

Despite these challenges, and also considering that this research is performed within the framework of a specific project and on an appropriate sample, that further researches are necessary and desirable, especially in the domain of the effectiveness of *Interactive (teaching and learning) strategies in vocational education* and other professional development programs, we believe that the competence-based development of teachers can be the basis for the development of a professional development programs that will be in content harmony with real educational needs, based on reflection on foreign experiences, but also on personal practice and on contemporary andragogic and didactic approaches that prioritize the active participation.

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## FROM NORMATIVE MORAL EDUCATION TO EDUCATION OF A PHILIATIC MORAL CHARACTER

**Abstract:** Aristotle's well-known theory of friendship (*philia*) distinguishes between two kinds of imperfect, false friendship (for pleasure and for profit) and true friendship, the goal of which is moral good. The issue of friendship completes the discussion on virtues in the Nicomachean Ethics and highlights the positive quality of interpersonal relationships as *areté*, that is, a disposition that can be purposefully pursued, i.e. intentionally formed. In addition to the vertical gradation of this quality with regard to its perfection, it also offers a horizontal differentiation of forms of social realization of friendship in the context of community (*favor*, *eunoia*) and wider society (*concord*, *politiké philia*). Political friendship is thus presented as a civic virtue, worthy of effort (cf. *EN VIII.10, Pol. III.5, IV.2*). Character education, with the focus on the development of this quality, is manifested not only as the subject of cultivating the individual personality for the purpose of a "happy life" of man, but also as a political requirement, reflecting the interest of the state. The paper points out the renaissance of Aristotelian *aretology* in the context of current debates on school education and shows an example of how education for "political friendship" is implemented in the structure of the school subject Ethical Education in Slovakia.

## Introduction: Ethics of Justice (Rules) versus Ethics of Friendship

The contribution addresses two basic questions, the second of which follows directly from the first one, and therefore the answer to the first question is directly reflected in the answer of the second one:

1. What is the main distinguishing criterion for assessing a person's level of moral quality?
2. What is the cardinal object of moral education that would lead to higher levels of moral development of the pupil?

In the environment of school moral education, as well as among theories of moral pedagogy, the deontological-cognitivist thesis has prevailed, which says:

1. The level of moral quality is measured by the fulfillment of the norm, set before man by the requirement of justice.
2. The cardinal object of moral education, which leads to higher levels of moral development of the pupil, is their ability to judge morally in relation to the rules (law).

The contribution points out the reductivity of this conception of morality, as well as this model of moral education; also, the (neo) Aristotelian conception of social friendship, which transcends the requirement of legal justice, will be introduced.

In his earlier work, *Philosophy of Moral Development* (1981), Lawrence Kohlberg established the philosophical foundations of moral development by analyzing ethical theory from Socrates, through Kant to Rawls, and others; he tried to determine own subject of moral education – he concluded that it was justice – and on the basis of this criterion he distinguished three levels and six stages in the moral-educational process (his second work being *Psychology of Moral Development* (1984)).

1. preconventional level
  - orientation of obedience (avoidance of punishment)
  - reward orientation
2. conventional level
  - orientation towards approval (being a “good” child)
  - orientation to authority and rules
3. postconventional level
  - orientation to the social contract
  - orientation to universal ethical principles (e.g. justice, dignity)

Kohlberg anchored his theory in normative ethics, which has its roots in Kant's deontological ethics (ethics of duty) and which results in normative pedagogy. He determines the criteria of behavior required of persons (children, pupils, adults) based on the stages of their development. The normative nature of morality (and moral pedagogy) makes it possible to clearly phase out the educational process and verify the achievement of the set educational goals. It gives the institution and the teacher an authoritative tool for measuring, controlling and also the execution of power. On the other hand, normative ethics and normative pedagogy bypasses the education itself (it focuses mainly on ethical learning), renounces the ambition to form the moral identity of individuals, as well as to co-experience and influence the contents of moral practices.

Kohlberg established justice (and the resulting normativity) as own subject of moral education. Justice is the primary requirement of every coexistence, it is a universal precondition for the functioning of every society. However, the requirement of justice appears to be only one of the possible moral principles, it does not apply as an exclusive measure of morality (cf. Gilligan, 2001, others).

