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How to be Neo-Aristotelian in Politics today?

In respect to many Neo-approaches, like in case of the Neo-Republican turn, as distinct view from the liberal one (or demo-liberal one), a seminal question can be asked: what is DISTINCT from the mainstream approach?!

One of the traditional markers of Aristotelianism (not infrequently linked to Thomism, e.g., Catholic social thought since the 19th century) in the philosophy of society has been the opposition of this position to both atomistic liberalism and collectivist socialism (communism and other totalitarian approaches). Aristotelianism was supposed to value the individual and the community, without letting the latter dominate the former, but at the same time setting a frame of reference and conditions of functioning for it. It seems that this traditional view today must confront much more sophisticated positions.

In my talk, I want to highlight some challenges to the Aristotelian project in politics (both in terms of the philosophy of society, meta-politics and political action itself in modern societies, often post-national and global structures). I will refer to competing positions that, while turning to communal references, at the same time dissociate themselves from Aristotelianism, for one reason or another. I will pay special attention to the neo-republican conception of the state (Pettit, *The State*, 2023), as an ontologically and institutionally considered vision of the social democratic state, which the author has been developing since the late 1980's.

I believe that the points he raises may be, for various reasons, relevant to contemporary attempts to formulation (revival) of the Aristotelian tradition,

which will not be treated a priori as a noble antique to be placed in a museum, but only as an object of times past.

I will highlight four points that, in light of Pettit's formulation, are worth taking into account in thinking about contemporary takes on the Aristotelian tradition.

Right-Left, Conservatism-Progressivism - what is Aristotelianism's potential standpoint in the contemporary Realpolitik landscape. Pettit claims that republican theory is left-of-the-center-liberalism (1997). Where to place Neo-Aristotelian?! How to relate Neo-Aristotelian to communitarian (Alisdair McIntyre, Charles Tylor) – it used to be labelled as a left oriented politics? However, some may argue, that some of the communitarian approaches might support conservative view? Community as *small platoons* (Burke and Scruton)

Aristotelianism's social ontology in political arrangement. Communitarianism as important factor from ontological point of view – relation. A received view is as follows: liberalism – atomism, communism/socialism – collectivism, Aristotelianism (Thomist + catholic social thought) claim to be a third way (standpoint) – individual substance + community (on various ontological levels – *subsidiarity principle* of the modern national state and international entities like the European Union – Chantal Delsol). How to place Aristotle in network, assemblage, makro-mezo-mikro levels, which are discussed in modern social ontology (Little 2016). Question: How ontology of holistic individualism (Taylor 1985, 1995, Pettit 1993) might work in case of Neo-Aristotelian (vs. Neo-Republican) understanding of the ‘common good’ in modern societies which are governed by axiological pluralism principle?

The common good, and social (class) divisions. What reference to social values. Whether Aristotelian politics is to take into account (and if so, how) the axiological diversity of modern societies (Weber's conundrum of axiological polytheism), the separate interests and fractures of societies (Josiah Ober - Athens, John P. McCormick - Machiavelli).

Civic virtue has always been a determinant of the Aristotelian political tradition (including in the republican tradition). How to understand the issue of civic virtue in the context of social and political institutions of modern societies, such as the selection and evaluation criteria of cadres of the state apparatus (administrative state) in various areas of state functioning. Civic (official) virtue in the context of the economy of esteem (Brennan, Pettit, 2004) but also in the context of a recent work on Political Meritocracy in Renaissance Italy by James Hankins (Hankins 2023)