

Praktinė filosofija

A PHILOSOPHICAL REFLECTION ON EUROPEAN INTEGRATION: ARISTOTELIAN SUBSIDIARITY VERSUS KANTIAN UNIVERSALISM

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This paper aims to show how contemporary Aristotelian political philosophy can be utilised in our reflections on European integration. It argues that changes in international relations after the end of the Cold War and a growing cultural divide between Europe and the US makes Europe's Western identity untenable. Through a brief philosophical sketch of the history of 'the West' it argues that Europe needs to return to its European rather than Western roots. The philosophical emphasis on national cultures and local identities, which is also found at the heart of the European Union in the form of the notion of subsidiarity, links European cultural and political integration to Aristotelian philosophy. The paper argues that the principle of subsidiarity can be seen both as the political as well as ethical principle of European integration. Subsidiarity is understood in terms of Aristotle's teleological ethics which emphasises the importance of culture and culturally embodied human ends and is juxtaposed to Kant's deontology. The essay argues that the Kantian notion of the public and Kant's understanding of morality gives rise to the modern one-sided account of the political.

Keywords: Aristotelian philosophy, Kant, modernity, post-modernity, subsidiarity, European integration.

Since the dawn of European Enlightenment political reality and its institutional structures have been shaped by intellectuals (or the *Philosophes* as they were called in the 18th century France). Today as never before the enlarged European Union needs philosophers and social critics to reflect on the process of European integration and its changing identity. There are many controversial questions with which European intellectuals will have to come to terms. What is the role of an enlarged Europe in the

global world? Can Europe sustain a friendly relationship with its traditional ally the US or will Europe and America inevitably drift apart? What are the best conceptual resources enabling us philosophically to reflect on European integration?

In this paper I attempt to engage with some of these questions. There are two interrelated themes of my argument. On the one hand, I will address the issues of European regional identity *vis-à-vis* its more traditional Western identity. I will

argue that the end of the Cold War, the rise of Islamic fundamentalism, and the enlargements of the European Union in 2004 and 2007 have changed the nature of international relations. Consequently the traditional Atlantic alliance between Europe and America can no longer be taken for granted. I will suggest that Europe needs to return to its European, rather than Western, roots, if it wants to cherish its distinctive cultural and political identity in the global world. On the other hand, the emphasis on regional and local identities will allow me to introduce an Aristotelian conception of the political. The notion of subsidiarity, as an essentially Aristotelian principle, is at the core of this conception. I will argue that it is Aristotelian philosophy (together with its recent post-modern embodiment in Alasdair MacIntyre's thought) rather than Kantian universalism that will provide us with suitable conceptual and philosophical tools to reflect on European integration.

Europe versus 'the West'

Commenting on the 1989 revolution in Europe Ralf Dahrendorf made a far-reaching claim. The collapse of communism in East Europe should not result in the necessity for these societies to learn the language of "the West". According to Dahrendorf, the free European societies do not coincide with any single system and have no single language. Instead, they constitute an open space with all its variety and multiplicity. The 1989 revolution in Europe was precisely the enlarging of this space (note that Dahrendorf spoke about revolution in Europe, not just East Europe). Thus the collapse of the Berlin wall was not the victory of "Western

capitalism" over "Soviet communism". For if it were so, a part of the ideological framework that lay behind the constitution of the Cold War would have prevailed:

The countries of East Central Europe have not shed their communist system in order to embrace the capitalist system (whatever that is); they have shed the closed system in order to create an open society, *the* open society to be exact, for while there can be many systems, there is only one open society.

And

[I]f capitalism is a system, then it needs to be fought as hard as communism had to be fought. All systems mean serfdom, including the 'natural' system of a total 'market order' in which no one tries to do anything other than guard certain rules of the game discovered by a mysterious sect of economic advisers (Dahrendorf 1990: 36, 37).

