Plato and the Concept of the Political

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Note on the Texts, Translations and Abbreviations

The Greek texts used in this dissertation are based on the following critical editions:

Platonis Opera, Vol. I, edited by E. A. Duke, W. F. Hicken, W. S. M. Nicoll, D. B. Robinson, and J. C. G. Strachan (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995).

Platonis Opera, Vols. II–V, edited by John Burnet (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1901–1907).

Platonis Respublica, edited by S. R. Slings (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

Platon, Œuvres Complètes, Tome XII, 1re partie: *Les Lois*, Livres VII–X, edited and translated by A. Diès (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2003).

Aristotelis *Ethica Nicomachea*, edited by I. Bywater (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1894).

Aristotelis *Politica*, edited by W. D. Ross (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957).

All English translations of Plato cited in this dissertation are from

Cooper, J. M. & Hutchinson, D. S. (eds) (1997). *Plato: Complete Works*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing,

unless otherwise noted. Where a different translation has been followed or a modification has been made, this is indicated in the text or in a footnote.

References to "LSJ" in the footnotes indicate

A Greek-English Lexicon, edited by Liddell, H. G., Scott, R., and Jones, H. S. (9th ed., Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940).

References to "*Platon Handbuch*" and "*Radikale Demokratietheorie*" in the footnotes indicate respectively the following works (see also the References):

Horn, C., Müller, J. & Söder, J. (eds) (2017). *Platon-Handbuch: Leben – Werk – Wirkung*. Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler.

Comtesse, D., Flügel-Martinsen, O., Martinsen, F. & Nonhoff, M. (eds) (2019). *Radikale Demokratietheorie: Ein Handbuch*. Berlin: Suhrkamp Verlag.

Author names and work abbreviations for classical texts follow the conventions set out in the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 4th edition, Abbreviations List.

Introduction

This dissertation combines a comparative study (Chapter 1) with a (somewhat typical) historical study of Plato (Chapters 2-5). Its overarching thesis is that it is both possible and productive to read Plato's political philosophy in terms of the concept of *the political* as developed in contemporary political discourse. The historical part, which spans four chapters, is intended to be read as a project that takes a stance on several questions debated in recent Platonic scholarship.

The comparative study in Chapter 1 comprises two parts (Sections 1.1 and 1.2-1.3), each offering different forms of justifications for this project: whether it is legitimate to read Plato in terms of the political.

The first justification is negative (Section 1.1): it addresses the argument that Plato is anti-political because he is illiberal and anti-democratic. While there are sufficient reasons to believe that he is illiberal and democracy-hostile, this does not mean that he is anti-political, as these concepts are not necessarily linked or mutually entailing. Nevertheless, the misconceptions about their interrelationship have distorted interpretations of Plato. My first example of this is the conflation of liberalism and democracy, which leads to arguments for a "democratic Plato" based on features he allegedly advocates through his use of the dialogue form, features that are, however, attributed to liberalism. I show that a similar conflation has occurred between liberalism and the political, and between

democracy and the political. We do not have to conclude that Plato is anti-political just because he is illiberal if the liberal conception of politics is not the one and only possible one. Likewise, Plato's skeptical attitude toward democracy does not imply that he is anti-political if *the political* pertains to processes of societal change and dynamics, while democracy denotes one of the many forms of regime.

The second way is positive (Sections 1.2-3): my strategy here is to argue that Plato shares the spirit and aim of introducing and developing the concept of the political with the contemporary political theorists (such as Carl Schmitt, Hannah Arendt, Sheldon Wolin, Jacque Rancière, Chantal Mouffe, John Rawls, and Jürgen Habermas). Of the two subsections, I first identify four key theoretical perspectives drawn from contemporary political thinkers who engage with the concept of the political (Section 1.2): (1) distinguishing between politics and the political; (2) exploring the possibility of radical political change; (3) defining a genuinely political community and concern with the disappearance of the political; and (4) highlighting the pervasive nature of the political. I do not claim that these points are exhaustively representative of every strand within the broad and diverse family of contemporary political theory, but I acknowledge their somewhat selective nature. Still, I maintain that these points are, in significant ways, widely shared. Then, in Section 1.3, I examine how these four points manifest in Plato's texts. For Plato, the political pertains to questioning an established order, envisioning an alternative one, and bringing about radical political change in reference to the Good itself and Justice itself (Section 1.3.2). This stands in contrast to the everyday notion of politics, which pertains to matters concerning the community within a given order and the activities—often involving the exercise of power—undertaken to manage these matters (Section 1.3.1). If understood in the way described above, the scope of the political becomes so expansive that we might say *everything* can be political, meaning that any societal element can be rendered questionable and thus become a site of potential political transformation (Section 1.3.4). The potential for such radical political change, however, can also vanish from a society; a truly political state or society is one in which the very conditions for this potential are preserved (Section 1.3.3). The chapter concludes that it is possible to meaningfully engage with the concept of the political in Plato's work.

Chapter 2, with greater fidelity to Plato's scholarship, establishes two basic premises necessary for attributing to him certain theoretical positions that I argue are shared by some contemporary political theorists. Most crucially, since I have argued that Plato

affirms the theoretical possibility of radical political change through the existence of the Forms—and its actual possibility and process through the inquiry into, and knowledge of, the Forms and its operation and influence on society, the first and more crucial premise must be that Plato considers the political *epistêmê* must be of Forms. (The reason this premise also needs to be assumed for other claims will become clear.) However, since such an *epistêmê* (or knowledge) seems to exclude the capacity to know and judge what is good and just in a particular situation, various interpretations have emerged, for example, that Plato did not originally conceive such a notion of political *epistêmê* in the *Republic*, or that Plato's thought evolved (especially in the *Statesman*) toward a preference for the rule of law or institutionalism over the rule of knowledge, or that Plato's political *epistêmê* consists in knowledge of the *kairos* (the good in time). Since these interpretations are problematic in their own way for my project of reading Plato through the concept of the political, the second premise I put forward is a unitarian thesis—that Plato consistently holds the first, more crucial premise to be true not only during the composition of the *Republic* but also in his later productive phase, and endorses the vision of the rule rooted in such *epistêmê*.

More precisely, in Section 2.2, I argue that even in the *Statesman*, where the rule of (good) laws is regarded as a second-best option, there remains an implicit presence of the *epistêmê* of the Forms—as the *epistêmê* that makes use of those laws and enables good legislation. In Section 2.3, to refute the interpretation that political *epistêmê* is of particulars, I argue that such a view stems from a "rule-centric" conception of politics—as opposed to the conception rooted in the political—and that it attributes to Plato's ideal rulers a kind of "worldly omniscience" that not even Plato himself believed in. This renders his political thought more vulnerable to criticism. Following this line of critique, I explore why Plato's ideal rulers can still be regarded as true political experts or genuinely political, even if they possess only the *epistêmê* of the Forms, without having any practical knowledge required for day-to-day governance.

The rest of my dissertation, from Chapter 3 to Chapter 5, is structured to uphold and reinforce these two premises.

Chapter 3 reconciles two divergent visions of political *epistêmê* and establishes the thesis that, for Plato, there is only one form of political *epistêmê*, which is of Forms. According to Malcolm Schofield, Plato entertains a vision of political *epistêmê* as a practical and

architectonic knowledge that is required for ruling over other expertises and for using their products in the *Charmides*, *Euthydemus,* and *Statesman*. In contrast, Plato's discussion of political *epistêmê* in the *Republic*—the *epistêmê* of philosopher-rulers—is clearly metaphysical and moral knowledge of Forms, such as the Good and Justice itself. Contrary to Schofield, who underscores the divergence between the two visions, my intertextual reading, from *Charmides* through *Euthydemus*, *Laches,* and decisively to the "Asclepius Passage" in the *Republic* (III. 406a-408c), demonstrates that the *epistêmê* for using and ruling (the *Charmides* and *Euthydemus*), the *epistêmê* about good and bad (the *Laches*), and the *epistêmê* of the Good itself (the *Republic*) are for Plato the same. This is exemplified in Asclepius, who is portrayed not only as a competent medical expert but also as a "statesman." The Asclepius Passage illustrates how the *epistêmê* of the Good itself uses and rules the medical expertise, how it serves the epistemic basis for legislation concerning medicine, and how it enables a radical change in medicine and the whole society by questioning the established conception of medical good. Finally, the inquiry in this chapter elucidates how the claim that *everything can be political* may be understood in Platonic terms, while demonstrating that political expertise cannot be reduced to a (non-existent) knowledge possessed by technocratic rulers who are merely efficient in governing for the sake of material production and directionless prosperity of society.

Chapter 4 establishes a parallel between *dianoia* in the *Republic* VI-VII and the three "precious" expertises in the *Statesman* 303c-305e. I begin by identifying the key features by which Plato characterizes the cognitive state or capacity called *dianoia* (Section 4.2), then apply these six features to the three expertises that are distinct from the political *epistêmê* (Section 4.3). Just as *dianoia* in the *Republic* is represented as a cognitive state related to the Forms where one hypothesizes them as unaccountable principles and draws particular conclusions from them, so too do the experts of the three precious expertises—orator, general, and judge—do concerning justice. They accept the principles of justice without providing an account of them (in the form of law), apply these principles to particular situations, and produce a form of justice that is sensible and particular: not the Justice itself but merely an image of it. Since those engaged in these activities were historically referred to as *hoi politikoi*, we may consider them and their expertises as political in the ordinary sense. However, if we understand the political as pertaining to the questioning of an established order and the envisioning of an alternative one, then these experts do not qualify as political in that sense. For true political *epistêmê* is not the

expertise concerned with "justice according to a constitution," as is the case with these experts, but rather with Justice itself—an inquiry and reflection that transcends any given constitutional framework. In this way, this parallel enables us to understand more systematically how politics and the political can be distinguished in Plato's own terms.

The parallel drawn in Chapter 4 between *dianoia* and the three precious expertises is further significant for my project in two more ways. One is that it reinforces the first and more crucial premise through analogy with their respective counterparts: *noêsis* in the *Republic* and political *epistêmê* in the *Statesman*. Since *noêsis* operates at the level of unhypothetical Forms, it follows—by analogy—that political *epistêmê*, as something higher than the three expertises, must also be directed at ontologically superior objects than the domains of those expertises. This conclusion, in turn, confirms that the premise holds true in the *Statesman* as well. The other is that Chapter 4 offers the most appropriate context for clarifying what I have referred to in Sections 1.2.2 and 1.3.2 as *radical* political change. As previously mentioned, when the expertise that investigates and knows what Justice itself and the Good itself are begins to question a given constitutional order—and proposes new understandings of justice and goodness—the resulting transformation qualifies as *radical.* Such transformation enables what was previously impossible, immoral, or unintelligible to become the very principle of a new political order. In this process, the knowledge of the Forms (and the capacity to inquire into them) provides the epistemic basis for such transformation.

Chapter 5 challenges the readings of the *Statesman* that interpret Plato as conceiving political *epistêmê* as the capacity to know particulars and issue commands concerning them. The view that political *epistêmê* in the *Statesman*, unlike in the *Republic*, is concerned with particulars illegitimately attributes to Plato, whether intended or not, a "rule-centric" conception of politics and the idea of the "worldly omniscience" of ideal rulers. This renders his political thought more vulnerable to the criticisms often leveled against it. I specifically engage with Melissa Lane's reading, according to which Plato conceives political expertise as consisting in knowledge of the *kairos*, or the good in time. She further argues that the true statesman appears as a direct commander—one who can discern particular instances of the good within the ever-changing temporal conditions and prescribe them to citizens—something the law, by its very static and rigid nature, cannot do. In response, I reject Lane's notion of an *epistêmê* of particulars by showing that the expertise required to discern particular instances of the good must consist in knowledge of,

and the capacity to inquire into, general principles (Section 5.1). Moreover, in Section 5.2, I argue that the true statesman does not command each particular action directly, but rather, based on such knowledge, seeks to realize it—however imperfectly—through the laws of the state, the best available means to do so. What proves decisive here, and throughout my entire project, is the distinction between the two roles or moments: the true statesman, *qua* expert in the reality of the Forms, possesses the *epistêmê* of the Forms necessary to initiate political transformation; yet *qua* legislator, he must be content with embodying only partial images of justice in law—representations that necessarily fall short of the Forms themselves.

In the first of the final two sections of Chapter 5 (Section 5.3), I examine the forms in which such an *epistêmê* can exist and function within a society. This inquiry is crucial in light of the point raised in Chapter 1: that both Plato and contemporary political theorists are concerned with what constitutes a genuinely political society, state, or community. The functioning—however partial or indirect—of this kind of *epistêmê* is precisely what makes something genuinely political. Ideally, everyone would possess *epistêmê* of the Good itself, or at least those who actually wield political power. Yet, a society may still be political insofar as such individuals manage to exert influence—for instance, by mentoring an individual ruler, or by addressing the people as an orator. In such cases, political *epistêmê* still plays a role, and the society, community, or state remains genuinely political in that it has the potential to bring about radical political change. In the final section (Section 5.4), I revisit the theme discussed in Sections 1.2.4 and 1.3.4—namely, how everything can be political. It does so by exploring how, in such a society, *epistêmê* brings about radical political change by engaging various sectors of society as sites for the political. It is in this way that *epistêmê* rules over subordinate expertises and uses their products.

The analysis reveals that Plato's political *epistêmê*, throughout his works—including the *Statesman*—is a form of expertise concerned with the inquiry into and understanding of the Forms. With this established, we can define what, for Plato, truly counts as political: the person is *political* who possesses the knowledge and capacity to inquire into the Forms; the activity of such a person is *political*: questioning the existing order, envisioning a new one, and bringing about radical political transformation; and the society is *political* that leaves room for such political activity and sustains the influence of such persons upon itself.

The discussions in Chapters 1 through 5 have aimed to demonstrate that it is both possible and productive to read Plato through the concept of the political and to show how such a reading can be carried out validly. However, one may still ask: is it truly necessary to turn to Plato in order to study the general concept of the political as it has developed in twentieth-century political discourse? Why should we refer to Plato when thinking about the concept of the political? What theoretical advantages does it provide? These are the questions I address in the Afterword.

Chapter 1
Talking about the Political in Plato: may I?

Since the time when the works of Karl Popper and Hannah Arendt, still popular today, held enormous influence over mainstream interpretations of Plato's political thought,[1] abundant literature has been published within Plato's scholarship. This literature seeks meaningful and productive ways to interpret Plato that are relevant in today's context—for example, by emphasizing his affinity with (liberal) democracy from the fact that he composed dialogues, or by understanding his criticism of democracy as reformative and intended to complement it. Regardless of the validity of such readings, such debates demonstrate that the relationship between Plato's political thought and modern political concepts remains a pertinent yet unresolved issue, demanding further exploration and discussion.

Then, are the current circumstances propitious enough for discussing the political—or the

[1] Reinhard (in Badiou 2013, ix) refers to Badiou's summary of anti-Platonism strands, the sixth of which is 'the anti-Platonism of political philosophy, which regards Plato's politics as "totalitarian."' Karl Popper exemplifies this here, though Badiou also includes the more 'noble' example of Arendt. For Arendt's analysis of totalitarianism, which is 'more elaborate, nuanced and attentive to historical details' than Popper's, see Backman 2020, 170. On Popper's persistent influence in Plato's interpretation, see Arruzza 2019, 96.

concept of the political—in Platonic terms? At first glance, the answer would be no, as Plato *is* still viewed as hostile to liberalism and democracy, a claim that relies on one or several assumptions about politics, which I shall argue are untenable. If we define "politics" (I will demonstrate that the term "the political" is more appropriate in this context; see Section 1.2.1. below) as something that exists only within liberal democracy, or in other words, if only what occurs within liberal democracy can exclusively be labeled as "politics," then my project might appear unpromising from the outset. As is evident to readers of Plato, his unfavorable or skeptical attitude towards democracy (often interpreted as anti-democratic, albeit with a somewhat reduced hostility) and the illiberal elements in his political thought (or in ancient and pre-modern political thought in general) are indisputable based on textual evidence. Therefore, because he cannot be viewed as liberal or democratic, we are led to conclude that he is not a genuinely political thinker—a misleading inference that I shall contest from this point onward.

In the following section, I dispute this very claim by exploring how a thinker who stands against liberalism and democracy may nevertheless be able to say something meaningful about the concept of the political. This brief overview of key concepts—liberalism, democracy, and the political—along with their interrelations, serves as a preliminary justification for discussing the political in the context of Plato.

1.1. The Constellation of Three Key Concepts: "liberalism," "democracy," and "the political"

The discussions revolve around these key terms: liberalism, democracy, and the political. These concepts hold significance not only within the context of Plato and his scholarship but also for political thought or political philosophy in general. My goal here is to demonstrate that the long-held assumption of the necessary coupling of these three concepts is now being critically reassessed. By addressing these misconceptions, I anticipate that a renewed understanding of Plato's political philosophy becomes possible.

1.1.1. Liberalism and Democracy

One of the most illuminating attempts at decoupling these concepts can be found in Josiah Ober's *Demopolis: Democracy before Liberalism* (2017). His central thesis is that liberalism and democracy may not be necessarily linked, either analytically or historically.

They can be conceptually and analytically separated, as liberalism represents 'a moral system centered on personal autonomy, rights, distributive justice, and state-level religious neutrality',[2] while democracy refers to a form of regime. Historically, democracy precedes liberalism, the most salient example being classical Athenian democracy. Building on this distinction, Ober argues that "basic democracy," an ideal type nearly fully instantiated in classical Athens, can stably procure the benefits of democratic self-rule and foster the social conditions (such as aversion to tyranny, even that of the majority) that liberals would also endorse. He further argues that basic democracy can serve as a stable and robust foundation for a suprastructure that the liberals aspire to build.

This conceptual confusion, along with the somewhat anachronistic projection of the modern conception of democracy onto the Athenian case, has also influenced interpretations of Plato's thought. Even before *Demopolis*, Ober criticized a relatively recent scholarly trend of identifying pro-democratic elements in Plato's (political) philosophy.[3] At the heart of this position, advocated by those sympathetic to the idea of a "democratic Plato," is the observation that Plato wrote in the form of dialogues, wherein the critical reasoning of the interlocutors, particularly Socrates' art of conversation, is shown fully and vigorously exercised. They view Plato's style of writing as evidence of his commitment to free and open discourse, a value they consider essential for a democratic regime. Consequently, they argue that Plato couched his works in a manner that preserves the dialogue form, using the Socratic method to showcase the exercise of discursive reasoning.[4]

Ober's argument here suggests that there has been confusion between democracy and liberalism, or misunderstandings regarding the nature of Athenian democracy. Democracy, in its etymological and original sense, means nothing more than the "rule of the people," a nearly unanimous government of a collective but unitedly constituted demos exercised through the active participation of all members. The discursive political process and a plurality of views and opinions are insufficient, if not totally irrelevant, for a regime to be

[2] Ober 2017, 6. For what is typically considered liberalism, see also Ober 2017, 2: 'I take autonomy, rights, and justice, along with a commitment to neutrality at the level of state authority and religion, to be among the primary commitments of mainstream contemporary liberalism.'

[3] By "relatively recent," I refer to the first decade of the 21st century. For an overview of this interpretative trend ('*gegenwärtig … in einem milderen Licht*') and specific works on it, see *Platons Handbuch* 185.

