Teaching a holistic, harmonious and internal motivational concept of excellence to promote Olympic ideals, health and well-being for all

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Abstract

Based on recent trends in positive psychology, on ancient Greek sport literature and particularly on Aristotle’s philosophy, the holistic, harmonious and internal motivational components of excellence and their implications for students’ motivation for physical activity, health and well-being are presented. While modern motivational theories and research have partly addressed the holistic and internal motivational components of excellence, they have yet to address its harmonious part. In this article it is explained why all three components of excellence are required to promote eudaimonic well-being, which is the ultimate aim of Olympism. It is argued also that the conceptualization of hedonic-eudaimonic well-being should be primarily based on the “me” versus “us” meaning. While current physical activity experiences more often reflect a hedonistic perspective, to promote health and well-being for all, an eudaimonic perspective in teaching in physical education and youth sport is needed. This should primarily focus on the promotion of Olympic ideals, such as excellence, friendship, and respect. These three ideals and well-being are all very much interconnected, when all three components of excellence exist in excess. To promote excellence, Olympic ideals, and well-being, the core ideas of an educational philosophy promoting excellence in physical education and youth sport are presented.
“Physical education is the most effective means of providing all children and youth with the skills, attitudes, values, knowledge and understanding for lifelong participation in society.” The Declaration of Berlin 2013 – UNESCO’s World Sports Ministers Conference (MINEPS V)

Motivation aims at excellence. But do all of us adopt the same concept of excellence? If not, does it affect motivational theories and their implications?

Influential behavioral scientists underline the importance of concepts and research perspectives coming from cultures which are not the prototype of WEIRD (Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich and Democratic) societies (Henrich, Heine & Norenzayan, 2010). The present perspective was affected by influences in the conceptualization of excellence and well-being from my own culture, Greek, and the culture that I understood through ancient Greek texts, particularly Aristotle’s ethics.

Importantly, thanks to influential modern philosophers (e.g., Anscombe, 1958; MacIntyre, 2007), psychologists (e.g., Fowers, 2012; Ryan & Deci, 2001; Ryff, 1989; Waterman, 1993) and philosophers of education (e.g., Kristjánsson, 2007) who drew ideas from the ancient Greek culture and particularly Aristotle, the concepts and ideas presented here are already popular in contemporary philosophy, psychology and education. I believe that they will soon become popular in Physical Education (PE) and sport too.

Ancient Greece is considered the birthplace of democracy, Western philosophy, Olympic Games, sport pedagogy, and other sciences and arts (Wikipedia, 2017, Greece). The main education setting was the gymnasium where PE aimed at the development of youngsters’ excellence of any kind (arete) because this leads to health and well-being/human flourishing (eudaimonia) (Reid, & Holowchak, 2011). Hence, when we recently proposed to the Greek Ministry of Education that the central aim of
PE in senior high school (grades 10-12) should be “lifelong Physical Activity (PA) for health and well-being”, it was widely accepted (Papaioannou et al., 2014). Of course this is not surprising given the recent trends in sport and health sciences (e.g., Li, et al., 2016). What I felt that we missed though, was a clear reference to the development of arete (translated “excellence of any kind”; Liddell & Scott, 1940) through PE. In fact, Aristotle claimed that “eudaimonia (transl. as “happiness” or “a flourishing life”) consists of arete” (NE, I 8, 1098b30).\(^4\,5\)

In this article I will argue that the cultivation of excellence of any kind should be reintroduced and integrated with the aim to promote health and well-being of future PE curricula worldwide. I will explain why excellence of any kind is inseparable from “eudaimonic” well-being, a term which is used to imply meaningful experiences and students’ flourishing, and why these are needed to sustain long-term PA and psychological health. I will also explain why implementation of successful strategies towards excellence have better chances to promote health and well-being for all individuals than the mere emphasis on momentary experiences of joy and pleasure in PE which reflect “hedonic” well-being and a biomedical perspective of health (Kimiecik, 2016) that often compromises the inclusive component of this aim (Li & Rukavina, 2012).

Importantly, the present approach is aligned with Pierre de Coubertin’s emphasis on character development and promotion of human good through PE and sport (Muller, 2010). It is also aligned with the recent appreciation of PE’s important role in the development of social and civic skills by World Ministers and Senior Officials responsible for PE and sport (UNESCO, 2013). Accordingly, PE’s central aim to promote “excellence of any kind, health and well-being” might help this school
subject to regain its prestigious status that it had in ancient Greece, a goal that
Coubertin tried passionately to achieve (Muller, 2010).

To clarify my arguments, here I present the holistic, harmonious, and internal
motivational components that are inherent in the concept of excellence of any kind,
their consequences for physical activity, health and well-being, and the implications
for motivational research in PE and youth sport. To help readers understand the three
components of excellence I will start with the contextualization of the meaning of
excellence/arete in ancient Greek sport.

Three Components of Excellence

Holistic Component

The Greek vocabulary has two words for “excellence:” “aristos” and “arete”.

They belong to a word family starting with “ar” deriving from the Greek verb
“ararisko” implying “join,” “connect,” and “fit together” (e.g., the Greek words
«armos» joint, «arthro» article, «arithmos» number, amount, the verb «aretao”,thrive,
prosper, and “armonia”,means of joining, fastening, harmony,music). In “ar”+“istos»
the second part «-istos» is an ending of Greek superlatives like “meg-istos” (biggest)
and “tah-istos” (fastest). For ancient Greeks someone becomes “aristos” (excellent)
when all the best qualities (physical, mental, spiritual, moral) within oneself are
perfectly connected. For example, MacIntyre (2007, p. 127) suggests that in Homer’s
Iliad, “physical strength, courage and intelligence are among the excellences.”

Like contemporary individualistic perspectives of excellence that focus on “me”,
an intra-individual perspective of a holistic meaning of excellence connoted the
perfect connection of excellent qualities within-the-person. Examples of such qualities are given in the following three ancient texts referring to “arete” in sport:

Athletes’ excellence combined amazing physical abilities, skills, determination and passion: In Olympic or Isthmian or Panathenaic Games…the arete of men and physical beauty, amazing conditioning and great skill and irresistible force and daring and pride and unbeatable determination and indescribable passion for victory (Solon in Lucian, Anacharsis 9–14; translated by Miller, 2004, p. 78).

Arete was the result of exercise connecting physical and mental skills: ball playing trains the eye… (because the player) judges its flight accurately. The player will also sharpen his critical abilities by planning how to catch the ball and stay out of the middle, and how to snatch the ball if he happens to be in the middle. Thinking alone will keep weight down, but if it is mixed with some exercise and rivalry which ends in pleasure, it promotes health in the body and intelligence in the mind. This is an important benefit if an exercise can aid both the body and the mind toward the arete which is inherent in each. (Galen, On Exercise with the Small Ball ca. a.d. 180; translated by Miller, 2004, p. 122).

