also the differences in translation from Latin. The English version uses the term "constitutional government" (*ibidem*, III, V, 2, p. 207; IV, V, 10, p. 313), except for footnote „a" on page 282 where the term "polity" is used (*ibidem*, IV, I, 5, p. 282). Meanwhile, the correct phrase *Poliea* was used in the Polish translation (Arystoteles, *Polityka*, transl. by L. Piotrowicz, Wrocław 2005, III, V, 2, p. 115; IV, V, 10, p. 170).

[40] Aristotle, *Politics*..., III, VI, 1, p. 231; R. Kraut, *Aristotle: Political Philosophy*, Oxford 2002, p. 211.

Pobrane z czasopisma Studia Iuridica Lublinensia **http://studiaiuridica.umcs.pl**
Data: 14/11/2026 18:32:38

which are the poorest.[41] As he wrote: "For it is not safe for them to participate in the highest offices (for injustice and folly would inevitably cause them to act unjustly in some things and to make mistakes in others)".[42] He warned, however, that not allowing this class to participate in the exercise of power could turn out to be equally dangerous, as it could result in hostility of its members towards the entire state. The solution to this dilemma is the system constituting a kind of "golden mean" between the two degenerated forms of government.[43] *Politeia* is a system based on indirect property censorship, in which the middle class plays a dominant role in power.[44] Aristotle also mentioned the possibility of applying in *Politeia* certain solutions derived from oligarchy and democracy, the combination of which would have a positive effect on the functioning of the state. For example, he pointed out that with regard to the performance of judicial obligations by citizens, it would be appropriate to allow the use of penalties for the rich who avoid fulfilling their obligations (element of the oligarchy) together with granting the poor payment for the fulfillment of this social obligation (element of democracy). He also argued that filling official positions should take place through elections (element of the oligarchy), without qualifying property census (element of democracy).[45] It follows from the above that for Aristotle, *Politeia* did not have the character of an abstract and alternative system, but constituted a certain synthesis that improved the functioning of the state so that it could actually serve the general good of society and at the same time being independent from external interference.

Summing up the systemic considerations, it should be noted that basing *Politeia* on the middle class is the transfer of ethical argumentation to the ground of social considerations.[46] The empirical counterpart of the virtue of moderation, in this case, is a group of citizens with moderate ownership. This is because "for this degree of wealth is the readiest to obey reason, whereas for a person who is exceedingly beautiful or strong or nobly born or rich, or the opposite – exceedingly poor or weak or of very mean station, it is difficult to follow the bidding of reason".[47] Thus, such a regime serves to create and maintain conditions that allow each person to realize their own rational and social nature, which leads to the achievement of the most perfect, and therefore happy life.[48] However, the condition for achieving this

[41] More about perception of law as an instrument of political activities, see K. Kuźmicz, *Utopia Without the Law – Why Is It Impossible?*, "Studia Iuridica Lublinensia" 2012, vol. 30(2), pp. 285–304.

[42] Aristotle, *Politics*..., III, VI, 6, p. 225.

[43] A. Kasia, *op. cit.*, pp. 46–47.

[44] R. Kraut, *op. cit.*, p. 438.

[45] Aristotle, *Politics*..., IV, VII, 2, p. 321.

[46] K. Leśniak, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

[47] Aristotle, *Politics*..., IV, IX, 4, p. 329.

[48] *Ibidem*, VII, 2–3, p. 571.