At the very dawn of the post-Cold War era Dahrendorf, in opposition to Francis Fukuyama (1989) and his fifteen minutes of fame article, as Dahrendorf put it, argued that the 1989 revolution is the enlargement of a free and open Europe rather than the ideological victory of the capitalist West. Today this Popperian remark is true as never before. The 2004 and 2007 enlargements, together with other radical changes in our perception of the world, marks the end of post-communism and thus eradicates the remains of the Cold War ideological setup. A part of this ideological setup, I suggest, is the concept of "the West".

Christopher Coker (1998) in his book *Twilight of the West* (whose title alludes both to Nietzsche's *Twilight of the Idols* and to Spengler's *The Decline of the West*) argued that the concept of "the West", which emerged in the 19th century and became widespread during and after the

First and Second World Wars, was always juxtaposed to and depended on that which was considered to be non-West – the Orient, authoritarian Russia, Nazi Germany, and the communist Soviet Union. “The West” from the very beginning has been both a cultural and political term. We can trace its emergence back to the ideas of the French Enlightenment. It was the *Philosophes* who introduced the conception of freedom of the individual in terms of universal human rights, thereby providing a significant element of the impetus for the development of the modern political order. These Enlightenment ideals of political liberty and universal humanity, which were most evidently expressed through revolutions in America and France, became essential elements in the formation of, what was later called, Western civilisation. What is important, however, is that the West emerged as an alliance between leading European powers, first of all France and Britain, and the United States, in order to defend freedom and human civilisation against tsarist and later communist Russia. The first thinkers to foresee this were the 19th century French historians Jules Michelet and Henri Martin who envisaged the importance of a Western alliance between Europe and America in order to withstand Russia as their common enemy (Coker 1998: 10). This became especially evident during the Cold War when the world was fundamentally divided between the capitalist West and the communist East. It was then that the concept of the West became not only clearly defined, but also embodied in NATO as the political and military alliance between North America and the West European liberal democra-

cies. Thus up to 1989 the West was simply all those modern liberal democracies that adopted a free-market economy/capitalism and saw themselves as in ideological opposition to the Soviet Union.

It is from this point of view of Cold War ideological dualism that aforementioned Fukuyama proclaimed the victory of the liberal West over the communist East. What he did not realise, however, was precisely that in winning and exporting its values to the rest of the world it will gradually decline. Thus as long as the West, conceived as liberal democracy coupled with capitalism and social modernisation¹, is exported or accepted by other traditionally non-western cultures, the West will lose its strictly defined identity. As Coker puts it in a slightly different context:

The West’s traditional definition of ‘civilisation’ is no longer tenable. It was a product of an age when the Western world took itself to be the acme of human achievement as well as the purveyor of value to others <...>. At the end of the century it is beginning to recognise that the civilisation of the future will be a discourse between cultures, each different from the other but all of them confronting the challenge of modernity together for the first time (ibid: 20).

The West then has always been dependent on the alliance between Europe and America. We have good reasons to think that today the transatlantic friendship and the common values can no longer be taken for granted. The Atlantic divide is becoming and will continue to become bigger because of the

¹ It is instructive that in the 1960s and 1970s there was an influential school of thought in sociology which argued that modernisation of the developing world should be understood in terms of its westernisation. See, for example, Eisenstadt 1966.

growing cultural and political differences between Europe and America². In the future the European Union will be preoccupied with its huge cultural and political diversity brought about by its enlargements. Dealing with these political complexities will require enormous political, cultural and financial resources. An ever closer European integration is likely to foster a unique political culture and a stronger European identity. On the other hand, the changes in international relations after 9/11 are significant as well. Today there is no obvious enemy which could unite and give reason for the close friendship between Europe and America. The threat of terrorism cannot unite the civilised Western world in the way the Warsaw pact once united the West. Furthermore, the United States' changing demographical makeup suggests that the 21st century will be less dominated by the whites of European descent because of increasing immigration from Latin America and Asia which will gradually but inevitably change the United States' European/Western identity³.

