An Historical Overview of Justice and Rationality by Alasdair Macintyre with Special Reference To Whose Justice Which Rationality

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Abstract: The present study aims to review and analyze the concept of justice and rationality and their relationship that how justice and rationality play a significant role for the establishment of any culture and society. The relationship of both elaborated with special reference to Alasdair Macintyre’s famous work “Whose Justice, Which Rationality” in which he presents an historical overview of justice and rationality. Professor Macintyre argued that there is no tradition-neutral origin of practical rationality that can be used to resolve disagreements about justice. Through an examination of four philosophical traditions, he argues that the conception of justice of each is linked to its own theory of practical rationality. He follows the progress of the Western tradition through “three different traditions:” from Homer and Aristotle to Thomas Aquinas, from Augustine to Thomas Aquinas and from Augustine to Hume. He maintains that there is no single conception of justice and rationality. Thus there are justices rather than justice and there are rationalities rather than rationality which are varying from society to society and person to person.

Keywords: Justice, Rationality, Alasdair Macintyre, Traditions (Aristotelian, Augustinian, and Scottish)

Introduction
Justice is a broad notion that is based on a concept of moral rightness. It comes from Late Old English iustise ‘administration of law¹ that it is the legal or philosophical theory by which fairness is administered². Different theories in relation to justice are (a) distributive justice which emphasizes that each person should find what they deserve, (b) Retributive justice that is related to punishment for unlawful activity. It is the view that “punishment is justified by the desert of the offender”³, (c) Restorative justice is a move toward justice that focuses on the requirements of victims and criminals⁴, as an alternative of punishing the criminal or
fulfilling theoretical lawful doctrines. So Justice is an act that grants appropriate regard to the suitable benefit, possessions, and security of one's member. The idea of justice changed in each tradition.

Plato (the ancient Greek Philosopher) in his famous work “The Republic”, maintains that “Justice is doing one’s own job.” Aristotle assumed that justice deals with people in accord with their merits, deal with equals equally, and unequal’s unequally. Augustine argued that the chief connection of justice is among God an individual. According to Thomas Aquinas, justice is a reliable virtue, in which we give every person what is appropriate to him or her. John Locke (1632-1704), maintains that all men are equal and independent; no one should harm another in his life, health, liberty, or possessions. John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) claimed that justice is what has the best outcomes and for justice, it is unintelligible to be one-sided. John Rawls offered an egalitarian concept of justice and his main focus was on social justice. He maintains that man has the equal rights to the basic liberties and all the positions for the employment and public offices were available to every person. All of its members should be offered by the society to fill their positions.