Pobrane z czasopisma Studia Iuridica Lublinensia **http://studiaiuridica.umcs.pl**
Data: 14/11/2026 18:32:38

state is the development of civic virtue, for which participation in public life is necessary, requiring a large amount of free time.[49]

In order to confirm Aristotle's position as an ancestor of republicanism, it is also worth paying attention to his views on the education of young people.[50] He emphasized that it was one of the legislator's priority goals to educate citizens who would be the pillar of the system's durability in the future. Hence, education should be state-owned and education must be one and the same for everyone. As Stagirite claimed: "But matters of public interest ought to be under public supervision; at the same time also we ought not to think that any of the citizens belongs to himself, but that all belong to the state, for each is a part of the state, and it is natural for the superintendence of the several parts to have regard to the superintendence of the whole".[51] For this purpose, it is necessary to focus on developing in the young person the qualities essential for the development of the desired civic virtue. This is done by activities worthy of free people, which stimulate the mind, and not those involving the study of paid work. So he included grammar, drawing, gymnastics, and music as valuable subjects.[52]

But what form should be taken by the action desired of the citizens, which benefits the state? It can be realized on the plane of military service, in public administration, and in the service of God. Such civic activity is universal, regardless of the specificity of a particular system. Aristotle believed that each person can perform different social functions according to their age. And so he should be a soldier in his youth, then a public servant, and in his old age a priest.[53] This shows the organic structure of society consisting of different parts that perform the necessary functions for the self-sufficiency of the entire community, and thus for each of its members. Man, being useful to the general public, is at the same time a beneficiary of living in the state. Since an individual can satisfy all his needs only by living in the state, the purpose of the state is the good life of its citizens, identical with the concept of the common good.[54]

THE CONCEPT OF FREEDOM IN THE VIEWS OF ARISTOTLE

To begin with, it should be noted that the Stagirite used the term *ἐλεύθερος* ("free") in a political sense only, although he used it in different contexts. The first of these served to outline the social dichotomy that distinguishes a free man as

[49] E. Meinksins Wood, N. Wood, *Class Ideology and Ancient Political Theory Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle in Social Context*, Suffolk 1978, p. 233.

[50] A. Danysz, *Pedagogika Arystotelesa*, "Eos" 1904, no. 10, pp. 42–66.

[51] Aristotle, *Politics*..., VIII, I, 2, pp. 635–637.

[52] J. Sieroń, *op. cit.*, pp. 226–227.

[53] *Ibidem*, pp. 197–198.

[54] D. Morrison, *The Common Good*, [in:] *The Cambridge Companion*..., p. 176.

Pobrane z czasopisma Studia Iuridica Lublinensia **http://studiaiuridica.umcs.pl**
Data: 14/11/2026 18:32:38

the opposite of a slave.[55] This is the oldest concept of freedom in ancient Greece, known since the time of Homer.[56] The status of a slave has already been discussed above, but let us recall that a slave who is a "speaking thing" belongs by nature to another man because his mind, which is part of the soul, is not sufficiently developed. It should be emphasized that Aristotle was not strictly concerned with the lack of intelligence – because slaves were not only hard-working manual workers, but also people with much more important jobs, such as a teacher or even a clerk. Under the phrase lack of reason, he understood the lack of the ability to govern oneself, which means the lack of "political power".[57] Freedom perceived in this way is a perfect reflection of Berlin's concept of positive freedom – that is, being the master of oneself in the dimension of the autonomy of decisions made about oneself. Because in this approach, human freedom – as well as its lack – is dictated solely by nature, therefore it has the character of internal freedom.

The second meaning of freedom, on the other hand, relates to the relationship of the interdependencies between the individual (citizen) and the authority. Aristotle contrasted the political power of governing free people with the despotic power characteristic of the master-slave relationship. Thus, political power concerns free citizens who are legally equal, which manifests itself in the same possibility for all to hold offices of power and in bearing burdens for the maintenance of the state. It is connected with the necessity to properly prepare future citizens for life in the public sphere by guaranteeing them specific upbringing and education. Hence, he did not see free men engaged in manual labor as the best citizens, because due to the lack of free time they had not sufficiently developed either their virtue or their minds. In this approach, the category of human freedom acquires more and more of an elitist character and is related to the idea of human self-improvement.[58] In this case is also visible the dimension of freedom, close to the sensitivity of the representatives of leftist thought, which is economic self-sufficiency, which they equate with freedom from poverty. Of course, the two views are not analogous, but on the contrary, they constitute a certain contrast. The socialist postulates that the poor should be able to enjoy the same real opportunities as the rich. Meanwhile, Aristotle would like the citizen to have enough slaves who, by working for him, would provide him not only with economic stability, but also free time, which could

[55] A. Rosler, *Civic Virtue: Citizenship, Ostracism, and War*, [in:] *The Cambridge Companion…*, pp. 161–162.