In our conception, we anchor the theory of moral education especially in the **ethics of virtue**, which has its roots in classical Hellenic-biblical anthropology and results in relational education

and character education. We start from the premise that it is not enough if the social dimension of behavior is ensured by law enforcement, although adherence to a cultural norm is one of the important contents of moral education. We do not understand prosociality as subordination to society, but as an internally acquired habitus, motivated by the moral imperative of benevolence.

Our concept of moral education presupposes prosociality (and the resulting educational relationality) as its own object. Prosociality can be summed up, in terms of content, by concepts such as benevolence, altruism, generosity, love for others, responsibility for others, solidarity, etc. It does not deny justice, but fulfils it and transcends it with its claim (cf. the following text). After all, civilized humanity shaped by the ideal of “Love your neighbor as yourself” also implies the rule “Give everyone his due”.

## Friendship is More

Why do we think that prosociality is a more appropriate object of moral education than justice? Of course, we are not talking here about justice as a condition of equal distribution, but as a man of inherent virtue.

Plato’s **Socrates** says in the work *Republic* (332c): “(Simonides) made a riddle, after the fashion of poets, when he said what the just is. For it looks as if he thought that it is just to give to everyone what is fitting, and to this he gave the name ‘what is owed’. “According to Socrates, such justice is useless (it is more effective to ignore justice) and crafty (it does good only to friends, it harms the enemy). “If someone asserts that it’s just to give what is owed to each man—and he understands by this that harm is owed to enemies by the just man and help to friends—the man who said it was not wise. For he wasn’t telling the truth. For it has become apparent to us that it is never just to harm anyone.” (335e).

According to Plato, the virtue of justice goes beyond the logic of retribution, with regard to building a “good community”: “So we should neither return an injustice, nor do harm to any man, regardless of what we suffer at his hands.” (*Crito* 49c). In the *Laws* (VI, 757a-b) he questions the uncritical acceptance of equality as the sole criterion of justice and creates space for invoking the ontological value of man (dignity) as a source of law: “There is an old and true saying that “equality produces amity,” which is right well and fitly spoken; but what the equality is which is capable of doing this is a very troublesome question, since it is very far from being clear. For there are two kinds of equality (...) The one of these any State or lawgiver is competent to apply in the assignment of honors,—namely, the equality determined by measure, weight and number (...); but the truest and best form of equality is not an easy thing for everyone to discern. It is the judgment of Zeus.” Plato, like Aristotle later, points out that above justice δίκη (*diké*) rises φιλία (*philia*), favor, friendship.

Aristotle devotes the entire 5<sup>th</sup> book to justice in *Nicomachean Ethics* and constantly returns to it in *Politics* (V, 1, 1301b, V, 2, 1302b, V, 10, 1310b, VI, 1, 1317b). Fundamental is his distinction between general virtue (“virtue itself” for the benefit of others) and part of virtue – “partial justice”, which is further divided into distributive (right as the center of merit – proportion against injustice) and commutative (with respect to profit and loss: *do ut des*). The main criterion of legal justice is equality and its goal is a good citizen. Aristotle suggests that partial justice is confused in speech with general justice (“it bears identical name”), as both have their principal jurisdiction over the other, but only one (legal one) “pertains to honor, money, or preservation – or to some one thing if we were able to encompass all these by a single name – and arises on account of the pleasure associated with gain. The other [one] pertains to all the things with which a serious person is concerned.” (*EN* 1130b). Justice as a holistic virtue pursues the main criterion of one’s own human value, “dignity” (ἀξία, *axia*), and its goal is a good person. And “it is not the same thing in every case to be a good man and to be a good citizen” (*EN* 1130b).

The Roman but also the scholastic tradition interpreted justice in the sense of a formal definition as a norm, that is, as a relation to the law, in front of which we are all equal. It is a habit to give everyone what belongs to them, in terms of *aequitas*, equality with one another. *Habitus* is understood here as a synthetic and, above all, architectural ratio of equality.

The current distributive-utilitarian (market) model of interpersonal relationship even rejects as an indecent simple care of one for the good of the other. Experience with the consumer world encourages us to seek another form of justice, one that transcends the formal condition of equality and provides an opportunity to appreciate the dignity of life.