The strong relation of justice with virtues maintains that it cannot uphold without the presence of virtues. The most basic virtue is rationality without which no justice is possible. Rationality is the state of being rational, based on facts or reason. It is the "quality of possessing reason." It implies the consistency of one's actions with one's reasons for action, or of one's beliefs with one's reasons to believe. Like justice, reason also contained its various types: (a) Practical reason is the broad human power for resolving, through reflection, the inquiry of what one ought to do. It is the expression about action itself unswervingly moves people to do something, (b) Theoretical rationality is exhibited in modifying individual's cognitive conditions whereas practical rationality is exhibited in standardizing individual's goals, or actions and tries to give the explanation of those acts, (c) Instrumental rationality, inculcates agents to acquire those ways that are essential for their specific goals. The instrumental theory used, to a certain extent, as a structural condition on an individual's thoughts. (d) Structural rationality is being directed by forms of actions that the agent evaluates of. A distinction takes place among the different areas of rational activity which is
as follows:
Plato holds that reason is accountable and will be in command of the well-structured soul. There is no virtue without reason, and this type of life was ruled by passion, desire, and sentiments. Aristotle said that “the purpose of the human being is logos or reason, and the more carefully one survives the life of a rationale; more the better-off individual’s life will be”. Thus the happiest life will be based on the activity of virtues (justice, prudence, courage, and temperance), and this activity takes place under the control of reason. Thomistic ethics characterizes the first principle of practical reason that we should do right acts and avoid from sinful acts. Utilitarian’s inclined to observe reason like a tool for the fulfillment of desires and needs. Therefore, possessing a justified way of life regarding how to survive in an ethically rational manner would entail that one has good reasons holding one’s belief concerning what is ethically right and wrong, and concerning what one ethically ought and ought not to do in a broad range of events. Macintyre holds that to understand what justice is, we have to understand firstly what rationality in practice demand for us? Aristotle claims that practical wisdom entails virtue and justice is one of the four cardinal virtues (courage, temperance, reason, and justice). Justice in a sense covers all the other virtues, thus just consisting of exposing virtue normally. Locke said that, in Aristotle’s point of view, the man should act according to their reason and what is recommended to him by his reason. He holds that perhaps the function of human reason is weak to grasp the realities of the natural world, but to judge the moral obligations of human it can perform a great job and to understand the moral rules reason is the first source. He said that, the justice of God is because of his goodness which restrains us from doing harm. J.S.Mill maintains that happiness comes when we apply rationality in our decisions. If the decisions are just then we will be able to maintain happiness among individuals and the community at a maximum level. But John Rawls who was a contemporary philosopher and opposed to the Utilitarian’s concept of maximization presented the concept of justice in his egalitarian theory which is based on equality on the whole level. He favors a fair or equal distribution of things among people or society. This is possible for the use of rationality in our judgments so that we can sustain equality, which is the form of justice, to spend a better way of life. Thus rationality itself, in case of theoretical or practical, is thought with history: in fact, as there are a multiplicity of practices of investigation, with narrations, there are, rationalities instead of rationality, at the same time as it will turn out that there are justices instead of justice.

Alasdair Chalmers Macintyre (1929–) who is a Scottish philosopher presented Aristotelian,
Thomistic, Scottish traditions of justice and rationality. He presented ancient thoughts about practical rationality and justice which start from Homer. He states that, according to Homer, the world is on a particular order (themis)\(^\text{24}\), which is based on society and nature. To become a just person one should act according to this order. Homer uses the word dike\(^\text{25}\) for justice. To tie these two terms dike and themis both arête\(^\text{26}\) (virtue) and agathos\(^\text{27}\) (good) are required. He argues that, in Homeric poems, arête is the only quality which enables an individual to do what individual’s role requires, and to preserve the order that is dike. So, he calls upon his arête to give him the strength to overcome the passion\(^\text{28}\). Justice' is a virtue; and it requires good practical reasoning. Macintyre holds that justice and rationality both are virtues (arête). They cannot work separately\(^\text{29}\). He stated that justice is defined in term of merit and desert and there is a multiplicity of standards of the desert, each standard will be independent of other. Thus Macintyre maintains that the members of a society make those standards whose aim was to introduce a kind of life in which the goods of every practice can be enjoyed. This kind of action was named by Greeks the “Politics” which comes from “Polis”\(^\text{30}\) whose concern was, not to this or that particular good, but with human good as such. Justice is a disposition to give to each person what that person deserves and to treat no one in a way incompatible with their deserts. The rules of justice are those rules best design to secure the outcomes, including both the just and the unjust. The virtue of justice is nothing other than the dispositions to obey those rules\(^\text{31}\). Thus Macintyre declared that “Other virtues and justice can be understood as dispositions their aim was to protect the overall good of the polis, so also practical reasoning becomes ordered on the whole good of the polis, to the good and the best”\(^\text{32}\).