[56] M.H. Hansen, *Democratic Freedom and the Concept of Freedom in Plato and Aristotle*, "Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies" 2010, vol. 50, p. 2.

[57] M. Bizoń, *Powstanie i znaczenia pojęcia wolności w Grecji. Platon i ἐλεύθερία. Arystoteles i ἐλεύθερία*, [in:] *Wolność człowieka i jej granice. Antologia pojęcia w doktrynach polityczno-prawnych*, vol. 1: *Od Starożytności…*, p. 53.

[58] R. Bellamy, *Republicanism, Democracy, and Constitutionalism*, [in:] *Republicanism and Political Theory*, eds. C. Laborde, J. Maynor, Oxford 2008, p. 161.

Pobrane z czasopisma Studia Iuridica Lublinensia **http://studiaiuridica.umcs.pl**
Data: 14/11/2026 18:32:38

be used for the proper development of his reason and the virtue of public life.[59] The only common feature of both concepts is to embed the individual in a wider social spectrum, which determines the realization of his freedom. It should be emphasized that for the Stagirite, the essence of human freedom is not to do whatever he wants, but to direct the individual's actions towards community civic goals.[60] As it results from the above, in the discussed doctrine the dimension of positive freedom is dominant over negative freedom. The distinction introduced by Berlin into the higher and the lower self is also visible, which in this case takes the form of a glorification of the attitude of a free citizen using a higher self, actively oriented towards achieving social goals.

In order to better understand the issue of citizens' equality before the law, one should also refer to the Aristotelian perception of the concept of justice. Broadly speaking, (legal) justice – perceived as an ethical virtue – is an acquired disposition to act in accordance with the recognized law in a proper system. For our argument, however, the distinction made in the detailed understanding of this concept is more important. Aristotle contrasted with "commutative justice", which for him meant arithmetic equality in relations between citizens, with "distributive justice", meaning proportional equality in the distribution of goods and honors in the relations of the community with its members. Thus, commutative justice concerns equality before the law, and distributive justice refers to the distribution of goods in the community resulting from rewarding citizens for actions taken for the benefit of the entire state.

By juxtaposing both understandings of freedom used by Aristotle, it can be concluded that it is an independent good, identical to a properly fulfilled citizenship. It is therefore natural and normative, but also empirical. Only a community consisting of such citizens is fully self-governing and self-sufficient, giving individuals the opportunity to individually achieve the state of eudaimonia while respecting the rule of law, expressed in compliance with the norms of law established by free citizens.[61] It is therefore the crowning achievement of the concept of the common good.[62]

---

[59] As Andrzej Kasia wrote (*op. cit.*, pp. 40–41): "In order for some to gain full freedom and fully realize their humanity, others had to be deprived of all of this in advance (…). Prosaically speaking, the essence of the Aristotelian concept of freedom simply boils down to the possibility of having free time, therefore it consists in freedom from all work 'lower', that is, those made, e.g., by farmers or artisans".

[60] M. Bizoń, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

[61] J. Filonik, *"Living as One Wishes" in Athens: The (Anti-)Democratic Polemics*, "Classical Philology" 2019, vol. 114(1), p. 4; M. Bizoń, *op. cit.*, p. 28, 32.

[62] A. Bosiacki, *Moralność publiczna w koncepcji ustroju mieszanego w starożytności: Arystoteles, Polibiusz, Cyceron*, [in:] *Moralność i władza jako kategorie myśli politycznej*, eds. J. Justyński, A. Madeja, Warszawa 2011, p. 149.