In an interview Alasdair MacIntyre has once remarked:

I think the great disaster has already happened. I think the West is already gone. What we have to do is find means of constructing and sustaining local forms of community through which we can survive this age (Pe arson 1994: 42).

² The war in Iraq in 2003 and the fundamental differences between the way public opinion in Europe and America saw it is just one of many examples of the increasing cultural and political gap between Europe and America.

³ The 1960 population of the US was almost 90 % white; today it is about 75 %, and demographers project that by 2020 it will be approximately 60 % and by 2030 it may constitute less than half of those under eighteen (Coker 1998: 129).

This apparently pessimistic claim is deeply rooted in MacIntyre's Aristotelian philosophy and his disbelief in modern liberal democracies and their compatibility with capitalism (it is this emphasis on local communities, I shall argue, that will allow us alternatively to conceptualise the normative principle of subsidiarity, the principle which is at the core of European integration). My aim, however, is not to provide a detailed account of the reasons which led MacIntyre to dismiss the institutions of modern liberal democracy and capitalism. Instead, what I want to suggest is a more modest claim. The West is gone not so much because of the alleged ills of its moral culture, but because of radical changes in the way we see the global world. Today it is impossible to perceive the world in terms of some implicit ideological dualism between the West and the non-West. The future world and its international relations will be based not on the balance between the western and non-western powers, but between regions and their cultures (e.g. China, the Islamic world, India, Russia, Europe, the Americas and so on).

In this sense it is possible to say that the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the post-communist decade, which the unification of the enlarged European Union symbolises and contributes to, can be seen as a postmodern event. Unified Europe needs to get back to, or to be more precise, invent its *European*, rather than *Western*, roots. In as much as the unification of Europe in terms of the enlargements of the European Union contributes to the formation of a distinctive *European* identity at the expense of its former *Western* identity,

European integration allows us to go beyond another essentially modern and highly ideological term – the West. Thus a further European integration fostering a distinctive European cultural identity can be seen as a move beyond modernity, modernity as the uniform, expanding and allegedly universal civilisation.

Modernity and Postmodernity

The concept of “postmodernity” is problematic, fashionable and banal at the same time. It is problematic because it has a variety of competing definitions and its usage differs from one intellectual discourse to another. In literary criticism/cultural studies, in architecture, in sociology and in philosophy postmodernism designates different things. Consequently its periodisation becomes rather difficult. For example, cultural studies date the advent of postmodernism roughly with the 1960s (Jameson 1998), while in philosophy there is a tendency to trace back the conceptual beginning of postmodernity at least from Nietzsche (Best *et al.* 1991). The usage of postmodernity here by no means implies the affirmation of the post-1960 intellectual movement initiated by French post-structuralists such as Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, and Jean-Francois Lyotard. Although there are some affinities between my conception of postmodernity and theirs (especially in so far as the emphasis on ‘the local’ is concerned), the implicit relativism of post-structuralism should be resisted. Thus postmodernity here will be understood as an attempt to think beyond modernity. It is in this sense that contemporary Aristotelianism, developed by Alasdair MacIntyre, in

as much as it criticises and seeks to move beyond the Enlightenment project and the social order of advanced modernity, can be seen as a postmodern philosophical project.

It is important to note, however, that to affirm postmodernity does not mean to reject modernity. It should not be seen as an attempt to invent a new social order or a set of institutional practices that may be juxtaposed with modernity. Modernity is a period of our history which has been dominant for at least two hundred years. Furthermore, its growth and expansion have become global. Therefore modernity *is* an ineliminable horizon of our social and cultural reality and thus it is important to learn how to live with it. By postmodernity in this context I first of all mean an attempt to imagine/conceptualise a European future beyond the prevalent modern discourses of humanism and of individual autonomy, and beyond striving for ever increasing liberation (or in other words, beyond liberalism as *the* theory and practice of modernity). Secondly, it will mean to focus on those social and moral practices which are local and regional rather than global and allegedly universal. It is precisely because modernity and its expansion are global and all encompassing that it is impossible to conceive of introducing an alternative social order on the global scale. This is one of the reasons why Soviet socialism, as a *global* alternative to liberalism and capitalism, has been understood by sociologists as another (rival) project of modernity (Wagner 1994). A post-modern alternative – an alternative way of thinking aiming to go beyond modern liberal humanism – can only be local. It is in this sense

that Alasdair MacIntyre claimed that there are no remedies for the condition of liberal modernity (Rowlands 1998).