## Friendship as the Height of Virtue

In pedagogical practice, but also in theoretical works, there is a demand for the return of the issue of virtues to serious discourse. In the context of justice, this means re-establishing the theme of friendship – *φιλία*, *filia* as a virtue that can form a “good relationship” between human beings. A “good relationship” cannot be based solely on the “distribution” of goods and obligations.

A friend is not a general agent of rights. He is a concrete subject whose dignity and value are not disturbed by the compassion or mercy of another. Friendship is a synthetic disposition that applies to the person of the other, not to his need. This disposition in relation to the other expresses appreciation and dedication, regardless of any state of emergency. “If an emergency arises, the friendship will quietly express a message of this kind: I appreciate and consider it a great sign of your trust that you allow me to help you.” (Angelini, 1994, s. 239-240). In any case, the other (friend) must never be reduced to their need (in the sense of the equation *do ut des*).

Friendship is such a radical disposition of life that it applies to all forms of personal relationships. The possibility of appreciating every other good depends on it. Aristotle gives justice as a “perfect virtue” a dimension of friendship: “justice, alone of the virtues is held to be another’s good, because it relates to another. For it does what is advantageous to another (...). Best is he who makes use of virtue not in relation to himself but in relation to another. For this is a difficult task.” (EN V, 3, 1130a). According to Aristotle, friendship, favor, seems to be the dimension of virtue that gives justice the opportunity to overcome the criterion of equality. “For friendship is a certain virtue or is accompanied by virtue; and, further, it is most necessary with a view to life” (1155a). Aristotle, as it is well known, sees an exceptional virtue in friendship, which he devotes the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> book of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. According to him, true friendship unites man with man on the basis of a free and dignified reason, and not according to the criterion of pleasure or gain (1157a18-21). False friendships “involve equality. For the same things come from both people involved, and they wish for the same things for each other, or they exchange one thing for another—for example, pleasure in exchange for a benefit.” (1158b). He sees equality as a natural condition for coexistence (in terms of particular justice), but emphasizes its inadequacy in striving for perfect virtue. “But perfect [gr. *teleia*] friendship is the friendship of those who are good and alike in point of virtue. For such people wish in similar fashion for the good things for each other insofar as they are good, and they are good in themselves.” (1156b). Friendship “is not at all similar to the case of lenders: lenders feel no friendly affection toward their debtors but only wish that they be preserved so they may recover the debt. Those who have done others some good, on the other hand, love and are fond of those who are the recipients of it, even if these recipients are not useful to them and might not be such later” (1167b). It follows from these and other passages (1168-1170) that Aristotle considers legal justice to be the necessary minimum of peaceful coexistence, but not the goal of the effort with which we should be satisfied. “Lawgivers are more serious about [friendship] than about justice. For like-mindedness [gr. *homonoia* = concord] seems to resemble friendship, and lawgivers aim at this especially (...). When people are friends, they have no need of justice, but when they are just, they do need friendship in

addition” (1155a). Aristotle even suggests empathy as a way of realizing a friendly relationship: “Is a friend who shares our joy in good fortune and our sorrow in affliction, for our own sake and not for any other reason” (Rhetoric II, 4, 1381a).