[4] For recent modern contextual readings and the concept of a democratic Plato, see Euben 1995, 1996; Monoson 1995, 2000; Saxonhouse 2005, 2009; Wallach 2001. Ober's critical literature review and his own view of Plato's political thought in terms of democracy, see Ober 2001, 158-60.

considered a democracy. As Ober states, directly addressing Euben:

> From the point of view of the intellectual historian interested in Plato and Athenian democracy, Euben's position can be criticized on the grounds that it is a modern (or postmodern) vision of democratic discourse (a conversational willingness to contest meanings), rather than the democracy of fourth-century Athens (the rule of the demos and its power to establish meanings), to which his Socrates remains open.[5]

In short, Ober argues that the elements some scholars of Plato invoke to claim his democratic leanings are, in fact, the positive and ideal traits of modern liberalism or liberal democracy. Thus, the very elements they invoke lead them to conclusions they do not intend. From their arguments, it does not follow that Plato was sympathetic to the Athenian democracy before liberalism.

Quoting this very passage from Ober, Malcohm Scofield expresses some agreement with Ober's view. Schofield (2006) also engages with the problem of "democratic Plato," more precisely, the question of how to reconcile Plato's seemingly inconsistent attitudes toward democracy, as seen in the *Republic* and the *Laws* (and in the early Socratic dialogues). In his agreement with Ober's view, he reviews Euben's interpretation of Plato's dialogues and their political polyphonic character, which is framed through the lens of Habermasian deliberative democracy.[6] He then criticizes it on the grounds that what Euben asserts is 'politicalization of discourse – but hardly its 'democratization', as such features of Plato's dialogues can be seen even in oligarchies or other non-democratic regimes.[7] Schofield concludes that the evidence for Plato's sympathy with democratic culture cannot be derived 'from the *form* of the dialogue,' and this line of argument risks missing the key point of Plato's criticism of democracy—the impossibility of the masses acquiring the wisdom for ruling.[8] Then, if this is denied by Plato himself in every way, can we say that it is liberalism

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[5] Ober 2001, 159.

[6] For Habermas' optimistic presentation of Socratic dialogue as (not always real but) 'prospectively possible for everyone', see Mara 1985, 1056.

[7] Schofield 2006, 51-59.

[8] For a concise presentation of Plato's position, see Ober 2001, 160; For Plato's emphasis on the impossibility of 'democratic knowledge', see Schofield 2006, 125-6 and 130; For the two main tenets of democracy, 'the citizens' self-government' and 'the notion of collective wisdom', see Arruzza 2019, 96-101. Sørenson 2016 shows that Plato's rejection of the possibility of such knowledge is a considered stance, not merely an unthoughtful prejudice. Horn 2021a further demonstrates that Plato might admit the possibility, though he firmly prioritizes the rule of the wise over the democratic masses.

that the proponents of a "democratic Plato" are ultimately contributing to? This might seem to be case, as Arruzza states: 'the insistence on diversity, openness, freedom and common inquiry reveals a concern for the compatibility of Plato's philosophy with liberalism.'[9] However, regarding Plato as liberal would be improbable if we take into account the many other reasons for rejecting the notion of a "liberal Plato", such as his preference for personal rule over rule of law, absence of any conception of natural rights and lack of a public–private distinction. The upshot so far is that viewing Plato as democratic turns out to be spurious, and the justification for it (that Plato possesses many liberal traits) fails to support its intended target.

This example of conceptual confusion surrounding the "democratic Plato" debate demonstrates how common misconceptions about our key terms hinder a proper appreciation of Plato's political thought. In the subsequent section, I show how a limited understanding of politics, or the political, influenced by liberalism, has led readers of Plato to perceive him as an anti-political thinker.

1.1.2. Liberalism and the Political

Now, let us redirect our attention to the relationship between liberalism and the political. Our contemporary understanding of politics has undeniably been profoundly shaped by liberalism and the "public political culture" that emerged within its framework.[10] It is within this very conception of politics or the political that Plato has long been regarded as anti-political. In this section, I aim to argue that just as being liberal does not automatically imply being democratic and, *vice versa*, being illiberal does not necessarily equate to being anti-political. This is because there exist multiple ways of understanding politics or the political beyond the liberal paradigm.

To thoroughly delve into this matter, we must return to the source of the misinterpretation

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[9] Arruzza 2019, 98. However, as she shares the distinction between democracy and liberalism with Ober and Schofield, she is clearly aware that 'this concern does not license any inference about Plato's attitude toward democracy' (same page).

[10] Rawls 2005, 8-9 characterizes his project in *Political Liberalism* as a reflection on 'a fundamental organizing idea' inherent in the historical tendency of Western societies toward increasingly narrow disagreements. His approach, based on his definition of (political) society as a system of social cooperation, seeks to preserve what he deems essential to the stability of such a system, including certain values, a conception of the person, and reasonable beliefs, within the domain of the political as political, while relegating others to the realm of the comprehensive or metaphysical. While his "political" liberalism has shaped our current understanding of the term "political," I challenge why his use of these terms should be considered privileged.

of Plato's political thought, as discussed earlier: the confusion between democracy and liberalism. Democracy, after flourishing in Athens and other city-states, eventually declined as the Greek world lost its autonomy to external autocratic forces such as Macedonia and the Roman Empire, which proved fatal to democratic self-government.[11] Democracy did not resurface until the emergence of liberalism in the modern era, and when it did, it came packaged with the 'liberal suite of institutional design principles'.[12] In parallel, the intellectual influence of liberalism on the concept of politics has been evident since its ascendancy. Before that, especially in the medieval era, politics derived its meaning in contrast to the church and was concerned with the state.[13] The liberal conception of politics begins with John Locke, who recognized the existence of natural rights inherent to individuals, such as the right to live autonomously and to possess private property. To resolve conflicts arising from private affairs, he calls for the community as an 'umpire ... indifferent and the same to all parties', which is what forms the basis of a political society (civil society, state of commonwealth). He contrasts this with absolute monarchy, where his idea of the separation of powers is mentioned for the first time.[14] In Locke's writings, we find other essential features required for a society to be political (such as free consent) deduced from his liberal assumptions. Politics for Locke is something that operates within the institutions and pursues specific ends, all specified within the framework of liberalism. In sum, politics is assigned the task of protecting the safety of individuals and their private rights and property, as well as conciliating conflicts over interests. It does not exist, where there is no plurality—of interests, of opinion, and of political stances grounded in them—which can be viewed, on the one hand, as the ontological basis of politics, and, on the other, as the institutional arena where this plurality is reflected and addressed, representing the formal aspect of politics.

This liberal conception of politics (or, in Rawls' terms, the political conception of politics) has informed how we evaluate both democracy and politics before liberalism. Early-

[11] For ancient democracy and the subsequent pause in its history after Athenian democracy, see Wolin 1994, 22.

[12] This is an expression used by Ober 2017, 162. He cites examples such as representation, balance of governmental powers, federalism, and the concept of the sovereignty of the people as distinct from any given government agency.

[13] For the state as monopolizing politics and as a single political entity, see Schmitt 2015, 9-11, 19-20; Meier 1983, 15, 17-18, 28-30, 245-246.

[14] For the importance of the "horizontal" separation of powers in ensuring that a society is distinct from the state of nature and instead becomes political, see Locke's *Second Treatise of Government* Sec. 88 (Goldie (ed.) 2016, 44-45). "Horizontal" is the expression of Horn 2012, 51-52.

modern political thinkers characterized ancient democracy as 'volatile, irrational, susceptible to influence, chaotic, and potentially tyrannical.'[15] Civic participation, which characterizes ancient politics, has been seen as stifling the private and natural liberty inherent in human beings. This perception has, in turn, been employed to justify the form of representative democracy with periodic elections.[16] Moreover, the non-liberal character of the antiquity, where a uniform conception of the good dominated the society, has often been framed as the reason that politics scarcely existed.[17] John Rawls and Chantal Mouffe share the premise of the fact of (reasonable) pluralism as a defining feature of our liberal democratic era, in contrast to ancient times. This implies that, under the social conditions of the ancient world, there could be no politics in the modern sense, due to the absence of the very ontological basis of politics.[18] Zooming in on the institutional dimension of Athenian democracy, we find the prejudiced view that Athenian democracy, due to its unanimous or near-unanimous decision-making, suffered from political apathy or was "apolitical".[19] These prejudices have now faded, as scholarship of ancient Greek political history has progressed. Still, to speak of something of the politics or the political in ancient Greece, one has to begin by pointing out how narrow the liberal conception of politics is.[20]

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[15] *Radikale Demokratietheorie* 458 ('*Negativfolie*'). See *The Federalist* 'Fourteen' (Pole 2005, 69-70). For a remark of Bodin, Madison and Tocqueville, who 'have sought to counteract' the so-called unconstitutionalized, pure democracy, see Wolin 1994, 16-17..

[16] Republican and communitarian political theorists, inspired by Athenian democracy or the Roman Republic, have been criticized by liberals, ranging from Hegel's critical assessment of the ancient direct democracy and Rousseau's ideal, to Rawls' critical reference to civic humanism-Aristotelianism (Rawls 2005, 206). As a result, the pre-liberal democracy has been regarded as 'antiliberal ideology, inspired by a Rousseauian fantasy of a unified popular will and powered by unconstrained majoritarianism' (Ober 2017, xv; see also p. 11, which refers to the critical mention of Ricker 1982: 'viciously illiberal populism'). One of Hannah Arendt's major political works, the *Human Conditions (*whose ideas on ancient Greece were prefigured in Arendt 2005, 5-62) has also been deemed as a dangerous nostalgia for, or idealization of, ancient Greece (Benhabib 2003; for a critical response to Benhabib, see Tsao 2002). Indeed, the political identity or the identity of citizens *qua* citizens of the Athenians that was '*einzig nennenswerte, … die über die engen Zusammenhänge des Hauses und der Nachbarschaft hinausging*' (Meier 1983, 249) can be stigmatized from another perspective as a 'political zombie' (Raaflaub 2006, 340).

[17] Of course, from the more general perspective that conceptualizes politics as the pursuit of power (which, under this definition, makes politics truly universal), this criticism may not hold true.

[18] For the fact of reasonable pluralism, see Rawls 2005, 36f.; for his argument about the absence of the basis of the political in the classical (ancient and medieval) eras, see Introduction xxiii-xxvi. On Mouffe's (if limited) agreement with this view of pluralism and with political liberalism in modernity, see Mouffe 1993, 56 ff.: 'we cannot go back to a premodern conception and sacrifice the individual to the citizen.'

[19] For arguments against the supposedly apoliticism or political apathy of the ancient Greek and Hellenistic politics, see Canevaro 2018, 119, 125, and 144.

[20] For criticism of the modern understanding of politics as so narrow that many political aspects of ancient Greece are excluded from consideration, see Balot 2006, 5 and Raaflaub 2013, 329-330.

This liberal determination of the nature of politics and the political has shaped interpretations of Plato's political thought until recent times. In the second half of the 20th century, Plato came to be seen as a quintessential anti-political thinker. By "anti-political," I do not mean that he had no concern for common political issues or that he constructed his political project exclusively for individualistic ethical purposes.[21] Rather, Plato's anti-political stance is in the sense that he systematically undermined the very essence of politics itself, suggesting that political matters or problems presented as political are, in fact, mere illusions. If we accept the liberal conception of politics discussed so far, it inevitably follows that Plato is a non-political—or even anti-political—thinker. The literature produced under this line of reasoning (Leys 1965; Sparshott 1965; Flaig 1994; Trempedach 1994; Wolin 2016, 30, 39-41, 60) has had a similar argumentative structure. First, it defines politics and the political informed by the liberal conception. This definition presumes autonomous individuals having (natural) rights to identify and pursue their interests and opinions and understands politics as the (institutionalized or communicative) act of compromise or agreement among a plurality of such individuals.[22] Given this definition, scholars invoke Plato's preoccupation with, and efforts for, acquiring objective knowledge and demonstrating the reality of the truth as its object. Along with his claim that only a few can access this, Plato's political thought is ultimately described as anti-political in the sense that the alleged existence of the objective truth and the knowledge of it renders meaningless and superfluous all "political" matters, e.g. institutions or processes dealing with conflicts. Convinced that 'knowledge may potentially eliminate all disputes except those based on a real conflict of interests,'[23] he is seen as

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[21] For instance, the characterization of Plato's *Republic* as an ethical rather than a political work (see e.g., Annas 1999, 72-95); Arruzza 2019, 1-5 and 97-98 introduces this 'depoliticizing' view as part of a broader trend aimed at 'saving Plato from suspicions of proto-totalitarianism.' For further research on this trend, see also Hüttinger 2004, 116-117 n.139.

[22] See, for example, Leys 1965, 272: 'as political any activity, institution, or issue that pertains to a division of opinion and aspiration within a population that has some dealings with one another despite that division.' While he ascribes this definition to Carl Schmitt, I believe it results from a superficial understanding of the concept of the political. Moreover, the distinction between politics and the political is inadequately recognized in his definition. In contrast, Flaig 1994, 34-5 specifies these terms separately, namely, *das Politische* as *Rahmen* and *Politik* as a communication in that field. Similar criticisms that label Plato as anti-political have also, of course, come from those who do not identify themselves as adhering to liberal conceptions of politics – for example, Hannah Arendt and Farrar 1988, 264 ff. who also distance themselves from the modern liberal standpoint (see Farrar 1988, 3-5). However, in my view, such critical attitudes toward Plato might themselves reveal the pervasive influence of liberalism in contemporary conceptions of politics.

[23] Sparshott 1965, 219.

attacking the very ontological ground for politics or the political. What is left, as Flaig criticizes, is a strictly hierarchic division of the citizenry under the lawless, falsehood-based rule of philosopher-rulers through the *Befehl* based on their exclusive *Weisheit,* while subordinate citizens are burdened with the duty of absolute, slavish obedience.[24] The shared conclusion is that Plato is non-political, insofar as he is not concerned with what political philosophers would deal with, or even anti-political, in that he recognizes the political matters but denies their value.

This perspective of Plato as a non- or anti-political thinker, though no longer prevalent, has been deemed—even by Plato's scholars—as demanding explanation. One early attempt at such an explanation is Julia Annas' commentary on Plato's *Republic*, where she examines the passage where Plato emphasizes the unity of the city (cf. Section 1.3.3 below).[25] According to the prevailing definition of politics, she writes,

> 'some have held that Plato's political measures are so unrealistic that he is not interested at all in politics in our sense of the term. For politics is often defined as the area in which major conflicts of interests are resolved, and political measures and theories are those that try to do this in various ways. But Plato does not want to regulate or cope with conflicts of interests. He wants to remove them altogether. This takes what he says out of the area of practical politics, and renders it either *unpolitical* [italic for my emphasis], or, if one is not strict about the term, political but highly ideal.'

More recently, Ryan Balot continues to engage with this issue. While concluding that 'this line of thinking relies on too narrow a conception of politics,'[26] he writes:

> 'Perhaps one might be tempted to say that the *Republic* has no politics, because there is no political negotiation or compromise, no true public sphere, no need to has things out "in the middle" of the city. ... It is hard to imagine, one could perhaps argue, a politics worth the name in a polis where most citizens live in darkness in a different world from the decision makers. But this line of thinking relies on a too narrow conception of politics. Plato's *Republic* imagines the rulers' exercise of power for the good, and with the consent, of the governed, and it

[24] Trampedach 1994, 186-196 largely accepts and in effect reiterates Flaig's view of Plato as anti-political.
[25] Annas 1981, 104.
[26] Balot 2006, 208.

> outlines specific institutional arrangements to achieve that good. The dialogue represents politics as a form of aristocratic governance that is based on knowledge and that seeks the welfare of the governed.'

Christopher Rowe, while similarly asserting that Plato's *Republic* is indeed a political work, says that 'granted, if "politics" is a matter of reconciling opposing interests in the community, of finding ways in which different groups scratch along beside each other, then the *Republic*, which imagines and argues for the possibility of eradicating political conflict altogether, is no truly "political" work.' Instead, in his defense of Plato, Rowe seems to pick up carefully the words in arguing that the construction of utopias is 'a part of *political theorizing*.' [italic is mine][27]

The commentators I cited above make a valid point in that we must not confine ourselves to the narrow conception of politics and that Plato's political works can rightly be regarded as political. However, I find it unsatisfactory to simply propose an alternative conception without further explaining the relationship between the existing conception and the alternative proposed. It would seem strange if politics were a mere homonym, having entirely different meanings when referring to our liberal democratic modern world and when referring to Plato. In that case, the investigation of his political thought would bear no significant relevance to contemporary political discourse but would be of interest only as a historical inquiry. The explanation that I think is required is one that clarifies, for example, how the two conceptions of politics diverge yet coexist, maintaining their proper meanings, and how the conception alternative to the liberal one retains a point of connection with it while expanding itself to include non-liberal elements that belong, in some way, to what we should call politics.[28] I believe that the introduction of the term "the

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[27] Rowe 2007, 28. See also n.4 on the same page, where he mentions a view that the model of Kallipolis in the *Republic* is intended to provide ethical lessons for personal morality, though he finds it 'finally indefensible.'

[28] For instance, the dichotomy between politics and ethics revolves around the question of education. If one asks whether the *Republi*c (and the *Laws*), since it deals for the most part with how to educate citizens, contains non-political or even anti-political elements, what assumptions underlie the question? It presupposes that, for politics to exist, there must be no objective truth about human good that can be taught beyond the realm of individual preference, given that politics can operate within a plurality of such preferences. (For this inference from the centrality of education in Plato's political thought to its characterization as anti- or meta-politics, see Trampedach 1994, 278-9; for Popper's liberal critique, see Popper 2003, 111-2.) However, as Schofield 2006, 30-43 argues, the project of Plato's *Republic* should not be reduced to either the moral or the political alone. Rather, it is both. He even argues that the justifications of laws by persuasion and the voluntary consent achieved through education in the *Republic* and the *Laws* bear similarity to the conditions of Habermas's critical principle: see Schofield 2006, 83-88. This amounts to the

political" as a contrasting counterpart to the term "politics" (discussed in Section 1.2.1) provides such an explanation.

In any case, it is evident that non-liberal conceptions of politics do exist, though a comprehensive overview exceeds the scope of this section. Carl Schmitt offers a strong critique of the liberal understanding of politics in his *Der Begriff des Politischen* and *Die geistesgeschichtliche Lage des heutigen Parlamentarismus*. Hannah Arendt's classical republican understanding of politics stands in contrast to the liberal perspective, even though both emphasize the importance of human plurality.[29] Meanwhile, Mirko Canevaro (2018) challenges the common assumption of the absence of politics in the pre-liberal ancient democracies, citing historical records attesting to their design of institutions and procedures for reaching the unanimity of agreement.[30] Of course, simply applying one of these non-liberal conceptions to Plato will not absolve him from the label of anti-political. What I aim to contest is the notion that he is anti-political because he does not share the liberal beliefs and commitments upon which the concept of politics has been traditionally construed.

1.1.3. Democracy and the Political

The relationship between democracy and the political is more complex than in the previous two cases: between liberalism and democracy, and between liberalism and politics. Regarding the first pair, the distinction is categorical—between a system of moral values and a form of political regime (this distinction is historically valid, as they were indeed separated). For the second pair, the distinction is vertical—between general and specific: Liberalism represents merely one among various ways of understanding politics, even a decadent one from certain viewpoints. The relationship between the political and democracy is a hybrid of these two modes. On the one hand, they are categorically distinct, as the political is not itself a regime, as democracy is. On the other hand, the relationship is also vertical or gradational, in the sense that the full realization or completion of the political can take the form of democracy, but only when democracy is understood as a set

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fact that the elements in Plato's political thought, often considered incompatible with the ontological basis of the political, i.e., the perfectionist conception of the good human life and its organizing measures, can be compatible with a liberal conception of the political.

[29] Arendt 1998 and 2017, especially 9-12, for human plurality as the basis of politics (*Fragment* 1).

[30] For Canevaro's critical assessment of Flaig's argument for the positive aspects of simple majoritarian rule, see Canevaro 2018, 103-4.

of institutions.