Arete was connected with good sportspersonship, (e.g., “Menelaos called out: “Antilochos, … you won’t get the prize without swearing that you played fair!””, in Homer’s Iliad; translated by Miller, 2004, p. 4).

Greeks also adopted an inter-individual perspective of the holistic meaning of excellence, which focused on “us”. “Connectivity” and “fitting together” are found in the meaning of excellence at higher-ordered levels of generalization: between-
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persons, between persons and cities, and between persons-cities-gods. The most important PanHellenic Games, Olympic, Pythia, Nemea and Isthmia, were contexts of excellence facilitating the communication between Greeks and the development of common Greek identity and culture. The aim of the Olympic truce was to stop wars during the Olympic Games and bring Greeks together in Olympia. Olympic winners’ excellence reflected the excellence of their cities. Greeks tried to connect the excellence of athletes and cities with gods within the social and holly atmosphere of PanHellenic Games. This is illustrated in the following extract from a text in a marble stele in Delphi where Greeks honored the Olympian deity Apollo:

the Aitolians… announce the Soteria games which they are establishing as a memorial to the salvation of Greece and of the victory over the barbarians who were attacking the sanctuary of Apollo which is common to all Greeks, and the Greeks themselves,… citizens who compete and win at the Sot[eria have the same honors as those written in the law for victors at the Pythia and Nemea; that the Aitolian League be commended and crowned with a gold crown because of its arete and reverence toward the gods and valor against the barbarians (translated by Miller, 2004, p. 153-154).

Harmonious and internal motivational components

As MacIntyre (2007) observed, the holistic meaning of excellence that is found in Homeric poems was the first stage of development of a more comprehensive definition of excellence that was provided later, particularly by Aristotle. Prior to Aristotle, pre-Socratic philosophers had already emphasized another component of excellence and well-being, that of moderation and harmonious life. Some of their sayings survive in modern Greek language, e.g., “nothing in excess” (míđen ágan)
and “moderation is best” (métron áriston) (Laertius, 1853). Later, Socrates and Plato emphasized particularly the links between excellence and well-being and the importance of self-regulation and self-control in the attainment of excellence. The most famous student of Plato, Aristotle, focused particularly on the internal motivational component of excellence (Kraut, 1995) and he integrated it with the harmonious component, as is depicted in his definition of excellence:

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**A state of mind concerned with deliberate choice, consisting of the mean relative to us, as determined by a rational principle, that is, as a “phronimos” (i.e., man of practical wisdom) would determine it. It is a mean between two vices—one stemming from excess, the other from defect—and, once again, while the vices either exceed or fall short of what is appropriate in feelings and actions, arete finds the mean and chooses it. Thus, concerning its essential quality and the definition which states what it really consists of, arete is the mean, but concerning what is best and right it is an extreme. (NE, II 6, 1106b35-1107a5).**

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While for ancient Greeks and Aristotle excess was generally a vice, in modern English dictionaries excess is central to the definition of excellence: e.g., “extremely high quality; extreme merit; superiority; the quality of being outstanding or extremely good; the condition of being superior; surpassing goodness” (online English Dictionaries: Cambridge; Collins; Dictionary.com; Longman; MacMillan; Oxford; WordReference.com). “Arete” has been translated in English as “excellence of any kind” (Liddell & Scott, 1940) and virtue, although scholars like MacIntyre (2007, p. 122, 181) and Miller (2004) consider virtue a narrower conceptualization than “excellence.” Still in several modern English dictionaries (e.g., online Merriam-Webster Dictionary) virtue is defined as a universal moral principle or duty, “a
particular moral excellence; conformity to a standard of right” or in line with rule-utilitarianism perspectives “a beneficial quality or power of a thing”, but nowhere is found the concept of “deliberate choice” and the internal motivational approach which is inherent in Aristotle’s definition of “excellence.” Contemporary philosophers like MacIntyre (2007) emphasized the importance of the harmonious and internal motivational component of excellence for the development of new perspectives to promote human good. Physical educators have an important role in the education of children about the consequences of different conceptualizations of excellence in sport.

Along these lines, McNamee, Jones and Duda (2003) observed that the primacy of contemporary duty and consequential theories over virtue ethics often directs individuals including athletes to come to fair agreements that are not ethically defensible. It seems in professional North American ice hockey that everyone agrees to be violent…Consider those who overconform to violent norms of sport sub-cultures. This is not courage as a virtue, but rashness, a failure to see what dangers are properly to be faced; failure to emotionally attach significance to the health and well-being of an opponent. (p. 73).

Sport philosophers adopting an Aristotelian approach have reminded the numerous unethical and unhealthy behaviours in sport when Olympic records and world records are uncritically considered good and indication of human excellence (Loland, 2001). Likewise, Schantz (2016) pointed out that the emphasis on excess in sport will result in athletes characterized as cyborgs or post-humans. Still the impact of these philosophers in modern sport has been trivial and they will remain so unless their approaches infuse into the dominant paradigms of other sport and social
sciences, including sport pedagogy, that will apply these ideas in practice. Modern
sport history might allow room for optimism.

Muller (2010) suggested that Aristotle’s emphasis on the internal motivational
dimension of excellence was shared by the founder of the modern Olympic Games
but this has not been realized until recently:
the Olympic Movement spent all those years using this problem as a demonstration
of its high ethical standards, in the same way as the doping problems of the present
day. Coubertin thought differently: he was interested in the inner, moral,
responsible attitude of the athlete to which the Olympic education was to
contribute. (p. 9).

What’s more, Pierre de Coubertin (1918) espoused ancient Greeks’ emphasis
on harmony and moderation when he defined the term Olympic Education; “this
Pedagogie Olympique – of which I recently said it is based simultaneously on the cult
of the physical effort and the cult of harmony – in other words, on the taste of excess
combined with moderation” (in Muller, p. 217).

Interestingly, the five interconnected Olympic rings depict the notions of
connection, symmetry, and harmony, but not excess which is emphasized in modern
Olympics. Pierre de Coubertin was aware of the meaning of excellence in ancient
Greece, which might implicitly affected him when he created this Olympic icon to
celebrate human excellence and human good.

Internal Motivational Component of Excellence and Well-being in PE and Sport

Contemporary research supports the notion that individuals adopting
Aristotle’s internal motivational definition of excellence and success are more likely
to experience well-being and to initiate actions aiming to integrate their well-being
with the good of the society than individuals adopting excellence as is defined by normative and duty perspectives. Below I briefly summarize evidence stemming from recent motivational research in PE and sport. Where evidence does not exist, implications for future research are suggested.

