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THE NECESSITY AND CHANCE IN ARISTOTLE'S THEORY OF SOCIETY AND ETHICS

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Abstract

This study deals with Aristotle's ideas on society in the context of his ethical and political philosophy focusing on the question of whether society emerges out of necessity or chance. Since his social philosophy is part of his ideas on society, morality, and politics, to respond to this question it analyzes his ideas on society as interconnected to his moral and political views. Moreover, it explains his ideas on life, soul, and mind exhibiting Aristotle's perspective on these ideas in his philosophical system. Therefore, the study examines these ideas about his general philosophy concerning discussions about mind, life, human, and politics. Accordingly, it posits that society is the outcome of collective good and happiness, which is achieved through ethical behaviour. This habituation is the very product of politics that occurs through moral behavior whose telos is a just life amongst fellow humans. In this sense, it claims that Aristotle puts forward that society is not the product of either necessity or chance since human actions are neither automatic results of natural laws nor uncontrollable external forces.

Keywords: Aristotle's Ethics, Aristotle's Theory of Society, Necessity, Chance.

Aristoteles'in Toplum ve Etik Kuramında Zorunluluk ve Şans

Öz

Bu çalışma, Aristoteles'in etik ve politik felsefesi dâhilindeki toplum üzerine düşüncelerini, toplumun zorunlulukla mı yoksa şansla mı ortaya çıkar sorusuna verdiği cevaba odaklanarak ele alır. Onun sosyal felsefesi toplum, ahlak ve politika ile ilgili fikirlerinin bir parçası olduğundan bu soruyu cevaplamak için toplum üzerine görüşlerini ahlaki ve politik görüşleri ile bağlantılı olarak analiz eder. Ayrıca Aristoteles bu düşüncelerini genel felsefe sistemine nasıl yerleştirdiğini ortaya koyarak zihin, yaşam, ruh, insan ve politika ile ilgili düşüncelerini açıklar. Bu nedenle bu fikirleri onun zihin, yaşam, insan ve politika hakkındaki tartışmaları ile ilgili genel felsefesiyle ilişkili olarak inceler. Böylelikle toplum, bireylerin etik bir biçimde davranmaya dönük alışkanlığının inşa edilmesiyle oluşan ortak iyinin ve mutluluğun üretimi ve cisim bulmuş hâli olarak meydana gelir. Bu alışkanlık, telosu insanlar arasında adil bir yaşam kurmak olan ahlaki davranış aracılığıyla oluşan politikanın ürünüdür. Gösterildiği üzere Aristoteles'e göre insan eylemleri ne doğa ve evrenin zorunluluklarının otomatik bir etkisiyle oluşur ne de faillerin kontrolü dışındaki güçler ve şartların neden olduğu olumsuzlukların ve şansların ürünüdür. Bu bağlamda çalışmanın temel iddiası, Aristoteles'in düşüncesinde toplumun ne zorunluluk ne de şansla meydana geldiğini ileri sürdüğü yönündedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Aristoteles'in Etiği, Aristoteles'in Toplum Kuramı, Zorunluluk, Şans.

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Introduction

Alongside the Sophists, Socrates and Plato, Aristotle was one of the first philosophers to deal intensively with moral issues in ancient Greek philosophy. It is well known that philosophical thought began to focus on questions concerning human beings immediately after the emergence of the Sophists (Conacher, 1998; Kerferd, 1981). Therefore, by placing the human being at the centre of philosophical thought, philosophy went beyond the natural philosophy of the pre-Socratic philosophers, even though they developed ideas about human life in relation to problems of politics and ethics. However, none of these philosophers went straight to the heart of ethics and questioned its nature and concepts. Even Socrates concentrated on ethical issues to develop his ideas against the Sophists, such as the assertion of the reality of universals and argued for the objectivity of knowledge and morality. In addition, Plato wrote directly on ethical issues in most of his works such as the *Republic* (Plato, 1994), the *Symposium* (Plato, 1998), the *Sophist* (Plato, 1993), the *Apology* (Plato, 2017), and the *Theaetetus* (Plato, 1987), but he never made ethics an object of knowledge like Aristotle in the sense that he wrote books that dealt with the boundaries of the field of ethics and the nature of ethics itself rather than as an issue of general philosophical problems, even though he discussed the nature and origin of ethics. Unlike Aristotle, it is fair to say that ethics was never the target and subject of the philosophical discussions of the era, although Plato's philosophy was deeply interested in morality and produced systematic ethical views that related to other human issues such as politics and the soul.

