

Approaches to the study of Politics

The Philosophical tradition of Politics

This involved a preoccupation with essentially ethical, perspective or normative questions, reflecting a concern with what 'should', 'ought' or 'must' be brought about, rather than with what 'is'. Plato and Aristotle are usually identified as the founding fathers of this tradition. Their ideas resurfaced in the writings of medieval theorists such as Augustine and Aquinas. The central theme of Plato's work was an attempt to describe the nature of the ideal society, which in his view took the form of a dictatorship dominated by a class of philosopher kings. It formed the basis of 'traditional' approach which has the character of literary analysis. It is primarily interested in examining what major thinkers said, how they developed or justified their views and the intellectual context within which they worked.