
NICOMACHEAN ETHICS AND ITS APPLICATION TO THE UKRAINE-RUSSIA WAR

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ABSTRACT

Nicomachean Ethics is Aristotle's one of the most well-known works on ethics and philosophy, written by him in around 340 BCE which contains proposed virtues that teach us how to best lead our lives. It is a philosophical treatise and a historically significant work that compiles his in-depth analysis of existential questions about morality, friendship, happiness, knowledge, pleasure, virtue, and even society as a whole. In the current times, we have lost the significance of these virtues and have indulged ourselves in dishonest acts, hateful crimes, and lethal wars. This paper aims to bring back life and relevance to the age-old philosophy of Aristotle by testing its application to contemporary issues, specifically in the Ukraine-Russia conflict. The paper tries to address and answer questions like how are Nicomachean Ethics which were written by Aristotle still applicable to contemporary issues like inter-state conflicts, political rivalries, and warfare. What is the relevance of Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics on the principles of the UN Charter? And lastly, whether and how the application of the Aristotelian cardinal virtues could have prevented the Ukraine-Russian conflict. To better grasp its relevance, the paper intends to explain the cardinal virtues that Aristotle has described while addressing his ethics and happiness philosophy. The paper also tries to analyze the background of the entire scenario by going all the way back to their relationship and cultural ties, revealing the fundamental causes of the disagreement. Additionally, an effort is made to comprehend the Security Council's and UN Assembly's resolutions to stop the war, as well as the application of Nicomachean ethics to the UN Charter. The wrongdoings of the parties that sparked the conflict and flaws in both parties' behavior that might have brought a stop to it are then addressed by testing the application of each of the virtues. The paper draws a conclusion on how the virtues are still pertinent to modern world problems and could encourage people to lead better lives.

Keywords: Nicomachean Ethics, cardinal virtues, golden mean, philosophy, prudence, temperance.

Introduction

Aristotle, an esteemed Greek philosopher, and a pupil of Plato as well as the private tutor to Alexander the Great, stands as a monumental figure in the annals of philosophy. Renowned as one of the greatest thinkers in history. “Aristotle's intellectual contributions span a wide array of subjects, encompassing not only philosophy but also biology, literature, politics, logic, metaphysics, and ethics. His famous work, the *Nicomachean Ethics*, contains his theory of the virtues in which we find a brief discussion of how humans and the divine should interact.”¹

This paper seeks to delve into the 4 cardinal virtues proposed by Aristotle in his work

‘*Nicomachean Ethics*’ which he finds essential and catalytic to lead a satisfactory and blissful human life. Aristotle stresses that virtues are habits that can be learned and developed through practice in real-life situations that ultimately help us understand and achieve happiness. An accurate comprehension of the intricate interplay between elements such as friendship, pleasure, virtue, honor, and riches are essential for cultivating a holistic perspective that guides us towards a life well-lived. To navigate the complexities of existence, it becomes imperative to explore the nuanced connections and dependencies among these facets. Only through this comprehensive understanding can we aspire to make informed choices and pursue a harmonious existence where each component contributes meaningfully to the overarching tapestry of a fulfilling life. To better comprehend how the four virtues will be applied later, the author has made an effort to clarify their meaning and significance. In the next segment, this paper has dealt with the origin and background of the Ukraine-Russia War, its recent developments, and the UN Assembly’s resolutions and

Security Council’s measures to prevent the conflict. The relevance of Aristotle’s ethics on the UN Charter is also what the paper has tried to analyze.

The last segment of the paper examines how the application of virtues like Prudence, Temperance, Justice, and Friendliness could have prevented the war which ultimately explains the pertinence of *Nicomachean Ethics* in the current times.

¹ Kucuk Uysal, B., Beyhan, E. (2011). Virtue ethics in Aristotle’s *Nicomachean ethics*. *International Journal of Human Sciences*

Research Questions:

The primary questions that the author aims to discuss in this paper are as follows:

1. How are Nicomachean Ethics which were written by Aristotle around 340 BCE still applicable to contemporary issues like inter-state conflicts and warfare?
2. Whether and how the application of the Aristotelian cardinal virtues could have prevented the Ukraine-Russian conflict.
3. What is the relevance of Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics on the principles of the UN Charter?