On the other hand, neither Plato nor Aristotle limited ethical action and ethical issues in individual life as already mentioned. On the contrary, they related their ideas to ontology, knowledge, and social and political philosophy by placing ethics within the broader issues of society and politics. Within this framework, Aristotle developed his ethical philosophy in relation to the philosophy of biology and the soul, political philosophy, epistemology and ontology. For example, in his books, *Nicomachean Ethics* (Aristotle, 2009) and *Eudemian Ethics* (Aristotle, 2011), there are many discussions about the nature of life and the universe. In the books such as *On Generation and Corruption* (Aristotle, 2001), *Physics* (Aristotle, 2008), and *Metaphysics* (Aristotle, 1994) the problem of whether the universe emerges out of necessity or chance is discussed in detail. What determines the course of the universe? How does it work? Parallel to these questions of metaphysics and ontology, he discusses the nature, origin, limitations, and possibilities of human life. Accordingly, he discusses the possibility of humans becoming morally virtuous beings in reference to his philosophy of biology, according to which he distinguishes the nature of living beings such as vegetables, animals, and humans.

Given these, this study questions whether society emerges out of necessity or chance in the context of Aristotle's ethical and political philosophy. In order to answer this question, it is first necessary to mention the triangular relationship between ethics, politics and society in Aristotle's thought. According to Aristotle, the foundation of a human society requires ethical relations between individuals in a collective manner. This collective quality of society is constituted by the political institutions and constitutions that form the citizen and the state. Therefore, all political activities and institutions are the basis for the development of the virtues of individuals. Justice as one of the moral virtues is the actual prerequisite for the virtuous actions of individuals towards others. In this sense, politics constructs the manner and form of an individual's relationship to another. The condition for the emergence of ethical virtues is therefore also the condition for the emergence of society.

In this context, when Aristotle's ideas in ethical philosophy are quickly scanned, it becomes evident that his ethical virtues emerge neither by necessity nor by chance. As he puts out: "After all, human beings acquire many characteristics neither from nature nor by learning, but by habituation— bad characteristics by bad habituation, and good characteristics by good habituation." (Aristotle, 2011: 1214a, 15-20). When these sentences are interpreted and thought on with Aristotle's way of thinking, it is right to say that for Aristotle, human actions in terms of ethics are neither automatic results of necessities of nature and the universe, nor the contingencies and chances caused by forces and conditions beyond humans' control. In other words, the fates of human beings are neither the works of biological determinants and divine fate nor the actions that occur automatically and mechanically as the expression of some innate natural "genes" or "memes" in the modern sense that determine every action of human beings beyond their freedom and

voluntariness. On the other hand, the habituations internalized by humans and transformed into dispositions for good or bad emerge in human praxis voluntarily by the use of reason, which gives them the ability to choose under normal conditions in which nothing forces a person to act against their will. In this sense, society is the product and embodied expression of the collective good and happiness by constructing the habituation of individuals to act ethically. This habituation is the very product of politics through ethics, whose telos is a just life among fellow human beings, in which everyone acts in accordance with human nature, which is to be rational and ethical beings, in their good form. Regarding these points, the study shows how Aristotle develops these ideas in relation to his philosophical system concerning problems of mind, life, soul and politics.

1. General Overview of The Aristotle's Ethics

Aristotle's general philosophy aims, in a sense, to find meaning within the philosophical binary oppositions such as becoming vs. being, mind vs. body, and materialism vs. idealism constructed before him in ancient Greek philosophy. For example, for Heraclitus, nothing is more real than becoming, and nothing is more real than the earthly world against Parmenides' view that there is only being other than the world of matter and bodies (Kirk&Haven, 1963). On the other hand, for Aristotle, becoming as the sign of change and transformation in this world is as real as being itself. For him, both matter and the soul are real. Furthermore, in Aristotle's thinking, both the universals or ideas and the particulars are important in explaining the world. For him, both mind and sensation are sources of knowledge (Aristotle, 1994).

In order to justify his philosophy by giving it a meaning, or in other words, to synthesize the binary oppositions in the previous philosophical discussions, we should also look at the general characteristics and logic of his moral philosophy. Since according to him, neither the body nor the soul is the source of moral virtue. In this context, neither reason nor desire alone is sufficient to become virtuous. Therefore, ethical virtue finds its place both in subjective interests and in objective moral virtues and vices. Likewise, both human nature and convention are the sources of moral action and of virtues and vices.