### True Friendship and False Friendships (Vertical Division)

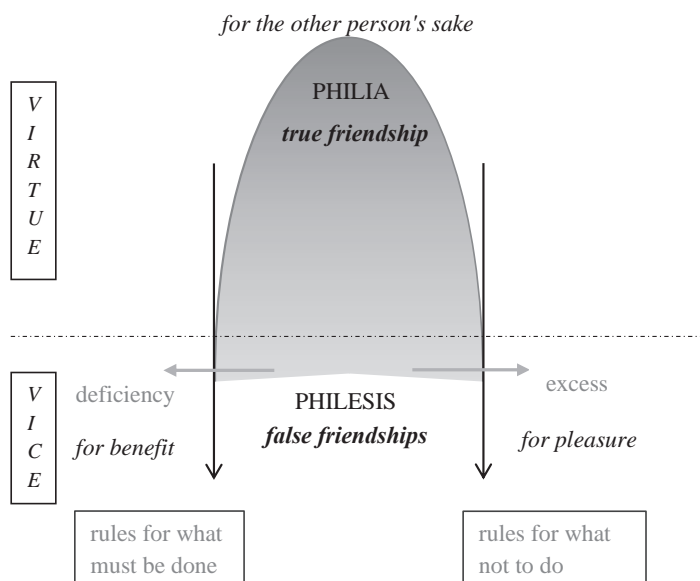
It is no coincidence that the theme of friendship is the culmination of the whole work in the Nicomachean Ethics, where the author devotes the whole eighth and ninth book to it and it follows only after introduction of the previous virtues and moral dispositions (especially justice, reason virtues and moderation). According to Aristotle, friendship is the dimension of virtue that transcends justice and fills it with vertical content. Friendship (gr. φιλία, philía) is a virtue that can form a “good relationship” between human beings (EN 1155a). A “good relationship” cannot be based solely on the “distribution” of goods and duties. A well-fulfilled and good-looking relationship is a virtuous relationship that unites man to man for a free and dignified reason, and not according to the criterion of pleasure or gain (cfr. EN 1157a18 – 21). The benefits and pleasures are good that we can get from a friendly relationship, but if the relationship is motivated by these “random goodies”, it is not a real friendship, but an exchange, a business.

Perfect friendship as a virtue lies in the middle between imperfect forms of love, philēsis (superficial, fleeting love), specifically between friendship for benefit, which is the lack of love, and friendship for pleasure, which is its excess.

The crucial key to define a good relationship is the phrase: “But those who wish for the good things for their friends, for their friends’ sake, are friends most of all” (EN 1156b); friend is someone “who wishes for and does things that are (or appear to be) good, for the other person’s sake, or as someone who wishes for his friend, for the friend’s own sake, to exist and to live” (EN 1166a). Certainly, Aristotle cannot be included to personalistic philosophers, but the statements on benevolent friendship as the goal of human effort confirm our intuition about the inadequacy of just equality to define what is foremost important to us in life. The philía is a higher and more dignified goal of action than its minimum premise, such as justice (1155a). Love or favour is the

**Figure 1**

Vertical division of the quality of the philiatric relationship



quality of a “good relationship” that innervates any pursuit of justice. The filia is the nerve of a culture that transcends the levelling laws of nature and society, it is a capillary of justice. However, is the Aristotelian philia an asymmetrical relationship between a moral subject and another? It is not. Aristotle places friendship on the level of self-love (gr. filauthia). Man wants real good above all for themselves, and that is their own being – they prefer themselves, they are themselves a source of thought, joy and sadness, they care most about themselves. Love for myself should not be understood as selfishness, but as a good relationship with my best friend, who is myself. And in the view of this essential relation to oneself, **“the friend is another self”** (EN IX, 4, 1166a).

The emphasis in a friendly relationship is on common experience (gr. syzén), common perception (gr. synasisthésis), common thinking (gr. syngnórisein) and especially common action (gr. synergein) (cf. Eudemian Ethics VII, 1, 1245b). The relationship of love for another can be compared at the highest level with the relationship of love for oneself, but it will not exceed it. A virtuous person loves another as themselves (cf. e.g. Mark 12:31). In the other person and in their confirmation of what is good for life, my self finds a kind of reflection, a confirmation of the goodness of my being. The key word of a friendly relationship is the word “we”, a platform on which we help each other to perfection. Aristotle’s friendship can be at most symmetrical, it does not imply the primacy of another, which we meet e.g. in the Christian concept of kenosis (self-sacrifice), or charitas (charitable love), or in the ethical conception of E. Lévinas.

As highlighted above, if there is friendship between people, they do not need justice (EN VIII, 1, 1155a26). According to Aristotle, perfect friendship is between good people and requires mutual affection (gr. antiphilía) and mutual choice (gr. antiprohaireisis). Reciprocity, the return of benevolence is a necessary condition of friendship. As our ancient author emphasizes, it is not possible to have many friends, the philia is not the positive relationship to another that could be extrapolated to the whole community or to every existing human individual. There is exclusivity, uniqueness and unrepeatability in a friendly relationship.