**Personal growth versus normatively defined goals** and well-being

Aristotle’s connection of goal-directed action with well-being is central in his ethics works. His first sentence in Nichomachean Ethics (NE) reads, "Every art or applied science and every systematic investigation, and similarly every action and choice, seem to aim at some good; the good therefore, has been well defined at that at which all things aim" (NE, I 1, 1094a1). Not every kind of goal-directed action leads to excellence and well-being though. For Aristotle excellence of any kind and well-being are accomplished through the pursuit of personal growth but not normative goals (e.g., Ryff & Singer, 2008). As Johnston (1997) observed, for Aristotle, “The excellence of the human being is thus going to be associated with growth towards some final realization of his or her true and best nature” (p. 6).

Contemporary research proved that Aristotle was right. Achievement goals theorists (Nicholls, 2009) established that internal motivational definitions of achievement and success lead to mastery goal, or more generally, personal growth goal pursuit (Papaioannou, 2006; Papaioannou, Simou, Kosmidou, Milosis & Tsigilis, 2009), while normative definitions of success leads to normative performance goal pursuit. Extensive research across achievement settings such as PE and sports implies that an emphasis on context-specific personal growth goals (i.e., mastery achievement goals) is more likely to produce adaptive outcomes for both the person and society than an emphasis on normative performance goals (for reviews and meta-analyses, see...
Papaioannou, Zourbanos, Krommidas & Ampatzoglou, 2012; Roberts, Treasure & Conroy, 2007). An emphasis on personal growth goals is linked with intrinsic interest to achieve, positive emotion achievement and decreased negative emotions, positive thoughts, task focus, deep cognitive processes, and metacognitive strategies. We have also evidence suggesting that while PE and sport-specific growth goals are predictors of long-term participation in physical activities and sports, normative performance goals are not (e.g., Papaioannou, Bebetsos, Theodorakis, et al., 2006).

Importantly, athletes and PE students adopting personal growth goals experience positive psychological outcomes beyond sport: high satisfaction in life, high vitality, high general self-esteem, increased positive affect, and decreased positive affect in life. On the other hand, several of these positive outcomes do not emerge through the adoption of normative performance goals (Roberts et al., 2007; Papaioannou et al., 2012). Coaches and PE teachers emphasizing normative performance approach goals create a social-psychological environment that disempowers and excludes the less competent children from sport and exercise settings. On the other hand, they create a more inclusive environment when they emphasize an inherent motivational definition of success and personal growth (e.g., Papaioannou, 1995).

In line with Aristotle, modern research in PE, sport and other achievement settings revealed that an emphasis on personal growth goals is likely to promote human good: collaboration and peer support, ethical behaviors and sportspersonship. On the other hand, an emphasis on normative performance goals leads to egocentric thinking, the perceptions of others as opponents, interpersonal conflict, cheating, and aggressive behaviors (e.g., Sage, & Kavussanu, 2007; Smith, Balaguer, & Duda,
280 2006; Van Yperen, Hamstra & van der Klauw, 2011). An emphasis on competence
growth goals in PE has been associated with responsibility and discipline in PE while
an emphasis on normative performance goals has been linked with disruptive
behaviors (e.g., Agbuga, Xiang, & McBride, 2010; Papaioannou, 1998). A priority on
normative performance goals is connected with egocentrically defined values that
emphasize pursuit of one's own interests, normative success, social prestige, and control
or dominance over people and resources, such as power. On the other hand, a priority
on personal growth goals is positively linked with values indicating concern for the
welfare and interests of others, like benevolence (e.g., helpful, forgiving, honest)
and universalism (e.g., social justice, a world at peace, equality, etc.) (Papaioannou, et al.,
2012).

Implications for future research. The association of values with personal growth
versus normative performance goals in PE and sport settings should be further examined
with longitudinal and intervention designs.

Intrinsic-extrinsic goals and well-being

Aristotle was one of the first to argue that intrinsically but not extrinsically
motivated actions lead to well-being. He not only defined intrinsic-extrinsic
motivation as it is often defined today, but he also explained why the pursuit of
extrinsic goals is unlikely to lead to happiness and why the pursuit of intrinsic goals
indicates excellence:

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 (for at that rate the process would go on
to be an infinity, so that our desire would be empty and vain), clearly this must be
the good and the chief good. (*NE*, I 2, 1094a15-20).

Recently Self-Determination Theorists (SDT) Ryan, Huta, and Deci (2008) illustrated this with the following example of questions and possible answers:

“why are you working so hard?”…“to accumulate money or wealth”…“why do you want wealth?”…“because I want to be admired”… why do you want to be admired?”…so far we have not reached a “bottom line”…But suppose the person answers “because I want be loved”…“why do you want to be loved?”…“because love is good”…love is irreducible… intrinsic goals… are not reducible to other goals, but are done for their own sake. (p. 148-150).

Extensive research over the last 20 years, including a recent meta-analysis of findings (Dittmar, Bond, Hurst & Kasser, 2014), supports Aristotle’s argument that while materialism and the pursuit of extrinsic goals in life such as money, fame and appealing appearance are negatively linked to health and well-being, intrinsic goals in life such affiliation, community feeling/helpfulness, and growth are positively related to well-being (Kasser & Ryan 1996). Materialism goes hand in hand with normative/non-authentic goals and hinders authentic personal growth. A longitudinal study in an Eastern and a Western culture revealed that students who were higher in materialism emphasized higher normative performance approach and avoidance goals but less mastery goals and worse school performance (Ku, Dittmar & Banerjee, 2014).

The positive effects of intrinsic goals and the negative effects of extrinsic goals on well-being emerged across several life domains including PA settings. In PE classes Papaioannou, Simou, Kosmidou, Milosis & Tsigilis (2009) applied the multidimensional model of goal orientations (Papaioannou, 2006), investigating the
association of goal orientations in life and in PE with intrinsic goals in life (contribute
to society, promote science/understand nature) and in PE (adopt active lifestyles,
become good citizens), and extrinsic goals in life (acquire money/power) and in PE
and well-being indices. After partialling out effects of social desirability, intrinsic
goals in life and in PE corresponded positively to personal growth goal in life and
mastery goal in PE, while both personal growth goals in life and in PE were positively
linked with positive emotions in life and in PE, and satisfaction in life and in PE. On
the other hand, extrinsic goals in life corresponded positively to goals towards
exhibition of superiority in life and in PE (i.e., performance goals), but the latter had
no impact on well-being and positive affect in PE.

In an exercise setting, Sebire, Standage and Vansteenkiste, (2009) calculated a
relative intrinsic goals variable by subtracting the mean of extrinsic (image, social
recognition) from the mean of intrinsic (health management, skill development, social
affiliation) goals subscales. They found that the relative intrinsic goals variable
corresponded positively to exercise behavior, psychological well-being and physical
self-worth and negatively to exercise anxiety. Their findings were replicated later
across several studies, like in the longitudinal study of Gunnell, Crocker, Mack,
Wilson, and Zumbo (2014).