Henceforth, I will use the term "the political" rather than politics for precision, with the following justification: We have at least two notions of the politics: one that exists wherever interpersonal power operates within a human group,[31] the other that normatively distinguishes itself, whatever the norm may be, as implied e.g. by the liberal claim that politics exists only under certain (liberal) social settings. The term "the political" has been introduced to capture this tension.[32] (I will discuss more in detail in Section 1.2.1.) Since my goal is to challenge the claim that Plato's ideal society is one in which there is no politics in the normative sense, and in which the social conditions required for the existence of politics are absent, I must use the term *the political* here, rather than *politics* in its more universal sense—since even in Plato's ideal *polis*, politics in that broader sense would still exist. To refute the assumption that discussing the political in Plato is absurd simply because he is anti-democratic, I must demonstrate that the political, in its more fundamental and comprehensive sense, emerged historically prior to democracy as a form of regime or constitution. Christian Meier's *Die Entstehung des Politischen bei den Griechen* clearly establishes the chronological order of the emergence of both.

In his introductory texts, Meier begins by defining *den Begriff des Politischen* as follows:

> *Ein Beziehungs- und Spannungsfeld, naemlich das Feld oder das Element, in dem in und zwischen politischen Einheiten (und Untereinheiten) eine Ordnung des Zusammenlebes geschaffen und praktiziert, Entscheidungen ueber gemeinsam interessierende Fragen getroffen und Positionen umkaempft werden, von denen her diese Entscheidungen zu beeinflussen sind.*
>
> *... seines bestimmten, potentiell das ganze Leben durchdringenden Handlungsfeldes', where 'die politischen Einheiten sich untereinander bewegen und in dem verschiedene – von wo auch immer angetriebene – Kräfte direkt, durch politisches Handeln auf sie einwirken oder einzuwirken*

[31] As Balot 2006, 5 says, politics exists even therefore in monarchies. For politics even among chimpanzees, see Waal 2007.

[32] See, for example, Bedorf 2010, 16: '*das Politische als den normativen Maßstab für jeweils realisierte Formen von Politik zu begreifen*.'

versuchen.[33]

How one can determine the nature and the status of this field or element in terms of social theory or (probably) system theory, and how Meier's definition relates to those of the concept put forth by pioneers such as Carl Schmitt and Hannah Arendt, whom he references, are the questions too vast to be fully discussed here. Therefore, without missing the key point, it would be more convenient to say that with the presence of the political (whether it is something identified, invented, discovered, or emerged), a society becomes political, and without it, it ceases to be political (In this sense, the political denotes a set of social conditions enabling a community or a society to be political). According to Meier, being political fundamentally means the emancipation of a human community from autonomously advancing processes.[34] Indeed, if politics exists in all societies and at every stage of development, then politics in this sense—related to social power—is consistently upheld through these processes. This was evident in ancient Greece before the emergence of the political, where such dynamics manifested as the perpetuation of socio-political order and reproduction of ruling class.[35] One of the most evident indicators that a society is political is when the *political* question of who should rule becomes itself a *political* matter to be decided among the entire citizenry.[36] Meier points to the push toward

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[33] Meier 1983, 16-17 and 34-36. Hence, the term "the political" does not simply signify '*die Summe aller Bedeutung des Adjektivs politisch oder ein gemeinsames daran zu begrifen*' (16). I disagree with two authors who critically assess Meier's definition of the political. Ottmann 2016, 10-11 opts to use "politics" due to what he sees as Schmittian existential, decisionist, and nihilist connotations in the term "the political." He argues that for the Greeks, politics was '*Diskussion, nicht Dezision*." While it is true that Greek politics included moral (*sittlich*) and communicative behaviors in a well-institutionalized sphere, how, then, can one account for phenomena like constituting revolution for democracy, decisions to go to war, radical political movements, or Socrates' civil disobedience only through such a concept of politics? It seems to me that Ottmann interprets politics and the political in ancient Greece too narrowly. On the other hand, Hüttinger 2004, 28-29 argues that Meier's definition better corresponds to the term δημόσιος based on her analysis of its usage. She suggests that his concept of the political should be expressed by τὸ πολιτικόν in Greek texts, while the plural form, τὰ πολιτικά, refers to what takes place in that field. However, as Meier points out, the political is not simply an '*Abstrahierung*' and has not been conceptualized until the twentieth century.

[34] Meier 1983, 17: '*prozessualen "Selbstläufigkeit", dem autómaton*'. For the emancipation of the Greeks from this process and their distinctive status in the world as a result, see also Meier 1983, 20, 44-45, 244-45. His reference to the (historical) process of modernity seems to be influenced by Arendt's idea. See Arendt 1998, 14-17, and 32 on the concept of society as a process.

[35] For discussions of the unreflective, unquestioned rule of aristocrats, see Meier 1983, 62-63, 109, 118-119, 279-281).

[36] Meier's essays revolve around this very phenomenon. The historical cause was the broad distribution of power throughout society, a high degree of social mobility and dynamism, and the emergence of a third political and intellectual position that claimed objectivity and impartiality, accompanied by the development of political thought. The substance of this phenomenon lay in members' awareness that the political order was at their disposal, and in their political self-identity as citizens. His reading of Aeschylus' *Eumenides*

isonomia as the beginning of the historical process through which the political emerges, and the stage where political matters are dealt with in a political way marks the completion of this process, the institutionalization of which is called democracy.[37] Hence, the political, when it emerged alongside citizens' demand for *isonomia*, preceded democracy as a constitutional form or a framework for conducting politics.[38] In sum, democracy and the political can be distinguished both conceptually and historically. This leads me to question whether a political thinker who dislikes or is hostile to practically functioning democratic institutions has anything meaningful to say about politics or the political.

Although the political flourished within direct democratic institutions and their concrete operations, the conception of democracy as a completion or full development of the political implies that democracy is not simply a '*pauschaler Name für eine ganze Reihe verschiedener empirischer Verfassungen*.'[39] In fact, some contemporary political theorists have expanded the concept of democracy beyond a form of government or constitutional arrangement, imbuing it with new meaning.[40] In "radicalizing" democracy in this way, it no longer merely signifies majoritarian rule or representative institutions such as elections and assemblies. Rather, democracy crystallized as majoritarian rule becomes an impediment to democracy itself, which is ideally grounded in unrestricted and unbounded equality. In light of this, it has been problematized that these democratic procedures could be appropriated as a facade for elites pursuing their interests under the guise of legitimacy. This points to one of the most intractable hindrances to the persistence of the political, which is democracy reduced to mere formalism, and this is precisely why contemporary political theorists have sought to radicalize democracy in opposition to liberal, representative, and "rationality"-based models. Thus, while democracy as a regime or set

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explores how this is reflected in the literary work. Its corollaries are, finally, observed by him in the field of concepts: their perspective on time and history, and the confidence in human ability (*Können-Bewusstsein*) and the corresponding way of life.

[37] As Meier 1983, 13 writes: '*Es[das Politische] ist sehr viel umfassender als die Demokratie, mit der es zur vollen Ausbildung kam*.' Daniela Hüttinger 2004, 9: '*eine(r) spezifische(n) Ausdrucksform des Politischen*'; Raaflaub 2013, 323: 'The political is not identical with democracy, but its development to some extent parallels that of democracy.'

[38] See Meier 1983, 144, 150, 189, 223 and 285-7.

[39] *Radikale Demokratietheorie* 585.

[40] Rancière 1995, 139 and 142. For Badiou's contrast of politics with democracy as 'the central ideological category of the neo-liberal status quo,' see Hallward 2003, 238. If we accept Wolin's definition of the political and his framing of democracy as 'one among many versions of the political', it follows that democracy does not simply mean 'its constitutional form', but something "episodic and fugitive", 'the political moment, when the political is remembered and re-created', with the demos as the actor. See Wolin 1994.

of institutions once represented the completion of the political in Athens, radicalized democracy manifests as the continuous embodiment of the political in each moment of its existence.

All these considerations justify discussing the political in Plato despite his detestation of Athenian democracy in practice. Regardless of whether Plato's criticism of democracy positively complements the democracy itself,[41] his political thought could have engaged with the political. Just as theorists inspired by Habermas' theory of deliberative democracy argue that the polyphonic character inherent to Plato's dialogues reveals the possibility of reinterpreting his thought to fit deliberative politics,[42] other points Plato makes in his texts can likewise be seen as evidence for his concern with the problem of the political, whatever he meant by it. As Schofield puts it, 'what above all permeates Plato's political philosophy is not any interest in constitutions as such, but a constant preoccupation with the need for wisdom or expertise in government, a vision of what constitutes a true community.'[43] Here, what constitutes a true community is, in my term, "the political."

So far, we have seen three cases where conflating terms or erroneously assuming a necessary mutual implication between paired concepts results in flawed interpretations of Plato. The notion of a "Democratic Plato" arises from projecting liberal ideals onto the concept of democracy, while the "anti-political Plato" stems from a narrow conception of politics viewed through the lens of liberalism. At this point, it is scarcely helpful to argue *vice versa* that Plato's political thought can be interpreted in alignment with liberalism to prove that his thought has affinity with liberalism.[44] This is because Plato's understanding of the political includes elements not typically encompassed by liberalism, whether construed as the normative standard or in its (Rawlsian) political version. In conclusion, we need not label Plato as liberal or democratic to assert that he engages with the political. This preliminary discussion thus enables us to define and understand the three key terms

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[41] For the distinction between criticisms of democracy as 'immanent or connected' and 'rejectionist or disconnected', see Schofield 2006, 54 and 81.

[42] See Schofield 2006, 55-59. As I mentioned in Section 1.1.1, while such characteristics were falsely believed to be democratic, they are in fact "political" in the Habermasian sense.

[43] Schofield 2006, 62.

[44] Griswold 1999 for reading Plato as a liberal perfectionist who cherishes "toleration and open-minded inquiry" (107), and Smith 2000 who reads him as liberal in the Leo Straussian tradition, emphasizing his skepticism and openness toward political reality. See also Thakkar 2018, especially 257 ff. on 'philosophical citizenship.'

in question separately and thereby legitimize this present project, albeit in a negative way (which is to say, it is far from unpromising!)

1.2. The Shared Points Characterizing the Theories of the Political

This preliminary discussion has prepared us to examine the political in Plato: we have established that Plato's illiberal and undemocratic stance does not obstruct this project. However, beyond this negative justification, we now require positive grounds for reading Plato in terms of the political. (Beyond these negative and positive justifications—that we *can* read Plato in this way—the reason why we *should* will be addressed in Afterword.) My approach is as follows: I aim to demonstrate that Plato and the contemporary political theorists, especially those focused on the concept of the political, share several points. Specifically, I identify four such points: (1) distinguishing between politics and the political; (2) exploring the possibility of radical political change; (3) defining a genuinely political community and being concerned with the disappearance of the political; and (4) highlighting the pervasive nature of the political. Of course, I do not claim that these points are exhaustively representative of every strand within the broad and diverse family of contemporary political theories. While acknowledging their somewhat selective nature, I maintain that they are widely shared. After briefly reviewing these points, I will turn to Plato in the rest of this chapter, examining evidence in his texts to show how his work engages with these very themes.

1.2.1. The Political Difference between Politics and the Political

In the previous Section 1.1.3, I mentioned in passing the need to have a distinction between politics and the political when discussing politics in a stricter sense. Instead of using the term "politics" with its broadest sense (pertaining to power in general and being effectively universal, even in chimpanzee bands) or with its narrowest sense (existing only in liberal institutions and culture), Christian Meier chose the term "the political" to reflect the unique course of historical development ancient Greece had experienced. In other words, he sought to recognize the significance of the emergence of democracy, which he characterizes as "politicization of politics" on the one hand and which preceded all liberal-democratic institutions on the other.

However, before his work, there had been both a practical and theoretical necessity to denote

something other than "politics," something related yet different, more fundamental and comprehensive. Let us continue from the point at which (classical) liberalism began constraining the meaning of politics. When it is emphasized that politics exists meaningfully only in liberal institutions, this tradition defines politics as a distinct subsystem of society, one in which, for example, social values are authoritatively distributed. It becomes primarily a matter of methodology as to how we define the scope of our consideration of politics. Within a theoretical framework shaped by contemporary political conditions, namely, the unprecedented advancement of capitalist-liberal states in Western Europe and the USA, political science has taken on a positivist and complacent character, focusing only on "*die vorfindliche Regelwerke für Entscheidungsprozesse, Verfassungsstrukturen politischer Gemeinschaften sowie ihren jeweiligen institutionelle Designs*."[45] This has led, on the one hand, to illegitimately narrowing the scope of politics, reducing it to certain contingent political settings, which scholars studying ancient Greek political development felt compelled to challenge (see Section 1.1.2 above). On the other hand, no less problematic is the jeopardizing of the autonomy of politics: If each subsystem is determined by its relation to other subsystems, politics is believed to have a limited autonomy, let alone its primacy within a society. The traditional Marxist economism and contemporary political sociology approaches, such as Luhmann's or Easton's system theory,[46] can also be seen as attempts to negate such primacy of politics or its (re)constructing potential.[47]

The necessity of distinguishing between politics and the political emerged not as purely theoretical considerations but was inspired by the practical need to redefine politics and to transcend the traditional conception of politics. A fresh theorization of the political by Laclau and Mouffe (2005), which was driven by the rise of neo-liberalism and the emergence of new social movements, is one notable example.[48] Rewinding to an earlier moment, this was also the case for two pioneers of the concept of the political, Carl Schmitt and Hannah Arendt. Faced with the democratization of society and the decline of the

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[45] *Radikale Demokratietheorie* 585.

[46] For the significance of David Easton in the context of the contemporary process of '*Enthistorisierung*', see Greven 2010, 74, who describes David Easton's system theory as its '*Siegeszug*'.

[47] For economism as a species of foundationalism, see Marchart 2007, 5, where he mentions economic determinism, behaviorism, positivism, and sociologism. In this respect, Habermas appears as one of the thinkers who recognizes the autonomy of the political, especially in his distinction between *System* and *Lebenswelt*. For criticism of Luhmann's position, regarded as a form of 'social-scientific anti-humanism and determinism', see Horn 2012, 83-84. For a post-foundationalist perspective, see Marchart 2007, 27.

[48] For the essence of new social movements, see Laclau and Mouffe 2005, 45 and 87.

state's monopoly on politics, Schmitt established his famous friend-enemy distinction as the new criterion for determining whether a practice or a motivation is political. In doing so, Schmitt located the primacy of the political in the intensity and gravity inherent to political struggles, which necessarily revolve around the friend-enemy distinction. Hannah Arendt, meanwhile, viewed the political—"to be political" or "politics in the ancient times"—as fully realized in the public realm, a space for appearance and freedom through diverse human actions and speeches. She emphasized the primacy of the political as a source of novelty rooted in human activities specific to the public sphere and recognized its divergence from politics in the modern era, which, according to her, has been reduced to a societal 'housekeeping' function, lacking the potency for novelty.[49] Building on these pioneering works, later political theorists sought to reclaim the distinctiveness of politics and thereby reassert its autonomy and even primacy,[50] which is essential for envisioning the emergence of an entirely new political order and our role in this contingent change.[51] However, doing so required theorists to ask anew what constitutes political, necessitating a new term to signify the political phenomena, distinct from the traditional understanding of politics, namely as a sub-system parallel to its equivalents like economy, culture, society, and even politics itself. This term is "the political," which means something that has "*spezifische Modi ihrer [etabilierte Strukturen, Institutionen und Handlungsmuster der Domäne Politik] Durchbrechung, Infragestellung und zuweilen Überwindung … , die in diesem Falle als originär politische Handlungen aufgefasst werden*."[52] The distinction between politics and the political, deeply resonant with Heidegger's ontological difference, is referred to as the political difference.[53]

Naturally, the ways in which theorists understand the concept of the political and the aspects they choose to highlight vary significantly, so much so that one can find only a family resemblance among them.[54] Nevertheless, a broad consensus exists that two moments of the political have drawn the attention of two divergent groups of theorists: the

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[49] For her criticism of the modern conception of politics as a mere sub-system of a society, see Arendt 1998, 33 ff. and 159 ff.; the idea of which is present in her fragment (2017, 35-37).

[50] Bedorf and Röttgers 2010, 8 state that the introduction of the concept of the political is not meant to demonstrate the worthlessness of the traditional concept of politics, but rather to revitalize it.

[51] Marchart 2007, 5-6: 'Politics as a certain form of action, the political sub-system in contrast to something that always escapes the efforts of political or social domestication: the political.'

[52] *Radikale Demokratietheorie* 583.

[53] For the Heideggerian background of this political difference, see Section 1.2.2 below.

[54] Bedorf 2010, 13-32. 16: '*Die Bezeichnungen variieren, die Struktur der Differenz … ist jedoch stets die gleiche*.'

associative and dissociative moments of the political, each corresponding to Arendt and Schmitt, respectively. Chantal Mouffe, in the introduction to her *On the Political*, succinctly summarizes the two strands.[55]

> But this still leaves the possibility of considerable disagreement about what constitutes 'the political'. Some theorists such as Hannah Arendt envisage the political as a space of freedom and public deliberation, while others see it as a space of power, conflict and antagonism. My understanding of 'the political' clearly belongs to the second perspective. More precisely this is how I distinguish between 'the political' and 'politics': by 'the political' I mean the dimension of antagonism which I take to be constitutive of human societies, while by 'politics' I mean the set of practices and institutions through which an order is created, organizing human coexistence in the context of conflictuality provided by the political.

It falls outside the scope of this discussion to elaborate further on the disagreements between the two thinkers or between the theoretical strands originating from them. Rather, I wish to emphasize here that at the core of theories of the political lies the distinction between politics in the ordinary sense and the political, which is more fundamental and original and which is said to have either an associative or a dissociative moment. I shall begin my analysis of Plato by asserting the point that we can find this distinction in his texts (see Section 1.3.2 below). I do not think it is necessary, at this stage, to determine whether Plato's conception of the political—if we may speak of it in those terms—is more associative or dissociative.

1.2.2. The Possibility of a Radical Political Change

The second point common to theories of the political is their emphasis on the contingency and the political designability (*Gestaltbarkeit*) of social order. A good starting point for clarifying this is the premise shared by most contemporary political thinkers: the absence of an ultimate ground, grounding (*Letztbegründung*), and foundation for a society.

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[55] Mouffe, 2005, 6. See also Marchart 2007, 38-44 and *Radikale Demokratietheorie* 584. According to their textbook categorization, Claud Lefort, Sheldon Wolin, and Habermas are grouped under the associative, Arendtian conception of the political, while Laclau and Mouffe fall under the dissociative, Schmittian conception. Similarly, Bedorf 2010, 23 regards not only those two but also Rancière as reminiscent of Carl Schmitt.

Historically, it has been presumed that there must always be a ground or a foundation upon which an existing social order can be explained, justified, or assessed, and towards which it should be oriented through reform or progress aimed at a specific goal. The designation of this ultimate ground varies across historical periods. Before philosophy, shared conventions or traditions within a community enjoyed an unquestionable status as the ultimate foundation.[56] For Plato and other ancient philosophers, it is metaphysical principles— identified (according to Rancière) as *physis* or (according to Arendt) as the Good itself. After the end of the ancient era, religion assumed this role, as Christianity and the divine right of monarchs long served as dominant sources of grounding. Later, ethics, (Marxist or capitalist) economies, and the natural or social sciences successively claimed this foundational role.[57]

Modernity, by contrast, is characterized by the absence of such a foundation. John Rawls, in self-revision of his theory of justice with regard to its political status, bases his political liberalism on the fact of plurality fundamental to "the political culture of a democratic society." Similarly, Habermas argues that moral norms derive validity not from moral truth but from the possibility of agreement achieved through discursive-ethical principles in the argumentative discourse among free and equal participants.[58] He thereby abandoned the pursuit of an ultimate ground for social order, claiming instead that a society's moral and legal norms should be legitimized through communicative processes. In this regard, Richard Rorty (1989), who argues that liberal democracy is better grounded in the contingency of language and selfhood and that this contingency makes abandoning traditional moral and epistemic frameworks more plausible, aligns with this strand.[59]

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[56] Greven 2010, 73 describes traditional society as a society without a reflection of itself as traditional. It lacks awareness of contingency.