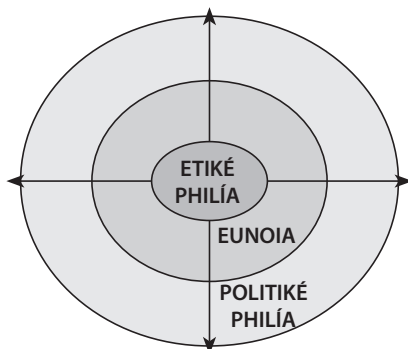
### The Concentric Circles Model (Horizontal Division)

Does it seem that philía is not intended as a feasible model of practical good social relations, to which we could set moral education? Does the requirement of justice in its normative level, or directly education according to the ethics of rules, return to the game again?

Similar to the later issue of the “third” in the ethics of Lévinas, we find a certain solution in Aristotle, even though it is only outlined in the Nicomachean Ethics. The solution to the problem of “love for many”, or “love for everyone” lies in the model of concentric circles, at the core of which stands the relationship of perfect friendship (gr. philía) and its quality diffuses progressively like a wave in

**Figure 2**

Horizontal division of the quality of the philiatric relationship



symmetrical circles heading “beyond the horizon”. The individual circles of benevolence are simultaneously affected by the strengthening elements of justice, order and security, i.e. those elements of social relations and structures that protect coexistence from the abuse and arbitrariness of the ruthless. However, the ethical basis of friendliness and orientation towards common goals prevails in them. In Aristotle, these circles have the names favour (gr. *eunoia*) and concord (gr. *politiké philía*).

Favour is a good relationship with strangers or those who do not know about our goodness, or for various reasons do not return it. It is a virtuous attitude of a moral subject who maintains the respect, esteem and disposition to help, to contribute to the good of others without being in a close and near relationship of friendship. Favour is also referred to as the “idle friendship”, it is a kind of germ or preparation for the *philía*. *Eunoia* literally means “benevolence” or “goodwill.”<sup>54</sup> It lacks a common choice and a mutually confirmed agreement on what is a good goal of life, as in the case of friendship. Retaliation for such benevolence and charity by gratitude cannot yet be considered an expression of friendship, it is only the fulfilment of the requirement of justice. However, friendship can grow out of favour, and there is no friendship that does not come out of favour.

Concord is also called “civic friendship” (gr. *politiké philía*). It represents a broad circle of friendship-like relationships that unite individuals in a narrower community (gr. *koinónia*) or in a broad political community (gr. *polis*) in accordance with common goals and common values, that is, with regard to what society is to strive for. The minimum basis for such agreement is the common belief that a virtuous life leads to bliss (gr. *eudaimonia*). Concord ensures the sense of belonging and encourages mutual solidarity, which goes beyond the demands of justice, especially in situations of danger. If a community is united by the concord of its members, the society does not need to make too much effort to enforce the common good, because civic virtue naturally does it. Evil people, as Aristotle writes, cannot be united by concord because they cannot be friends, and their quest for immediate individual gain will cause the death of the common good and the deployment of coercive procedures. Such a society does not allow a “good life” for its members and degrades itself to a collective similar to a flock or a clamp from the subhuman world. Civic friendship should therefore be a valuable asset that every community should cultivate if it wants to maintain its vitality and its own dignity. The contemporary philosopher Martha Nussbaum (2003, p. 650) therefore points out that friendship is not given to people in advance, it is a virtue that everyone must strive for, practice and improve in it as in other virtues. An individual is too fragile to build a “good life” on his own, he needs a community, a community framework. One can become a friend in the community and in the *polis* environment, which will favor his good upbringing and character formation. Even in this context, cultivating prosociality shows us as a suitable and necessary way to develop morality.

We have indicated above the hypothesis of “focused circles” as a model offering a solution to the problem of “love for many” or “love for everyone”. In Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*, we find the center and at the same time the culmination of a benevolent relationship in the “perfect friendship” *philía*, to which it approaches and at the same time spreads as a diffusing quality in circular waves of favour (gr. *eunoia*) and concord (gr. *politiké philía*). The farther the wave is from the center, the more it integrates with the institutions of justice, order and protection against the abuse of power, but it continues to refer to the source of its movement. The trajectory of this “wave” can be defined as the inside out, respectively, from the center to the sides, potentially “beyond the horizon” of the visible.