He argued that “In Athenian thinking, the position of justice in the relationship of citizens to citizens in the state is one thing and outside the state is quite another. Every citizen is free to participate in the life of the city and also to pursue his own ends, and each will do so successfully by means of reason of that participation”\(^\text{33}\). According to Macintyre Thucydides represent that, in the community, there is and can be only that justice which the strong find it in their own interest to uphold\(^\text{34}\). Plato rejects the Thucydidean view that justice is nothing but what the strong make it\(^\text{35}\). Macintyre holds that, According to Plato, Reason itself is the command to move to action- rather than those of passions or appetite. The main focus of the concept of good is to the excellence of a specific action which is given to a specific individual. For the attainment of the goods, virtue is essential and it is the worth of our character that is helpful in our achievements. Macintyre argued that in Plato’s point of view:
“Justice is the key virtue because both in the psuche (soul) and the state (polis) only justice can provide the order which enables the future virtues to do their work” 36. He maintains that, from the Platonic standpoint, a best social order depends upon three classes of people-producers, auxiliaries (warriors), and guardians (rulers, who possess reason); when they will be in harmony the society will be just. The Homeric view of the dike is reappeared in the Aristotelian notion of the dike as the classification of what is highest in nature, and it is the norm through which the polis is ordered. So in order to become just person phronesis (reason) is required and phronesis is not possible without arête (virtue). Thus one can judge rightly if he follows all kinds of virtues (courage, temperance, reason, and justice). Macintyre holds that, according to Aristotle, justice is a matter of what is fair, that is, of to ison, “the equal”. Thus a distribution will be just if it will be among unequals.

Every inhabitant of every state has a rational source of thinking through which they judge their state that what is adequate for the progress of the state. He maintains that one cannot become just, on Aristotle's viewpoint, without the ability to reason practically, that justice requires phronesis (reason). It is also the case that one cannot become rational without being just. He said that “one cannot be practically rational without being virtuous”. And what holds of the virtues generally, holds more specifically of justice37. Macintyre argued that: “Justice is a precondition of practical rationality” 38. Thus with the use of rationality in decisions, an agent can better perform his actions. In Aristotle's point of view, all rational practical activity has as its ultimate final cause, the vision of what God sees. Macintyre holds that: “A story which begins in Homer's poems with the justice of Zeus culminates in Aristotle's philosophy in an account of justice and the other virtues as serving a life moved in its activity towards and by the Unmoved Mover”.39

The debate over justice and rationality also appeared in a medieval era. Macintyre maintains that Augustine suggests that Justice exists only in that republic which is the city of God. God created man and reason was possess by Him to every person, therefore, individual should do right judgments that are based on his reason. Intellect is motivating through will and it separates us from other beings that do not possess reason and through this faculty, we can grasp those truths that are based on facts. He said that justice is owed to anyone regarding desert and no virtues either it will be justice can be possible without humility and charity, without it one cannot have the love of God, and so cannot possess any other virtue. Justice, therefore, cannot informs an individual's character unless that character is informed by
humility, and the rootedness of injustice in pride entails that injustice consists in disobedience. The Augustinian content of virtues differs from their Aristotelian counterparts because in Aristotle’s point of view, the reason is not motivating to attain the goals and there is no place for humility and charity among virtues and no place for a divine lawgiver.