Implications for future research. Interventions in PE might examine the
effectiveness of teaching methods and curricula emphasizing the pursuit of intrinsic
and personal growth goals both in life and in PE/PA settings and their effects on
youth PA activity, health, and well-being. A relevant example is presented by Milosis
and Papaioannou (2007) who applied a multidisciplinary curriculum in PE
emphasizing personal growth goals in life, in PE, and in other school subjects. This
intervention had positive effects on mastery goal adoption, students’ multidimensional self-concept and satisfaction in PE and school. Much more intervention research is needed in this area.

Intrinsic/Internal and& Extrinsic/Instrumental motivation

The concept of intrinsic motivation is associated with pleasure while doing an action. Aristotle acknowledges that while it is positive to have fun during learning and executing an action, “there are many things that we would be keen about and should consider excellent even if they brought no pleasure…we should choose these even if no pleasure resulted from them” (*NE*, X 3, 1174a1-5). In fact, he observed that “the pleasure proper to a morally good activity is good, the pleasure proper to a bad activity evil” (*NE*, X 5, 1175b25).

Participation in practices or games are not aimless, results matter. However, for an individual pursuing excellence of any kind, what primarily matters is whether both the final aim (telos) and the adopted actions leading to results are good/ethical. When we play a game we want to win, but we are internally motivated when we pursue excellence (i.e., to win) because we exhibited excellent performance. If we cheat in the game, we treat the end as external to the activity and we fail to exhibit excellence of any kind. That’s why psychologists like Fowers (2012, 2016) and Schwartz and Wrzesniewski (2016) suggest that Aristotle made the distinction of internal-instrumental motives alongside the contingency of actions-process and ends-consequences. Internally motivated individuals care both about the excellence of the action and the results/consequences and the relation between them. Instrumentally motivated individuals care about the results irrespective of how these results are accomplished.
In the long-term, internally motivated individuals achieve better outcomes for themselves and society. A 10-yearlong study by Wrzesniewski, et al., (2014) showed that strong internally based motives for undertaking a course of action were associated with stronger persistence, better performance and better careers; however, internally based motives when they were accompanied by strong instrumentally based motives had negative effects on persistence and performance. No relevant research exists in PE and sport.

Implications for future research. Yearlong methodologies might examine the hypothesis: PE and PA participants and athletes achieve better outcomes for themselves and society when they prioritize internally motivated and not instrumental actions in their careers, PA, and life.

Aristotle’s emphasis on excellent actions done by choice and not under compulsion is particularly underlined by SDT (Ryan & Deci, 2016). This theory will gain from research on deliberate choice determined by knowledge and practical wisdom which are required to define which goals/aims are good to pursue. Importantly, because many self-determined behaviors can be evil, research should focus on pedagogical practices promoting not just autonomy but deliberate choice to promote both personal and social well-being. This is explained in the following section.

Well-being, Health and Excellence of any Kind: “Me” versus “Us”

A holistic concept of excellence for students in PE implies very high levels of competences across all domains of human action and life, including school, sport, and peer/social settings. This is important for students’ well-being and health. For example, the European Parliament (2006) declared that
Social competence is linked to personal and social well-being which requires an understanding of how individuals can ensure optimum physical and mental health, including as a resource for oneself and one's family and one's immediate social environment, and knowledge of how a healthy lifestyle can contribute to this. (p. 17).

Indeed, meta-analytic research findings support the links among social competence, health, and personal well-being across individuals (e.g., Kimiecik, 2016; Martins, Ramalho & Morin, 2010). However, various historical examples imply that some social competences that benefit individuals, such as communication skills, do not always serve social well-being and human good. Positive psychologists would be tempted to investigate the latter across different conceptualizations of well-being, particularly between hedonic and eudaimonic well-being (Vittersø, 2016a).

**Hedonia and Eudaimonia**

Hedonia and eudaimonia are two Greek words whose philosophical underpinnings are found respectively in Aristippus and the Cyrenaics philosophical school on the one hand and Socrates/Plato and particularly Aristotle’s philosophical schools on the other. Today hedonia is usually used to describe experiences of pleasure irrespective of the sources from which that pleasure is derived. In modern psychological literature a popular definition of eudaimonia reads, “feelings of personal expressiveness… when acting in ways perceived to involve the development of one’s best potentials and the use of these potentials in pursuit of one’s purpose in living” (Waterman, et al., 2010, p. 42). In general, eudaimonia is usually associated with ideas about pursuing excellence and the best within us, true self, actualizing
potential, feelings of personal expressiveness, meaning, and purpose (Kimiecik, 2016).

Contemporary psychologists adopt many approaches, definitions, and measures of eudaimonic well-being and even reviews of the various perspectives (Huta & Waterman, 2014; Proctor & Tweed, 2016; Vittersø, 2016b) become quickly updated because this field is growing rapidly. Almost each of the authors of the recent 38-chapter volume on eudaimonic well-being (Vittersø, 2016a) positioned (implicitly or explicitly) themselves in relation to Aristotle’s original ideas. Several of them connected excellence/virtue with eudaimonia (Fowers, 2016; Haybron, 2016; Hirata, 2016; Proctor & Tweed, 2016; Schwartz & Wrzesniewski, 2016; Steger, 2016), with Hybron (2016) observing “it is odd that neither “virtue” nor “excellence” makes its way into most eudaimonic scales” (p. 49). What is important in these views is the conceptualization of hedonia and eudaimonia as actions motivated to serve primarily “me” or “us”, respectively. For example, according to Steger (2016) “hedonia would be actions motivated by self-centered interest in immediate gratification and eudaimonia would be effort directed at making a more enduring impact that benefits the self in the context of other people and responsibility toward the collective or community” (p. 178).

The connection of excellence/virtue with eudaimonia is critical for contemporary personal and social well-being. With regard to personal well-being Haybron (2016, p. 50) noted, “caring and doing for others is well-known to be a potent source of subjective well-being, and there is little doubt that people who care a great deal for others tend to fare better than the selfish.” The association of excellence/virtue with eudaimonia is also critical for health because a large body of
studies has established the positive relation between eudaimonia and health (Ryff, 2014; Kimiecik, 2016).

*Implications for research.* The above have important potential for research in PE/PA, health, and personal well-being. Two examples comes to mind. First, one might examine whether caring for others is determinant of mutual support among family members to pursue healthy lifestyles, including regular exercise of all family members and correspondingly a determinant of families’ well-being. Second, one might examine whether these caring/supportive families are adaptive to health education and facilitate the work of PE teachers to involve parents and families in the adoption of extra-curricular and out-of-school physical activities, as the World Health Organization (2007) advises us to do.