Pobrane z czasopisma Studia Iuridica Lublinensia **http://studiaiuridica.umcs.pl**
Data: 14/11/2026 18:32:38

THE MODEL OF HUMAN FREEDOM IN THE DOCTRINE OF ARISTOTLE

To summarize the analysis, it is now possible to use the extended formula of MacCallum to build a model of human freedom containing all of its manifestations described by Aristotle (see Figure 1). The subject of freedom is a citizen of the *polis*, who by his nature, level of social and property status and due to receiving appropriate upbringing and education (X) is free from being a slave and from the necessity of physical work (internal freedom from Y) and the compulsion of obedience to despotic power (external freedom from Y); he is also free to autonomously decide about himself ("political power") and to develop his reason and ethos of civic virtue, that is, to self-improvement (internal freedom to Z), and to co-govern and be responsible for the entire state, identical with the political community (external freedom to Z). In connection with the above, it should be noted that in the doctrine of Aristotle there is a vision of elitist freedom, available only to individuals selected by nature and by law, but also requiring the citizen to have a sufficient estate to provide him with free time that could be used for such developments as one's mind and virtues, which would best serve the good of the entire community.

Subject of freedom (X)	A citizen of *polis* focused on the realization of the common good	
Dimensions of freedom	Internal dimension	External dimension
The dimension of negative freedom (from Y)	Inherently free from being a slave Free from necessity of manual work	Free from despotic power
The dimension of positive freedom (to Z)	Free to decide for himself Free to develop his mind and ethos of civic virtue (self-improvement)	Free to co-rule and responsibility for the entire state (community)

Figure 1. Aristotle's concept of freedom in terms of MacCallum's extended formula

Source: own elaboration.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, while the theory of Berlin's two freedoms allows for an accurate observation of human freedom from completely different points of view, it wrongly divides the substantive scope of the two concepts, which – at least in most cases – complements and specifies each other. Therefore, only the use of the adopted multidimensional perspective of the studied category allows for a comprehensive and structured approach to various planes of human existence. As it has been shown in this article, the concept of freedom in Aristotle's political thought is not only limited to positive freedom, although such an approach dominates in the cited literature on the subject. Therefore, the developed research method referring to the

Pobrane z czasopisma Studia Iuridica Lublinensia **http://studiaiuridica.umcs.pl**
Data: 14/11/2026 18:32:38

extended concept of MacCallum is an innovative and exceptionally useful as well as universal research tool used to analyze the category of freedom contained both in political thought and in the content of normative acts.