Methodology

The paper uses doctrinal as well as analytical research to answer the research questions raised by the author. The research has involved critical thinking skills and the evaluation of facts and information with the virtues and ethics given by Aristotle. The paper uses the facts and information already available and analyzes them to make a comparative study of the material.

Scope and Limitations

The author has limited the research to the application of cardinal virtues proposed in Aristotle's voluminous work Nicomachean Ethics. The application of the same has been analyzed in the context of the Ukraine-Russia war taken as a contemporary issue to check the relevance of Aristotle's work in the present times.

What is 'Nicomachean Ethics'?

"Nicomachean Ethics" stands as a cornerstone in the realm of ethical philosophy, offering profound insights into the nature of human morality and virtue. Composed by Aristotle between 334 and 323 B.C. in Athens, this influential work serves as an exploration and examination of the principles governing ethical conduct and the pursuit of a flourishing life. This treatise was written as a series of lectures in 10 volumes for Aristotle's son, Nicomachus, it delves into various aspects of ethics, including the concept of eudaimonia (often translated as "flourishing" or "well-being"), the role of virtues, and the importance of cultivating a balanced and virtuous

character. As Aristotle navigates through the complexities of human behavior and the moral landscape, "Nicomachean Ethics" provides a timeless guide for individuals seeking to understand the essence of a morally fulfilling and meaningful existence.

Aristotle talks about a stable situation of happiness 'eudaimonia' which can be achieved by maintaining a balance between the extremes. In addition, he claims that every ethical virtue exists in a situation that lies halfway between two other conditions, one of excess and the other of deficiency. This he calls what is popularly known as the "golden mean". The virtues, according to him, are no different from technical skills: every talented worker is in a state somewhere between two extremes and knows how to avoid excess and insufficiency. According to Aristotle, "every ethical virtue has a similar topography and is situated on a map between states of excess and deficiency. He is careful to point out that the mean must be calculated in a way that takes into consideration the particular circumstances of an individual."²

Aristotle keenly observed the inherent human inclination to pursue objectives of value, commonly viewed as ends. However, he discerned that some of these pursuits are merely intermediate or means to an ultimate goal. For instance, deciding to go to the store serves as a secondary objective, existing solely to facilitate the broader aim of purchasing food. In Aristotle's insightful analysis, he deduces that amidst various means, there must exist a singular principal good that represents an end in itself, propelling human behavior. This ultimate aim, unequivocally identified by Aristotle, is happiness. Accordingly, Aristotle posits that all human actions are fundamentally driven by the innate pursuit of happiness.³

What are 'virtues' according to Aristotle?

Happiness, according to Aristotle, is "the active exercise of the mind in conformity with perfect goodness of virtue." Since virtue is a habit that can be learned and developed through practice, Aristotle contends that studying the nature of virtue can help us better understand the nature of happiness. This assertion has significant ramifications for moral education. According to Aristotle, "human virtue refers to the quality of the soul rather than the excellence of the body.

² Richard Kraut, 'Aristotle's Ethics' in Edward N Zalta and Uri Nodelman (eds), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2022, Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University 2022) <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2022/entries/aristotle-ethics/>> accessed 1 October 2023.

³ 'What Were Aristotle's Four Cardinal Virtues?' <<https://www.thecollector.com/aristotle-four-cardinal-virtues/>> accessed 1 October 2023.

Aristotle, like Socrates and Plato, believed that virtues were essential to leading a fulfilling life. Like Plato, he sees the ethical virtues—justice, bravery, temperance, and so forth—as sophisticated cognitive, affective, and social abilities.”⁴

Aristotle divides virtue into two groups: moral qualities and intellectual virtues.

According to Aristotle's definition of moral virtue, it is "a state of character concerned with choice, lying in a mean, i.e. the mean relative to us, this being determined by a rational principle, and by that principle by which the man of practical wisdom would determine it."⁶

"Moral virtues enable us to handle our desires and emotions rationally, whereas intellectual virtues enable us to think rationally"⁵. "A good intellect is chiefly produced and fostered by education, but moral goodness is primarily formed by training in habit," writes Aristotle.⁶

Aristotle goes on to say that even when actions are in line with virtues, it does not follow that they are being done justly or with restraint. Aristotle highlights three prerequisites for performing them: first, "he must have knowledge, second, he must choose the acts for their own sakes, and third, his action must proceed from a firm and unchangeable character."⁷