Macintyre expresses that both for Aristotle and Aquinas, rational justification is a matter of deducibility from first principles, in the case of necessary truths of the first principles. Thus our actions should be according to the principle that we should do good acts and avoid from the wrong acts and the acquisition of practical knowledge and the exercise of good practical reasoning cannot occur without some development of the moral virtues which are courage, prudence (reason) temperance and justice without which we cannot make valid judgments behind this our rationality works. Aquinas follows Aristotle (Nicomachean Ethics) in holding that we can only become just by performing just actions, and every specific action that is based on disobedience is a cause of demoralized reason through passions or of bad habits. He said that it is the divine will or the nature of things that produce disasters, not the human wickedness. By the method of deliberation, through intellect, we can appropriately judge the will and with the help of intellect or practical reasoning we reached the conclusion that how we ought to act. Aquinas follows Plato in using the scheme of four cardinal virtues (Prudence, justice, Temperance, and courage) and holds that someone whose reason and passions are rightly ordered will, therefore, exhibit each of the four cardinal virtues. He said that it is with the help of our reason that we believe in the principles of natural law, and thus leads to good actions. He said that like Aristotle, Aquinas adopted the view that intellectual virtues cannot work fairly without prudentia (reason). Macintyre states that in Aquinas view if human laws are according to the divine laws then the activity of prudentia will be efficient. Thus justice is what is rightly owed to another either in accordance with the natural law or with positive law. Macintyre argued that: “The central human experience of the natural law, as I remarked earlier, is of our inability to live by it; and what we know of justice as or more often finds application in its flouting and disregard as in its observance.” He holds that the statement of Aquinas is logical and justifiable, as it comes out from the complex arguments that are considered more than Augustine and Aristotle.

The Two most renowned philosopher of Scottish tradition, which Macintyre describes, is Francis Hutcheson and David Hume also discussed the relationship of justice and rationality. Hutcheson departs not only from the Aristotle but also from the ancients. Like Shaftesbury, Hutcheson believed that actions are expressions of and produced by affections or passions.
and no natural affections or passions can bad itself. When we judge an action to be virtuous or vicious, we judge it as the expression and product of some passion.\textsuperscript{48} He was impressed by Shaftesbury's writings and believed upon his claim that all plain persons are well able, without education in moral theory, to discern the distinction between virtue and vice. Macintyre said that according to Aristotle we use reason for the achievement of ends.\textsuperscript{49} Unlike Aristotle, Hutcheson argued that the ability to demonstrating, examining, judging there involves no reasoning about the ultimate goals. We act against them, by the willpower of the soul, which is prior to all reasoning; as no opinion or judgment can move to action.\textsuperscript{50} Macintyre described that we judge morally, on Hutcheson's view, only because God so created us that our moral judgments should not be compatible with His. And in this way, we have no moral standards independent of the divine standards.\textsuperscript{51} On his view, we are motivated only by the affections. Aristotle holds that intellectual as well as a moral virtue is involved in every exercise of phronesis and we cannot make true judgments without moral virtues. While on Hutcheson view, we can make true judgments without moral virtues. Thus Macintyre concludes that there is a most fundamental disagreement between Aristotle and Hutcheson over practical rationality because for Hutcheson there is no place for the virtue of phronesis, that virtue according to Aristotle which is exercised in exercising all other virtues.\textsuperscript{52}

According to Macintyre, Hume repeated what Hutcheson said. He said that practical judgment is, of course, the expression of someone particular individual's particular passion or passions. He constructed his account of reasoning from his Hutchesonian inheritance. What immediately precedes action is an exertion of the will.\textsuperscript{54} Nothing but a passion or passions can produce an action. He said that according to Hume reason cannot motivate us. Passions help us in judging this or that action to be virtuous or vicious. Reason acts only at the command of passion. He asserted that “Reason is and ought only to be the Slave of the passions and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them”.\textsuperscript{55} According to Macintyre, Hume concludes that “however single acts of justice may be contrary, either to public or private interest. When therefore someone condemns an action as unjust, they are expressing that in themselves which is in key part the outcome of their reasoning.\textsuperscript{56} Macintyre said that, Hume narrates, judges and reason as a member of social order and in his point of view there is no other way to narrate, judge and reason. He holds that both Aristotle and Hume offers an explanation of practical rationality in which a person who reasons correctly does so as a part of a specific kind of community, based on politics,
not just as an individual human being. He stated that Aristotle and Hume both present that
the type of reasoning that adjusts means to ends can be exercised separately from any such a
society. Thus to reform the passions this type of reason has no criteria. Thus, to each
determinate form of the practical reason there correspond a determinate conception of justice,
and Hume’s theorizing exhibits this connection as clearly as Aristotle’s does, assume’s added
significance. So Macintyre argued that: “Those who disagree with each other radically about
justice will not be able to look to some neutral conception of rationality, by appeal to which
they will be able to decide which of them is in the right”.