Reference to the all-encompassing and penetrating nature of modernity and its narratives of humanism, autonomy and liberation is significant in order to clarify two important facts. First, contemporary Aristotelianism, which seeks to set itself in opposition to the late modern social and economic institutional order, is not an attempt uncritically to restore a pre-modern mode of theorising⁴. Second, there is not and cannot be a global alternative to modernity, to its paradigmatic narratives of self-determination, autonomy and humanism and their embodiments in consumer capitalism and liberal democracy. In this sense we are all, willingly or unwillingly, moderns and liberals. The world, into which we are thrown, to use Heideggerian terminology, is one with the cultural horizon of liberalism and modernity. Therefore, post-modernity can be only a localised attempt to go beyond this all encompassing uniform cultural horizon of modernity.

Post-modern Europe: Kant or Aristotle?

In his famous essay *Was ist Aufklärung?* Kant argued that Enlightenment (i.e. a human condition wherein people are able to resolve moral and scientific matters through informed, rational and public debate) requires two sets of interrelated conditions. One is that individuals should have courage

⁴ John Gray (1995), for example, has claimed that Alasdair MacIntyre engages in the impossible task of reviving a pre-modern way of philosophising.

and determination freely to use their reason. Second, such free exercise of reason, when individuals dare to express their opinions without being guided by others, should be unrestricted only within the public sphere. Thus Kant introduces the paradigmatically modern distinction between the public and private, understood as the universal and the local. The public use of reason is when someone makes use of it as a scholar, i.e. “before the entire reading world” (Kant 1996: 58). *Publikum* then is the entire reading world where arguments about a subject matter are provided and elaborated. It is only here that reason should not be restricted by any external authority since the only authority is reason itself. This is not the case with the private use of reason which simply means the expression of our rationality within a certain office or civil post. An example that Kant gives is that of a soldier. A soldier cannot argue whether to obey an order or not because in doing so he will compromise his duty as a soldier. Therefore within the civil office, which is always local and in this sense private, the ability to exercise one’s reason should be limited by the requirements and regulations of a particular civil office. However, this does not mean that the soldier cannot express rational criticism about a certain structural aspect of the military life in *general* “before the entire reading world”. The reason as to why it is essential for the public use of reason to be unrestricted is that, according to Kant, public free rational debate *as such* leads to the progress of mankind. Therefore provided people are not cowards and lazy, it will be enough to allow them to express their opinions, and the free public

debate in matters of science, morality and even religion will lead to resolution of conceptual conflicts, reasonable consensus and hence progress.

From a Thomist point of view such modern faith in free public debate and progress is nothing else but the Enlightenment's unfounded prejudice. Alasdair MacIntyre has convincingly argued that reason and free public debate as such do not and cannot lead to moral resolution and consensus, and that it was precisely the belief in universal reason *as such*, reason unmediated through any moral and cultural tradition, that led Enlightenment philosophers from one failure to another. It was a set of these philosophical failures rationally to justify morality that contributed to providing the background for the emotivist moral culture to become prevalent today. The essential mark of such a culture is its inability to provide moral and conceptual resources for mediating between different moral positions and their arguments, and thus disagreements and inconclusiveness have become the essential features of contemporary moral debate (MacIntyre 1985). It is in this sense that MacIntyre could claim that the Enlightenment project with its attempt to establish universal morality and universal civilisation has failed.

For Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas and MacIntyre there can not be reason *as such*. It is not enough merely to allow its unrestricted exercise, because reason and rationality cannot be separated from such moral and intellectual virtues as justice, temperance and wisdom. To say that one cannot be fully rational without having acquired virtues is already to acknowledge the importance of moral education which can come only from

a tradition. But to say that our rationality depends on education in a moral tradition, which we inherit from others and which is always prior to our rational ability to theorize about morality, is to recognise the importance of authority and guidance by others. It is also to acknowledge the fundamental importance of the *local*. Thus for Aristotle and MacIntyre free rational debate cannot bring any resolution and cannot lead to progress *unless* its participants are educated through a particular (local) moral tradition.

Furthermore, we find an even stronger emphasis on universality and uniformity in Kant's moral theory. This introduces the essentially modern conception of the universal subject as the cornerstone of the modern moral and political order. In the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* and *The Critique of Practical Reason* Kant formulates the conception of the subject's moral autonomy through his/her ability to act in accordance with a universal law. Two formulations of the categorical moral imperative in particular – i.e. so act that you can will the maxim of your action to become a universal law *and* treat human beings as ends in themselves and never as means only – enable Kant to introduce the universality of moral agency. That is to say, as long as individuals are able *a priori* to formulate and at the same time submit to a universal moral law, they are morally autonomous. What characterises such a conception of universality is its formality. The categorical moral imperative is universal because of its form, not its content. The content (i.e. ends) of our actions have no moral value and thus cannot be the basis of morality because, ac-

cording to Kant, otherwise morality would be reduced to the sphere of means and thus would never be an end in itself.

In both of these cases we find Kant's disbelief in the local and the contingency of human aims and culturally embodied forms of human flourishing. The postulation of the universality of moral agency and the Enlightenment's belief in formal rationality *qua* rationality, disembodied from and unmediated by any cultural tradition, gives rise to the conceptual formation of the modern state. And yet it introduces a very impoverished and thin conception of the political. There are only two interlinked agencies: the universal disembodied subject *and* the state whose existence is legitimate in as much as it guards and protects the negative freedom (to put it in Isaiah Berlin's words) of its individuals. There are no other significant moral/political agencies which can mediate between the universal subject and the modern state. Accordingly, the sphere of aims and the conceptions of the good become irrelevant. It is not an accident that such Kantians as John Rawls have sought to build the entire normative edifice of the institutions of liberal democracy on the Kantian notion of formal and neutral justice. The fundamental characteristic of justice, so Rawls argued, is that individuals are asked deliberately to suspend (and in this sense exclude from the sphere of the political) their conceptions of what it is to live a good life (Rawls 1971).

Such a Kantian conception of formal deontological universality not only presupposes an individualistic conception of the social. It also disqualifies the sphere of aims and the notion of human flourishing

from the political, since the latter, i.e. the political, is based on a procedural rather than substantive conception of rationality. No doubt for Kant the universality of our rationality (at least in ethics) was far more substantive than to some of his recent followers such as Rawls⁵. What makes rationality universal is its formal character: rationality, for Rawls, is the ability to formulate and achieve aims which themselves are never questioned since what makes rationality universal is its formal means/ends thinking. Thus understood the political becomes formally universal precisely due to the exclusion of the cultural aspects of human existence. Cultural traditions, which always embody certain communal conceptions of human flourishing and the forms of the good life, are pushed outside the sphere of the political. Here we can return to Francis Fukuyama's semi-ideological claim that the victory of liberal capitalism will end the human history of cultural and ideological conflicts. Fukuyama thought that it would be replaced by pragmatic calculations and technical problem solving within the paradigm of the universal homogenous liberal democratic state. Kantian formal universality, utilised and reworked by liberals such as Rawls, reduces liberal democracy to Fukuyama's impoverished conception of

⁵ Kant believed that the universality of moral reason is such that it can serve to establish the fundamental moral law which would be acceptable to the whole of humanity cross-culturally. It would be interesting to write a genealogy of how the Kantian initially uniform conception of universal rationality has become thinner and more instrumental over the course of the history of modernity. From this point of view there is an important difference between the Christian content of Kant's categorical moral imperative and Rawls' conception of justice as fairness and neutrality.

the political. If rationality is only formal, and the only normative principle of modern liberal democracy is the autonomous individual with his/her universal rights, then liberal modernity can indeed be seen as an ever expanding homogenous and uniform social condition dominated not by ideas and different cultural traditions but by autonomous individuals bargaining with each other and with the state.

