

Editorial

REALIGNING POLIS WITH ETHOS, PATHOS AND LOGOS

Throughout ancient times, there has been a concerted effort to perceive politics and ethics as two sides of the same coin. In certain cultures, there existed a belief that the ruler is a heavenly incarnate possessing not only political authority but also encompassing all moral and religious values. The term 'society,' in fact, was historically viewed as an offshoot of the political wings, responsible for ensuring fraternity, peace and well-being among the inhabitants. An ideal city state (*polis*) in ancient Greece was the epicenter of *arete*/excellence or virtues. In course of time, when concept of 'power' was redefined, an unusual separation happened between ethics and politics. Politicians, who were once perceived as the 'prophets of well-being,' began to be seen as a 'privileged group enjoying the corridors of power.' Though a remarkable change has been visibly evident through various agitations that upheld the principles of equality, fraternity and liberty in various parts of the world, the situation hasn't fully met expectations until the advent of technology and the information revolution. Thanks to the selfless services of knowledge societies, people are now more aware of what is taking place in public. It's in this context that we analyze the presence of ethico-political societies that revolve around the principles of moral imperatives.

How can we facilitate the realignment of ethical norms at various stages of political societies, especially in the emergence of right-wing ideologies? Certainly, I would like to adopt the visionary spirit of Martin Luther King's cherished ideals, articulated in his letter: A conglomeration of Ethos, Pathos, and Logos. Modern political societies are expected to function as cosmopolitan arenas where the mantras of *ethos* (Virtue Ethics), *pathos* (Human Emotions) and *Logos* (Reason) collectively shape the ethico-political landscape. *Ethos* that signifies the credibility of the Politicians, *pathos* that testifies his emotional connect with people and *logos* which exemplifies his rational appeal to defend the state and its wellbeing are, indeed, the guiding sign posts in the journey of a political society towards moral growth and economic development.

Ever since the publication of *The Politics of the Governed* (2004) by Partha Chatterjee, the notion of 'political society' has consistently been a focal point for discussions and debate catalyzing a critical and innovative perspective on global politics. While the discourse primarily revolved around democracies and their effectiveness, it gradually shifted the conversation toward the ethical positioning of states and various political entities. Chatterjee further delves into a candid examination of contemporary politics and political societies in his subsequent work, *Lineages of Political Society* (2008). The fundamental question emerges: Is global politics advancing to safeguard the *ethos* of society and governance, particularly in upholding age-old moral values and highlighting the emotional (*pathos*) and rational (*logos*) appeal? Or, is it trending towards a 'power politics syndrome' where Power (*Krátos*) often takes precedence over moral Virtues (*Êthos*)? The current issue of the *Journal of Dharma* endeavors to illuminate the landscape of existing political societies and their moral imperatives in response to this pressing ethico-philosophical inquiry.

Aristotle in his *Politics* defined 'human being as a political animal/*πολιτικὸν ζῷον/Politikon Zôion* (1253a) asserting that human being alone 'has an impulse towards partnership with others'. Before Aristotle, Plato also alluded to a "political species" in his book *Phaedo* (82a-c), suggesting that those who naturally and habitually practice civil and social virtues find themselves among the happiest individuals. Both perspectives in theory underscore the socio-ethical orientation inherent in human nature. Concerning the human quest for partnership, we recognize that it is manifested in various forms such as households, villages, and organizations. However, one crucial partnership that enables humans to achieve the highest good and to which they are naturally drawn is the city or *polis*: a political partnership. Consequently, every human being can be designated as a 'political being'. Certainly, being political is not exclusive to humans; bees, wasps, ants, and cranes also belong to the political species. However, humans uniquely possess the capacity for speech and moral perception (*Politics*, 1253a). In this context, there is a heightened significance in exploring the interface between political and ethical societies. Moral reasoning plays a pivotal role in establishing an ideal political society.

The ancient Greeks, with the aim of fostering transparent

political and legal societies, introduced the system of *Agora* – an open space serving as a meeting place for citizens to engage in intellectual, emotional, spiritual, juridical, economic, social, commercial and political activities. Emerging ideas, deliberations, suggestions and proposals were presented and debated in *Agora* before being introduced in the society. I do believe that a *mini-Agora* exists in our times in the form of social media, a public space where people can engage in ideas, exchange their political views and even reach both formal and informal decision making. Considering the current state of affairs, could it be opportune to reintroduce a system akin to *Agora* – a public sphere – where citizens can freely exchange views and express concerns, particularly when they perceive that certain measures are not conducive to promoting societal well-being?

I firmly believe that virtue ethics cannot be determined or dismissed solely by majority votes. The truth remains unchanged even if it faces opposition from a majority group. Nevertheless, discussions on issues common to many political societies could benefit from a shared platform to enhance better understanding and comprehension. All the same, I am not advocating for a replication of the ancient *Agora* in its historical form, as it was evident that democratic involvement in ancient Greek political society was limited to specific segments, excluding women, slaves, foreigners, etc. My emphasis is on the importance of reintroducing a public forum where everyone can fearlessly express their views. This approach seeks to uphold genuine democratic principles, opposing inclinations towards autocratic enforcement of laws and policies.