In Aristotle's moral philosophy there are a number of distinctions that distinguish him from his predecessors such as Socrates. The main distinction is between moral virtue and intellectual virtue. For Plato, knowledge is the source of moral virtue, as he argues that there is no difference between doing and knowing. On the other hand, knowing the truth and having true knowledge about something, especially when it comes to knowing the good action that must be done, does not automatically mean that virtuous action or ignorance is the only source of vice (Plato, 1994). Parallel to this idea, Aristotle distinguishes between moral or ethical virtues and intellectual virtues. Although one must know what to do or not to do in order to do good actions; and since ignorance can lead to vices, even that is not enough for moral actions (Aristotle, 2009). This is because, as it will be explained below, they are habits with the use of reason or practical reason that lead individuals to choose the good option as the source of ethical action. Therefore, the habits, the internalisation of the experiences through repetition of good or bad actions, provide the practical reason to choose and guide human action. As the intellectual virtues are the rational part of the soul, the virtues that are non- rational part of the soul "but capable of desire." (Aristotle, 2011: 21)

This division of the mind is very related to his philosophy of the mind, according to which the mind has three different functions: the intellectual, the practical and the aesthetic. The first refers to metaphysics, the second to ethics and politics and the last to craftsmanship. As the intellectual reasoning (sophia) works for metaphysical reasoning and pure knowledge, the practical (phronesis) one is very related to the field of praxis. Therefore, as the intellectual virtues are about the intellectual part of the mind, the practical virtues are concerned with the part that governs and directs the praxis. For Aristotle, "there are two kinds of virtues: the moral and the intellectual..." (Aristotle, 2011: 5). The intellectual virtues differ from the moral ones, since they "incorporate reason" and it belongs "to that part of the soul which possesses reason that, qua rational, gives orders", the former belongs to the part that is irrational but is by nature obedient to the rational part. (Aristotle, 2011: 11)

In this sense, moral virtues or vices are acquired through action and experience, while intellectual virtues can be acquired through learning. As humans use their intellectual reasoning for attaining metaphysical knowledge and to acquire intellectual virtues, practical reasoning works to guide human actions in praxis. Aristotle explains this relationship between practical wisdom (phronesis) and practical habits as follows: "...such wisdom is concerned not only with universals but with particulars, which become familiar from experience, but a young man has no experience. These words make it obvious that moral virtues are acquired by experience." (Aristotle, 2009: 110). In this sense, as long as experiences are gained as a habit, and are formed into a character to act in a virtuous or vicious way, there is ethical action.

Within this framework, virtue is not the product of necessity, neither is chance nor pure contingency. Rather, phronesis and dispositions control and give direction to humans to choose virtuous or vicious actions. Therefore, moral virtue requires an action that is desired in accordance with the orders of reason. The given reason arises to choose and creates the grounds for choosing, thus ordering the human desire to choose the good. Within this framework, for Aristotle, the voluntary choice to do good or modest actions is morally good. This ability to choose voluntarily is the freedom that makes an individual responsible for his or her actions. Aristotle says the following on this issue: "Those things, then, are thought involuntary, which take place by force or because of ignorance; and that is forced of which the moving principle is outside, being a principle in which nothing is contributed by the person who acts." (Aristotle, 2009: 38)

In other words, ethical action starts not with force, but out of responsibility; as the actions of humans are neither determined by the inherently natural characteristics, nor by the very capricious character of the universe making life completely indeterminate beyond the control of the individual as argued by Aristotle: "...each man is responsible for things that are voluntary and in accordance with his own choice, but that if they are non-voluntary then he is not responsible. It is evident that whatever he does by choice, he does voluntarily." (Aristotle, 2011: 20). Accordingly, for Aristotle, "both virtue and vice must concern things that are voluntary". (Aristotle, 2011: 20).

This potential to act and choose voluntarily is due to the natural capacity of humans to use of reason. As explained below, humans possess the faculties of the soul, which is the biological composition of faculties such as nutrition, perception, desire, and reason. These faculties of desire and reason have different dispositions in the sense that desire may lead to incontinent actions, but reason can serve to control the bad actions and expressions of the human, however, each are biologically natural faculties. Even if these faculties do not guarantee good actions and happiness, they donate the human with telos. In Aristotle's thinking, the telos is the end of everything in the universe. Everything in the universe has the potential to reach this telos. For example, the telos of every seed is to become a tree. But it is wrong to argue that under any circumstances the seed will become a tree, but instead, a seed is only a seed as long as it grows and lives according to its nature, enabling it to potentially become a tree and reach its telos. In other words, every being has the potential to reach its telos as long as it has the right means. In mathematical terms, it is impossible for an element of a set to transform into an element of a new set without a function. The process, or its becoming, realizes the potential of the being. This is the problem of the duality between form and matter.