At this point that it is worth suggesting that such a Kantian model of liberal modernity is far more suited for the American model of liberal democracy than for Europe. In this respect I take issue with Larry Siedentop who has recently argued that Europe, and the European Union in particular, needs to learn from American federalism (Siedentop 2000). The fundamental difference between the US and the EU lies in their different models of multiculturalism. To put it very crudely: my ethnic origin and ethno-cultural heritage in America is my private business. I can speak Lithuanian at home, I can let my kids go to a Lithuanian Sunday-school, but neither I nor my children will be able to use it in public. It is in this sense that the Rawlsian veil of ignorance perfectly depicts the American melting pot model of multiculturalism. Cultural differences are allowed and affirmed as long as they are practiced in private. This is so because the ethno-cultural differences do not have a political/institutional basis in the US constitution. This, however, is not the case with the European Union. The preamble of the Treaty on European Union states that one of its aims is:

To strengthen the protection of the rights and interests of the nationals of its Member States

through the introduction of a citizenship of the Union [and that the European Union] shall respect the national identities of its Member States (Articles 2 and 6).

What this means is that the common European citizenship is possible only through being a citizen of a member state: one acquires the European citizenship through being British, French, Polish, etc. Thus the principle of subsidiarity becomes essential here⁶. The common Europeanness is defined only through the local – national – identity. It is in this sense that we can claim that the European Union will never become a quasi-American “melting pot” because national languages, cultures, and their distinctive identities will always be at the centre of European integration. Now what I want to suggest is that the principle of subsidiarity can be seen as (or rather can be philosophically articulated to) a normative principle, and that the most illuminating way to conceptualise this is through Aristotelian philosophy.

Subsidiarity as the Aristotelian normative principle of flourishing

Aristotle’s moral philosophy is fundamentally different from Kantian ethics in at least one very important respect. The essential principle of Aristotle’s ethics is the teleological notion of human flourishing. In the first book of the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle defines *eudaimonia* as the main and the highest end of our (ethical) lives (*NE*, 1097b). For Aristotle human flourishing *is* the moral principle. This appears in

⁶ The close relationship between the principle of subsidiarity and European citizenship has been discussed by Alessandro Colombo (2004).

stark opposition to Kant's separation of morality from happiness, on the one hand, and to Rawls' distinction between the right and the good, on the other. In order to move beyond Kantian criticism of happiness as possibly immoral (i.e. there are so many ways, including immoral ways, to be happy), human flourishing should be understood in the wider context of Aristotelian metaphysical biology. Our flourishing is not and cannot be accidental (thus it cannot be radically relative to different individuals and communities) because it is inscribed in the form of our existence *qua* human existence. Our flourishing is different from the flourishing of other animals and it is this peculiar form of flourishing that defines our humanity. Here it is important to stress only the fact that probably the most fundamental condition of human *qua* human flourishing is a well structured political community. And this is not only because to be human for Aristotle is to be *politikon zōon*. It is also because to live a flourishing human life one needs virtues and these are most reliably acquired in a well-ordered *polis*. It is in this sense that Aristotle claimed that the political community is the *highest* form of community (i.e. it is different from other communal formations such as the household and the village). It is driven not merely by the necessity of daily needs (as it was for John Locke who saw the main task of the state in securing "life, liberty, and estate") but by freedom when humans can freely and fully exercise their faculties and in doing so achieve happiness. Hence Aristotle's definition of the state:

A state is an association of similar persons whose aim is the *best* life possible.