Attaining happiness necessitates leading a life aligned with the virtues that define moral excellence. Virtue, Aristotle asserts, is not merely an action but a deeply ingrained disposition within an individual. In essence, a morally upright person possesses a predisposition to consistently act with integrity and moral goodness, finding genuine satisfaction in doing so. Virtue, Aristotle contends, occupies a balanced space between excess and deficiency. Unlike a rigid set of instructions, avoiding vice is a nuanced journey that varies for each individual, as the path to virtue is shaped by unique circumstances and personal character.⁸

⁴ ‘Nicomachean Ethics: Full Work Summary | SparkNotes’
<<https://www.sparknotes.com/philosophy/ethics/summary/>> accessed 1 October 2023. ⁶ Book 6, Chapter 2

⁵ Geirsson & Holmgren, 2000, p. 211

⁶ Aristotle, 350 B.C.E. p. 63

⁷ Aristotle, 350 B.C.E. p. 244

⁸ ‘Nicomachean Ethics: Full Work Summary | SparkNotes’ (n 5).

Meaning of the 4 virtues - Prudence, justice, temperance, friendliness

In his *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle offers a wide variety of virtues, but some are highlighted more than others. Among the moral virtues discussed by Aristotle, his cardinal values — prudence, justice, temperance, and courage which forms the basis of Aristotle's moral code takes priority over them. These 4 cardinal virtues that Aristotle outlined are still relevant to effective leadership techniques today. These virtues— temperance in relation to circumstances involving diverse anxieties; and friendliness, the virtue in relation to sharing valuable things with others—are essential in this setting because they are tied to the most fundamental human urges. Although these qualities are sometimes seen as personal, they are essential to the growth of all social and political institutions, including both large and small businesses. A solid place to start when creating an all encompassing model of effective leadership is Aristotle's theory of human greatness.

PRUDENCE

According to Aristotle, "prudence is practical wisdom, the reasoning rule or principle by which we decide what is right or wrong under a given set of circumstances." Prudence can now be used to refer to caution or even timidity. The concept of a "prudent" individual, as commonly understood, involves a cautious approach, with one keeping their intentions guarded and acting only when the risk to themselves is minimal. Aristotle's interpretation, however, diverges significantly. According to Aristotle, prudence stands as the primary cardinal virtue, serving as the foundational source for other virtues. It is not a reluctance to take risks but rather a profound understanding of what is ethically right in the present moment, guiding the selection of the optimal course of action among available options.

In Aristotle's perspective, prudence is indispensable for virtuous conduct. It acts as a guiding light, enabling individuals to make choices aligned with wisdom. Without prudence, one is akin to a blind actor, unable to navigate the complexities of moral decision-making. The acquisition of prudence predominantly occurs through life experiences. The capacity to discern actions that lead to happiness can only be cultivated by individuals who keenly observe human nature, accumulate diverse experiences, and engage in profound reflection on those experiences.⁹

⁹ 'What Were Aristotle's Four Cardinal Virtues?' (n 4).

TEMPERANCE

Prudence and justice both sounds very vague; if one is just and treats people with respect, what other virtue could there possibly be? However, according to Aristotle, we also have irrational cravings and drives as animals, such as thirst, hunger, love, and wrath, which can become out of control and impair our judgment and will. These internal forces must be properly channeled so that they advance rather than threaten human welfare.

In contemporary times, the term "temperance" may evoke memories of the Prohibition era. However, Aristotle's perspective transcends the notion of abstaining solely from alcohol. For Aristotle, temperance encompasses much more, particularly in relation to sensual pleasures such as food, drink, and sex. It serves as the central virtue that finds balance amidst these indulgences. Temperance, as Aristotle sees it, involves the pursuit of appropriate pleasures at the right time and in the right manner, steering clear of both self-indulgence and insensitivity. A moderate individual, according to Aristotle, neither rejects enjoyment nor succumbs to excesses. Instead, they place their desires within the broader context of human life, aligning them with the greater well-being of humanity. In essence, temperance, for Aristotle, is the art of enjoying pleasures in a measured and considerate manner.¹⁰

JUSTICE

Justice stands as the cardinal virtue that inclines individuals toward righteous actions and cultivates a genuine desire to pursue what is morally right. On the other hand, prudence empowers one to make wise judgments concerning the appropriate course of action. Justice is concerned with both actions and desires, emphasizing ethical conduct, while prudence is primarily focused on exercising sound judgment. The concept of justice is complex to Aristotle. A "just person" might simply be defined as a "good person," or it can more explicitly refer to someone who treats others fairly in all of their dealings. The two interpretations are related, though. According to Aristotle, people are social animals meant to participate in politics. Therefore, the moral perfection of a person as a whole can be best described by the virtue that makes them perfect in their interactions with others and with their fellow members of society.