Likewise, humans have a potential given by nature, but they do not determinately come to realize the end of the human. In ethics, the end or the telos of humans is the happiness that emerges from the voluntary free choice to do good actions. Humans have this potential, but it is put into action by reason, given by nature. In that sense, reason gives a form to the desires of humans to reach their telos to become human. However, reason itself does not guarantee virtue, but its use by humans does. At this point it is right to emphasize that the use of reason in praxis for the telos of being human transforms from a potentiality to a disposition. How this disposition is gained is one of the problems in Aristotle's ethics. In that sense, ethical virtues are acquired neither necessarily nor by chance, but by the use of reason that is the ground for ethical habits. These points become apparent when Aristotle compares humans using reason to develop habits with children and animals. For him, no one claims that animals become happy, for they are not "capable of sharing in such activity. For this reason, also a boy is not happy; for he is not yet capable of such acts, owing to his age; and boys who are called happy are being congratulated by reason of the hopes we have for them." (Aristotle, 2009: 15).

Henceforth, “moral virtue comes about as a result of habit, whence also its name (ēthikē) is one that is formed by a slight variation from the word ethos (habit).” (Aristotle, 2009: 23). The acquisition of this habit is very related to praxis. In other words, it is gained by experience as Aristotle expresses: “Acquiring the virtues by doing and exercising. Again, of all the things that come to us by nature we first acquire the potentiality and later exhibit the activity... but the virtues we get by first exercising them, as also happens in the case of the arts as well.”(Aristotle, 2009: 23). Therefore, the moral virtues do not come from our nature, but through training and experience, as Aristotle emphasizes: “...none of the moral virtues arises in us by nature; for nothing that exists by nature can form a habit contrary to its nature...Neither by nature, then, nor contrary to nature do the virtues arise in us; rather we are adapted by nature to receive them, and are made perfect by habit.” (Aristotle, 2009: 23). These sentences state the argument of Aristotle that moral virtue is the expression of a character, which is formed through habit: “Now, character (ethos), as the word itself indicates, is developed from habit (ethos), and an agent acquires a habit when it eventually becomes operative in a particular fashion as the result of the repetition of a certain motion under some non-innate impulse.” (Aristotle, 2011: 18). We can’t see this in inanimate things like a stone, because a stone cannot move except by force. Therefore, Aristotle defines character “as a quality governed by the prescriptions of reason, which inheres in that part of the soul which, although non-rational, is capable of obedience to reason.” (ibid: 18) All these points make it clear that moral virtues are acquired through experience and transformed into habits that constitute a character. It is this character who does morally good or bad actions. The character is like a toolbox of dispositions of the individual to do good or bad in praxis. However, these habits are not an automatic expression as they require thinking or deliberation in praxis. This is saying that the reason, the practical reason in praxis, is in charge of leading the individual to do right and good. In that sense, the individual acts in freedom by the use of his reason.

In relation to these ideas, some points in Aristotle’s moral philosophy make their appearances. Reason provides humans with choice. However, the reason humans have is not an intellectual reason alone, but they also have a practical reason that is part of the soul that gives humans the potential to choose voluntarily to do good. Emphasizing this voluntariness in ethical actions, Aristotle places the responsibility in the very heart of his ethics. According to this perspective, no one or nothing is responsible for the good or bad actions of an individual except himself or herself. In that sense, it is right to say that the decision of any action does not come from outside, but from within an individual. At this point, it is crucial to point out that ethical action is motivated by desire, but the desire in ethical action is not exempted from reason, as is not in itself contrary to reason. Aristotle clears the nature of the relationship between desire and reason in the following sentences “...let us assume that in the human soul there are two parts, each endowed with reason, but each in a different fashion: the natural role of one is to give orders, and the role of the other is to listen and obey.” (ibid: 16).

