

An Indian-Australian research partnership

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| <b>Project Title:</b>                                  | <b>Affective Approaches to Justice as a Way of Life</b>                 |                         |
| <b>Project Number</b>                                  | HSS0942   |                         |
| <b>MonashMainSupervisor</b><br>(Name, Email, Phone)    | Dr.Michael Ure<br>Michael.Ure@monash.edu                                | <i>Full name,Email</i>  |
| <b>Monash Co-supervisor(s)</b><br>(Name, Email, Phone) | None  |                         |
| <b>Monash Head of Dept/Centre</b> (Name,Email)         | Associate Professor Dharma Arunachalam<br>dharma.arunachalam@monash.edu | <i>Full name, email</i> |
| <b>Monash Department:</b>                              | School of Social Sciences   |                         |
| <b>Monash ADGR</b><br>(Name,Email)                     | Professor Rita Wilson<br>Rita.Wilson@monash.edu                         | <i>Full name, email</i> |
| <b>IITB Main Supervisor</b><br>(Name, Email, Phone)    | Siby K. George<br>kgsiby@iitb.ac.in                                     | <i>Full name,Email</i>  |
| <b>IITB Co-supervisor(s)</b><br>(Name, Email, Phone)   | None  |                         |
| <b>IITB Head of Dept</b><br>(Name, Email, Phone)       | Kushal Deb hod@hss.iitb.ac.in   | <i>Full name, email</i> |
| <b>IITB Department:</b>                                | Humanities and Social Sciences  |                         |

### Research Clusters:

### Research Themes:

| Highlight which of the Academy's CLUSTERS this project will address?<br><i>(Please nominate JUST <u>one</u>. For more information, see <a href="http://www.iitbmonash.org">www.iitbmonash.org</a>)</i> |   | Highlight which of the Academy's Theme(s) this project will address?<br><i>(Feel free to nominate more than one. For more information, see <a href="http://www.iitbmonash.org">www.iitbmonash.org</a>)</i> |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| 1  | Material Science/Engineering (including Nano, Metallurgy)                 | 1  | Advanced computational engineering, simulation and manufacture |
| 2  | Energy, Green Chem, Chemistry, Catalysis, Reaction Eng                    | 2  | Infrastructure Engineering                                     |
| 3  | Math, CFD, Modelling, Manufacturing                                       | 3  | Clean Energy   |
| 4  | CSE, IT, Optimisation, Data, Sensors, Systems, Signal Processing, Control | 4  | Water  |
| 5  | Earth Sciences and Civil Engineering (Geo, Water, Climate)                | 5  | Nanotechnology   |
| 6  | Bio, Stem Cells, Bio Chem, Pharma, Food                                   | 6  | Biotechnology and Stem Cell Research                           |
| 7  | Semi-Conductors, Optics, Photonics, Networks, Telecomm, Power Eng         | 7  | <b>Humanities and social sciences</b>                          |
| 8  | HSS, Design, Management   | 8  | Design   |

## The research problem

Mainstream twentieth century political theory primarily focussed on the formulation of abstract, normative principles of justice and their application to judging and evaluating political structures, decisions, and events (e.g. Rawls 1971; Nozick 1974). In the late twentieth and early twenty first century, two independent lines of research identified significant problems with theorising justice as simply a matter of rationally adjudicating and applying ideal principles.

On the one hand, feminist research argued that by focussing exclusively on rules and codes this conventional abstract approach to justice risked moral blindness and failed to recognise the virtues of trust, compassion and care as constitutive of just action (e.g. Gilligan 1982; Baier 1995). On the other hand, critical theorists argued that it failed to grasp how and why real political actors behave as they actually do and called for a 'realist' approach that examines the actual motives that shape their actions (e.g. Geuss 2008, 2016, 2020). Both perspectives independently conceived justice as a practical way of life and demonstrated that we must understand the affective connections, sensibilities and virtues that inform this practice. In this way, these two separate lines of research, feminist and critical, independently converged on the need for research into the affective dimensions of justice and injustice. For this reason, contemporary political theorists have sought to apply theories of the emotions to questions of justice (e.g. Nussbaum 2013, 2018; Ahmad 2004). Yet we still lack a comprehensive, integrated affective theory of justice.

This project therefore focusses on the question: "What are the affective dimensions of justice as a practical way of life?" It aims to develop a new political theory that takes into account the affective background conditions that facilitate or impede just practices, the affective dimensions of just living itself, and the role of affective communication or rhetorical suasion in cultivating habits of justice. In doing so, it will draw on recent revivals of the ancient conception of philosophy as a way of life (Sharpe & Ure 2021) and build on both Western and Indian traditions that conceive justice as practical way of life, which actors realise through exercises that cultivate just habits and sensibilities.

Michael Ure's Australian Research Council funded research on philosophy as a way of life, which includes editing the Bloomsbury Academic book series 'Reinventing Philosophy as a Way of Life' and interdisciplinary theories of the emotions, and Siby George's interest in phenomenological and post-structural political theories form the background of this joint theoretical research project. In this project, they will supervise Ph.D. candidates from political philosophy and political theory in affective approaches to justice as a way of life. The projects of the Ph.D. candidates themselves may be on associated aspects of the theme, such as:

- specific problems in political philosophy and theories of affective justice,
- theorizing the cultivation of the just society,
- exploring the affective background conditions of the just society,
- contextualizing theorization of this theme with respect to India or Australia,
- critical assessment of political manipulation of emotion for the perpetuation of injustice,
- analysis of moral resentment & indignation and the passion for justice,
- analysis of compassion and other virtues in the just life,
- critiques of prejudice and the forced-invisibility of injustice,
- critical interpretations of historical exemplars of justice.

## References

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### **Project aims**

This project principal aim is to develop a new affective theory of justice. Contemporary political theory has seen a renaissance of research on the politics of the emotions. Yet we still lack an affective theory of justice. This project will develop an integrated affective theory of justice. It also aims to draw on this theory for practical ends. In this respect, it will build on Michael Ure's recent research on practical philosophy (Sharpe and Ure 2021) and Siby George's research on the politics of pedagogy (George et al. 2020), to develop insights into pedagogical practices that address the affective dynamics that reproduce and reinforce structural and historical inequities.

### **Expected outcomes**

- Affective approaches to the theory of justice centered on the ideal of living a life of justice, which is still an evolving area in political philosophy, will be developed.
- The Ph.D. candidates trained through this project will fill the vacuum in India of specialized scholars in political philosophy.
- This project will form the basis of further collaborations between the two investigators in co-authoring publications, organizing conferences, taking up further joint research projects and applying for research grants (see details below in the project timeline).

### **How will the project address the Goals of the above Themes?**

- The project is focused on a central area of the Humanities and Social Sciences, namely 'political conception of justice'. Hence, it directly addresses one of the eight themes of the Academy.

### **Capabilities and Degrees Required**

- MA in Philosophy or Political Science (candidates who are not conversant with political philosophy need not apply)
- The ideal research project must have a clearly philosophical rather than an empirical, social science or literature angle
- The ideal candidate must answer questions from the prescribed syllabus satisfactorily in the entrance examination
- Fulfilling the other Ph.D. selection requirements of IIT Bombay
- English language ability suitable for Humanities research

### **Potential Collaborators**

Assistant Professor Arunlyer (IITB, Mumbai)