[57] In this way, Marchart 2007, 5 notes that the "foundationalist" paradigm is 'represented scientifically by such diverse species as economic determinism, behaviorism, positivism, sociologism, and so on.' The list of historically claimed ultimate grounds coincides with the sequence Schmitt 2015, 73-87 observes in the neutralization (from theology and metaphysics through economy to technology). In doing so, he anticipates post-foundationalism by claiming that the human mind itself, as a source of political dynamics, can never be exhausted by any politically neutral or firm foundation. For the criticism of Marxist economism as a species of foundationalism, see Laclau and Mouffe (2005).

[58] This is the essence of Habermas' concept of the political: the political is a dialogue or deliberation, where 'it has to be capable of transforming participants' existing preferences and beliefs through public and rational discussion so that they converge on a shared conception of the common interest.' According to this meaning of the term "political", it is 'distinguished from politics', the latter being the arena of competition for power and control over resources.' See Schofield 2006, 57.

[59] For the fact of pluralism and the distinction between classical, comprehensive liberalism and his political

Besides this "liberal" strand, there exists another strand represented by French, Heideggerian-left political thinkers, who find the liberal approach to the problem of the absence of ground or truth less thorough. In contrast, they draw inspiration from Heidegger's ideas—such as the drive to overcome scientism and structuralism as the remnants of foundationalism, the original way of thinking of the absence of a ground as itself operating as a kind of ground, and the notion of ontological difference. With these theoretical resources, they have sought to justify their post-foundationalist project in political thought, which explores, for example, the relationship between the political and politics, the retreat of the political, and 'an ontological weakening of the status of foundation'—a perspective where no ultimate ground is granted but rather absent, and in which the 'quasi-transcendental condition of empirical plurality of grounds' arises from this ungroundability as a 'productive absence.'[60] These theoretical enterprises aim to overcome a condition in which politics is reduced to a technological governance or management of everything, a mere force for maintaining an existing order allegedly founded on an ultimate ground. In short, the goal is to enable the emergence of an entirely new political order that is neither constrained by existing conditions nor arbitrary. It is for this reason that they contrast themselves to Rawls and Habermas (and Arendt as well), because the liberal strand seems to accept pluralism and the absence of the ultimate grounds but is still bound to the ultimate principles, such as agreement or rationality. Instead, these theorists argue that society is not a stable state maintained by an already achieved consensus but rather a conflict or discord among irreconcilable heterogeneous subjects, and that this profound antagonism or disagreement serves as a productive impulse for political change that cannot be reduced to any higher principle. This is why they align more strongly with the dissociative moment of the political, according to Mouffe's categorization I cited above.[61]

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liberalism, see Rawls 2005, 3-4 and 36 ff. (Cf. Habermas 1999, 99-100). For the requirements of communication (*Kommunikationsvoraussetzung*), see Habermas 1992; for his discussion of *Rechtsordnung*, see Habermas 1998.

[60] For Heiddeger's thought of the post-foundational political theories, see Marchart 18-19, 22-25 and for the case of Nancy and Bacoue-Barthe, see 60-61 and also Marchart 2010, 143-158.

[61] For the general formation of contemporary political discourse, see *Radikale Demokratietheorie* 474-483 and 731-4. These theorists, who emphasize the dissociative moment of the political (see n. 55 above), form an anti-liberal and anti-Habermasian ("Haber-rawlsian": Marchart 2007, 155) alliance that includes even Arendt among the targets of their critique. For Mouffe's criticism of Rawls, see Mouffe 1993, 23-57 and 112-113, that of Habermas, see 2005, 13-14, 83-88 and that of Rorty, see 1993, 10 and 2005, 88-89, as well as Rancière critique of Habermas in Rancière 1995, 75-76, 86, which points to the political limits of rational

To fully address the complexities and nuanced arguments of each strand and their reciprocal criticism of one another falls beyond the scope of this thesis. My aim here is to just clarify that the theorists of the political have sought to explain the possibility of radical political change, regardless of their foundational references, such as the human condition (Arendt), the nature of the human mind (Schmitt), or reason (Habermas), or Heideggerian quasi-transcendental arguments.[62] Thus, it is worth being treated as one of the main shared points. However, there is one more commonality among them: anti-Platonism. In the eyes o modern political theorists, Plato has been regarded, not without justification, as the forefather or prototype for the idea of an absolute ground for any political order, emphasizing the philosophical, both eudaimonic and moral, value of pursuing such a ground. When discussing the political in Plato, the reinterpretation I propose must demonstrate how the emergence of an entirely new political order remains possible within his framework of political thought. I will return to this point in Section 1.3.3 below.

1.2.3. Concern with Disappearing of the Political and Defining "Genuinely Political"

The third point I find common to the theories of the political is their shared pessimistic diagnosis regarding the disappearance of the political in society. As discussed in Section 1.2.1 above, politics in its ordinary sense—as a set of actions within an institutionally fixed framework or as one social subsystem among others—has only limited autonomy. It fails to bring about significant change, instead aiming to stabilize, control, and manage the existing social order. The distinction between politics and the political has been introduced to revitalize politics in its original sense and to reaffirm its primacy in generating radical political change and reconstructing a given existing order. While the expressions employed to describe this phenomenon vary among theorists,[63] the anxiety or pessimism that such transformative potential of politics is being lost can be counted as one of the conspicuous features common to the theories of the political. Moreover, this diagnosis conversely constitutes the answer to the question of what conditions or criteria define a community,

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discourse.

[62] For Arendt's notion of novelty and beginning, see Arendt 2017, 48-50 and 1998, 9, 189 f. and 246: 'the human condition of natality'. On the principal impossibility of eliminating the political and its roots in the nature of the human mind ('*Geist kämpft gegen Geist*'), see Schmitt 2015, 71 and 86-87.

[63] "*Neutralisierung*" (Schmitt 2015, 63-87), "*Kolonialisierung*" (Habermas 1988), "sublimation" (Wolin 2016, 371 ff.), "suffocation" (Preuss 1999, 164), "*retrait du politique*" (Lacoue-Labarthe und Nancy 1997, 128 ff.), "*La fin de la politique*" (Rancière 2004, 23 ff.), "*Abschaffen*" or "*Verschwinden*" (Arendt 2017, 29-30). See also *Radikale Demokratietheorie* 586-587 and Marchart 2007, 44-48.

state, or society as "genuinely political." Hence, the concern with the disappearance of the political and the constructive question of what is genuinely political are two sides of the same coin, characterizing these theoretical approaches.

These two characteristics appear across all political thinkers mentioned thus far. For instance, Arendt and Habermas see the disappearance of the political in terms of the contraction of the public sphere, a realm characterized by members' freedom and equality, expressed through their action and speech. Arendt's criticism of modernity centers on the decline of space for the political and its distortion of the very meaning of politics. Similarly, Habermas' *System-Lebenswelt* distinction and the idea of the colonization of the latter by the former stem from such a concern. On the other hand, Schmitt identifies a liberal moralizing trend in his era that erodes the existential friend-enemy distinction, which results in both the domestic incapacity of the political entity and the international humanitarian catastrophe. More or less inspired by this idea (though softening the existential tone of the political distinction), the theorists of the political who emphasize its dissociative moment have lamented that the room for disagreement and antagonism has been closed off, whether through the pursuit of agreement and deliberation within the liberal-representative democratic institutional framework (in terms of content), the narrowing of the boundaries of the political (in terms of methodology of politics), or the pervasive compromise or despair among political agents (in terms of actuality).[64]

Regardless of how theorists specify and formulate this phenomenon, their diagnoses conversely help us determine and identify the conditions under which a society, state, or community remains political in the sense that it experiences no such phenomenon but rather retains the reinvigorating potential for radical political transformation. This line of thinking is not exclusive to theorists of the political: Rawls rejects metaphysical conceptions of justice and society as a community (as opposed to political society) on the grounds that they are not political in his usage of the term "political" ("comprehensive" or "metaphysic" versus "political" conceptions of justice; society as community or association versus political society). For Arendt, what is lost in modernity is the spiritual and material conditions for human action and speech, which had constituted the public sphere as the

[64] For the strategic and ideological rhetorics aimed at denying the possibility of the political in terms of antagonism (where Thatcher's *There is No Alternative* serves as an example), see Greven 2010. Rancière 1998, 23-34 identifies signs of '*La fin de la politique*' in the political circumstances at the time this book was written.

defining feature of the political community. Rancière locates the foundation or conditions of politics in the presence of "those who have no part" and in the disruptions of the existing order. He views the end of politics as the outcome of attempts at maintaining order that either ignore or foreclose these disruptions. He treats this as a criterion for judging whether something is political or not; thus, Plato's state or a minimal state, for instance, is considered a non-*political* state.[65]

This constructive question of what constitutes a political community, state, or society is valuable for placing the contemporary theoretical discourse of the concept of the political within the context of ancient Greece and, ultimately, within Plato. Research in history, political history, and classics has been inspired by these theories and has explored the most pivotal era in ancient Greek history from the perspective of the political—the very moment of the birth of politics (or the political) in its nascent form—whether one calls this birth "inventing," "discovering," or "emerging".[66] In a manner reminiscent of Arendt, Otto Hennings writes that the Greeks discovered (*Endeckung*) politics as *Miteinander-Reden und Handeln* after certain conditions had matured, such as *Können-Bewusstsein* and human responsibility, all of which are not unlike what Meier spells out in tracing the emergence (*Entstehung*) of the political, as defined in the passage I have quoted from his work (see p. 19-21 above). Similarly, Cynthia Farrar shows that the Greek polis became a polis, or, in other words, genuinely political, by finding out or inventing, not theoretically but collectively and practically, a way to reconcile the bursting autonomy of individuals with a desirable political order and harmony.[67] She adds, in the final part of her monograph, that Plato's political thought, despite his recognition of his partial agreement with Protagoras, represents a 'retreat from politics' 'by abandoning the principles of personal independence and autonomy.'[68] Though diverging in certain respects, their

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[65] According to Rancière, the historical Athens during Solon's reform was genuinely political (1995, 28: '*Le démos, le ramassis des gens de rien, devient le peuple, la communauté politique des libres Athéniens.*'). In contrast, Plato's political community, although claiming to be genuinely political, falls short of being political. See 1995, 107: '*Aussi la cité platonicienne n'est-elle pas politique. Mais une cité non politique n'est pas une cité du tout. … Il n'y a de cité que politique et la politique commence avec la contingence égalitaire.*'

[66] These terms are used respectively by Meier 1983, Farrar 1988 and Ottmann 2003, 7-18.

[67] For instance, Farrar 1988 writes: 'the level at which self-control was possible and at which the disintegration of Hellenic power could, perhaps, be halted, is the level of the political community, the *polis*' (153). She argues that Pericles, the democratic leader, persuaded his fellow Athenians to be prudent – and that his reporter, Thucydides, does the same to us – in a way appropriate for democracy, namely by appealing to history (126). For the Athenians' effort to overcome the scars of the violent stasis following the civil war and thereby to become a unified political state, see Raaflaub 2013, 345.

[68] Farrar 1988, 80 and 264 ff. and Trampedach 1994, 177-187 identifies Protagoras in his contrast to Plato as

criterion for judging whether a community or a state is political is closely connected to the contingency of political order, in the sense of "being at the disposal" or "in the hands of citizens," and the potential for a radical political change, such as democracy as unpredictably newborn.

To justify the reading of Plato in terms of the political, I must demonstrate that Plato is concerned with the disappearance of the political, that he is engaged with the question of what is genuinely political, and that his criterion or concern is related to the possibility of a radical political change. Generally, many thinkers have regarded Plato as a reactionary to the historical development of the political community in ancient Greece.[69] In Section 1.3.2 below, I will contest this view.

1.2.4. The Pervasiveness of the Political

The fourth and final point to consider when applying this framework to Plato is that the political is pervasive in things that are seemingly not political or politically neutral. Theories of the political do not confine their scope to formal political fields, spheres, and activities, which we typically understand as politics (as distinguished from the political in Section 1.2.1 above). Rather, these theories are willing to engage with matters that are politically significant but positioned outside politics as a social subsystem. This is the reason why the new term "the political" is introduced—to denote something political beyond our conventional understanding of politics. Therefore, the political is broader than politics, as this concept has what I call a "pervasive" character. By examining whether Plato identifies and emphasizes political significance in things that are not overtly political or are politically neutral, we can determine if his political philosophy aligns with this point found in other contemporary theories.

The pervasive character of the political can be understood in three interrelated ways. First,

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someone who '*die ontologische Basis der griechischen Politik seiner Zeit aufgedeckt*' (183). Hüttinger 2004, 17-22 also discusses *Polishaftigkeit*, first by paying attention to Herodotus' account of Greek self-understanding and Thucydides' way of setting the bar for an ideal polis. With regard to Greek political history, Rancière 1995, 26-27 sees Solon's reform as the moment of politics and the formation of a genuinely political community. For this, see also Raaflaub 2013, 330-333.

[69] The simplest and once most standardized view is provided by Karl Popper: Plato is the enemy of the contemporary development of Greek civilization toward an open society. In contrast, Jean-Pierre Vernant 1982, 128-9 sees the culmination of intellectual and spiritual development, based on the Greek political achievement of the *polis*, in Plato's *Gorgias* (508a), where Socrates conceives the natural order as a mathematical one, reflecting justice, equality, and political order.

it corresponds to the idea that everything *is* political. As Carl Schmitt observed in relation to the emergence of '*totale[r] Staat*',[70] driven by the democratization of society, and as Hannah Arendt noted in totalitarian states, everything became political in the sense that everything once considered private came to be governed and controlled in the service of maintaining stability and order, with no room for questioning or challenging the existing order. This "omnipresence" poses a crucial threat to the potential for freedom to reconstruct or even envision a new political order.[71] In a somewhat similar vein, everything is political insofar as everything in a society functions as a medium for the exercise of political power, thereby contributing to the preservation of the current social or political order. This idea is reflected in Karl Marx's insight that the suprastructure is determined by the relations of economic production in a way that it sustains the capitalist production and the dominance of the capitalists.[72] Later, in critical theory, feminist theory, and post-structuralism (Foucault's assertion that 'power is everywhere' implying that everything is political[73]), it has been argued that political power permeates and controls society as a whole.

This idea that everything *is* political can also be understood without any critical spin. Its key insight is that the various elements of a society form a totality, such that no single element is understood without reference to its relationship with others. Especially in societies like ancient Greece, where the political was established as the central element of life,[74] every aspect of social life, can be understood in terms of its relation to the political or politics. Meier traces the transformations the Greek polis societies underwent and the peculiarity of the public and private life in Greek institutions to the emergence of the

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[70] Schmitt 2015, 23-25.

[71] See Marchart 2007, 62-63, 67-68, reviewing Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy's ideal of the retreat of the political in Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy 1997, 126 and Nancy 2000. Also see *Radikale Demokratietheorie* 586: '*Omnipräsenz ... Erliegen bzw. Verschwinden von Politik*.'

[72] The idea that everything is political can serve not only as a critique but also as a justification for the control of everything by the state or political power. It is a typical criticism leveled by liberalisms at actual socialist states. For the general doctrine of totalitarian, socialist statists, see, for example, Popper 1947, 61: 'The State is therefore the basis and centre of all the concrete elements in the life of a people: of Art, Law, Morals, Religion, and Science.....', which are all considered social, not political, by Rawls (2005, 13-14). Marxism insists on the "impotence of politics" in a situation where everything is political, i.e., determined in service of the bourgeoisie. Yet, being faithful to the ideal of social engineering, it ultimately gives way to the totalitarian, centralized state-intervention (Ch. 17).

[73] For the statement, see e.g. Foucault 1977 and 1980, 189 and for Foucault's theoretical attempt to overcome the governmentality and biopolitics by showing that everything can be political, see Deuber-Mankowsky 2008.

[74] Meier 1983, 17, 45, 152 and 291. "*zentrale[s] Lebenselement*"

political and its entrenchment at the center of community life. In this sense, not only other social domains or institutions, such as religion, economy, and art, but also Greek identity as citizens, their thoughts, perspectives, behaviors, and even their sense of time and of history were shaped by the political.[75] As Greek religion is regarded as political in the sense that it constitutes a political matter in Meier's work, the studies of Greek religion have emphasized its political or civic character, highlighting significant features, such as the election of priests, the overlap between religious and civic or political life, and the extension of public decision-making into religious affairs.[76] Connecting this to the third point above, we might ask what forms of identity, religion or theology, or art are needed for a community or a society to qualify as genuinely political. That is, as the political expands, so do the conditions that a society, community, or state must satisfy to be deemed political. This idea is not outdated, as Walter Benjamin applies the term 'political' to art, and Mark Coeckelbergh (2022) to technology.[77]

Most striking in illustrating the pervasive character of the political is the assertion by theorists that everything *can be* political. While the idea that everything is political suggests that all aspects of life surreptitiously function as vehicles for the operation of political power, the potential politicalness (*Politikhaftigkeit*) or politicizability

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[75] Meier 1983 12-13: the Greeks' experience of the political shaped their social identity, their experience of time (*Zeiterleben*), forms of experience, perception, and conception of human ability, events, society, and changes, including exposure, poetry, and questions in theology, philosophy and other sciences. In this sense, everything was political for them. On tragedy, see Meier 1983, 144-246: '*Die existentille Tiefe und Brisanz dieser Erschütterung sowie die faszinierende der im neuen Horizont sich erschließenden Möglichkeiten samt all den Fragwürdigkeiten … werden in der griechischen Kultur der klassischen Zeit gespigelt. Diese ist aufs staerskte davon bestimmt*.' (154) and 1988. For time experience, see Meier 1983, 273 ff. (*Teil C*) about the Greek histography, the historical development of political concepts, and the consciousness of ability (*Können-Bewusstsein*) in the ancient time.

[76] Meier 1983, 250: '*Die Religion war im wesentlichen Polis-Sache*.'; Burkert 2011, 493: '*Der Staat hütet die Religion*.' For the Greek civic or polis religion and its characteristics, see Burkert 1995 and 2011, especially 413. For the embeddedness of Greek religion in the polis, see Sourvinou-Inwood 2000a, 2000b. Zaidman and Pantel 1992 write that for the Greeks, 'religion was thoroughly intertwined with all areas of public and social interaction' (3) and 'most human actions had a religious dimension.' (92)

[77] I interpret Rousseau's conception of "*religion civile*" as political religion, in the sense that it is a religion a political entity must have. In fact, a Korean translator of Rousseau's *Du Contract Social ou Principes du droit politique* translates "*civile*" into the same Korean word as that for the term "political." It should be distinguished from political religion in the sense of the religions Eric Voegelin 2007 calls "*die Politischen Religionen*", in which he identifies twentieth-century totalitarianism, especially fascism, as a form of political religion and argues that the criticism of it is truly radical when it acknowledges its religiosity. However, a political or politicized religion in Plato's sense, religion suitable for a political community or society (Rousseau's remarks on civil religion), is determined by the normative predominance of the political question: which religion is necessary and desirable for political life?

