

**THE INNER CONNECTION
BETWEEN POLITICS AND MORALITY:
HISTORICAL AND ANALYTICAL EXPLORATIONS**

Thesis for a Doctor of Philosophy in Politics

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Submitted by Marios Filis to the University of Exeter
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THESIS ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the inner connection between politics and morality and the analytical challenges it has posed and still poses for political philosophy. In part one, I explore the problematic relationship between politics and morality as it has been conceived and analyzed by Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli and Weber. This exploration is a historical reconstruction, a 'genealogy', of four major philosophical accounts concerning the tension between the moral demands of politics and the moral demands of 'ordinary' life. The historical reconstruction aims at revealing the philosophical complexity of the problems that characterize the relationship between politics and morality. It is set to show that those problems have some basic perennial features which remain unresolved until nowadays.

In part two, following the conclusions of the historical reconstruction, I make the central contention that the insoluble fragmentation of moral values that characterizes our world is central to the understanding of the inner connection between politics and morality. For this reason I analyze this connection from the perspective of moral pluralism, the philosophical tradition that conceives moral conflicts as the very essence of moral activity. My claim is that politics appears to be structurally opposed to specific types of moral values, because political moral values themselves are part of the fragmentation of morality. I support this claim with a further analysis of the moral divisions between the private, public and political spheres of conduct. My argument is that each of those spheres is permeated by a dominant type of moral values which is in permanent tension with the dominant types of values in the other two spheres of conduct. Finally, I make the case, that the usual aphorisms against the immorality of politicians and the famous concept of 'dirty hands' can be better understood when viewed as the inevitable result of the insoluble fragmentation of morality. I conclude, however, that the perennial attempts to achieve some sense of moral unity through politics indicate the special moral status we should attribute to political action.

Contents

Introduction.....	13
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PART ONE

HISTORICAL ACCOUNTS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POLITICS AND MORALITY: A PERENNIAL PROBLEM

<u>Chapter 1: The Genesis of Political Philosophy: Plato’s Attempt to Treat Politics and Morality as One.....</u>	32
--	-----------

A) Crito and the Apology: The origin of the debate between politics and morality.....	32
B) Democracy against Virtue.....	37
C) Doing away with the plurality of social roles.....	43
D) The merging of politics and morality: a philosophical experiment.....	53

<u>Chapter 2: Happiness Requires Politics: Aristotle’s Social Conception of Virtue.....</u>	56
--	-----------

A) Virtue as practical activity.....	56
B) Practical and theoretical reason.....	61
C) Politics as phronesis: Ethics can only be social.....	68
D) The political and the contemplative man.....	73
E) Reconciling politics with virtue: practical wisdom and the conditions of eudaimonia.....	78

Chapter 3: Machiavelli’s Theory: The Disunity of Politics and Morality vs. Morality as the Necessary Ground for Politics	82
A) The breaking from classical political philosophy.....	82
B) The amoral Machiavelli: A first traditional interpretation.....	85
C) Civic Humanism and the separation of politics from ethics: A second traditional interpretation (variation one of Machiavelli’s false Republicanism).....	88
D) Pagan against Christian ethics: A second traditional interpretation (variation two of Machiavelli’s false Republicanism).....	91
E) Machiavelli’s moral politics: A third unconventional interpretation.....	97
F) The transition to modernity and the creation of ‘good orders’: can ethics be the ground for politics?.....	107

Chapter 4: Weber’s Fragmentation of Value: Political Responsibility in a World Without Symbolic References	113
A) Transition to modernity: The variety of conditions of existence and political organization.....	113
B) Domination and the existential meaning: The ethical importance of the nation.....	122
C) The first fundamental distinction between morality and politics: The ‘ethic of conviction’ and the ‘ethic of responsibility’.....	129
D) Weber’s solution: The responsible leader and the necessary ethical re-orientation.....	133

PART TWO

A MORAL POLITICS: ITS ESSENCE AND BOUNDARIES IN A WORLD OF CONFLICTING MORAL VALUES

Chapter 5: The Possibility of Moral Dilemmas and the Importance of Moral Judgment	138
A) Modern moral philosophy: Monistic and pluralistic explanations of morality.....	138
B) Deontic and utilitarian theories: Moral conflicts are only apparent.....	142
C) The pluralist argument: The incommensurability of moral values and the political danger from moral absolutism.....	151
D) Modern moral philosophy: Relativistic and pluralistic explanations of morality.....	161
E) Moral conflict: the ‘agent-‘ and ‘outcome-centred’ standpoints and the ‘moral remainder’.....	169

Chapter 6: The Central Conflict Between Politics and Morality: The Private and ‘Ordinary’ vs. the Public and Political..... 176

A) Notions of the public, the private and the political: overcoming the conceptual confusion..... 176

B) The fundamental moral conflict: private vs. public and political morality..... 180

C) From private ‘ordinary’ morality to political conduct: the discontinuities which constitute the philosophical problem..... 183

D) The conflicting nature of morality: impartiality against integrity..... 188

E) Assigning priority to the moral standpoint: the derivability problem..... 195

F) The conflicting nature of morality: utility against integrity..... 199

CHAPTER 7: Moral Agency, Political Agency and the ‘Dirty Hands’ Paradox..... 206

A) Moral dilemmas: The Philosophical problem of ‘dirty hands’ 206

B) Moral and political integrity: What is to have ‘dirty hands’? 212

C) Private life and public office: Some accounts of the ‘dirty hands’ problem..... 222

D) Politics and morality: the normative importance of the ‘dirty hands’ concept..... 231

Conclusion..... 236

Bibliography..... 247

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