What is best is happiness, and to be happy is an *active exercise of virtue* and a complete employment of it (Aristotle 1981: 1328a).

Thus Aristotle's, as opposed to Kant's and Rawls', conception of the state/political community is based on a substantive conception of the good. It has been argued that such a conception of the political community appears fundamentally at odds with the prevalent modern minimal conception of the state and its embodiment within contemporary liberal democracies (Bielskis 2005). To engage with politics and the political community in moral perfectionist terms is impossible today because late-modern liberal societies do not and cannot share any substantive conception of the common good. Without the latter the Aristotelian conception of politics, which sees its main aim in educating its citizens as virtuous individuals, is impossible. However, what is possible is to move beyond the modern conception of the political which, ever since the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 has been exclusively embodied within the state, the state as unified a sovereign political authority within a strictly defined territory. We need to move beyond this Westphalian order whose main principle was the notion that only the modern sovereign state embodies and has the monopoly of the political. Such a conceptual move would point towards a post-modern (i.e. after / beyond modernity) conception of the political. Our political reality already hints at this direction: the modern nation-state is no longer the only source/possessor of the political today since there are other supranational political bodies which increasingly compete with the nation-state. One of them is the European

Union with its unique constitutional order⁷. At the core of this order is the principle of subsidiarity. Looking at it from an Aristotelian point of view we can reformulate it as a normative and far more substantive principle in the following way. It is the local which is morally of principal importance, since it is only locally that a substantive and shared conception of the good is possible without which the networks of giving and receiving (to use Alasdair MacIntyre's words), necessary for the development of our virtues, would be hardly possible. Thus understood subsidiarity is not only a political principle, but also a substantive/moral one. The principle of subsidiarity is also seen as the fundamental principle of the EU, which has very strong roots in Catholic social thought formed by and large through St Thomas's Aristotelianism. It states that all those issues which can be solved by the lower level/smaller organization should be done without any reference to a higher/more complex political authority⁸. Its clearest formulation can be found in the Constitution of Europe:

In areas which do not fall within its exclusive competence, the Community shall take action, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, only if and in so far as the objectives of the proposed action cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member States and can therefore, by reason of the scale or effects of the proposed action, be better

achieved by the Community (*Draft Treaty establishing a Constitution of Europe*, Title III, Article 9).

On such an interpretation, one's primary political allegiance is not to a modern nation-state (despite the fact that legally it is the case), but to a local community – a city, a county, or a local Christian *Ekklesia*. It is only in this way that it is possible to accommodate an Aristotelian conception of politics within the institutional framework of late-modernity. To be sure, such a postmodern conception of the political does not imply easy and conflictless relations between one local community and another (or between a local community and a higher organizational level). However, in restoring the local with all its different cultural forms, such an Aristotelian conception of the political is able to offer a non-Kantian and thus substantive notion of universality. That is, a human being together with his/her community⁹ embodies the universal in as much as it is able to achieve individual and communal flourishing. The only criterion for universality is our culturally embodied forms of flourishing and their embodiment within cultural artifacts of beautiful and harmonious communal space.

Conclusion

The normative principle of subsidiarity means that the smallest and the most local

⁷ Here the European Union is fundamentally different from the US once again. The US is, even if multicultural, still a nation-state. The EU is not. As Jan Zielonka convincingly argued, the European Union, especially after the eastern enlargements, cannot be seen as a Westphalian federal state. Rather, it is more accurate to see the EU as "a post-medieval empire" (Zielonka 2006).