REFERENCES

Literature

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, transl. D. Ross, Oxford 2009.
Aristotle, *Politics*, transl. H. Rackham, London 1959.
Arystoteles, *Polityka*, transl. L. Piotrowicz, Wrocław 2005.
Bellamy R., *Republicanism, Democracy, and Constitutionalism*, [in:] *Republicanism and Political Theory*, eds. C. Laborde, J. Maynor, Oxford 2008.
Benn S.I., Weinstein W.L., *Being Free to Act, and Being a Free Man*, "Mind. New Series" 1971, vol. 80(318), **DOI: https://doi.org/10.1093/mind/LXXX.318.194**.
Berlin I., *Liberty*, Oxford 2002, **DOI: https://doi.org/10.1093/019924989X.001.0001**.
Bizoń M., *Powstanie i znaczenia pojęcia wolności w Grecji. Platon i ἐλεύθερία. Arystoteles i ἐλεύθερία*, [in:] *Wolność człowieka i jej granice. Antologia pojęcia w doktrynach polityczno-prawnych*, vol. 1: *Od Starożytności do Monteskiusza*, ed. O. Górecki, Łódź 2019, **DOI: https://doi.org/10.18778/8142-180-5.03**.
Blackstone W.T., *The Concept of Political Freedom*, "Social Theory and Practice" 1973, vol. 2(4), **DOI: https://doi.org/10.5840/soctheorpract1973249**.
Bosiacki A., *Moralność publiczna w koncepcji ustroju mieszanego w starożytności: Arystoteles, Polibiusz, Cyceron*, [in:] *Moralność i władza jako kategorie myśli politycznej*, eds. J. Justyński, A. Madeja, Warszawa 2011.
Bravo B., Węcowski M., Wipszycka E., Wolicki A., *Historia starożytnych Greków*, vol. 2: *Okres klasyczny*, Warszawa 2009.
Danysz A., *Pedagogika Arystotelesa*, "Eos" 1904, no. 10.
Drelich S., *Perykles z Aten*, [in:] *Encyklopedia polityczna*, ed. J. Bartyzel, Radom 2009.
Feinberg J., *Rights, Justice and Bounds of Liberty*: *Essays in Social Philosophy*, Princeton 1980, **DOI: https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400853977**.
Filonik J., *"Living as One Wishes" in Athens: The (Anti-)Democratic Polemics*, "Classical Philology" 2019, vol. 114(1), **DOI: https://doi.org/10.1086/701112**.
Gajda-Krynicka J., *Paradoks wolności w filozofii stoickiej*, [in:] *Wolność człowieka i jej granice. Antologia pojęcia w doktrynach polityczno-prawnych*, vol. 1: *Od Starożytności do Monteskiusza*, ed. O. Górecki, Łódź 2019, **DOI: https://doi.org/10.18778/8142-180-5.04**.
Górecki O., *Granice wolności jednostki – problemy metodologiczne i klasyfikacja pojęcia*, "Studia Erasmiana Wratislaviensia" 2016, vol. 10.
Górecki O., *Typologia granic wolności jednostki w doktrynach polityczno-prawnych*, [in:] *Wolność człowieka i jej granice. Antologia pojęcia w doktrynach polityczno-prawnych*, vol. 3: *Od Nietzschego do współczesności*, ed. O. Górecki, Łódź 2019, **DOI: https://doi.org/10.18778/8142-188-1.23**.
Gray T., *Freedom*, New York 1991.
Hansen M.H., *Democratic Freedom and the Concept of Freedom in Plato and Aristotle*, "Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies" 2010, vol. 50.
Kasia A., *Arystotelesa teoria wolności elitarnej*, [in:] *Antynomie wolności*, eds. M. Drużkowski, K. Sokół, Warszawa 1966.

Pobrane z czasopisma Studia Iuridica Lublinensia **http://studiaiuridica.umcs.pl**
Data: 14/11/2026 18:32:38