Instead, desire is led by the reason in ethics or it takes a share from this reason. That is to say that desire operates in ethical praxis in accordance with the reason’s orders. These means are the condition of the good or the happiness of the individual, and the collective relations within society. A comparison of Plato’s *Symposium* (Plato, 1998) with Aristotle in the context of the philosophy of desire will make the issue understandable. Contrary to the Sophists’ argument that sexual desire or Eros cannot be reduced to the subjective sexual interests and appetite, Plato claims, through the words of Socrates, that desire can be directed to the unworldly and material ideal, to the Good. In other words, the desire emerging within a body or materiality of this world can be the source of happiness and can gain an ideal form as long as it transcends the subjective appetites and the search for satisfaction of sexual or worldly needs by leading it to search for truth by reason (Plato, 1998). On the other hand, according to Aristotle, the form or the ideal that desire should be reached as an end is not beyond the body or the materiality of this world. Instead, the desire in ethical actions aims for happiness as the ultimate end or the telos of humans, to take their ideal forms or to be able to reach happiness within the very materiality of their bodies.

Accordingly, ethical virtues are at the very heart of reason or at least require it. Therefore, it functions within the very body of humans in any ethical action. As mentioned before, there is a difference between the two intellectual wisdoms: *sophia* and *phronesis*. It is this very reason that leads humans in praxis to act accordingly to acquire ethical dispositions or habits. But how are these habits gained by

humans? The answer to this question is very related to Aristotle's ideas in political philosophy. To become a human, both as an individual and as a part of society requires an ethical praxis which is not learned but acquired by constructing a habit through performing good actions. If ethics are dependent on habits, these habits can be acquired, and they can be acquired by everyone. It is expressed by Aristotle as such:

For if a noble life is something that results from chance or the course of nature, it would be a hopeless dream for many people; its acquisition would be beyond powers no matter how strenuous their endeavors. But if it is something that depends on a person's character and conduct, then it will be a good but more widespread and more divine: more widespread because it will be accessible to more people, and more divine because happiness will reside in the personal development of character and conduct. (Aristotle, 2011: 5)

As mentioned, one side of the ethics is aimed towards individual happiness, and the other towards collective happiness within the society constituted by the political. On the other hand, both individual and collective happiness are required to construct a political society and the political society is the condition for both individual and social happiness. In that sense, ethics find its most perfect condition within politics.

2. Ethics, Politics and Society in Aristotle's Thought

According to Aristotle, some form of political constitution must be established as a prerequisite for the formation of a society in which the individual can have the potential to develop and express ethical and intellectual virtues in order to find a place among others, with the purpose of reaching their telos of happiness. Since humans are naturally political animals with a telos to reach happiness, any political constitution (politeia) to emerge in response to this natural motive to create order amongst humans must be created with the goal of providing collective happiness in which every individual can find a place among others by acting ethically well towards others to collectively construct the happiness in question. For Aristotle, a society is not merely a sum of its units such as the family, but rather a greater entity – it is a greater organization that includes all units starting from the individual level, to the top. Accordingly, a good political system, which would also be the best, should emerge to achieve the best end for all people, which is happiness (Aristotle, 1998).

In this context, it is possible for moral virtue to be constructed in a political society, and henceforth, it is right to say that without ethics there would be no good society, and without politics it would be difficult for an individual to become virtuous. In other words, politics with its institutions and laws make individuals acquire the habits of performing virtuous acts. On the other hand, in this symbiotic relationship, all ethical virtues are considered as means to acquire the ultimate end or the telos of politics. As mentioned before, the telos of ethics is to make humans happy. This happiness is not only for an individual's happiness, but for a collective happiness that must transcend individual happiness. This collective happiness can only be produced by a good political constitution. David Ross summarizes well the role of the relationship between ethics and politics: "Aristotle's ethics, no doubt, are social, and his politics are ethical; he does not forget in the Ethics that the individual man is essentially a member of society, nor in the Politics that the good life of the state exists only in the good lives of its citizens." (Ross, 2005: 197).

So, for Aristotle, politics and its virtues precede ethical virtues. Henceforth, ethical virtues are there in an assisting role in the politics' aim of creating collective happiness and forming a society. These points about politics are evident when he mentions the state: "...every state is a community of some sort, and that every community is formed for the sake of some GOOD..." However, the good which a state aims for is the highest good, because "...while all every community aims at some good, the community that has the most AUTHORITY of all and encompasses all the others aims highest...is a city state" (Aristotle, 1998:1).