(*Politisierbarkeit*) emphasize the contingency of what constitutes political.[78] Carl Schmitt paved the way for recognizing this possibility by defining the political in terms of the degree of intensity of a conflict, prophetically proclaiming that the nature of the human spirit will inevitably generate new spheres of conflict intense enough to be considered political.[79] His thought has been reinterpreted by theorists of agonist democracy, such as Laclau and Mouffe, who were inspired by the rise of new social movements in the 1970s and 1980s (2005). For them, the notion that everything can be political stems from their post-foundationalist premise that group unity and identity are only temporarily and discursively fixed and are experienced as antagonism(s).[80] Since no ultimate foundation exists on which a society can be configured, every existing social order is constructed through hegemonic, that is, *political* practice. The central claim here, in this sense, is that each social space has the potential to become a frontline of antagonism, a potential that is, however, weakened by the elimination of the existential tone, yet remains meaningful in pluralist societies.[81] From this perspective, the distinction between the public and the private is undermined by the radical politicization of all social spheres.[82]

As a recent example of the politicization of non-political elements, Coeckelbergh (2022) shows that the development of artificial intelligence both is and can be political. It is political not only because it functions within the existing political contexts, such as power relations, inequality, or discrimination, but also because it gives rise to new issues that were previously considered non-political or did not exist at all but now need to be addressed politically. These include, for example, the status of non-humans or human-robot enslavement. This new political space reveals that a society striving for justice has been anthropocentrically totalized, and it confirms that the development of AI can be

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[78] *Radikale Demokratie* 462: '*die radikale Demokratietheorie [wird] ... darauf hinweisen, dass eine konkrete Politisierung von den genauen Kräfteverhältnissen abhängt, also durchweg kontingent ist.*' See also Greven 2010, 68-9. On the idea that everything can or cannot be political, see Rancière 1995, 55-56: '*Aucune chose donc n'est par elle-même politique. ... Une même chose - une élection, une grève, une manifestation—peut donner lieu à politique ou n'y donner aucun lieu.*'

[79] On defining the political as a matter of the intensity of conflict, see Schmitt 2015, 25-26.

[80] See Laclau and Mouffe 2005, 85 ff. for post-foundationalist ideas ('Unfixity has become the condition of every social identity.') and 122 ff. for a definitional statement for antagonism.

[81] On 'the political character of any social identity' in Laclau, see Marchart 2007, 131 and 164.

[82] Laclau and Mouffe 2005, 180 f.. For the hegemonic contingency of the public-private distinction, see 185. Nancy 2000, 81-82 shares this idea. For the limited acceptance of state intervention, or the rejection of the absolute state-neutrality toward the private realm (implying that everything can be political, such as 'values and customs'), and that its guiding principle must be based on agonistic pluralism, see Mouffe 1993, 117-153 (Ch. 8 and 9), especially 131-2 on religion, and 140 for Mouffe's presentation of the Schmittian idea.

political because it has not yet been fully totalized.

Did Plato think that everything is political and can be political? On the face of it, it appears true that Plato believed everything is political, in the sense that seemingly private affairs, such as religion and art, substantially affect the lives of citizens. This is why Popper rebukes him, stating that for Plato, 'state interest dominates the life of the citizen from the mating of his parents to his grave.'[83] One may counter this criticism by arguing that Plato did not conceive of the interests of the state as independent of each citizen's individual interests. However, how is it possible to assert further that Plato thought everything can be political, especially given his fundamentally different conception of the political and the distinct historical and institutional context compared to today's agonist democrats? I will address this issue in Section 1.3.4 below.

1.3. Justifications for Using the Term "the Political" in Reading Plato

The preceding discussion has outlined four shared points among theories of the political, which, though selective, remain worth mentioning. In order to substantiate my interpretation of Plato's political thought through the lens of the political, I assume that its validity hinges on identifying these four points within his texts. The following section will demonstrate their presence through a detailed examination of each point, illustrating how they manifest within Plato's works.

1.3.1. "Political Difference" in Plato

In addressing whether or how Plato engages with the political difference, an analysis of the usage of the term "*ta politika*" (τὰ πολιτικά) serves as a suitable starting point. Assuming that there is political difference in Plato, I advance two arguments: first, the politics in the ordinary sense, in contrast to the political in the context of political difference, corresponds to *ta politika* in Plato's framework; and second, the political, on the other hand, relates to the political *epistêmê* or *technê*, which is characterized both as the capacity for using (χρῆσθαι) and governing other goods, knowledges, or skills, and as the object of philosophical inquiry, as undertaken by Socrates.[84]

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[83] Popper 2003, 147-8.

[84] I find this approach to Plato, in terms of the contrast between the political and politics, in Sheldon Wolin's

1.3.1.1. *Ta Politika* Corresponding to Politics

I begin with an analysis of *ta politika*. My understanding of the usage of *ta politika* in Plato's texts draws on Daniela Hüttinger's scholarship (2004; Cf. Deibel 2000). As part of her investigation into the concept of the political in Plato (2000) and in Greek thought more broadly (2004), she analyzes how relevant vocabulary, such as κοινός, δημόσιος, and πολιτικός, is employed in ancient Greek texts.[85] She defines δημοσία as a field (*Bereich*) and *ta politika* as the political processes operating within that field. In more concrete terms, *ta politika* carries a dual meaning: (1) public, civic affairs that are common to and affect all members of a city and hence must be managed, and (2) political (both institutional and non-institutional) activities and processes for managing those affairs, including various democratic participatory activities.[86] For instance, Pericles, in his famous funeral speech, says that Athenians 'who are devoted to their own businesses know enough about the city's affairs [*ta politika*]' and 'think that a man who does not take part in public affairs [*ta politika*] is good for nothing' (Thuc. Ⅱ.40.2). This dual usage of the same term, "*ta politika*," corresponds to (1) the first and (2) the second meaning. A similar

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Politics and Vision (2016): According to him, Plato understood politics as 'the struggle for competitive advantage, of the problem of distributing the good things of life among the various groups in society, and of the instabilities engendered by changing social and economic relationships among the members' and as 'evil' (39; Cf. 11-12). By contrast, Plato's idea of the political, which Wolin suggests we can draw from Plato's ideas of 'political art', 'political philosophy', or 'political ruling', has to do with the realization of the Good in a public life by shaping an ideal order in a community. I dispute his three points, which are shared by those who consider Plato anti-political (see Section 1.1.2). First, he argues that 'the central weakness in Plato's philosophy lay in the failure to establish a satisfactory relationship between the idea of the *political* and the idea of *politics*'(40). However, Plato conceives this relationship as one of use: politics, termed "*ta politika*" and understood as all activities aimed at seeking consensus and order in the public sphere, is not eliminated but reorganized so as to contribute to the recognition and realization of the good - questioning an existing order and envisioning a new one (for this point, see Section 2.2). Secondly, Wolin remains silent on the transcendent nature of the Good itself (see 1.3.2 below) by simply stating that Plato's aim is 'to shape the community to a pre-existent Good' (41). Thirdly, he speaks of the autonomy of the political throughout the chapter devoted to Plato, yet likes many twentieth century political theorists, fails to recognize that the principle of the Good must be necessarily acknowledged for the empirical reality of the good—namely, the preservation of a polity and maintenance of a society, the creation of livable conditions, and radical transformative responses against external mutability. In Section 1.3.3, I will argue that Plato's conception of unity does not originate from his alleged metaphysical preoccupation.

[85] For Plato, see Deibel 2000, 25-26 and Hüttinger 2004, 118-119, 126-7 and 149. Among the Greek authors predating Plato, Hüttinger dedicates separate chapters to Herodotus, Thucydides, and Aristophanes.

[86] To put it in their words: in Deibel 2000, 26 and Hüttinger 2004, 28-29 and 119, the former is '*die Angelegenheiten der Polis, die gemeinsamen Angelegenheiten, die gereglet werden müssen*', '*die politischen Angelegenheiten*' or '*Polisangelegenheiten*'; the latter '*die Prozesse und Tätigkeiten, die zur Regelung der gemeinsamen Angeregenheiten nötig sind*', '*die politischen Prozesse selbst*', '*politische Handlung*' or '*Partizipationsmöglichkeiten*'.

twofold usage also appears in Plato's works, especially in his early dialogues. In the dramatic setting of the dialogues, Protagoras, in his long justification of democracy, describes a democratic environment in which all citizens are expected to deliberate well on public affairs (Prot. 319c8-e1, 324c7) and to learn how to do so from proper teachers, the sophists (318e5-319a2). In this context, *ta politika* is used in the first sense, referring to the matters or issues of public concern. On the other hand, its use in the second sense is found prominently in the *Apology*. During Socrates' defence of himself before the citizen-juries, he claims that he has never committed any injustice against others or against the city. Socrates cites his absence from *ta politika* as a basis for this claim (31d5, d7-8), as he hearkens to the voice of the *daimōn*. In this context, *ta politika* denotes the democratic participatory activities related to handling public affairs.[87]

However, it sounds odd to claim that young people in the dramatic period of Plato's dialogues passionately longed to participate in formal political activities such as attending assemblies, serving as councilors for one-year terms, and serving as jurors. As George Kerferd explains regarding Periclean democracy, it rested on 'two principles': the political equality of citizens and the collective exercise of power by all equal citizens, alongside a meritocratic elitism such that 'high offices ... should be entrusted to those best fitted and most able to carry out these functions.'[88] In a highly democratized (or completely politicized) society like classical Athens, showcasing one's competence in public affairs through sophistic education, and thereby achieving political prominence and influence, gradually came to become a means to fulfill the socially structured desire of the young generation. It is only by considering these social dynamics that we can meaningfully interpret lines such as 'you [Callicles] are just now beginning to be engaged in *ta politika*' (*Gorg*. 515a); 'turn to higher pursuits (*epi ta meizô*, according to the context, *ta politika*)' (*Mnx*. 234b); 'only one of our public men (*tôn politikôn monos*) [Meletus] to start out the right way' (*Euthyph* 2c8-d1). Although *ta politika* in these sentences denotes the same extensionally as its the second meaning, it refers intensionally to all actions needed required to pursue one's private goods and recognition under given social conditions—which constitutes its third meaning. It is here that we encounter politics in its ordinary sense, understood as the maintenance or management of the existing social order

[87] For examples of activities Socrates abstained from engaging in, see *Ap*. 31c, 32b; *Gorg*. 473e-474a. I believe that *ta politika* in *Meno* 93a5-6 can be read as referring to both.
[88] Kerferd 1983, 16-17.

through individual compliance and collective reproduction. However innovative democratic participation (*ta politika*) may once have been, in Plato's eyes, the democratic institutions and culture had ceased to sustain the dynamic space for bringing about any significant political change. It is at this very point that the theorists became critical and sought to introduce an alternative concept to politics.

The *Alcibiades* Ⅰ exemplifies all three typical usages of *ta politika*, both in its dramatic motive and philosophical content. As for the motive, Socrates initiates the dialogue with Alcibiades because he is about to enter the public realm without the requisite knowledge for political activities:

> You are wedded to stupidity ... This is why you're rushing into politics (ᾄττεις πρὸς τὰ πολιτικά) before you've got an education. You're not alone in this sad state – you've got most of our city's politicians [those conducting the things of the city: τῶν πραττόντων τὰ τῆσδε τῆς πόλεως] for company (118b6-c1).

What Alcibiades actually seeks by "presenting himself before the Athenian people" (105b2) is private goods: honor, power, and high status.[89] Thus, he wants to pursue politics in the third sense. Irrespective of his ultimate goal, his task, to accomplish his pursuit of these goods, involves participating in public activities (134b: τὰ πολιτικὰ πράττειν), such as "advising," "proposing discussions" (106c), and "managing and keeping safe" (126a), all with regard to *ta politika* (107d, 133e, 134c). What is at stake for Alcibiades is whether he has equipped himself with the requisite expertise to handle *ta politika* as civic or public affairs. Without such expertise, he cannot effectively engage in *ta politika* activities.

1.3.1.2. What in Plato's Texts Corresponds to the Political?

Turning to a different question: what in Plato's texts corresponds to "the political"—distinct from politics? Analyzing the usage of terms like τὸ πολιτικόν or *ta politika* is no longer helpful to address this question. A provisional clue comes from Hüttinger's observation that '*Die politika erscheinen in den frühren Dialogen nicht nur als Gegensatz zum Begriff des Privaten, sondern auch zu dem der „Philosophie" oder des*

[89] Alcibiades is depicted as wanting to τιμήσασθαι (105b2), μέγιστον δυνήσεσθαι (b4), μέγιστος εἶναι among the Greeks and other nations (b5-6).

„*Philosophen*“.’[90] It is tempting to associate the philosophy epitomized by the life of Socrates with the concept of the political, a connection that is not without grounds. Consider, for example, the famous passage in the *Gorgias*, where Socrates declares that he is ‘one of a few who put their hand to the political art and try to do politics’ (521d6-8), as well as another passage that represents the same Socrates as disinterested in *ta politika* (473e6-474a2; Cf. *Ap*. 31c-33b).[91] If we can unequivocally identify the Socratic philosophical activity as a form of politics, we might conclude that it is (his) philosophy, a philosophical conversation with his fellow citizens, and his effort to live justly and virtuously that constitute what is genuinely political for Plato.[92]

However, it leaves us with a difficult question: in what sense is philosophy political? Does not Plato’s ‘*kontrafaktisches Politikverständnis*’ represent only an unrealistic, impractical, and romantic conception of politics?[93] Even more challenging is to come to terms with the anti-political character of philosophy as portrayed in the *Republic*—the pursuit of absolute truth through knowledge of the Forms. The assumption of an absolute truth has been regarded as the most anti-political aspect of Plato's philosophy and the most challenging to reconcile with politics, which has its ontological basis in pluralism. On this view, the *Republic,* though claiming to be a political work, offers only a transcendent, supra-political standard for politics, eventually revealing the tension between philosophy and politics.[94] I will revisit this issue, whether philosophy is genuinely political or anti-political under the guise of true politics, in Section 1.3.2. Since the task at hand is to demonstrate that Plato distinguishes between politics in the everyday, ordinary sense and the political in a more

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[90] Deibel 2000, 25-26; cf. Hüttinger 2004, 118-119: ‘*Daneben erscheinen die politika als Gegenpol zur „Philosophie“ oder zum „Philosophen*.“’

[91] In this sense, Socrates serves as an epitome of the ideal citizen Pericles demands the Athenians to be (Thu. II 37-41). See Hüttinger 2004, 125. This liberal, communicative, egalitarian aspect of Socrates is highly regarded by those who are hostile to Plato but favorable toward Socrates, for example, Popper 2003, 135-141 (Ch. 7.4), 162-165 (Ch. 8.8), and 202-207 (Ch. 10.5). See also Section 1.1.1 above for the view of Socrates’ method in the dialogues as genuinely political in the sense of deliberation, pluralism, and communication.

[92] According to Rowe 2007, 29, Socrates’ claim seems ‘purely provocative, pure paradox’. However, ‘to call him “apolitical” ... is to say no more than that he attaches no great value to political *institutions* as such.’ Here, political institutions are what we refer to by using the general term “politics”.

[93] Greven 2010, 70-71.

[94] Regarding the danger of such suppositions, see Popper 2003, 70-78 and 86-87 for his criticism of the psychological or spiritual naturalism advocated by Plato and its ethical and political consequences; Arendt 1998, 225-7; 2017, 54 for her critique of Plato introducing the standard for politics from elsewhere, say, philosophy; Flaig 1994, 37-43 on Plato’s idea of the reality of “*absolute[n] Wissen*,” and 58-68 for his justification of the superfluousness of persuasion and deliberation (see also Trampedach 1994, 176-202, who follows this criticism); Hüttinger 2004, 126 ff. See also Section 1.1.2 above for the view of Plato as an illiberal, anti-political thinker, and Section 1.3.2. below.

fundamental and normative sense, let me now examine whether Plato intended to attribute to philosophy the features we associate with the concept of the political: expanding our perspective on politics and a dual status, separated from and still connected or relevant to politics. For this, I shall discuss three passages in Plato's works that are particularly relevant to this examination.

The first passage I want to examine is Socrates' exchange with Thrasymachus in Book 1 of the *Republic*, where politics and philosophy are presented as intertwined through the same question of what is good. Following Melissa Lane's recent analysis of this passage (2023), the readers see Socrates' argument about the notion of rule as 'focus[ing] especially on its *telos*, underscoring the archaic evaluative expectation that the ruler is to aim at the good of the ruled.'[95] Against Thrasymachus's claim that rule exists to serve the interests of the stronger and dominant, Socrates first elicits his agreement to the thesis that those who do it without errors are the true experts (τεχνικός) in the strictest sense and then appropriates this premise for his own advantage. Since every *technê* or *epistêmê* involves a form of rule (ἄρχειν, κρατεῖν, ἐπιτάττειν) and is directed toward its proper object by prioritizing its interests, the rule of every expert must inherently serve the good of the ruled.[96] If not conducted for this good, such a rule fails to qualify as the rule of experts. In other words, it is not the rule in the strict sense, which Thrasymachus, by his own agreement, claims to be talking about. 'The only proper rule is a rule that serves the interest of the ruled,' and doing good for the subjects becomes a 'definitional' or 'constitutive' feature of kinds of rule.[97] According to Lane, Socrates refutes Thrasymachus by extending this conception of rule to political rulers. It is striking that the verb for "investigate" or "inquire" (σκοπεῖν) appears as frequently as the verbs for ruling or commanding, specifying the task of a *technê* or *epistêmê* (9 times from 342a2-342e1; additionally, "ζητεῖν" in b4 and "βλέπειν πρός τι" in e10), all with the same direct object "τὸ συμφέρον." I interpret this to mean that *technê* includes both the inquiry into what is good and the act of issuing commands and thus

[95] Lane 2023, 140. In contrast, the *Statesman* focuses especially on the *taxis* of the rule. See Lane 2023, 37 and 123 ff.. Trivigno (2021) offers a different formulation for this idea: 'A ruling expertise thus has a teleological sturcture, which make its goal the care, preservation and improvement of whatever the expertise ranges over.' (161-162)

[96] Lane 2023, 147: Rule 'is being incorporated into the very structure and meaning of (at least certain kinds of) *technê*. ... the notion of arche that structures this techne from within.' Cf. 142 and 152-3 for her proposal to shift the focus from technê in interpreting this passage to the idea of *archê*.

[97] Lane 2023, 150: 'definitional and even metaphysical'; 153: 'constitutive'. For a similar idea for the nature of ruling, see Roupa 2020, 109.

ruling, because what is good for the subjects is not a given solution for all political experts but rather a problem itself.[98] The readers of the *Republic* recognize how the rest of the dialogue is devoted to determining what is good, which is the task of the philosopher. Therefore, the inquiry into the good, or the question of what is good, belongs both to the philosopher and the political expert.

The second passage to be discussed is the so-called second protreptic argument and the intervening conversation with Crito (288d-292e) in the *Euthydemus*, where it becomes most evident to me that Plato is aware of the distinction between politics as ordinarily understood and politics in a more fundamental sense. As noted above, expertise comprises both the inquiry into what is good and the practice of issuing orders to its subjects, and the same holds for political expertise or political rule. The *Euthydemus* names several goods it is supposed to provide (292b4-6):

> The other results which a person might attribute to the statesman's art (πολιτικῆς [τέχνης]) and these, of course, would be numerous, as for instance, making the citizens rich and free and not disturbed by faction.