Kraut R., *Aristotle: Political Philosophy*, Oxford 2002.
Kukathas C., *Liberty*, [in:] *A Companion to Contemporary Political Philosophy*, eds. R.E. Goodin, F. Pettit, New York 2007.
Kuźmicz K., *Utopia Without the Law – Why Is It Impossible?*, "Studia Iuridica Lublinensia" 2012, vol. 30(2), **DOI: https://doi.org/10.17951/sil.2021.30.2.285-304**.
Leśniak K., *Arystoteles*, Warszawa 1989.
MacCallum Jr. G.C., *Negative and Positive Freedom*, "Philosophical Review" 1967, vol. 76(3), **DOI: https://doi.org/10.2307/2183622**.
MacIntyre A., *A Short History of Ethics: A History of Moral Philosophy from the Homeric Age to the Twentieth Century*, London 1998, **DOI: https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvpg85gr**.
Maynor J.W., *Republicanism in the Modern World*, Cambridge 2003.
Meinksins Wood E., Wood N., *Class Ideology and Ancient Political Theory Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle in Social Context*, Suffolk 1978.
Miścicki W., *Narodziny wolności. Rozwój idei w Grecji epoki archaicznej*, [in:] *Granice wolności w starożytnej myśli greckiej*, eds. J. Bernat, P. Biernat, Kraków 2013.
Morrison D., *The Common Good*, [in:] *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle's Politics*, eds. M. Deslauriers, P. Destrée, Cambridge 2013, **DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/CCO9780511791581.008**.
Oppenheim F.E., *Dimensions of Freedom*, New York 1961, **DOI: https://doi.org/10.1037/14355-000**.
Pellegrin P., *Natural Slavery*, [in:] *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle's Politics*, eds. M. Deslauriers, P. Destrée, Cambridge 2013.
Pietrzyk-Reeves D., *Tradycja republikańska, respublica, republikanizm*, "Horyzonty Polityki" 2013, vol. 4(7).
Polanowska-Sygulska B., *Doktryna wolności Isaiaha Berlina*, [in:] *Wolność człowieka i jej granice. Antologia pojęcia w doktrynach polityczno-prawnych*, vol. 3: *Od Nietzschego do współczesności*, ed. O. Górecki, Łódź 2019, **DOI: https://doi.org/10.18778/8142-188-1.10**.
Polanowska-Sygulska B., *Filozofia wolności Isaiaha Berlina*, Kraków 1998.
Polanowska-Sygulska B., *Między filozofią polityczną a filozofią prawa*, Kraków 2012.
Rawls J., *Theory of Justice*, Cambridge 1999, **DOI: https://doi.org/10.4159/9780674042582**.
Rosler A., *Civic Virtue: Citizenship, Ostracism, and War*, [in:] *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle's Politics*, eds. M. Deslauriers, P. Destrée, Cambridge 2013, **DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/CCO9780511791581.007**.
Sieroń J., *Status jednostki i państwa w greckiej πόλις w świetle filozofii Sokratesa, Platona i Arystotelesa*, Katowice 2003.
Szahaj A., Jakubowski M.N., *Filozofia polityki*, Warszawa 2005.
Zdybel J., *Między wolnością a powinnością. Filozofia polityczna Isaiaha Berlina i Alasdaira MacIntyre'a*, Lublin 2005.

Online sources

Carter I., *Positive and Negative Liberty*, [in:] *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/liberty-positive-negative (access: 1.11.2021).

ABSTRAKT

Wśród współczesnych badaczy pojęcia wolności panuje całkowita zgoda co do znaczenia, jakie dla nauki odegrał wykład inauguracyjny Isaiaha Berlina z 31 października 1958 r. pt. „Dwa pojęcia wolności", wygłoszony na Uniwersytecie Oksfordzkim. Opublikowany później i wielokrotnie przedrukowywany, uporządkował naukową refleksję nad pojęciem wolności poprzez wprowadzenie terminów

Pobrane z czasopisma Studia Iuridica Lublinensia **http://studiaiuridica.umcs.pl**
Data: 14/11/2026 18:32:38

wolności pozytywnej i negatywnej. Pomimo pojawienia się w literaturze przedmiotu licznych głosów krytycznych z pewnością nie można dziś uprawiać nauki bez przywołania wspomnianej dychotomii. Dziewięć lat później Gerald MacCallum – zainspirowany m.in. teorią Berlina – przedstawił własny trójczłonowy model wolności. W prowadzonych badaniach wykorzystuję właśnie ten model, ale rozszerzam jego zakres o dodatkowy wymiar wolności wewnętrznej i zewnętrznej. Dlatego celem niniejszego artykułu jest przeprowadzenie rekonstrukcji kategorii wolności człowieka występującej w poglądach Arystotelesa ze Stagiry przy zastosowaniu rozszerzonej formuły MacCalluma oraz zbudowanie jej modelu z wykorzystaniem wprowadzonych narzędzi badawczych. Przyjęta wielowymiarowa perspektywa obserwacji ludzkiej wolności pozwala na kompleksowe ujęcie różnych płaszczyzn życia człowieka, na których możemy dostrzec przejawy tej enigmatycznej i niezwykle trudnej do uchwycenia koncepcji, którą nazywamy wolnością.

Słowa kluczowe: poglądy Arystotelesa; wolność człowieka; trójczłonowy model wolności; wolność pozytywna i negatywna

UMCS