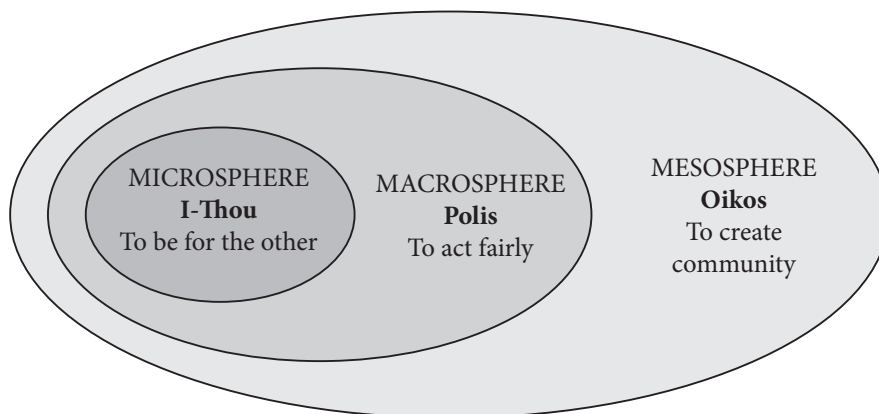
<sup>54</sup> *Eunoia*, εὐνοία means exactly “good mind”. In this naming of favour as a precursor of friendship the etymological relation with a later definition of virtue as a quality of mind can be seen: “*Virtus est bona qualitas mentis*” (Thomas Aquinas, *STh I – II*, q. 55, a. 4). St. Thomas refers here to the more original definition of virtue according to St. Augustine. If the favour *eu-noia* is a certain virtue, the more the virtue must be the friendship *philia*, in which a good “common mind” *syn-noia* takes place (συννοία, concentration of the mind, in the ancient Greek also “care”, or “friendship”).

We have already sketched this model in the monograph *Man to Man...* (Rajský, Podmanický et al., 2016, pp. 32 – 33), where we asked ourselves a pedagogical question:

“How to morally educate and accompany so that the personal morality of responsibility for another (which is another term for expressing the ethics of favor, friendship or altruism) is not an obstacle to life in the real world – on the contrary, it is a moral benefit to it?” We have outlined a plan that we have called “from home” out into society, that is, “from the ethics of responsibility for the other’s face to the ethics of social justice, from the education of personal benevolence to the education of a sense of justice.” It is a process that begins in cultivating the closest interpersonal relationships I – You in the “home” community, transcends the boundaries of family, kinship and the immediate community, i.e. intimacy of home, into the community (school class, school, extracurricular educational and leisure groups, social environment of the municipality and the city) and finally enters the sphere of a broad political society up to the planetary level of humanity. “The term ‘prosociality’ acquires a strong meaning in this respect – it contains the dynamics of innervation of social morality by the ethical imperative of the personal dignity of the other person. The concept of ethical education as education for prosociality includes precisely this process in which the formation of a relationship with You is guided as a capillary in the body of education of the “good life” in society” (ibid., p. 33).

**Figure 3**

Horizontal division of education of philiatric moral character



### **The Mesosphere of Home**

The question of the continuity of the “ethics of encounter” (especially in the Levinas` sense) between the intimate microsphere of the exclusive personal relationship I – You and the impersonal political macrosphere is primarily a question of the function and role of the mesosphere that connects and integrates moral demands of love (being-for-another) and justice (social normativity). This mesosphere is characterized by the phenomena of home, dwelling, family, fatherhood, sonship, femininity, hospitality, brotherhood, etc. The mesosphere of home, community and hospitality is proving to be a key space for education in the ethics of good relations. It creates a typical anthropological situation in which respect for You becomes a paradigm of every interpersonality, even, at the level of regulation, of every social structure. At the same time, the requirement arrangement, order and security of the home is seen as a commitment to respect for what is common and what allows individuals to face each other. The structure of oikos makes it possible to combine love of neighbor with respect for the rules. The political community, which forms the macrosphere of our coexistence, has in the structure of oikos the pattern of its inner



human order. Polis, in which the politiké philía is to dwell, must support an oiko-logical moral education, i.e. an education of personal and social benevolence.

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