⁸ There is the conceptual relationship between the principle of subsidiarity and European citizenship

⁹ It is worth noting that it is Aristotelian moral philosophy (especially as embodied in Alasdair MacIntyre thought) that is able to provide a close link between the individual and the communal (i.e. my individual good is impossible without the already existing structures of common good), a link which is able to go beyond the modern collectivism of Rousseau or Marx (MacIntyre 1999).

forms of communal life (the extended family, a parish, a city, a region) are morally and politically most essential, since it is first of all locally that we are formed as moral and political agents. Our moral and political lives start from extended families and local communities, that is, from the proximity of significant others, which educate or fail to educate us in moral and intellectual virtues. It is not the abstract idea of duty which nurture and build us up, but significant others, their love, teaching, and unconditional giving. Our moral and intellectual faculties and our ability to become independent and successful practical reasoners, as Alasdair MacIntyre argued, greatly depend on the love and giving of our parents, grandparents, friends, teachers, colleagues or partners, all of whom we always encounter face to face. It is precisely because of that that local communities are essential not only morally (as the source of our moral virtues), but also politically since without the politics of local communities and their institutional structures the realization of the common good would be impossible.

The recognition of the local is essential in yet another sense. Aristotelian political philosophy sees the first importance of politics not only in our ability to create the structures of the common good. Politics are also essential as far as the education of individuals into being virtuous characters is concerned. The first importance of politics, looking at it from the Aristotelian notion of self-sufficiency as perfection, lies in our ability to create a perfected communal life.

The normative principle of subsidiarity would be based on the conviction that it is our political and moral duty to give back in return first of all locally. Precisely because to show pity, justice, generosity and exercise other moral virtues is always most difficult to those who are closest to us, our first moral duty is to get these local relationships right. Yet the normative principle of subsidiary – our first moral and political obligation is towards local relationships – by no means imply parochialism and narrow mindedness. Nor does it imply moral tribalism. That is, we are not called to give back *only* to those who gave us in the first place but to those who are in need. Furthermore, the principle of subsidiarity does not mean that there are only local moral and political relationships. Subsidiarity becomes essential only where the historical and ethical transition from moral tribalism to moral universalism already happened. In this sense subsidiarity is essentially a post-Enlightenment or post-modern normative principle. Thus the moral idea of universal humanity, on the one hand, and the global political structures, on the other hand, are essential to the practical embodiment of subsidiarity. Furthermore the normative aspect of subsidiarity would not be possible without some notion of universality. That is, what is universal is our ability to achieve individual and communal human flourishing. In this sense it is possible to claim that in as much as our local forms of communal life achieve flourishing and excellence, the local embodies the universal.

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FILOSOFINIAI APMAŠTYMAI APIE EUROPOS INTEGRACIJĄ: ARISTOTELIŠKAS SUBSIDIARUMAS VERSUS KANTIŠKAS UNIVERSALIZMAS

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S a n t r a u k a

Straipsnyje siekiama parodyti, kaip šiuolaikinė aristotelinė politinė filosofija gali padėti reflektuoti Europos integraciją. Teigiama, kad Europos vakarietiška tapatybė pokyčių tarptautiniuose santykiuose po šaltojo karo pabaigos ir augančių kultūrinių Europos ir JAV skirtumų kontekste vis labiau praranda prasmę. Atlikus trumpą filosofinės „Vakarų“ sąvokos istorijos analizę teigiama, kad Europai yra tikslingiau puoselėti savo europietišką, o ne „vakarietišką“ tapatybę. Filosofškai pabrėžiant nacionalinių kultūrų ir vietinių (kultūrinių) tapatybių svarbą, Europos kultūrinę ir politinę integraciją galima apmaštyti ir susieti su aristo-

teline filosofija. Teigiama, jog subsidiarumo principas yra ne tik politinis, bet ir etinis unikalios Europos integracijos principas. Straipsnyje subsidiarumas aptariamas pasitelkiant Aristotelio teleologinę etiką, pabrėžiant jai būdingą kultūros ir kultūriškai įkūnytų žmogaus tikslų svarbą. Taip suprastas subsidiarumas iškyla kaip priešingas kantiškai deontologijai, teigiant, jog kantiška moralės samprata paskatina vienpusišką modernią politiškumo sampratą.

Pagrindiniai žodžiai: aristotelinė filosofija, Kantas, modernybė, postmodernybė, subsidiarumas, Europos integracija.

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