Thus Alasdair Macintyre (1929- ) presents rival traditions and the way through which they
can beat one another. His main focus was on Aristotelian, Augustinian, Thomist and Humean
traditions of practical rationality and justice. For him, “rationality comprises all the
intellectual resources, both formal and substantive, that we use to judge truth and falsity in
propositions and to determine choice-worthiness in courses of action”. An individual’s
rationality will be tradition constituted if he accepts the ethical and rational practices to
evaluate good and bad, right and wrong. We can judge and understand the world in which we
live, through tradition constituted rationality. According to him, the individual’s rationality is
both traditions constituted and constitutive, and he takes an active part in the rationalities of
their societies and in their own rationalities. According to him reason and justice both have
not worldwide concept: “since there are a variety of traditions of inquiry, with histories, it
will produce; rationalities rather than rationality, just as it will produce that there are justices
rather than justice”. The concept of justice and rationality is different from all modern
philosophies because the account of modernity is confused by its own values. He justifies
that, in Aquinas’ perspective, through a dialectical construction an individual reach first
principle. While on the other hand, Descartes and his follower’s states that the concept of
philosophy set upon the knowledge of the first principle. And the person who will be truly
rational could evaluate this knowledge as true. For moderns, philosophy is technical rather
than moral. The modern approach rejects the idea that all our thoughts are based on traditions
and that every culture has their own criteria’s of justice and rationality. For modern, there is
no place for traditions that are essential for moral and political investigations.

**Conclusion**

In this article the concept of justice and rationality was highlighted, that what is their role in
any society. Macintyre describe their relationship in ancient medieval and modern era and
reached a conclusion that, “There is no standing ground, no place for inquiry- apart from that which is provided by some particular tradition or other”. That is called “the rationality of traditions”. He maintains that “the justice and rationality of liberalism is the justice and rationality of those that are the “outsiders” and the “citizens of nowhere”. And the people who have no reason for actions, they fulfill their needs and their rationality is under the control of their needs and desires. Macintyre shows that all traditions have standards, no tradition can exclude the possibility of current beliefs and practices within its own terms; conversely, all traditions have the capacity to subject others to criticism and frequently such criticisms succeed and rival traditions change under the impact of such challenges.

Bibliography


13. Sigrú Svavarsdóttir, _Evaluations of Rationality_ (Ohio state University); pp-6


24. *Themis* is the Greek goddess of law and justice, literally "custom, law, right;" related to theme "that which is placed or laid down".

25. The Greek term “dike” which is given above is used for ‘justice’.

26. The Greek term “Arete” which is given above meaning "virtue" or "excellence".

27. The Greek term “agathos” which is given above is used for ‘good’.


30. The Greek term ‘*polis*’ which is used above meaning ‘state’.

31. WJWR, P. 39

32. Ibid. p. 44

33. Ibid. p. 51

34. Ibid. p. 65

35. Ibid. p. 70

36. Ibid. p. 74

37. Ibid. p. 122-123

38. Ibid. p. 129

39. Ibid. p. 143

40. Ibid. p. 155-157
41. Ibid. p. 163
42. Ibid. p. 172-173
43. Ibid. p. 181
44. Ibid. p. 187
45. (ST. Ia-IIae, 12, 1-4)
46. WJWR. p. 197
47. Ibid. p. 205
48. Ibid. p. 267
51. Ibid. I, ix, 5
52. WJWR. p. 275
53. Ibid. p. 276
54. Ibid. p. 300
55. Ibid. p. 304
57. WJWR. p. 320-321
58. Ibid. p. 354
59. Ibid. p. 9
60. Ibid. p. 174
61. Ibid. p. 182
62. Ibid. p. 186

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