¹⁰ *ibid.*

Simple reciprocity might be necessary for justice. I must pay the listed price to the merchant if I purchase a cup of coffee. However, it might be more difficult. For instance, given the greater sacrifices made, a wounded veteran may be entitled to more support from the state than the typical citizen. The just individual wants to offer everything that is due, no matter what. Nobody may be taken advantage of, duped, or mistreated in any way.¹¹

Given that acting justly involves the demonstration of virtue in a broader sense, justice, in a way, encompasses all other virtues. Within human affairs, two primary forms of justice emerge: distributive and rectificatory. Distributive justice pertains to the fair allocation of income or recognition among a group based on merit. In contrast, rectificatory justice addresses interactions between two or more parties, aiming to establish a sense of balance and equality among the involved parties.

It is challenging to treat oneself unfairly or willingly endure injustice. While laws provide a valuable foundation, they may not be universally applicable. Some situations that legal frameworks fail to address require resolution through mutually agreed-upon principles of equity. In such cases, equity becomes an essential factor in achieving just outcomes beyond the scope of legal prescriptions.

FRIENDLINESS

Another illustration of the virtue of friendliness is that it lies in the middle of obsequiousness and surliness. Friendships can be categorized into three distinct types: those forged on mutual benefit, those formed around shared enjoyment, and those grounded in moral righteousness. The most commendable form of friendship is one rooted in moral goodness, where individuals appreciate each other for their intrinsic qualities rather than seeking material gains. The basis for friendships can be traced to one of these characteristics that bring friends together. A particular kind of friendship blossoms when two individuals recognize the moral decency in each other and spend time engaging in activities that allow them to practice their virtues. In the ideal scenario, if both individuals possess the same virtues, their friendship reaches its pinnacle. While a connection founded on the other person's moral character is meaningful, it may be imperfect, especially if there is a notable disparity in their moral development, as observed in

¹¹ *ibid.*

relationships with significant differences in moral growth, such as between a parent and a young child or between spouses.

But the flawed friendships that Aristotle emphasizes are not unequal partnerships founded on moral virtue. Instead, they are associations kept together by the perception that each person derives some benefit or pleasure from the other. Aristotle implicitly relies on generally held presumptions about what constitutes a satisfactory relationship when he refers to these partnerships as "imperfect". These friendships are flawed and have less of a right to be called "friendships" since the parties involved have little faith in one another, fight regularly, and are willing to stop their relationship suddenly. Aristotle does not intend to imply that unequal relationships founded on reciprocal respect for good character are also flawed in these respects. He is making the point that people are friends in the truest sense when they happily spend their days engaging in shared activities, and that those who are not equally developed morally have less access to this close and constant interaction. He is not saying that unequal relationships based on character are imperfect, however.

Ukraine-Russia War - BACKGROUND

Since the inception of the USSR, Russia and Ukraine were integral components. However, a confluence of factors, including Gorbachev's policies and internal disputes stemming from cultural diversity, contributed to the dissolution of the USSR in 1991, leading to the subsequent separation of Ukraine and Russia.

“Up until 2014, Ukraine experienced relative stability. Viktor Yanukovich, a pro-Russian leader, assumed the presidency in 2010, strongly opposing Ukraine's strategic choice to join the EU. His resistance was rooted in historical concerns, as EU member states typically aligned with NATO under US influence. During Yanukovich's tenure, cultural ties with Russia deepened. However, the 2014 presidential elections saw a shift, with the pro-Russian president losing due to the EU's decision to obstruct Ukraine's accession. The newly elected government strongly favored EU integration, provoking Russia, which preferred Ukraine to remain free from US influence. In 2014, Russia invaded Ukraine, responding to pro-Putin separatists seizing parts of the country's east. Concurrently, Russia annexed Crimea, bolstering its

influence in the Black Sea region and prompting its exit from the G8, subsequently forming the G7.”¹²