The article, "*Dharmo Rakshati Rakshitah*: Ethical Imperatives for Indian Political Society," authored by Sonalika Chaturvedi and R B Dangwal, explores the ethical responsibilities and accountability within the sphere of developmental politics. Drawing inspiration from the novel "Dweepa: Island" by Kannada writer Na. D'Souza, the authors highlight the challenges faced by indigenous and marginalized populations, emphasizing their disproportionate bearing of the consequences of inadequate governance. This paper is particularly relevant in the context of contemporary global development politics, contributing to a deeper understanding of the ethical foundations of governance and fostering a broader discourse on ethics and accountability.

The second article titled "Application of *Dé-coincidence* and Its

Expansion to Northeast Asian Political Society," authored by Keun Se Lee and Eun Ha Kim, focuses on restraining attempts to impose ideological coincidence in the political landscape of Northeast Asia. The study seeks to grasp François Jullien's concept of *de-coincidence* and its implied meaning of interface. It argues that for a common society, the interface can only function dynamically by maintaining a mutual divide (*écart*). The ideologies in Northeast Asia are influenced by cultural changes and assimilation processes due to modernization. However, the creation of a communication interspace in the region should not be based on homogenizing multilayered ideologies. The prevailing inclination toward coincidence in Northeast Asia impedes the dynamics of dialogue by relying on force. The concept of *de-coincidence* introduces alternative possibilities in politics, crucial for avoiding the detrimental consequences of conformist ideas of coincidence. The paper establishes a theoretical foundation for the interface of coexistence ethics, which can benefit Northeast Asian political societies and suggests a way to dismantle the illusion of the so-called 'universal coincidence'.

The joint research conducted by Thomas Eneji Ogar, Peter O.O. Ottuh and their co-authors, titled "Building A Mutual Interface Between Ethics and Partisan Politics in Nigeria," highlights the pervasive challenges in Nigeria's political environment. These challenges include egotism, corruption, and ineffective leadership, which hinder the achievement of national objectives and projects. Employing historical and critical literary review research methodologies, the authors emphasize the imperative of upholding moral standards in partisan politics. Their argument revolves around the idea that adhering to ethical principles is essential for achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and aligning with Pope Francis' *Laudato Si*.

Mini Srivastava, Arvind P. Bhanu and Divita Khanna, in their research titled "Role of Ethics in Political Governance via Social Media in India," affirm that governments wield the power to establish regular and real-time connections with citizens through social media channels. However, they express concerns about the prevalence of issues such as fake news, hate speech, and privacy violations on these platforms. Consequently, the authors advocate for the promotion of strong ethics-based digital literacy among users through the implementation of a model code of conduct. While acknowledging the

idealistic, time-consuming, and ambitious nature of this solution, the authors believe that if implemented sincerely, it has the potential to significantly enhance the safety and accountability of social media.

Jeonghoon Lee and Ji-Yeon Im in "The Violation of the Freedom of Play by the Game Rating and Administration Committee of South Korea," anticipate a troubling scenario and potential future harm for the Korean Game Rating and Administration Commission. They contend that the Commission is grappling with a problem that infringes upon people's freedom to engage in play. The issue, initially rooted in an escalating gender dispute, has revealed the committee's negligence in addressing age ratings appropriately. Through empirical investigation and a review of relevant theories and prior research, this study establishes that the committee has failed to grasp the essence of the problem, leading to a violation of the freedom of play and exacerbating social disputes.

In their work, "Indian Philosophical Model of Authentic Leadership and Management," Shivani Jandhyala and Navin Kumar present a distinctive viewpoint on authentic leadership and management. They derive valuable insights from ancient Indian texts, including the *Arthashastra*, the *Bhagavad Gita*, and the *Ramayana*. The authors assert that the cornerstone of every political society should be the supreme principle of *Dharma*. From their viewpoint, a leader who adheres to the path of *Dharma* has the ability to establish a harmonious and just environment, ultimately facilitating the achievement of societal goals.

The paper titled "Ethical Society: A Premise on which Successful Democracy Rests" authored by Vineeth Thomas, P Lazarus Samraj and Gothanda Moorthy C is primarily based on Samuel Phillips Huntington's Third Wave theory. The authors assert that, while democracy may be prevalent in terms of quantity in the contemporary era, it faces numerous challenges in its qualitative aspects. The central argument posits the deficiency of ethical values as a crucial factor contributing to the global erosion of democracies. Consequently, the authors aim to explore potential solutions by proposing the integration of democracy with an ethically conscious society.

I firmly believe that realigning ethical imperatives in the political landscape is a complex procedure; nonetheless, it is essential to underline the importance of transparency, accountability and

ethical conducts across different facets of political structures. It supports the idea that public officials should disclose their financial dealings, promote integrity in interactions, and ensure accountability for false statements, while also being open to scrutiny regarding the political donations they receive. Furthermore, rulers are tasked with overseeing the implementation of anti-corruption measures, prioritizing human rights, addressing environmental responsibility, and applying ethical principles in both domestic and international relations. Proposals further underscore the importance of promoting education and ethical leadership among the upcoming generation, highlighting the need for civic engagement, advocating for campaign finance reform, and emphasizing the collaborative efforts of citizens, media, policymakers and various public and private institutions. Undoubtedly, it is within such a *polis* that a seamless integration of *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos* is realized.

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