**PE, Sport and Social Well-being**

Intergovernmental organizations expect from PE to have an impact on social well-being too. The European Parliament (2006) identified civic competences as key-competences for lifelong learning, while the Declaration of Berlin (2013) as presented in a recent UNESCO document consider PE an important context to develop skills, attitudes and knowledge for civic engagement (McLennan & Thompson, 2015). According to the European Parliaments (2006), “skills of civic competence relate to the ability to…display solidarity and interest in solving problems affecting the local and wider community” (p. 17), while the UNESCO document encourages PE teachers to motivate students to develop ties with communities. More broadly, the United Nations (2003) promote the idea of PE and Sport For Development (SFD) and Peace. Lyras and Peachey (2011, p. 311) define SFD, as “the use of sport to exert a positive influence on public health, the socialisation of children, youths and adults, the social inclusion of the disadvantaged, the economic development of regions and
states, and on fostering intercultural exchange and conflict resolution.” These authors suggest that while sport offers opportunities for intergroup contact which is the medicine against racism, prejudice, and discrimination, to facilitate the process of breaking down stereotypes and prejudice group, a number of other prerequisites exist. Specifically, sport group members should have equal status and common goals in sport activities, they should cooperate to reach their goals, they must be supported by authorities, structures, and social institutions to attain their goals, and they should develop friendship in order to have lasting effects. Still, to eliminate prejudice it is also required to develop positive emotions and cognitions toward out-group members which should be also generalized to people with similar characteristics, while in order to realize their potentials “people also need to think beyond ‘self’”, understand concepts that go beyond what they see and touch, and develop higher mental processes that enable them to develop their ideologies, have a vision, be creative, and care about universal issues” (Lyras & Peachey, 2011, p. 313).

Lyras’ and Peachey’s (2011) principles for human development and inter-group acceptance reflect very well Aristotle’s notion of excellence of any kind. As Fowers (2016) observed, Aristotle discussed the content of goals as an outgrowth of humanity’s social and reasoning nature. In the domain of sociality… he emphasized friendship, justice and good governance…In the domain of reasoning…he saw practical wisdom (good judgement), scientific knowledge and contemplative wisdom as necessary components of eudaimonia. (p. 73).

Why are reasoning, knowledge and wisdom needed? Because “virtue stems not from obedience to rules that are imposed, but from the good that is chosen for its own sake; from a balancing of personal pleasure and civic duty in a manner that
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achieves a harmonious “Golden mean” (Dean, 2016, p. 508). For example, voting is a civic duty but we have many historical examples suggesting that ill-informed citizens have voted for parties that undermined democracy. One needs knowledge and practical wisdom to understand what constitutes good governance and how civic engagement contributes to good governance. For Aristotle the pursuit of shared goals and social well-being is a rational option for individuals. Only within flourishing societies all individuals flourish too.

The importance of Aristotle’s conceptualization of excellence of any kind has implications for inclusion in PE and sport of disadvantaged, minority, and any other individual or group differing from the dominant/major group. Organizations such as the United Nations (2003) consider PE and sport important contexts for the social inclusion of immigrants/refugees, disabled, or disadvantaged students. However, existing reviews suggest that PE and sport can promote either social inclusion or exclusion of ethnic minorities depending on the goal structure of the social-psychological environment (Hatzigeorgiadis, Morela, Elbe, Kouli, & Sanchez, 2013).

A PE class structure emphasizing mastery goals facilitates integration and assimilation while a PE class structure promoting normative performance goals is linked with marginalization and lack of interaction with students of the other culture (Hatzigeorgiadis et al., 2013; Kouli & Papaioannou, 2009).

Although a mastery goal structure creates the appropriate substratum to base inclusion-specific strategies, it is not enough to promote a fully inclusive climate. For example, even when the PE climate is perceived as extremely high mastery-oriented, both high and low perceived ability students are much more involved, active, interested, and satisfied when they play with high rather than low sport ability students (Papaioannou, 1995). It seems that most contemporary PE and sport
experiences are much more hedonic than eudaimonic. These experience helps no one
to co-exercise with individuals of low athletic abilities or overweight people, which is
very common in adulthood. Unfortunately, emerging research implies that overweight
students experience many different kinds of teasing in PE (Li & Rukavina, 2012),
which seems an important cause of decreased levels of PA in PE of overweight
students (Pathare, Piche, Nicosia, & Haskvitz, 2016). To make students very involved
and satisfied when they play with low ability, overweight, disadvantaged and
marginalized peers we must firstly help them to empathize with these peers before we
teach them how to adjust their games to make them inclusive and satisfying for all.

Implications for future research on social well-being. We have yet to
investigate which pedagogical models and practices in PE assist students to thing
beyond “self,” develop higher mental processes that enable them to have a vision and
be proactive about universal issues. This research can be achieved following further
theory development in which the promotion of “we” will be at the center of
motivational processes and not one of possible motivational outcomes. Fowers (2012,
p. 10) was very critical suggesting “the goods that psychologists do promote (e.g.,
autonomy, efficacy, satisfaction) turn out to be the centerpieces of individualism and
instrumentalism, the predominant perspectives on the good life in the modern West.”
For example, although mastery goal adoption is adaptive for both individuals and
society, it is primarily an individualistic goal that is probably less effective to enact
proactive behaviors than the pursuit of shared goals (i.e., goals pursued and achieved
in concert with others; Fowers, 2012; Fowers, Anderson, Lefevor, & Lang 2015) or
the pursuit of altruistic goals.

Within our individualistic societies many will be cautious towards these ideas.
Even scholars who believe that benevolence is part of human nature seem to accept
that “a life of excellence and virtue can, in some circumstances, lead to less day-to-day positive affect and even a premature death” (Ryan & Martela, 2016, p. 112). But these circumstances are rather very rare in peace times for those who adopt the harmonious component in Aristotle’s definition of excellence. Individuals who have developed excellence of any kind have the practical wisdom to balance wisely between individualistic and altruistic goals pursuit. Future research in PE/PA should examine the role of practical wisdom in the pursuit of personal growth, shared, and altruistic goals in PE, PA, and life. This research and its implications for pedagogical practice has the potential to make substantial impact in the literature of inclusion and personal and social well-being.