In 2017, Ukraine made a political decision to express interest in joining NATO. Article 5 of the NATO Treaty stipulates that an armed attack against any member in Europe or North America is considered an attack against all, potentially allowing member countries, notably the US, to intervene in Ukraine. This prospect of heightened exposure to US strikes made joining NATO financially burdensome for Russia, impacting its national security considerations.¹³

The latest developments in the conflict

"Russia moved its separatist protesters to the eastern Ukrainian areas of Donetsk and Luhansk, where it also stationed soldiers, placing its forces close to Ukraine's main borders. Russia recognized Donetsk and Luhansk, two separatist rebel territories in eastern Ukraine, as independent States on February 21, 2022. Giving these two regions the status of independent nation-states was a very astute move because it gave Russia full permission to attack Ukraine under the pretext of aiding the two independent nations in their fight against Ukraine's persecution. This is supported by the UN charter's provisions that allow neighboring states to intervene if an independent state is being oppressed by its enemy and the oppressed nation requests such assistance. Russia is waging war on Ukraine while disguising its actions as a 'Military Operation.'"¹⁴

UN's Resolutions, Security Council measures on the war

Days after the invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, the UN Security Council voted to permit the General Assembly to hold the eleventh emergency special session after Russia rejected a resolution that would have denounced the invasion.

The Assembly has the authority to take up international peace and security issues when the Council declines to do so, in accordance with 1950's resolution 377A(V). Through the

¹² 'Background of Russia-Ukraine Issue'

<<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/readersblog/burningissues/background-of-russia-ukraine-issue-41618/>> accessed 1 October 2023.

¹³ 'Background of Russia-Ukraine Issue'

<<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/readersblog/burningissues/background-of-russia-ukraine-issue-41618/>> accessed 1 October 2023.

¹⁴ *ibid.*

resolution, the Assembly urged Member States to work together in a spirit of solidarity to address the war's global effects on the environment, financial markets, food security, and nuclear security and safety. The Assembly emphasized the need for measures for a permanent peace to take these considerations into account and urged all countries to aid the Secretary-General in addressing these effects. The 193-member Assembly, the Secretary-General, and the international community "have been consistent and vocal in our calls to end this war, and to adhere to the UN Charter and international law" for a full year, General Assembly President Csaba Krösi said in the resolution.¹⁵

"On March 2, the UN General Assembly passed a resolution condemning Russia's "aggression" against Ukraine (141 votes in favor, 5 against, and 35 abstentions). The International Court of Justice commanded Russia to cease all military actions in Ukraine right away on March 16. On March 24, the UN General Assembly passed a resolution (140 votes in favor, 5 against, and 38 abstentions) calling for civilian protection and humanitarian access in Ukraine while simultaneously denouncing Russia for causing a "dire" humanitarian crisis. The UN General Assembly passed a resolution on April 7 asking for the expulsion of Russia from the Human Rights Council. In the 193-member Assembly, the resolution achieved a two-thirds majority of those voting, excluding abstentions, with 93 nations voting in favor and 24 voting against."¹⁶

The Assembly's support for Ukraine's sovereignty, independence, unity, and territorial integrity within its internationally acknowledged boundaries and in its territorial waters was reiterated in the resolution. In order to achieve justice for all victims and the avertance of future atrocities, the Assembly again highlighted the necessity of independent national or international investigations and prosecutions for the most serious crimes under international law committed in Ukraine.

UN charter relevance on Aristotle's virtues

The UN Charter provides in its Statement of Purpose listed in Article 1 that it tries "to maintain International peace and security and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or

¹⁵ 'UN General Assembly Calls for Immediate End to War in Ukraine | UN News' (23 February 2023) <<https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/02/1133847>> accessed 1 October 2023.

¹⁶ 'The UN and the War in Ukraine: Key Information' <<https://unric.org/en/the-un-and-the-war-in-ukraine-keyinformation/>> accessed 1 October 2023.

other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace;" and also that it tries "to develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace;"

Article 2 of the UN Charter, which lays down the Principles for all the Member Nations, states that "All Members shall settle their international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security, and justice, are not endangered; All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations."