In this context, Socrates recounts his previous day's conversation to Crito in which he and Cleinias have examined the political or kingly art,[99] understood as *epistêmê* that the takes over and uses the products of other arts, as the *epistêmê* to be acquired and possessed in order to achieve happiness (291b4-c1. cf. 288d5-290a8). However, they soon realized that if the political art were truly worth learning and possessing, it must produce or bring about something *absolutely* good, namely, the wisdom and *epistêmê* (292b7-8. cf. 281e2-5). However, the goods generally considered to be the products of political art, as cited above, should be regarded as *conditional* goods. In his conversation with Crito, Socrates does not appear to rule out the possibility that the kingly or political art could still align with the *epistêmê* he seeks (292c4-5). But they have reached an impasse in identifying what exactly the good is that this art produces. Commentators argue that this infinite regress occurring at this point is designed to anticipate the argument in the *Republic*, which posits the Form of the Good as the ultimate object of such *epistêmê*.[100] Building on the *Republic*'s

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[98] Schmitt 2015, 23 citing Puppendorf, a theorist of sovereignty, states that '*natürlich alle nur das allgemeine Beste, nur das öffentliche Wohl, Recht und Gerechtigkeit zu vertreten behaupten, aber die Frage ist, wessen Entscheidung in letzter und maßgebender Instanz entscheidend ist.*'

[99] On the identification of πολιτική and βασιλική at 291c4-5, see Schofield 2006, 153 and Erler 2017, 178.

[100] For the anticipation of the *Republic* in the *Euthydemus*, see Kahn 1996, 207-209 and Erler 2017, 84-85

framework, the kingly art can be described as the *epistêmê* that uses all other goods in reference to the Form of the Good to achieve happiness. The more intricate interpretative issues will be discussed further in Chapter 3. Here, I want to clarify that there are two distinct arts, both termed political art, corresponding respectively to politics and the political. The first is the art of productive kind, concerned with *ta politika* and generating conditional political goods. In addition to the goods mentioned in the citation, political speech is included as one of them, such that the oratory and speechwriting skills that produce them can also be understood as belonging to the political art of this kind (289c6-290a6 and 305b4-c4). All activities involving *ta politika* in the first sense and themselves constituting *ta politika* in the second sense, such as proposing policies or decrees, executing administrative measures, delivering persuasive speeches, or serving as a judge or council member making judgments, are productive activities aimed at conditional goods. This is exactly what we commonly understand as politics (see Section 1.2.1 above). Plato transcends this framework by positing a higher form of political art, one that uses these conditional goods with the aim of producing what is ultimately and absolutely good. The reference point of this higher art is the absolute good, enabling it to evaluate all conditional goods—determining whether something perceived as good by an individual, temporarily, or from a certain perspective, is genuinely good. For instance, political consensus may be good in the sense that it is better than disorder, but the second kind of political art enables us to put its assumed goodness into question. I argue this reflects Plato's engagement with theorists emphasizing the dissociative moment of the political, viewing it as more, or genuinely political, to disrupt and question existing consensus and thereby overcome the status quo that is well-managed and controlled. Also, while consensus is important, it should not be valued merely for being consensus; rather, it must serve a higher good. If the political art of the first kind produces political unity, then it can be made better, though only conditionally. For this gradual improvement, one must possess the political art of the second kind and appeal to the Good itself. I believe that this is what Plato means by "using the conditional goods" and "ruling productive arts." Therefore, it can be concluded that in the *Euthydemus*, too, Plato implies a close relationship between philosophy, addressing the question of what is good, and the political.

The third and final passage under consideration is *Statesman* 303d4-305e7, where the Eleatic Stranger concludes the last stage of dialectical division: the separation of political

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and 99-100.

epistêmê from the three precious expertises—oratory, generalship, and judgeship.[101] In his commentary on this dialogue, Christopher Rowe makes several interesting points regarding the term "πολιτικός." According to him, this term was generally used in the masculine plural form to refer to those involved in *ta politika*, that is, 'the affairs of the city.' Thus, those who were called political (οἱ πολιτικοί) were actually orators, generals, and judges. Plato innovates by using this term in the singular form to refer to the person who can be understood as 'statesman' or 'ruler.'[102] Plato seems to be drawing here a distinction between two kinds of political men, similar to the distinction between two kinds of political art in the *Euthydemus*. Just as the first kind of political art is productive, the ordinary politicians in the *Statesman* function as producers: crafting persuasion, attaining victory, and rendering legal judgments. As seen just above, the second kind of political art in the *Euthydemus* is the art for using the products of other arts and the art or ruling (ἄρχειν) over arts. In what sense it is such an art is specified more clearly in the *Statesman*: it is for deciding whether, when and for what each should be exercised (304c7-8 and d3-8, 304e9-12) and providing reference points for making particular judgments (305b6-7). Consequently, while subordinate craftsmen with specialized skills are political in the ordinary sense of engaging in politics, rulers or users possessing political *epistêmê* are political in a more fundamental sense: they possess the capability to evaluate, improve, and critique existing politics and the social order it sustains. In my view, these two meanings of "being political" correspond, respectively, to politics and the political. One unresolved question is whether the political *epistêmê* defined in the *Statesman* has the Form of the Good as its object, as the readings of the *Euthydemus* and the *Republic* imply. This is difficult to answer and will be addressed constantly in the rest part of this thesis (Political *epistêmê* is of the Good itself and of Forms). For now, we can observe the hint that the political art that uses and rules other ordinary political arts must involve knowledge of and inquiry into what is truly good.

Let me summarize the discussion so far. First, Plato employs the term *ta politika* to refer to

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[101] I am aware that the plural form of "expertises" is awkward, but it is necessary to denote many but distinct ἐπιστῆμαι. The same excuse has been made by Lane 2023, 129 to denote three precious expertises in the *Statesman*. ('the three latter expertises (if the awkward plural can be forgiven), ...'

[102] For the ordinary usage and Plato's innovative one, see Rowe 2005, 1 and 236 (comment on 303d4-6). Also see Wallach 2001, 338 n.21: 'Literally, *politikos* designates a man professionally concerned with the public business of the polis, and Plato was notably the first writer of record to use the word *politikos* in this sense, for it had been previously used only as an adjective.' See also Lane 2023, 115-116. All researches refer to Hansen 1983 for its historical evidence.

what we commonly understand as politics or political matters, including laws, institutions, and legitimate activities and interactions within a given constitutional framework. Next, in order to identify an equivalent to the concept of the political in Plato, we have examined several key passages from four of his dialogues. Beginning with the *Gorgias*, where Plato attributes true politics to Socrates *qua* philosopher, we saw in Book I of the *Republic* that philosophy and politics are inextricably linked through the question of what constitutes the good. Then, in the *Euthydemus*, we observed that the true political *technê* or *epistêmê*, defined as ruling and utilizing politics in the ordinary sense and its products, is implicitly tied to the Form of the Good in the *Republic*. Lastly, in the *Statesman*, we confirmed that Plato distinguishes between the common political expertise and the true political *epistêmê*, elevating the latter by using the term "πολιτικός" in an unconventional way. Can we then interpret "the political" in Plato as encompassing both the theoretical inquiry into the Good itself and the practical endeavor to realize it by criticizing, evaluating, and renewing political things? In the following sections, I shall examine whether Plato's conception of the political and his theorizing framework meet the other shared characteristics we have gone through.

1.3.2. The Possibility of a Radical Political Change in Plato's Political Thought

Does it not, however, look paradoxical to connect the notion of the Good itself with the concept of the political? As previously mentioned, the issue to be addressed here, whether the inquiry into what is really good and the pursuit of its realization are genuinely political or rather anti-political under the guise of a true politics, is critical to my reading of Plato's political thought in terms of the political. If the Good itself is posited as the epistemic ground or foundation and the practically desirable goal that exhaustively determines the orientation of all politics and serves as the ultimate ideal for all political orders, then Plato's theory of Forms and his metaphysics as a whole not only circumscribe the scope of political reconstruction but also, in principle, render it impossible. In short, Plato's philosophy appears to leave no room for radical political change and is therefore devoid of a defining feature of the theories of the political. Of course, one might be content to argue that such ideas actually constitute Plato's concept of the political, regardless of whether it aligns with contemporary discourse on the concept of the political. In that case, my project would reduce to a historical investigation of Plato's political thought, which is in itself interesting but diverges from my original aim (see p. 17 above). Thus, in this section, I will first outline the traditional critique that Plato's theory precludes the possibility of radical

political change. Subsequently, I will explore how Plato could counter or defend against this criticism.

As noted in Section 1.2.3 above, value pluralism and the rejection of transcendent truth or ultimate foundations constitute irreversible characteristics of modernity. Those who endorse these views often consider Plato's philosophy as the most classic and typical form of the rejected idea, where a unitary and objective principle, such as the Idea of the Good and the cosmos of Forms, serves as absolute truth and foundation. The political consequence of such a belief is primarily social oppression or perpetual disagreement, as witnessed in religious wars or totalitarian regimes, issues that concerned thinkers like Rawls and Popper.[103] However, another serious criticism of Plato concerns his rejection of change. According to Popper, Plato ideal state, once his utopian engineering aiming at realizing an unalterable blueprint for the ideal society has succeeded (*Resp*. VII. 540e-541a), becomes immune to all social disturbances. This is rooted in the conviction that 'change is evil, and rest is divine',[104] as exemplified by Sparta or any closed totalitarian society, where political power controls everything, leaving no room for pluralism of values and opinions (see Section 1.2.4. above). Popper's appraisal of Plato's political philosophy 'captures the core of Hannah Arendt's ... account of totalitarianism.' [105] The Ideas, including the Idea of the Good, function as 'standards, measurements, and rules of behaviors' and eventually as 'the impersonal object'.[106] This 'transformation' is part of Plato's 'substitution of making for acting and the concomitant degradation of politics into a means to obtain an allegedly "higher" end.'[107] When such a conception of politics prevails, our expectations of politics are reduced to the administration of a consumer society, dominated by laboring activity, or to a means of violence for specific purposes, displacing

[103] Rawls 2005, 134: Plato 'fall[s] on the side of the one reasonable and rational good. Such views hold that institutions are justifiable to the extent that they effectively promote that good' and justify the use of thepublic power to enforce a view based on that good (137-8). Popper 2003, 166-171, argues for the superiority of his vision of piecemeal social engineering, citing the danger of violence and conflict inherent in utopian engineering based on Plato's beliefs in 'one absolute and unchanging ideal.'

[104] Popper 2003, 37 and 15-17. For Plato's ambivalent attitude toward historicism and social engineering, see 22-23 and Popper 1947, 200.

[105] Backman 2020, 169-70.

[106] For her critical appraisal of Plato's introduction of the Good itself, see Arendt 1998, 225-8 and 2005, 10-11.

[107] Arendt 1998, 299. For the substitution of making for acting, see further 220-230 (Ch. 31) and 2017, 79: '*Zweck-Mittel-Kategorie*'. In contrast, 'no "end," no ultimate *telos*, was needed or could ever be used for their [human deeds] justification' (2005, 46).

the possibility of the advent of something new, i.e., a miracle.[108] Eventually, if we read Plato as these two critics do, he appears as one of the thinkers most hostile to political changes, rendering the question of whether Plato makes room for such change effectively moot.

In response to Popper's critique that Plato's ideal state is designed to be free from all changes, many counterarguments have emerged. One might note that Plato does not posit 'such Forms as the Form of the ideal city', but only 'relevant to the ideal city ... the Forms of justice and other virtues'.[109] Like any less-than-ideal city, Plato's city, however ideal in form, also continually faces a variety of challenges from both within and without, as long as the political community exists within the real world. Moreover, the identification of change with deterioration, which Popper attributes to Plato, cannot be sustained on either the metaphysical or physical level.[110] Rather, it is by producing changes that a city maintains its stability. In the ideal city, the philosopher-rulers are described as engaging in *ta politika* (*Resp*. VI. 498b7; VII. 540b3), requiring them to deliberate, decide, persuade, and enact laws.[111] In the absence of any changes or novelties in the ideal state, there would be nothing to judge or decide anew. Accordingly, strong evidence for 'active, critical intelligence' and for the revision it enables within Plato's ideal city is considered by George Klosko, who critically reviews Popper's criticism that for Plato, social laws and conventions must be 'rigid and ... impossible to change.'[112] It appears to me that the best way to

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[108] For her discussion of natality, the ability to begin anew, freedom, and miracle, see 1998, 8-9, 246-7, 318; 2017, 30-34.

[109] For Popper's outline of Plato's theory of Forms and its political implications, see 2003, 23-29 (Ch. 3.5), 36-41 (Ch. 4.1-2), and 211 ff. (Ch. 10.8). Burnyeat 1999, 297-8: 'It [the impossibility of the perfect actualization of justice in reality] has nothing to do with the metaphysical difference between Forms and their exemplifications.' See also Klosko 2006, 181.

[110] Arruzza 2012, 272-273 refers to passages discussing the soul's movement and various kinds of change in the realm of Becoming.

[111] For the political activities of philosopher-rulers, see Lane 2023, 240-242. Flaig 1994, 62 ff. understands politics only '*konkrete Handlungen*' *in the* '*Konkurrenz, ... welcher politischen Option in einem gegebenen Fall der Vorzug zu geben ist*' under the condition of '*Dissens*' and '*Meinungsverschiedenheit*', but It is not impossible to define politics as 'a search for the best answers about common interests and their advancement.' (Ober 2017, 142-143). Additionally, some critics of Plato with this perspective argue that his philosopher-rulers are expected to make the right decisions in every individual cases (ethical particularism: see Horn 2021a, 93-4 and 2021c, 22-27; See also Section 2.3 below) and then that, since such knowledge does not exist and claiming to possess it is impossible, Plato's ideal is both unrealistic and dangerous. Then, does this not indicate an inconsistency within criticism of Plato itself, that between these particularists and those who, like Popper, see Plato's ideal city as a rigid system with no room for decision making due to its lack of changes?

[112] Klosko 2006, 178-182.

understand the political changes Plato envisions is to draw an analogy with bodily movements as described in the *Timaeus* 88d-e. Based on a physiological analysis of bodily health and disease, Timaeus exhorts that a person maintain health by exercising and continually agitating the body. Exercise is therefore reformulated as an imitation of the nurse of the universe, a metaphor that refers to the reception of the rational principle imposed by the Demiurge and the reformation in accordance with it (*Tim*. 53b, 69b). By analogy, political changes such as the revision of laws and the introduction of new policies aim at the health of the city, understood in terms of stability and duration. This finds support not only in Plato's famous city-individual analogy in the *Republic* but also in Socrates' request for an imaginative depiction of the ideal city in motion in the introductory conversation (19b-c). Political changes thus contribute to the flourishing of the city by sustaining its stability (cf. *Critias* 120e-121c), just as a person can always perform well by staying healthy through regular training and exercise.

Given that Plato does not exclude the possibility of political changes in his ideal city and that counter-changes must be produced actively in response to spontaneous internal and external changes, the question that interests me is whether, and to what extent, these changes are radical. This is not a question of how radical change can be toward Plato's ideal city, as Popper describes "utopian engineering,"[113] but rather of how radical the changes occurring within Plato's ideal city can be. In other words, do these changes turn out to be mere governmental operations, or do they represent meaningful changes? If we define a political change as radical when it affects the fundamental principles and predetermined goals of a political system, the key to the interpretation is whether the framework within which Plato discusses the ideal city, such as the reference to Forms by philosopher-rulers in their ruling, allows either theoretically and practically, for such political change. (I will clarify in Chapter 4, especially in Section 4.4, what I mean by a political change being "radical".)

The first strategy is to elevate the ontological status of the blueprint that Plato suggests the philosopher-rulers should have in mind. Considering Plato's description of the city constructed in the *Republic* as a *paradeigma* in heaven (V. 472c4, d9, VI. 500e2, IX. 592b1), this blueprint, if it is indeed a blueprint, cannot be understood as a concrete

[113] See also Arruzza 2012, 276-279 for the discussion of 'the issue of the kind of change that is necessary for Plato in order to make the ideal city feasible.'

political plan, such as the planning of a collectivist economic system or 'a topical political manifesto'.[114] Rather, it is, as Christoph Horn (2013) calls it, '*eine normative Skizze, an die man reale politische Verhältnisse möglichst eng annähren muss*.'[115] Moreover, Richard Barney (2002) offers a similar argument against the so-called 'ethical reconstructionist reading' of Plato, which holds that what is desirable for Plato is the ethical reconstruction of the past, which makes his political thought 'moral nostalgia.'[116] According to her, Plato did not treat any existing polis as a reference for his political project, but rather he was always concerned with the universal and everlasting problem of how to subordinate greed to intellect.[117] If this constitutes the gist of Plato's scheme of an ideal city, then we might come up with an unlimited number of ways to realize it under culturally and historically conditioned circumstances, ranging from Plato's prohibition of private property for guardians to contemporary social democracy.[118] Combining the assumption that Plato's ideal city undergoes changes with the assumption that his political goal, however it is formulated, is abstract and ideal, we can conclude that the change that Plato envisions in his ideal city can be radical enough to overcome the given conditions. This follows because the substance of his ideal city, as specified in his works, lies not in the concrete suggestions he offers but in its conformity to an abstract and ideal political goal.

Plato's endorsement of the possibility of radical political change becomes more plausible when we fully take into account the transcendent nature of the Platonic entities.[119] Contrary to Popper's accusation that Plato's theory results in the 'empty formalism'[120] of the Good itself, Arruzza recognizes the subversive potential of its lack of any content in conferring the character of absolute openness on its instances.[121] Likewise, Backman

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[114] Popper 2003, xix and 162-165 (Ch. 8.8): 'a serious project of practical reform'

[115] Horn 2013, 15-16. For the same argument, see Arruzza 2012, 274.

[116] Barney 2002, 208. Her article discusses Athens' finest era around the democratization and the Persian War; the First city or so-called City of Pigs in the *Republic*; and the golden age in the *Statesman*, *Timaeus* and *Critias*.

[117] Barney 2002, 226: 'Plato consistently presents his ethical and political program as one of opposition, not to dangerous modernity, but to the perennially mesmerizing desire for wealth.'

[118] Schofield 2006, 275 for his mention of social democracy, his emphasis on 'Plato's principled aversion to the naturally insatiable desire for money' and his plea for 'finding more effective ways of exercising some control over it.'

[119] For the causal or explanatory connection of a political ideal, such as "intellect over appetite," with the transcendent cosmos of Ideas and human nature, see Horn 2013, 12-15: '*eine teleologische … Welterkläerung*' *oder* '*eine[r] metaphysische[n] oder vertikale[n] Kausalität*,' according to which the ideal social order is explained by a structured unity of the Ideas in the conceptual-logical (b*egriffslogisch*) realm.

[120] Popper 2003, 154 (Ch. 8.4).

[121] Arruzza 2012, 275-6.

(2020) shows that Arendt's interpretation of Plato's conception of politics as a fabrication of the actual instance of the Idea of the Good is not the only possible one. Backman contrasts it with Badiou's approach to understanding politics. According to Badiou, who shares with other theorists of the political 'a fundamental common concern, namely, to articulate politics as a realm for the deployment of novelty in history,'[122] the Idea can be regarded as the source of the novelty by functioning as a focal 'point of orientation' for political actions aimed at overcoming preexisting, predetermined orders. The real presence of the Idea of the Good, which answers the question of what is really good, legitimizes political actions that invalidate existing constructions based on conventional notions of the good itself and replace it with a newly manifested one. It is through an appeal to the Good itself that an action becomes politically radical or genuinely political.