**Measurement of Excellence of any kind**

The measurement of excellence of any kind (arete) is the greatest challenge ahead. The general trend has been the focus on the measurement of virtue, despite arguments that virtue is a narrower conceptualization of excellence of any kind (i.e., “arete”; MacIntyre, 2007; Miller, 2004). This limits researchers on the measurement of character, probably because ethics and character were the topic of Nichomachean Ethics. Still, as is illustrated in the aforementioned Gallen’s excerpt, for ancient Greeks a person’s excellence of any kind is found both in body and mind. This critical issue has gone unnoticed across virtue measurement articles in psychology and education. Although the measurement of mind is the main focus of most disciplines in education and psychology, PE and sport sciences are interested in the measurement of excellence of both mind and body. This complicates even further the already complicated literature on the measurement of virtue (Curren, & Kotzee, 2014; Fowers, 2014; Proctor & Tweed, 2016; Schwartz & Sharpe, 2006). These sources cover extensively the various challenges in the measurement of virtue, hence I will
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not reiterate them here. I will only summarize in titles some of these authors’ most
central points that are also connected with the previous analysis. Trying to integrate
them within the more general concept of excellence, the term “strength” below is used
to refer to qualities of both mind and body.

Implications for future research. We need measures of excellence in PE and
sport capturing the three components of excellence and practical wisdom.
Accordingly, the following should be considered. First, in line with the holistic
component, all mind and body excellences and strengths should be treated
interdependently and not in isolation from each other. Second, in line with the
harmonious component, when wisdom is not exercised excess can be vice; hence,
more of a single strength is not necessarily better. Third, in line with the internal
motivational component, excellence should be measured in concert with the pursued
good/goal. When this goal contributes harmoniously to both personal and social
flourishing, excess of the required strengths indicates excellence. Finally, practical
wisdom should be incorporated and assessed in the measurements of excellence and
all strengths.

Most of the existing virtue self-reports do not comply with these tenets (e.g.,
Proctor & Tweed, 2016; Schwartz & Sharpe, 2006). As alternative to self-reports,
experience sampling approaches (Fowers, 2014) and coding of participants’ responses
to stories of life dilemmas by trained coders (Baltes & Staudinger, 2000) have been
also proposed as promising methods in virtue measurement.

The existing limitations and challenges should not discourage researchers from
research on excellence of any kind. Although far from perfect, there are measures
capturing some determinants of excellence, such as personal growth goals
(Papaioannou et al., 2009) and eudaimonic motives (Hutta & Ryan, 2010), or
outcomes of excellence such as eudaimonic well-being (e.g., Waterman et al., 2010; Ryff, 1989). Researchers might also use measures of virtue (e.g., Peterson & Seligman, 2004) and wisdom (reviewed by Law & Staudinger, 2016) alongside other tools, acknowledging of course the limitations of these instruments.

Teaching the Core Olympic Values to Promote Well-Being: Excellence, Friendship, Respect

In his essay “L'Olympisme a l'ecole. Il faut l'encourager!” Coubertin (1934) argued that Olympic education should be part of the school curriculum. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) considers excellence, friendship, and respect the 3 core values of Olympism (The Olympic Museum Educational and Cultural Services, 2013). As stated below, for ancient Greeks and Aristotle in particular, friendship and respect were inseparable from excellence. But not all kinds of friendship and respect though, only those reflecting the internal motivational component of excellence. Below I link these ideas of Aristotle with implications of modern theories of motivation for teaching in PE. Lastly, I provide implications for teaching harmonious concepts of excellence in PE.

Aristotle’s legacy and implications of motivational theories in PE

Experience from action, habituation (Kristjánsson, 2007, p. 31-48), social modeling, Plato’s Socratic dialogues promoting critical thinking and wisdom, and perfect-excellent friendship are some of the best known social processes that were used in ancient Greece to cultivate excellence. Their influences on modern motivation theories are found in recommendations of social learning theory (e.g., Bandura, 1986) such as social modeling and the goal setting strategy that is aligned with Aristotle’s intentional approach to personal growth. Aristotle’s legacy is also found in modern
ideas stemming from Achievement Goals Theory (AGT) and SDT about motivational climates emphasizing mastery goal adoption, internally motivated decisions, and human relationships (Duda, Papaioannou Appleton, Quested & Krommidas, 2014). A lot of research on motivational climate in PE was based on Ames’ (1992) suggestions to adopt Epstein’s (1989) TARGET (Task, Authority, Recognition, Grouping, Evaluation, Timing) model (e.g., Braithwaite, Spray & Warburton, 2011), which, however, missed an emphasis on caring and authentic friendships as Aristotle would suggest. As I explain below, a caring environment and friendships constitute the most critical components of a motivational climate promoting mastery goals and love for learning and growth. Finally, empowering climates should adopt a harmonious approach to growth to promote well-being.

Friendship

Aristotle devoted one fifth of NE to friendship because he considered it excellence that promotes well-being: “Friendship is excellence (arete), or involves excellence and is most necessary for our life” (NE, VIII 1, 1155a1-5). Aristotle discussed extensively friendship between peers but he also used the term to discuss all human relationships (e.g., NE, VIII 12, 1161b10-1162a30). He distinguished between utility friendship, friendship for pleasure, and perfect friendship. Excellence can be promoted only through perfect friendship, which “is the friendship of men who are good, and alike in excellence (arete) (NE, VIII 3, 1156b5). Friendship is critical for the development of character: excellent friends cultivate the development of one’s excellence, like vicious friends cultivate one’s viciousness. Aristotle’s ideas are in line with recent research confirming that friends tend to become more alike in terms of pursuing intrinsic or extrinsic goals over time (Duriez, Giletta, Kuppens &
Vansteenkiste, 2013). This study showed that adolescents select friends according to perceived goal (intrinsic vs. extrinsic) pursuit similarity but their goals are also influenced by peers.

Recent research on Relationships Motivation Theory (RMT), a mini-theory of SDT (Ryan & Deci, 2016), is also in line with Aristotle’s philosophy. SDT researchers have found that people’s need for relatedness are satisfied when social interactions promote their autonomy, which is critical to enhance their well-being (e.g., Patrick, Knee, Canevello, & Lonsbary, 2007). Aristotle would add to this though that it is not enough for PE teachers and mates to support students’ autonomy and to sustain the good relations that we typically find in PE and sport settings. We should also adopt an eudaimonic approach, that is, to support others’ growth through authentically caring behaviors, which ultimately promote students’ eudaimonic well-being. This cannot take place with the typical hedonic approaches that are found across many sport settings. Aristotle explicitly stated that peer relationships that are based only on pleasure from playing in sport and in PE cannot sustain for long and they don’t develop excellence. Friendships are sustained for long and promote happiness when they are deep and caring, aiming at the development of excellence of both parties.