This superiority of politics is very related to Aristotle's ideas on the telos. As mentioned before, for Aristotle, happiness, as the telos of all human beings, is the ultimate goal. This is why all the other actions in praxis are done to reach this end. Therefore, virtues are nothing more than supplementary means to the end. Because "it has been said to be a virtuous activity of the soul, of a certain kind. Of the remaining goods, some must necessarily pre-exist as conditions of happiness, and others are naturally co-operative and useful as instruments." (Aristotle, 2009: 15). Correspondingly, politics is the end, and all other means

are done to reach it. As Aristotle states that some good actions must be superior to others, and engaging in politics is that sort of a superior good:

If, then, there is some end of the things we do, which we desire for its own sake (everything else being desired for the sake of this), and if we do not choose everything for the sake of something else... clearly this must be the good and the chief good... It would seem to belong to the most authoritative art and that which is most truly the master art. And politics appears to be of this nature. (Aristotle, 2009, 4-5)

As a result, for him, politics has a practical role in constructing the happiness of human beings by gathering them together and providing them with the possibility of having ethical and intellectual virtues. For this reason, politics is the supreme good for attaining the telos of a happy society. It is politics that makes up humanity, and nurtures its potential and natural desire to live with one another. Around these ideas, Aristotle tried to create a science of politics, by including practical knowledge on politics. He put forth ideas on how to form governments and how to govern the lives of its people. Accordingly, creating a society needs practical knowledge. As mentioned above, ethics and politics are considered as practical science. Furthermore, politics is on the top rank of practical sciences due to its role in constructing a society, and also serves as the condition for the emergence of other sciences. Because, “we stated the end of political science to be the best end, and political science spends most of its pains on making the citizens to be of a certain character, namely, good and capable of noble acts.” (Aristotle, 2009: 15)

According to these ideas, it is clear that, for Aristotle, a political order is not simply a composition of activities and institutions formed by individuals and their collective structures such as family, but it is a human field to construct humans as political animals. In other words, it is there to realize the potential of humans. Therefore, it fundamentally requires ethics and cannot exist without it. The ultimate goal of politics is to construct a society, which is very different from the sum of all the units such as the family, but it is a different collective structure constructed by politics. Therefore, politics is there to go beyond mere biological needs with its main aim being not to provide humans with just survival capacities, but rather to construct humanity with ethical capacities instead. According to this perspective, there can be no society and politics without virtuous humans. Therefore, the construction of the virtuous gives a clue on how the society is formed. Is it by chance or necessity? Is it necessitated by biology or by culture? Here, Aristotle goes beyond the duality between *nomos* and *physis* constructed by the Sophists, and his ideas have been improved upon under new forms and contents of thinking up to the present.¹

Considering this dualism, the question of whether a human being can become virtuous beyond political society becomes meaningful. This question is related to the question of whether *politeia* can emerge without virtuous humans. Leaving the question in the existing literature whether politics or ethics are prior to one another, it can be said that this question is related to the idea that without becoming ethical, it is impossible to construct a society. And without reason, it is impossible to become virtuous. Let's think about Aristotle's political philosophy. According to him, it is neither democracy, nor oligarchy that leads to chaos, and neither are useful for a human society. Furthermore, it must be said that without ethics, there can be no good, moreover, an ethical individual cannot emerge in the absence of politics.

Given these, it is reasonable to argue that neither culture, the conventional rules of *nomos*, nor nature are what makes humans human. But politics, as the composition of culture and nature, is the primary condition to reach happiness. Given these, it is evident that politics in a good system, creates the necessary condition for the emergence of ethical virtues, both by presenting a good social order and by providing the tools and mechanisms required to make humans acquire good habits. Once these habits are acquired, they become a disposition and are expressed through practical reason. In that sense, even if politics provide the conditions for ethical virtues to be expressed and done, in the course of life, they do not emerge automatically. Politics makes people acquire habits and forces them to act virtuously, but ultimately it is the individual who chooses voluntarily to do ethically good actions. Therefore, even if both acquire habits and act in accordance with the choices led by reason conditioned by politics, it is ultimately the human soul or the potential of humanity by which the politics functions. Then, it is evident that the idea which states

¹ For the distinction between *nomos* and *physis* and the ideas of Sophists see, (Guthrie, 1971; Kerferd, 1981; Conacher, 1998).

that it is the natural capacities of humans which enable them to become ethical humans within a society is very related to Aristotle's theories on the soul – namely the philosophy of life and living things. According to these views, it is obvious at first glance that the soul's nature-given capacities are what differentiate human beings from other animate beings, and that they are the source that provide an individual with the means to act modestly within a political society by expressing an attitude in accordance with the telos of the humans – the happiness constructed within a politeia. Therefore, it is essential to understand Aristotle's philosophy of the soul to put everything within context.