The purpose and principles of the UN Charter seem to align with the ethics and virtues Aristotle wants people to follow. They are laid on similar lines of thought and basis. The UN tries to further the thought of Aristotle when it comes to applying the virtues in international relations and expects all the member nations to follow the same in order to maintain peace and security in the world.

How could observing Aristotle's cardinal virtues have prevented the war?

Aristotle asserts that commendation or censure should be reserved for voluntary actions alone. Actions stemming directly from the agent, rather than being compelled by external forces like a push or stumble, fall under the category of voluntary actions. Nevertheless, there are instances on the borderline, such as when an individual is coerced into dishonorable conduct under the threat of a powerful force. Voluntary actions are distinguished by rational deliberation and decision-making, wherein the agent carefully considers and selects the most advantageous course of action to attain their desired objectives.

Aristotle's guidelines for prudent behavior, justice, temperance, and friendliness still hold true for contemporary world issues and strategies.

Ukraine-Russia followed friendly relations up until 2014. For hundreds of years, they have had mutually beneficial cultural and linguistic relations. Their friendship was based on moral righteousness and mutual benefit until one's greed for power and strength overpowered the

virtue of "friendliness". This is an example of what Aristotle refers to as a "flawed friendship," which is built on associations that are maintained by the idea that one person gains something from the other or enjoys doing so. Since the persons involved have little faith in one another, frequently argue, and are willing to quit their relationship abruptly, these friendships are flawed and have less of a claim to be called "friendships." Even if Russia continued to maintain this concept of "flawed friendship", it could have prevented a major war.

When it comes to 'Prudence', Aristotle defined prudence as practical wisdom, which is the standard or method of reasoning we use to determine what is good or wrong in a particular situation. Ukraine ought to have declined NATO membership and assured Russia that it is not supporting the western countries against it. It could have guaranteed Russia that their friendship and relations would not be jeopardized by the desire for membership. Russia, which had become too concerned and paranoid with its security and territorial integrity, responded irrationally out of fear without thinking about the potential effects of the war.

The next virtue which could have stopped the war if used correctly was 'temperance'. Most of the fight was made in retaliation to the attacks of other. Although it may seem prudent to defend oneself, the war could have been stopped if even one of the participants had shown restraint and suggested negotiations. It would have been much better if the parties had chosen to act and respond with temperance rather than just react.

The next virtue, and one of the most significant, is justice. In no way can the massacre of thousands of people in the name of security and land be justified. Justice ought to have been served when food supplies to the nations that imported from and were dependent upon Ukraine were inadequate. When students who traveled to Ukraine for academic purposes were unable to return to their homes, justice ought to have been done. According to estimates, the cost of rebuilding the nation will be much higher than Ukraine's GDP can bear. Because of this, the author believes that actions taken during the war in the name of self-defense and defending one's integrity and territory are not acceptable at such a great cost.

Conclusion

Aristotle in his work *Nicomachean Ethics*, talks about a state of 'happiness' which is the ultimate goal of human life and which can be attained by maintaining a balance between the extremes. He talks about certain qualities, virtues, and ethics that help us lead a life filled with

happiness. The primary objective of the Russian invasion is to prevent the Ukrainian people from establishing their own political community, constituting the core injustice of the war that fuels its various other offenses. In accordance with the just war theory, the rights to "territorial integrity" and "political sovereignty" serve as safeguards for the fundamental right of a people to exercise political self-determination. "Infringing on Ukraine's right to self-determination as well as the international order that, despite its flaws, is based on the inviolability of this right, Russia threatened both when it sent tanks across the border, violating territorial integrity while attempting to determine for itself the political future of Ukraine."¹⁷

I strongly believe that Aristotle's ethics and cardinal virtues are vehemently applicable to contemporary issues and in this case the Ukraine-Russia War. Had these virtues been followed promptly, the world could have avoided significant political, economic, cultural, social, and human loss. Both nations ought to have put their friendship, sovereignty, cultural and social ties above the greed of power and politics. This is justice in the true sense.

¹⁷ Santa Clara University, 'Reflections on Ethics and the Russian Invasion of Ukraine'

<<https://www.scu.edu/ethics/all-about-ethics/reflections-on-ethics-and-the-russian-invasion-of-ukraine/>>
accessed 1 October 2023.