Emerging research on caring in PE is in line with some of these predictions. Overweight students felt being cared when PE teachers and peers were concerned about their well-being in PE classes (Li, Rukavina, & Foster, 2013). Moreover, perceived caring in PE was positively connected with enjoyment and high effort in PE classes (Zhao & Li, 2016). This line of research might provide important insights on the creation of inclusive environments and the promotion of students’ well-being.
through interventions focused on the development of authentic friendships. Returning to the aforementioned issue of students’ motivation when they play with mates differing in abilities, gender, ethnicity, etc., the implication is clear: the development of authentic friendships between students is prerequisite for a truly inclusive environment for all children. Only perfect friends aiming towards excellence really care for the growth of both themselves and their friends and can be fully involved and satisfied when they play together. However, we have little knowledge how to promote perfect friendship through PE and PA and how to create a class environment in line with the eudaimonic perspective. For sure, the individualistic goals that are found in AGT and motivational climate literature should be enriched with shared and altruistic goals, the achievement affect should be enriched with eudaimonic affect like love, and the social skills like communication and cooperation should be enriched with eudaimonic social skills like empathy. Importantly, the specific shared goals in PE should be also aligned with shared intrinsic goals in life aiming to serve both personal and social well-being.

Respect

For the IOC respect “includes respect for oneself and one’s body, respect for one another, the rules and the environment” (The Olympic Museum Education and Cultural Services, 2013). Here I focus on respect for the rules because the others are addressed elsewhere in this article. Respect for the rules is the most important component of an excellent (or virtuous) person for Aristotle. It is an expression of the internal motivational component of excellence which is developed through full internalization of rules, as SDT (Ryan & Deci, 2016) also implies.
Don Hellison’s (1985, 2011) suggested practical ways of how to achieve respect in PE. His Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (TPSR) model reflects a pedagogical philosophy influenced by Aristotle’s legacy rather than normative or utilitarian philosophies. As Aristotle would teach us, Hellison put irresponsible behaviors in PE at the lowest level, internally motivated actions in the middle levels, and helping others and extending them in other domains of human action at the highest levels. With the assistance of various pedagogical practices the aim of PE teachers is to help children internalize rules at lower levels and move to higher levels where they are trying to learn how to initiate responsible and helping behaviors towards others and how to generalize these excellence skills in other life settings. Research in PE revealed a strong positive intercorrelation pattern among the fully internalized reasons for discipline suggested by Hellison and SDT, growth goals in PE and discipline in PE, but external reasons for discipline suggesting compliance with a duty (e.g., because “that’s what I am supposed to do” “that’s the rule”) had no relation with discipline in PE (e.g., Papaioannou, 1998). Hellison focused on the whole person development through teaching life skills that empowers children and help them to flourish in life (Hemphill, Andrew & Richards, 2016). In line with Aristotle’s suggestions, disengaged students participating in TPSR PA programs demonstrated social awareness such as understanding others’ perspectives, helping behavior and positive peer relationships (Gordon, Jacobs & Wright, 2016). The TPSR model was adopted by scholars across several countries to promote human good through PE, such as the recent study of Mandigo, Corlett and Ticas (2016) in Salvador targeting the reduction of violence through teaching in PE; both the aim and design of this study are in line with Aristotle’s philosophy.

Excellence
Holistic and internal motivational component of excellence. A holistic model of excellence in PE implies development of all competences and qualities of students that promote personal and social well-being, which is certainly in line with the aims of national PE curricula worldwide (Hastie, 2017). This requires an emphasis on whole person development in PE. To achieve it we need to integrate curricula emphasizing social and individual responsibility (e.g., Hellison, 2011), life skills development grounded on the promotion of students’ autonomy, relatedness, and competence (e.g., Hodge, Danish & Martin, 2012), health-related physical activity promotion (e.g., Welk, Eisenmann & Dolman, 2006), and sport skills development through sport education models that also emphasize ethical development (e.g., Harvey, Kirk, & O'Donovan, 2014; Siedentop, Hastie & van der Mars, 2004).

Such an integration sounds atheoretical but it is not. The aforementioned curricula share many common features, most importantly the emphasis on students’ growth and well-being. We can integrate them based on sound theory if we adopt a philosophy emphasizing the pursuit of both personal growth and shared goals in life. For example, in one of our interventions to promote life skills, social responsibility, and PA, a key-message was “by growing everywhere I will live a better/happier life” (Milosis & Papaioannou, 2007; Papaioannou & Milosis, 2009). This philosophy can be realized in PE through a motivational climate emphasizing mutual support in the pursuit of the short term mastery and shared goals specified by the aforementioned curricula and through a teaching process that enable students to deliberately choose these goals to promote health and both personal and social well-being. Theory and research implies that a personal growth goal pursuit triggers cognitive-emotional processes resulting in outcomes described in these curricula: adoption of exercise self-regulation strategies, exercise and sport adoption and healthy lifestyle (Papaioannou
et al., 2011), meta-cognitive strategies, life skill development, progress goals across different life settings, multidimensional self-concept, well-being (Papaioannou et al., 2009; Milosis & Papaioannou, 2007; Papaioannou & Milosis, 2009), and mental health (Robitschek & Keyes, 2009). Further benefits for social well-being are expected through shared and altruistic goal pursuit.

Harmonious component of excellence. None of the above curricula can promote both personal and social well-being if they do not concurrently emphasize the harmonious component of excellence. A successful approach to develop holistic excellence requires wisdom to select the goals that should be prioritized in particular situations to promote well-being. The following recommendations stem from Aristotle’s definition of excellence implying to “deliberately chose the mean relative to us… the mean between two vices—one stemming from excess, the other from defect… as a man of practical wisdom would determine it” (NE, II 6, 1106b35-1107a5). Teaching in PE should enable students to exercise knowledge and wisdom to investigate where they stand in relation to themselves and to others and to find and choose the mean that will help them harmoniously integrate either different qualities within themselves and different goal pursuits, or different interests between themselves and others. To make the right choice students need knowledge, or they should discover knowledge through practice, which is related to the specific situation and to the goal pursuit that achieves harmony and flourishing for all. Teaching in PE should also enable students to experience eudaimonic emotions and deliberately choose the mean and those goals leading to both personal and social well-being. Accordingly, the following recommendations which are related to the aims of the Olympic movement are proposed.
Physical Activity & pro-health pursuits. Lack of physical activity and health is certainly vice but excessive emphasis can be also a vice. As Hirata (2016, p. 58) suggested,

pursuing better and better health will eventually come at the expense of other goods, certain pro-health choices may not be prudent for a given person because the concomitant sacrifice in terms of other goods is out of proportion with — i.e. would not be justified by— the health benefits gained (p. 58).

Respect for the body. Both the untrained and overtrained body is vice. Too much emphasis on beauty and strength leads to maladaptive internalization of reasons for PA, and discontinuity in PA settings and to clinical symptoms like eating disorders and mental disorders, but goals for overall health increase intrinsic motivation, long-term PA, and well-being (Verstuyf, Patrick, Vansteenkiste, & Teixeira, 2012).