3. The Ideas About the Soul: Living Beings and Human in Aristotle

The ideas presented in *De Anima*, the most detailed book on the philosophy of the soul by Aristotle, is a book on the philosophy of the soul that does not describe it as an immaterial being, nor as a creation of the mind. Therefore, the ideas developed in this book go beyond the philosophy of mind, since it also is a philosophy of living beings, biology, and life. This is due to the fact that Aristotle sees the soul as a part of living things – something that emerges with them to form their actions. In that sense, it is somehow a principal work on the existence of living beings. The soul is also not equated to the mind because the souls of living beings have different faculties with the exception of the mind in the case of humans. So, the soul does not only pertain to the field of humans, but to all living beings. In that sense, to be able to understand Aristotle's theory of praxis and its relation to reason and desire, which are the main constituents of ethical virtues, the ideas on the human or the philosophy of human needs to be explained, as emphasized beforehand (Aristotle, 1986: 2016).

As mentioned before, to act virtuously, it is necessary for a human to use their reason to lead her or his desire to a modest action. This potentiality to use reason is common to humans, therefore, only humans can have a reason, and therefore, can develop responsibility and choose voluntarily. These ideas are grounded by Aristotle's philosophy of the soul. Typical of Aristotle's thinking, he goes beyond the binary opposition laid out before him (Aristotle, 1986). On the one hand, there are the proponents of the idea that there is nothing other than matter, and the soul is nothing more than the epiphenomenon of matter with no independent existence outside the body. Against this claim, of which atomists are typical proponents, Plato as the typical opponent of this camp argues that the soul has an independent existence from matter or the human body, and claims that it does not perish with the death of the body (Plato, 1994). Aristotle's position is in-between, since for him there is no soul that has an independent existence outside the body. However, the soul is not a phenomenon of the body, but is the very principle of the body and is superior to it. In this framework, the body as matter realizes its potential thanks to the soul, as the soul activates any body's potential to reach its telos. In other words, the body as a matter can realize its nature in accordance with its telos with the very help of the soul. The soul is the form anybody takes. In that sense, when the issue concerns humans, an individual has both a matter and a soul. The human's body is them, a matter formed by the faculties of the soul, and these faculties are what make a human essentially human by providing him with the capacities of living. This relationship of the soul to the body is also similar in other living beings. However, humans have different faculties than other living beings which make them a different being. In that sense, Aristotle makes a classification between living beings according to the faculties possessed by them (Aristotle, 1986).

Given these, firstly, Aristotle makes a distinction between animate things, namely, vegetables, animals, and humans. Vegetables only have the faculty of nutrition in their soul and animals have the faculty of perception. On the other hand, humans have perception, nutrition, reasoning and desire on top of those. However, "Any other part there may be in the soul, the vegetative part for instance, should also be disregarded." because, "the virtues of the nutritive and growth-inducing parts of the soul are not human virtues either." (Aristotle, 2011: 16). The desire and mind as being distinctive faculties of humans have different functions. Aristotle argues that among these faculties of the soul, the reason must be superior to others: "For if a part belongs to a human being qua human being, reasoning must be present as governing element, and conduct too; and what reasoning governs is not reasoning itself, but desire and emotions, so that these parts must be included." (Aristotle, 2011: 16).

In this sense, only humans can have freedom, which is the condition of ethical action. The other beings have a telos like humans, but they do not reach their telos by realizing their potential with conscious and voluntary choices. Instead, they act according to uncontrolled determination, either due to their nature or by chance: "...we speak of force and necessity also in the case of inanimate objects: we say that a stone travels upwards and fire downwards only by force and necessity." (Aristotle, 2011: 27). Accordingly, "their motion is not called voluntary either. When they travel contrary to their natural impulse, they move by force, but the opposite condition has no name." (Aristotle, 2011: 27). Other animate beings other than humans also have no free will: "Similarly, with living things, including animals, we see them being acted on by force, and also acting under force, when their motion is caused by an external agent against their intrinsic tendency." (Aristotle, 2011: 27).