Similarly, the concept of "nature" can be interpreted in this way. Plato's appeal to nature in the *Republic*, as well as in other dialogues, raises the troubling question of whether the Good itself ultimately determines the specifications of desirable social institutions in accordance with nature. This either leads Strauss to the idiosyncratic interpretation that the Kallipolis is against nature and hence impossible or provides a pretext for Rancière's criticism that Plato leaves no room for democracy by constructing his ideal city according to nature. However, these views are not inevitable if we understand nature as 'a normative but open-ended concept.' [123] For Plato, nature serves as 'an objective, normative standard,'[124] through which he constantly challenges the fixed notion of nature currently prevailing.[125] The concept of human nature, then, is not the ultimate basis for organizing a just politics but rather a regulative one for reflecting the opinions about human nature that have given rise to current politics. This is seen in the Kallipolis, where Plato institutes female guardians and abolishes the nuclear family in opposition to the prevailing notion of nature. For Plato, human nature prevents no radical change but is invoked when such

[122] Backman 2020, 178.
[123] Roupa 2020, 97.
[124] Roupa 2020, 114.
[125] Plato is a naturalist, but does not believe that a 'fixed human nature' determines the institutions of Kallipolis, nor that founding an ideal city is just a matter of mirroring 'a pre-existing psychic structure.' (Roupa 2020, 110). While her proposal for understanding Plato's conception of nature supports my argument in this section, I disagree with her reading of the First City passage (103-4), which suggests that the transition from the First City to the inflamed, luxurious City is driven not by nature alone but by the interplay between nature and political environment, and that the seeds of expanding desire are already present in the latter. For a detailed discussion of the City of Pigs and the existing scholarship on the topic, see Roh 2025.

change is being envisioned.[126]

My claim that the Idea or Form of the Good or the nature of human being (or the Human itself) is not a fixed or exhaustively determinable term or object but functions as a regulative ideal—normative in orientation yet inherently beyond full realization—finds further justification by reflecting on their role in radical political change. One might have simplistic views about it: for instance, that the Form of the Good or Justice is to be embodied in the actual political world by those with exclusive access to their knowledge, or that one first establish a general principle of justice and the good and then derive a conclusion for a given particular situation (resembling Aristotelian practical syllogism). However, the role of these Forms in enabling radical change appears to be more complex. The existence of Being over many sensibles is inferred by our recognition of the many as F. However, the content of Being—what X is—is questioned when we confront two *conflicting* perceptions of the same object. Our intellect is summoned to inquire into what it really is, as illustrated in the Finger Passage (*Resp*. VII. 523c-525a). The process finds an analogy in mathematics: geometers solve a given geometrical problem by setting an arbitrary length as a unit for measure but realize that two lengths are sometimes *incommensurable* with each other. However, independently of these concrete lengths, *the One*, as a unit, exists conceptually, leading from sensible numbers toward the recognition and inquiry into the principle of the abstract number (the unit or the One). It suggests that the higher principles, those above the sensible, are simpler and more fundamental, and that the inquiry into them begins from the incommensurability of geometrical magnitudes as encountered in sensory experience (for a more detailed discussion, see Section 4.3 where I refer to Vogel (2024)).

This explanation goes analogously for justice and the good. We are told in the texts that what is good and what is just, matters of great significance for our lives, give rise to political antagonism, as they are deeply controversial, and difficult to discern and compare (*Euthyph*. 7b-d; *Alc*. I. 111b-c, 112a-d; *Phdr*. 263a-c; *Tht*. 171d-172b). Since this antagonism does not arise between justice and injustice, but rather between competing conceptions of justice, we can say that this practical incommensurability leads, just as the mathematical

[126] See Burnyeat 1999, 306-7 for Plato's method of appealing to true nature to demonstrate the practicability of measures that seem unrealistic (in the case of female guardians) according to prevailing conceptions of nature (i.e., of women).

one does, to the necessity of investigating the simplest and most fundamental entities, which Plato calls the Forms, much like numbers in the case of mathematics. Now, according to the passage that thematizes the tension between law and expertise in the *Statesman* (295c-299e), there is always an asymmetry in this antagonism: it occurs when a particular notion of justice, once established and recognized within a social or legal order, prevails, and another form of justice that proves incommensurable with the former emerges, which is then deemed impossible, illegal, or unintelligible (it is with coercion: 296c-d; it is punishable: 297e; it is strange and corrupting: 299b-c). The experience of perceiving two conflicting notions of justice leads one, perplexed by this contradiction, to investigate (ζητεῖν: 299b5, 299e7) what is truly just, something that transcends both sensible instances and is common to both as a unitary principle. Superficially, such inquiry aims to articulate a new conception of justice, different from what is prescribed by the prevailing laws (295c, 296a). However, this is not possible without the expertise of Justice itself, which belongs to a higher reality than the currently accepted just things. Like the previous analogy, Justice itself remains unrealized through particular sensible instances; instead, it serves as a reference point, which continually gives rise to what is new and in contradiction to the existing. When this new conception of justice gains acceptance, I refer to such a transformation as radical (see Section 4.4). The *Republic* offers a metaphysical account of how such radical change is made possible by introducing the Forms, whereas its practical mechanism is delineated in the passage concerning the relationship between law and expertise in the *Statesman*. This topic will be further discussed in Chapter 2.

Taking all of this into consideration, it is appropriate here to offer a definitional statement about the concept of the political in Plato. Based on the discussion so far, I understand that the political in Plato, in contrast to politics in the ordinary sense or *ta politika* in the Greek text, pertains to questioning the value of every constituent of a given order and envisioning an alternative social order in reference to the transcendent Good itself. As argued in this section, it is this "posing questions" about what is really good and just that serves as the starting point for bringing about a radical political change. Indeed, it has been argued that Plato makes room for the possibility of such change in his philosophical framework.

1.3.3. Disappearing of the Political: What is *Political* Community for Plato, and What Is Not?

If the political is as defined in the concluding part of the previous section, it can be further

argued that a community is political when the political is present, that is, when it possesses the potential to question a given existing social order, envision a new alternative one and bring about radical political change in reference to the transcendent Good itself. An immediate example of such a political community is the city ruled by philosopher-rulers with knowledge of the Good itself. However, I will argue that there are multiple modes through which the knowledge of the Good itself may be present in a society beyond the possession of philosopher-rulers (For several scenarios illustrating how the *epistêmê* of the Good itself may operate within a society, besides the rule of philosophers, see Sections 2.2.3 and 5.3 below). The definition of the political for Plato enables us to assert that Plato's political thought shares with other theorists a concern for the phenomenon of the "vanishing of the political" and an interest in the conditions under which a community can be genuinely political. In the *Republic*, Plato is preoccupied with this not only by asking what a city is compared to 'something other than a city' (*allo ti ê polin*: IV. 421b3), such as 'a festival' (421b2), or even "two" cities,[127] but also by presenting his ideal city as a *paradeigma* in heaven (see the citation of Horn (2013) on p. 48-49 above). His two subsequent political works do not deviate from this trajectory.[128] When Plato declares the rule of the knowledgeable as the most desirable form of regime, he presents this as the definitional and essential feature of a *political* community.[129]

Conversely, then, it can be said that the political vanishes from a city when the rule of the knowledgeable collapses. This is delineated in Books 8-9 in the *Republic*: the ruling class becomes corrupted into money-seekers like farmers and banqueters (IV. 421a-421b), or the city is economically polarized (IV. 422e-423c on war with a polarized city, VIII. 547b-548d on timocracy, 551d, 552d-e on oligarchy), or even torn apart (IV. 434a-c on meddling in politics, V. 464d-465b on legal dispute). In such cases, radical political change becomes unattainable, and the city cannot be considered political. Moreover, the rule of law without

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[127] The banqueter-like warriors lead to the loss of political unity by conflicting among themselves over property (V. 464c-465b) and by exploiting their subjects (III. 415e9 ff., 417a7-b1, XIII. 547b-c). More generally, the rich and the poor necessarily form factions and make their city two, not one (IV. 422e-423b).

[128] In the *Statesman*, the constitution based on expert knowledge is the only true constitution. It serves as a standard or criterion for judging how good or bad a given constitution is, as an imitation of the true one (*Plt*. 293c5-e5, 297c1-d5, 300e12-301a1). The idea that the city united to the fullest degree is most preferable as a criterion and *paradeigma* is repeated in *Leg*. V. 739c-e, and the idea of the superiority of knowledge over the laws, discussed in the *Statesman*, also appears in *Leg*. IX. 875c-d.

[129] I found instances in McKeen 2025 where the term "political" is used normatively, although she does not specify the conditions under which a community qualifies as political in this normative sense. See the sentences in McKeen 2025, 6 and 29.

the instance of judging the legal order (III. 405a-c on excessive dependence on juridical order; IV. 425e on endlessly tinkering with laws. Cf. *Plt*. 298a-299e), or the rule of demos under the flattery of sophists who do not recognize any transcendent reality beyond actual democratic relations (VI. 488a-489a, 493a-d), also constitute a possible scenario in which any radical political change cannot take place. In such cases, the political is deemed absent from the city or state.

That the truest and genuinely political city for Plato is the city ruled by philosopher-rulers in the *Republic* is beyond doubt. However, what remains to be examined is whether the outcome of such an ideal rule—unity—can be recognized as a definitional feature of a political community. For Plato, political unity is both the greatest good for a city (V. 462a-b) and the *definiens* of the city itself (IV. 422e1-423a1).[130] When comparing a genuine city with its degenerate forms, Plato considers scenarios marked by the loss of the unity: when the city splits into rich and poor, a conflict of interest arises within the ruling class over power and wealth, and those who are unqualified covet the authority of the city, the political unity vanishes. If we follow Dominic Scott's (2000) argument that the more a constitution degenerates, the more its unity is lost, and observe that, where political unity totally evaporates, only master and slaves remain (VIII. 569b-c; Cf. IX. 557c-d), then we can understand the hierarchy of city types in Books VIII-IX, in terms of justice, as a hierarchy of the degree of unity, and thus of to the extent to which the city remains political. The aspiration for political unity is the flip side of the concern over the loss of the political.

However, we should not yet conclude, solely based on his pursuit of defining a city, that Plato shares the same concern and interest as contemporary political theorists. It is still possible that what Plato envisions as a city is, in fact, no city at all, just as the characters in the opening scene of the *Sophist* ask whether they agreed on the name (ὄνομα) but not the thing (πρᾶγμα ἔργον).[131] What if the definiens of political community Plato offers turns out to be no such thing at all or even something destructive to the city (Arist. *Pol*. II. 2. 1261a22, 1261b8-9)? Is not the considerable degree of political unity that Plato demands for his ideal city actually opposed to the nature of the city itself?[132] Such a criticism traces

[130] Annas 1981, 103-5, Reeve 206, 204-8, Schofield 2006, 212-8.
[131] *Soph*. 217a7-9, 218c1-5, 221a7-b2.
[132] For instance, Rawls' (2005, 133-172) and Habermas' (1997, 400; 1998, 228-9) conception of political unity available to modernity through overlapping consensus or the unity of reason in the discourse ethics.

back to Aristotle and finds a modern reprise in Hannah Arendt and many contemporary liberal political theorists, who emphasize plurality as the foundation of the political (see Section 1.1.2 above). The central question in this section asks whether Plato's pursuit of such political unity renders his political thought anti-political. I shall present two arguments against the claim that Plato's city is not political due to excessive unity and the loss of plurality: (1) one directed against Aristotle and (2) another addressing the conception of the political in light of plurality.

1.3.3.1. Aristotle's Criticism

Plato's pursuit of political unity has been treated as a central motive of the *Republic* ever since Aristotle. As Schofield points out,[133] Aristotle identifies Plato's preoccupation with unity and rightly directs his criticism to this fundamental concern in his *Politics* Book II. Aristotle argues that a city that maintains the unity Plato demands is actually not a city at all (*Pol*. II.2.1261a16-21; II.5.1263b30-35), a unity defined by *homonoia* (*Resp*. IV. 431e10-b2, 432a8)[134] and *homopatheia* (V. 464c-d). According to Aristotle's account of Socrates' arguments in the *Republic*, it is to be pursued to the greatest extent possible in the polis and can be achieved in a state where "everyone says "mine" and "not mine" at the same time"(II. 3. 1261b18-19. Cf. *Resp*. V. 462a-e). For Aristotle, the polis is a community of something. But of what? Among the possible answers ranging from "everything" to "nothing," the latter answer is self-evidently absurd, while the former has long been attributed to Plato.[135] However, if it is as Plato said, Aristotle argues, then the polis would no longer be a polis, but rather a family or an individual (*Pol*. II.2. 1261a18-21, II.2. 1261b11-15, II.5.1263b31-34).

If Plato intends his ideal city to function like a person whose parts act as organs, we may characterize him as endorsing a social organism. However, it remains unclear whether Plato's metaphor of the ideal city as an individual (V. 462c9-d7) truly implies social organicism or an organic theory of the state, the core belief of which is a 'metaphysical primacy to the city over the individuals.' Rather, his vision aligns more closely with the

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[133] Schofield 2006, 214.

[134] In IV. 433c, the word '*homodoxia*' is used in the same sense.

[135] The answer is given in Book 3. It is 'the most superficial way' to 'concern the location and human beings', since they are "disjoined" (III. 3. 1276a19-34). What makes a certain multitude of human beings (*ti plêthos*) a genuine political community is that they share a *politeia* with each other—in other words, that they live under a certain arrangement (*taxis*) called *politeia*.

basic principle that each citizen must regulate their behavior in such a way that contributes to the common good and social harmony.[136] For this, every citizen must have a certain common sense of what is justice and what is good, at least regarding public affairs. Hence, I take his reference to an individual person as a metaphor to stress this shared emotion and opinion (V. 462b6-7: 'παραπλησίως χαίρωσι καὶ λυπῶνται', d1-2: 'πᾶσα ἅμα συνήλγησεν ... ὅλη.').[137] One might insist that the unity Plato imposes on the city is organic, in that the ideal citizens are denied the pursuit of individual goods and instead compelled to commit to the common good of the whole city, as evidenced by the coercion demanded of the philosopher-rulers.[138] However, enjoying the contemplative activity without ruling is the best option for the philosophers only when it remains a viable option. If they do not compromise their philosophical life and refuse to rule, the very condition enabling philosophy will collapse (I. 347c-d VII. 520c6-d5, 521b4-5). Thus, interpreting the citizens of Kallipolis as slaves, analogous to organs within an organism, results solely from a collectivist reading, which is untenable.

Furthermore, Aristotle's claim that the unity Plato finds desirable turns a city into an individual is ambiguous, because the concept of unity seems to be discussed on different dimensions by Aristotle and Plato. On one dimension, the degree of unity is gauged from the individual, through the family (and through household and village), to the city, as Aristotle suggests (*Pol.* II. 2. 1261a18-20 and 5. 1263a31-32). However, as I mentioned earlier, the unity Plato aims to establish serves as a criterion by which a city is hierarchically evaluated from the Kallipolis on top to the tyrannically ruled city at the bottom. Of course, following Arendt, we might argue that a tyrannical city resembles a household in terms of violence, the rule of a master, and the absence of the public sphere.[139] However, we should note that Plato is more concerned with the functional impairment when evaluating each stage of degeneration. The tyrannical city is the least unified and lacks the capacity to execute its ruler's commands,[140] a point already

[136] For the argument against the collectivist reading of these passages, see Schofield 2006, 218-222 and Annas 1981, 179-180.
[137] This is the same argument made by Mouracade 2004, 225 ff., who draws a comparison between Plato's political unison and Aristotle's idea of friendship.
[138] Mayhew 1997, 16-7 and Frey 2023, 124-6. For the reconstruction of Aristotle's critical argument against Plato and an objection to it, see Mouracade 2004, 222-4.
[139] For tyranny as a loss of the public, see Arendt 1998, 160, 202-203, and 220-222.
[140] For objections to the view that the tyrannical person (and the corresponding city) possesses greater unity than other vicious forms, see Arruzza 2019, 243-5.

anticipated in Book I of the *Republic* through the second counterargument of Socrates against Thrasymachus' claim that injustice makes its holder more powerful than justice (I. 351a-352d). This distinction of dimensions along which the unity is discussed makes it plausible that Plato's political unity does not fall along the former but rather on a different dimension, one where a compound entity is evaluated in terms of its proper functionality. In this sense, both an individual and a city can be healthy by being united, though in different ways, for different purposes, and by different means. If we reject the claim that Plato wanted the city to function as an individual, then more commonalities become apparent.[141] Like Aristotle, Plato recognizes that a city consists of a qualitatively diverse multitude, required to satisfy various needs (*chreia*: *Resp*. II. 369c9-10), and education is counted as among the most significant means of securing political unity.[142]

1.3.3.2. A More General Criticism

If the criticism of Plato's pursuit of political unity, dating back to Aristotle, can be mitigated, we are now better positioned to interpret Plato's conception of political unity in terms of the political. His aspiration for *such* political unity should not be reduced to an anti-political stance but rather appreciated as an application of the first and classical solution to the general one-many problem. To justify the central argument of this section, that Plato's demand for political unity reflects his concern with the genuinely political community and the disappearance of the political, I briefly review attempts to bridge the gap between the theorists in question and Plato by presenting the ways Plato can be interpreted. I then justify the occasional preference for Plato's theory over others in thinking about the political by considering whether his concept of the political offers unique advantages.

Firstly, we must avoid privileging political plurality as the sole basis for understanding the concept of the political. As discussed in the section on liberal conception of the political (Section 1.1.2 above) and emphasized by Hannah Arendt, the political always seems to presuppose a plurality of individuals or social or cultural groups.[143] However, the political

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[141] *Pace* Grant (2014, 577), who labels Aristotle's unity as synthetic-functional unity and Plato's as 'fixed-organic.'

[142] Education is not the only means for Plato. He insists on the combination of regulation and education. See Schofield 2006, 225 on Plato's limited faith in human nature and awareness of the duality of persuasion and control.

[143] For this 'conviction,' see Enroth 2010, 458-9

pertains as much to political unity as it does to plurality. This insight is echoed by Carl Schmitt, who emphasizes the unity of statal rule based on a realized law (*Recht*) by the state:[144] '*die Einheit des Staates ist stets eine Einheit aus sozialen Vielheiten gewesen*,'[145] which is derived from the philosophical conception of unity that can be traced back to Plato, that is, the distinction between *Einheit* and *Eins*.[146] If plurality and unity form an inseparable pair, and if 'the question of what politics is or how we should think about the concept of the political' can be addressed not only in terms of (human) plurality but also through political unity as a balancing act between them, as Arendt and Schmitt exemplify,[147] then securing political unity itself should not be considered as negating all possibilities of the political. Therefore, Plato's project in the *Republic* and *Laws* can be legitimately considered as genuinely political.

Once the first point above has been established, it allows us to further compare Plato with other political theorists. In fact, theories of the political, while stressing plurality and pluralism, have sought to construct a form of unity compatible with that plurality. It is within this theoretical framework that they practically engage with questions such as what constitutes a true political community and how the political has been eroded in actual political communities. It is at this juncture that most theories of the political, ranging from liberalism through republicanism to radical or agonist democracy, converge.[148] Malcolm Schofield (2006) examines the extent to which Plato's project overlaps with those of Habermas and Rawls, who advocate liberal democratic institutions and practices while seeking social and political unity within this framework. Beyond their emphasis on rational dialogue form, both Plato and Habermas (Section 1.1.1 above), he argues, for instance, that the justifications by persuasion and the resulting voluntary consent to laws, established through education in the *Republic* and the *Laws*, resemble the conditions Habermas or

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[144] For an overview of diverse answers to the question of how the unity of state and law is legitimately secured, and a concise summary of Schmitt's position compared to others, such as Hans Kelsen, see Otten 1995.

[145] Schmitt 2014, 158.

[146] Balke 1995, 252.

[147] Sluga 2008, 107. This question is shared by Arendt and Schmitt. The author argues that Arendt's emphasis on plurality stems from her critical confrontation with Schmitt (96).

[148] Grant 2014 overviews visions of political unity from ancient to postmodern thinkers in order to show that 'unity is not inherently negative, nor is plurality automatically positive.' (576) In this light, the pursuit of political unity is temporally universal and cannot be regarded as a sign of anti-political. Enroth 2010 points out that postmodern political thinkers are no exception when it comes to struggling with 'the vexed question of unity in plurality', due to what he calls 'pluralist legacy'.