Effort and cheating. Excellence requires high effort which is found in the mean between deceiving others and deceiving oneself when one applies low effort. Winning through cheating does not require excellence and does not lead to eudaimonic well-being. Moral behavior in sport occurs through internal motivation linked with individuals’ pursuit of eudaimonic well-being (Sage & Kavussanu, 2010).

Cooperation and intra-team conflict. Sustained teamwork requires finding and selecting the mean between one’s interests and others’ interests. It requires integration of one’s perspective with that of others’ to overcome disagreements (Rahim, 2002) and promote psychological well-being (Knee, Lonsbary, Canevello, & Patrick, 2005). Obliging, dominating, and avoiding styles are ineffective to reduce conflict and unlikely to promote everyone’s well-being (Rahim, 2002). Shared goal pursuit is required for sustained teamwork, friendship, and flourishing of all individuals.
Social justice is found in the mean between absolute equal distribution of rewards irrespective of one’s effort and performance and the “winner takes everything” approach. To sustain happy classes and teams every individual should have a place and enough resources to flourish; even the lowest ability youngsters should be given time to play in team competitions. On the other hand, by giving a little more time to the most competent individuals the team benefits from longer sustained high performance that enable all individuals to flourish.

Peace and inter-group conflict. To sustain peace we should find the mean between the interests of one group/team and the interests of the other groups/teams. What was mentioned for intra-team conflict and social justice also applies here, but now the unit is the team instead of the individual. Teams pursuing shared goals contribute to a sport community that thrives. National teams pursuing shared goals can promote the message that sport really promotes global peace and human flourishing (which is not obvious today).

Environment. To achieve sustainable development students must be trained to find the mean between human and nature flourishing. Meta-analyses of studies indicate that materialistic values are negatively related to environmental attitudes and behaviors (Hurst, Dittmar, Bond, & Kasser, 2013), implying that an eudaimonic approach in children’s education has a positive effect on environment.

Conclusion

The traces of sport excellence and Olympic ideas are in ancient Greece, however, their conceptualization has changed substantially since then. This creates important problems in sport and PE worldwide, such as the doping and Olympic commercialization challenges for the Olympic movement, the anemic promotion of Olympic ideals, the exclusion of millions of children from sport and PA, and the
marginalization of PE. In this paper, I explained why a reintroduction of the ancient
Greek definition of excellence and Aristotle’s virtue ethics will help humanity to
confront these challenges in PE and youth sport. Contemporary motivational theories
can assist us to promote the holistic and internally motivated components of
excellence that were favored by Greeks and Aristotle. However, these theories should
be further developed to address effectively the harmonious component of excellence
too. To promote the holistic, harmonious, and internal motivational concept of
excellence we need wise leaders, particularly in schools, governments and sports.
Biesta (2012) suggested, “Following Aristotle … the key question for teacher
education is not how to become competent or skilled in the application of scientific
evidence… (but) how to become educationally wise.” (p. 6). Based on Aristotle we
can conclude that teachers’ and leaders’ knowledge development about excellence
and well-being is important for the development of their wisdom. I hope that this
article will stimulate researchers and policy makers to promote this knowledge in PE
and sport.
References


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Footnotes

1 Some of the present ideas and quotes to ancient Greek texts have been previously presented in the 55th and the 56th International Sessions for Young Participants of the International Olympic Academy, Ancient Olympia, Greece.

2 Like most contemporary experts in ancient Greek literature, I disown Aristotle’s and ancient Greeks’ views about the lower status of slaves, women and non-Greeks, which were common views across most human societies for millennia before and after Aristotle’s time. However, a criticism of past views using present-day ideas would be anachronism/presentism. As Fowers (2016, p. 68) noted, Aristotle’s “ethics can be relatively easily universalized to all human beings to square with contemporary views”.

3 This is not the place to argue about the contribution of Aristotle’s ideas in contemporary science, why to read Aristotle and not other philosophers, how to interpret Aristotle or those who wrote about Aristotle, etc. Barnes (1995) provided a nice introduction to Aristotle, advising readers on issues such as why and how to read Aristotle (Barnes, 1995, p. ix–xix), to check one translation against another and to suspect the possibility of error or infelicity in translation, because “even the best translations contain errors” (Barnes, 1995, p. xxii-xxiii), to remember that less than one third of Aristotle’s work has survived (Barnes, 1995, p. 6-15), etc.

4 According to Kraut (1979) contemporary conceptions of happiness tend to be subjectivist but Aristotle’s “eudaimonia” is closer to “welfare” and “human flourishing”. Several authors prefer to simply use the Greek term.

5 This and other translated quotes from Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics (NE) were provided following careful inspection of translations of NE to English from different scholars (transl. by Crisp; Johnston; Ross; Reeve) and translations of NE to
modern Greek from Greek scholars (Lipourlis) (see Note 4). All translations and the
present quotes to Aristotle followed the Bekker code of references to Aristotle’s
surviving works (Barnes, 1995, p. xxi). E.g., for this reference/quote, NE for
Nicomachean Ethics, I for Book 1, Part 8, 1098b Bekker Page, “b” for right-hand
Column, Line 30. The original ancient Greek text can be found in the online edition of

6 I am very grateful to Antonios Papaioannou, an excellent scholar of the
ancient Greek language, who draw my attention to the etymology of this Greek word.

7 For Aristotle poverty also decreases well-being; hence people need a certain
amount of money/wealth that allows them to flourish.

8 Not all Aristotelians agree with Steger’s identification of pleasure and
selfishness. For example, it might promote an unacknowledged religious (e.g.,
Judeo-Christian or Muslim) ethic, but projecting this value position in science
without acknowledgement might be problematic (Fowers, personal communication).”

9 Here we provided evidence that the word “arete” implying excellence of
both body and mind is found both in Homer (MacIntyre, 2007) whom Aristotle
mentioned many times and in Galen who lived several centuries after Aristotle.
Aristotle also used the term “arete” to refer to the ability of lyre-player who plays his
lyre excellently (NE, 1.7, 1098a); in this passage of NE the most recent translations of
arete is “excellence” (e.g., transl. by Reeve, 2014, p. 17) but in the past it has been
noted that “arete is often nowadays translated as “excellence.” An advantage of the
traditional translation “virtue” is that it preserves the link with socalled virtue ethics.”

10 The IOC maintains friendship as distinct Olympic value from excellence,
which is in line with current thinking. Indeed, MacIntyre (2007, p. 182) noted:
“consider the importance of friendship as a virtue in Aristotle's list —how different from us!” However, if we want to emphasize the humanistic purpose of Olympism, then the philosophy supporting the inseparable nature of excellence, friendship (and respect) should be promoted.

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