For this reason, humans are like a ship's captain who makes decisions while steering his ship to its destination. Humans, under normal circumstances, namely in conditions where the forces beyond the control of humans are absent, can decide to go about their telos, and truly become human by their own doing. Unlike humans, other animate and inanimate beings cannot choose the means by which they reach their telos. These ideas have important implications for the problem of form and matter because an individual body of a human can take the form of the human being, which is the telos of humans to become reasonable and political beings through choices. Around this relation between matter and form, some questions arise on the subject of whether the universe and the beings in the universe move by necessity or by chance. It is evident that human beings, having reason, can control their own actions.

In relation to our question of whether society emerged out of necessity or by chance, it can be argued that society is an end result of the desire of humans to reach their telos – a collective happiness produced by the politeia created by humans themselves. But this creation is neither against human nature nor determined only by convention or chance. Instead, humans have a capacity and a natural disposition to live together. Furthermore, having a capacity to realize this capacity of natural necessity depends on freedom. As a result, the human soul donated the human to act voluntarily to distinguish and choose between good and bad actions for both themselves and for others, the condition for the construction of a politeia for both the governed and the governors realizing the human's natural disposition to become happy together being happy.

As a result, without the use of the faculties of the soul, humans cannot exist and reach their telos. Nutrition and perception are not enough to become human, but also the mind is required to become human. So, the mind is the distinctive character of the humans that makes their existence in this world go beyond the needs of survival and offers them the possibility to construct a society. Therefore, to construct a political society and a constitution, the mind is the chief faculty for the emergence of ethical virtues. This is because the mind makes the individual to have a capacity to choose in their actions while ordering their desire to not to harm oneself and others. Therefore, the individuals can find the means to do good to turn themselves into both individuals and collectives. This is the condition for the emergence of a society, which is nothing other than the construction of a collective virtue, justice, expression of the realization of the best of the ethical virtues. In that sense, human reason donates the individual with the potential to construct a society, and politics offers the possibility to construct this society by providing the reason to lead the desire in acting voluntarily to choose virtue. Therefore, human actions can have a potential to express themselves freely and without force from external or uncontrollable forces. Then, the telos of the humans becomes a matter of choice and habit rather than an intrinsic fate that governs the humans beyond their control. Therefore, the ethics and the formation of the society emerge neither out of chance nor by necessity.

Conclusion

As it is seen in the context of Aristotle's ethics, the type of human action required to construct a society emerges out of the voluntary nature of humans. This capacity of the human is very related to their mind – one of the faculties of the soul – since without the mind, humans cannot have a potential to choose, and know what to do or not. To realize this potential, on the other hand, the mind must be acquainted by experience. Therefore, nothing is given to the mind to do right or wrong, but the very experience and

repetition make the mind choose the good or the bad. Therefore, the individuals become virtuous or vicious as they live and experience.

As it is seen, humans being different from inanimate and other animate beings enable them to develop the habits to use their reasons. But not all humans have habits since habits are formed by experience, and therefore, children cannot have any. According to the ideas mentioned above, it was clear in Aristotle's thought that ethical attitude or the ways of the praxis do not come with birth. Being born only gives them reason and some biological mechanisms. On the other hand, fortune or random experiences do not give people habits, because they are not repetitive. So, how do humans acquire these habits, whence they come? As it is explained throughout this study, it is argued that without the work of politics, there can be no acquisition of habits. This is because a political system gives individuals a place among others through constructing a society. Thus, it is very evident in Aristotle's thought that every human action and experience can only be realized in a society. The reason for this is the natural desire of human beings to live together. Without this desire, there is no usage of reason, no virtue, neither intellectual nor moral. Hence, for a human to become human and to construct a society that corresponds to his or her nature and its tools, i.e. being happy, a politeia must first be constructed.

It is this politeia which constructs an order for the emergence of a society, and makes human actions go beyond the uncontrollable necessities whenever they come and protect them from the caprices of chance. Also, it grounds the human action to be expressed in voluntariness. Therefore, politeia is the condition for freedom and responsibility, which are, in turn, the very conditions that make human action to be done beyond necessity and chance. It is the source of stability and order that provides people with normal conditions and comfort beyond survival. Under these conditions of the realization of the telos of humans, more than nutrition and perception, a human society and culture can emerge.

Conflict of Interest Declaration

The authors have stated that there is no conflict of interest with any institution or person within the scope of the article.

Ethics Statement

It is declared that scientific and ethical principles have been complied with during the preparation of this study and all the studies utilized are indicated in the bibliography. Regarding the Ethics Committee permission, the author(s) and referees of the study that constitutes the subject of this article have declared that there is no need for Ethics Committee Permission.

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