Rawls deem necessary for legitimacy.[149] Such consent and legitimacy are conducive to political unity through agreement on a basic structure of society, thereby contributing to social stability.[150] While critics of Rawls and Habermas are not content with the overreliance on discursive rationality and the limited delineation of the political sphere, it cannot be entirely dismissed that postmodern thinkers have also, albeit differently, pursued unity compatible with plurality (See Section 1.2.2 above for post-foundational political thought).[151] Then, the question for my argument is whether their conception of unity can be reconciled with, or even should be replaced by, that of Plato. If the latter is the case, what advantages make the Platonic project of creating political unity more promising and effective?

1.3.3.3. The Peculiarity of Plato's Way of Creating Political Unity

If constituting political unity is an inevitable aspect of the political, and Plato's approach to achieving it proves more advantageous, one may rightly ask what Plato considers the purpose of unity for a state and how it connects to the concept of the political I outlined above. As a suggestion for how to understand Plato's idea of political unity, I emphasize that such unity is what must be achieved for a state, society, or community to endure, and nothing more. As previously noted, Plato regards political unity as both the defining feature of a political entity and its greatest good. Accordingly, in his later thought, preservation, though a less transcendent feature, counts as a manifestation of the good and, hence, serves as the foremost evidence for its existence. While the metaphysical, theological, and physical dimensions of this idea appear primarily in the *Philebus (*as well as in the *Timaeus* and *Laws)*, the preservation of a political entity is mentioned in the *Statesman* (301e-302b). There, this unity is defined not as the coherence of an existing regime, ruling class, or aesthetic order, as Popper insinuates,[152] but as the establishment of endurable and least burdensome conditions (Cf. χαλεπὴ καὶ βαρυτάτη: 302e12, ἥκιστα ... βιωτέον: 303b2-3). Such unity, achievable through the absence of "experts in faction"

[149] Schofield 2006, 83-88.

[150] For the compatibility of Platonic political philosophy with modern political liberalism in terms of the 'Unity Principle'. See Schofield (2006, 216-7). See also Rawls 2005, 36 and 140 ff. (IV. 2) on the relation between societal stability and overlapping consensus.

[151] See Wolin 1994, 24 on the unity of a people based upon the 'commonality at any moment'; For the appraisal of Mouffe's project as pursuing 'unity in plurality', see Enroth 2010, 467. Indeed, political unity of a state should be understood as symbolic and temporarily constituted, not substantial. See Laclau and Mouffe 2005, 139 f.

[152] Aestheticism as one of Plato's ideals, see Popper 2003, 174-176 and Wolin 2016, 19, 37 and 43.

(*stasiastikoi*, 303c2), does not necessarily imply the homogeneity of a society based on whatever is considered a final ground—whether a moral conception, nature, economic efficiency, or otherwise— that enforces power and control across all parts of society. Just as Atlantis was defeated and submerged, most societies today are threatened by internal insecurity resulting from economic inequality, cultural conflict, societal atrophy due to declining birth rates and aging populations, and civilizational collapse triggered by the climate crisis. Although previous theoretical projects have risen with their critical spirit, often in response to urgent demands at that time, they must now be reevaluated. My objective is to consider how Plato's conception of the political and the imperative of building political unity at its core can shed light on a distinct perspective compared to other contemporary theories. (See further Afterword below.)

What, then, is the peculiarity, if any, of Plato's theory of the political? Plato adamantly holds that the political unity of a human community is achieved when it is *ruled* by a state.[153] However, this way of constituting political unity through rule should not be conflated with totalitarian, coercive, or violent rule, approaches often associated with simplistic state measures such as oppression, isolation, or suppression of plurality. I argue that Plato's insistence on the indispensability of rule and the state amounts to his acknowledgment of the limitations of the phenomenal world, within which a highly ideal state (See Section 5.3.2 below) cannot, in principle, exist. Since human beings cannot predict and "wisely" prepare for all future changes and risks, which remain unrecognizable and unintelligible from the current perspective, any attempt at political change or improvement inevitably results in a fixed state, which is intermediate and imperfect from the perspective of the whole ideal (I will discuss the necessity of the state further in Chapter 2, focusing on the *Statesman*). Furthermore, while a fixed state achieved through rule might be dismissed for its conservatism, it can also be interpreted as possessing an internal resilience against automated processes that follow blind natural or sociological forces (what Meier calls *automaton*: see Section 1.1.3 above). Rule, here, is understood as a form of control over these forces, which, when unleashed through abruptions (e.g. new technological advancements or large-scale immigration), may trigger chain reaction processes. He would not deny the latent potential to throw off the totality of a society, something that politics must cope with. The idea that anything can or should become

[153] For a united conception of Plato's political thought as a whole in terms of *anti-anarchia*, see Lane 2016 and for Plato's endorsement of rule by office, see Lane 2023, 10-12 and 381 ff.

political aligns Plato more closely with contemporary political theorists compared to those having a narrow conception of the political (will discuss it further in the next section, 1.3.4, below). To remain consistent with the concept of the political in Plato, I characterize as political the endeavor to preserve and stabilize a state by securing political unity. The unity can be achieved only by a state that is genuinely political in the sense that it is capable of bringing about radical political changes so profound they appear impossible, unintelligible, and paradoxical. As mentioned earlier, the existence of the Forms and appeals to the knowledge of them empower individuals or states to instigate such changes. For instance, Schofield argues that Aristotle's criticism of Plato's suggestions for a unity, specifically 'a radical reorganization of society and radical reform of education' for their inviability, is based on 'some *unargued* [italic is mine] assumptions about the limits to the transformation of human motivations.'[154] Plato's radical approach is connected with the knowledge of the Forms or their equivalents,[155] which enables its possessors to take 'a different value orientation.'[156]

Thus, his theory encompasses various aspects of the political. It has inspired many liberal democratic theorists with Plato's aspiration for a true politics grounded in rational discourse aimed at achieving truth (see Section 1.1.1 above). Meanwhile, Plato does not believe that rational argument and persuasion are a panacea, but he seems to be well aware of their limitations.[157] Hence, Plato's thought provides abundant resources for the measures of state available to philosopher-rulers possessing the knowledge of the good that transcends the existing legal order and state.[158] On the other hand, how a citizen's attitude should respond to a non-political state, more precisely, one lacking the potential to

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[154] Schofield 2006, 227.

[155] Roupa 2020, 111 points to the similarity between the way the problem of the nature of man and woman is addressed in the *Republic* (V. 454 ff.) and the dialectical procedure of division used in the *Sophist* and *Statesman*, according to which things must be divided up according to forms. That is, the application of the genuine method leads to a theoretically and practically radical conclusion and offers a motivation to realize it.

[156] Klosko 2006, 175. This re-orientation amounts to taking 'the absolute, timeless viewpoint of philosophy' on human and on the good of the soul and society. This viewpoint is enabled by philosophical contemplation aimed at the knowledge of Forms. See Burnyeat 1999, 305-8. Arruzza 2012 also claims that the reality of Forms, which constitutes philosopher-rulers' wisdom, represents 'a dimension that is external to every historically existing society: the reference to the forms' (279).

[157] For Plato's pessimism reflected in the representation of fruitless conversation with the intransigent Thrasymachus and Callicles, see Scott 1999 and Klosko 2006, 56 ff..

[158] These measures include education, constitutional rules, institutional regulations, and law in general. In the *Statesman*, a scenario is suggested in which the knowledgeable person exercises coercion over the ignorant multitude. See Horn 2021b, 193-4.

radically reform itself in response to its mutating environment, is no less theorized. A citizen is allowed to engage in persuasion both within and without the formal political spaces (*Crito*. 49e9-50a2, 51b4, c1, e8, 52a2, *Gorg*. 521a, 521e-522e, *Plt*. 296a, 299c), and civil disobedience can be permitted under circumstances implicitly specified by Plato.[159] The absolute superiority of knowledge to law holds, from the representation of Socrates privately philosophizing to the more institution-friendly project of constructing an ideal city. In either case, the appeal to knowledge of reality presupposes the existence of such a higher reality, not fully unrealized, but only partially imitated, which can be acknowledged as the ontological basis for radical political change. What is called political, then, includes a state that retains the potential for radical political change (πολιτικὴ κοινωνία: political society, state, community), and, when it is only a private citizen who attempts to persuade the whole state and his fellow citizens, it is he himself, his knowledge, and his actions (ὁ πολιτικός, πολιτικὴ τέχνη or ἐπιστήμη, and τὰ πολιτικά in Plato's sense).

1.3.4. Does Plato Think that "Everything can be Political"?

The last point to address is that the idea that everything can be political is evident in Plato's thought. As discussed in Section 1.2.4 above, the phenomenon of everything being political has been observed (e.g., by Carl Schmitt) in the modern total state and has been problematized by Marxists and subsequent critical theorists who have analyzed and grappled with the dynamics of power. However, Marxist criticism culminated in the foundation of another total state, in which everything is controlled to serve the interests of the state or class and where power infiltrates through interventions in private affairs. Plato has been regarded as a precursor to this tendency, which explains Arendt's critique of Plato's devaluation of public life. This, she believed, resulted in the collapse of the boundaries between public and private spheres, rooted in materialistic political philosophy on one hand[160] and a total (purely economic) society ruled by a *homo faber*-, or craftsman-

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[159] Taking note of some examples of disobedience to law and state in other texts, for example, in the *Apology* (57), Kraut (1984) attempts to identify space for such disobedience in the *Crito*, which has often been seen as advocating authoritative obedience to the state. Although his arguments have been critically evaluated as not very convincing, his emphasis on persuasion, or the attempt to persuade the state with sufficient justification for why it is just (76-77, 111-112), encourages us to consider to what extent and in what manner (public or private) a knowledgeable person who understands what is just may stand up against the existing law. For similar views, see Jinek 2021, 104 n.3.

[160] Arendt 1998, 37: 'the borderline between household and polis is occasionally blurred, especially in Plato ...'. On Plato's ignorance of the nature of polis or human affairs, see e.g., 223-4; for her argument tracing materialism in politics to Plato and Aristotle, see 183 n.8. A similar argument to Arendt's latter argument is

like sovereign, on the other.[161] It is also why Popper lambasts Plato in his denunciation of totalitarian states on both the left and the right. As is well known, Popper traced this idea of "everything is political" and its aftermath to Plato: 'a glance at Plato's argument will show that his whole trend of thought is dominated by the question: does this thing harm the city? Does it do much harm or little harm? He constantly reiterates that what threatens to harm the city is morally wicked and unjust.'[162] In this sense, the political nature of medicine or religion means that they matter politically and should therefore be controlled by political power in such a way as to contribute to the interest of the state, regarded as absolutely superior to that of individuals.

A negative objection can be raised immediately that the interest of the state or the common good, contrary to how Popper saw it, should not be simply identified with the interest of the ruling class or with the stability and unity of the state understood as domination.[163] Rather, the good of a city, its unity, means nothing but its preservation, which is again understood as the establishment and sustenance of the conditions necessary for well-being, as discussed in the previous sections. To this, he would reply with the question of what remains of such a common good or collective interest if individuals' private lives are extensively infringed. However, I would counter that this is not merely a metaphysical question but also an empirically demonstrable one. We cannot accept some lessons from Plato's ethical, aesthetic, psychological, and sociological arguments for evaluating elements in society (e.g., poetry and art, private property, social and cultural freedoms, and education) while rejecting their political implications: that they should be regulated and controlled in such a way as to function desirably. As Lane criticizes 'Popper's defence of democracy' as 'morally hollow' by referring to critics who argue for the existence of

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seen in Rancière 1995, who attributes to Plato the idea that the polis originates from the fulfilment of material desires which leads him to eliminate politics ('*la réciprocité des services*' (22), '*l'utilité commune*' (40), and his ingenious reading of the First City in the *Republic* Book II. (100 ff.))

[161] For homo-faber and the exchange market as public realm for homo faber, see Arendt 1998, 159-161; for the conception of politics as making or manufacturing an end, see pages 229-230; and for her analysis of this modern trend in terms of the concept of sovereignty, see pages 234-6. On the totalized society as an economic one, the marginalization of politics, the conception of politics in ancient times as divergent from the '*politique des Etats-nations souverains*', and Aristotle as an exception to this totalizing politics, see Nancy 2000.

[162] Popper 2003, 113. For examples of this conviction, see the cases of medical treatment and religion in 146-152 (Ch. 8). The passage in which Plato discusses medicine in the *Republic*, cited by Popper to justify his criticism, will be discussed. I will call it as the "Asclepius Passage" (III. 405c-408c).

[163] For his claim, see e.g., Popper 2003, 92 and 162; and for the refutation, see Balot 2008, 203 and Schölderle 2011, 180.

'positive values for which to fight' in any constitution form, including democracy,[164] there have existed, and continue to emerge, social forces threatening society that must therefore be fought against. In this sense, Plato's demand for legislation over seemingly private affairs is not so different from the efforts of contemporary liberal states to regulate them for the sake of fostering desirable social conditions. The strict dichotomy between the private and public realms has increasingly been questioned,[165] and Plato's critique of poetry in the *Republic* and the *Laws*, as well as his emphasis on education by the state, can be applied to our context, moderated as needed.[166]

However, is it still a soft totalization in the name of the common good or the interest of the whole? The idea we want to attribute to Plato is not that everything *is* political in this sense, but that everything *can be* political. We already have conceptual resources to distinguish between these two statements, namely, the distinction between politics and the political. "Everything can be political" means that something can newly begin to matter politically, that is, in terms of questioning an existing social order and contributing to the emergence of a novel one. Nothing can be permanently fixed as a component of a social structure; everything can be reshaped, reconstructed, and conferred with a different meaning. This is what Nancy means in the statement: *'le «tout» ne saurait être total ni totalisé en aucune façon*.'[167] Whether the political is defined, following Habermas, as reaching mutual agreement through rational discourse; or following Schmitt or agonistic democrats, as friend-enemy distinction; or as interpreted here in Plato's case, as the questioning of a given existing order and the envisioning a new one in reference to the Forms—everything in a society can be politically discussed, questioned, and serve as a frontline of antagonism.

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[164] Lane 2001, 117 and n.34.

[165] See Laks 2013, 165-9 for an overview of this point and the absence of such a dichotomy in ancient societies. Specifically, see Nancy 2000, 81: '*Toutefois, les sphères non-politiques ne sont pas celles d'un ordre «privé» opposé au «public»: toutes les sphères sont publiques et privées, si on doit seservir de ces termes*.'

[166] The critique and demand for censorship of poetry is one of the conspicuous continuities between the *Republic* and *Laws* (see Horn 2013, 10). Laks 2013, 184-5 highlights the innovative character of Plato's and Aristotle's idea of state-directed education. In light of the similarities between Plato's proposal and the Spartan education system, as observed by Schofield 2006, 36-8, this idea might be considered innovative within the Athenian context. Even Popper 2003, 117-8 endorses the role of education in fostering freedom as personal autonomy. My argument against this view is that determining the extent to which the state should intervene to promote such freedom is always highly problematic.

[167] Nancy 2000, 82.

I argue here that the grounds for attributing the idea in question to Plato lie in his value theory, which is rooted in his ontology. It holds that all actual goods are inferior to the Good itself and hence only partially and conditionally good or inherently neutral in terms of good and bad. In the section on the distinction between politics and the political, the notion of using other goods and the knowledge of this use or ruling was introduced as the knowledge of Forms, which employ other goods (counted as products of politics) and rule over political expertise or arts. This knowledge can be extended beyond politics: Plato's texts offer diverse examples of the things to be used by this knowledge or by its possessor. Poetry is a representative example. Since poetry or narrative is a medium to be regulated (ἐπιστατητέον) due to its educational function and moral neutrality (*Resp*. II. 376e-377c. cf. *Resp*. III. 424b-e, *Nom*. II. 653b-656c),[168] the notion in the *Statesman* (308d-e) that poets, as educators and teachers, should be subject to the authority of political knowledge or its possessor can be consistently read alongside the broader critique of poetry by Socrates and the Athenian. This suggests that the latter provides both the rationale for such control and the specific form it should take. From this, it can be argued that their entire discussion constitutes the substance of political knowledge for ruling over poets. To speak of how political knowledge *uses* poetry for the greater good, the second criticism of mimetic poetry in Book X provides the useful analogy. According to the famous scheme, the relationship around an aulos or any other product is tripartite (X. 601d): the knower (the user), the maker, and the imitator, who is 'third from the truth' (X. 602b). However, a decisive distinction is rather dichotomy: one between the user who commands (ἐπιτάξει, X. 601e2) and the maker, whose products are, depending on the command, deemed good or bad, since an imitator is still a maker, albeit a bad one.[169] Although the text itself is not entirely explicit about who the user of the products of a poet or storyteller might be, or what the function or product on the user's part is, unlike in the case of musical instrument or tools, we may infer that this user is the statesman or ruler responsible for the citizens'

[168] The most explicit remark indicating that poets and their expertise are subject to use is found in *Ion* 534c-d (534c8: τούτοις χρῆται ὑπηρέταις). There, the user is spoken of as a god supplanting poets' intellect with his own. Similarly, in the *Republic* X, poets are described in relation to the philosopher-rulers as occupying the position of producers in relation to users. In the same vain, the imaginary legislators who lead the dialogue—Socrates and the two brothers—are said to make use of poetry (II. 376e-377a, esp. 377a5-6: μύθοις πρὸς τὰ παιδία ... χρώμεθα) in the sense that they aim to prescribe norms, to judge and regulate them, and to instrumentalize poetry in pursuit of the greater good.

[169] Harte 2010 argues that the term μίμησις should not be translated as "imitation," which tends to draw attention to the object imitated, thereby obscuring the fact that μίμησις is a kind of production. See 77-8 and 69, n.1.

education and virtuous character. How does this relate to the concept of the political I have defined? Recall that the critique of poetry in the fictional dialogues is linked to questioning the religious practices and beliefs of the Greeks at the time, and that this is the reason why Socrates was sentenced to death. His questioning is so profound that it was regarded as an attempt to radically change the whole society.[170] In this sense, both poetry and religion are political insofar as they matter politically, their current forms are criticized and questioned, and they eventually serve as catalysts for major societal change. The list of things that are political in this sense could go on indefinitely. Already in Plato's texts, we find that he questions the current reconfiguration not only of poetry and religion but also of choreography (*Nom*. VII. 815d2-3), science (astronomy or mathematics), value hierarchy (*Nom*. III. 697c2-3), issues of family and women, the culture of debate, and more. Although Plato does not explicitly specify how the changes and reforms he envisioned were to be accomplished in this particular case, what is significant for my purpose is that the problem of all these social, generally "private" elements is discussed by him in the context of envisioning an ideal city, one that has never existed and is paradigmatic by virtue of the political knowledge that is supposed to use and rule them. In this sense, asserting that everything can be political amounts to saying that everything can matter politically when it comes to questioning a given social order and the envisioning of a new one. This applies not only to those whose significance we have already recognized but also to those that are yet to come, insofar as nothing that has existed or will exist is as good as the Good itself. (This same holds for medicine: see Sections 3.4.3; for architecture: see Section 5.2.4.(2)).

Turning our gaze from Plato to contemporary authors, we realize that when they speak of something political that is, in fact, not political in the ordinary sense, seemingly private, or politically neutral, their approach is not far removed from Plato's own. They first identify the significance of something, which allows them to label it as political, and then criticize its current specific configuration, examining what form it should take for a greater good. This transcends principles valid within a given existing social order, aligning instead with

[170] According to Vlastos 2005 and Burnyeat 2005, Socrates' moral theology was so aberrant that it was suspected of blasphemy from the perspective of contemporary religious conceptions. They stress the radical nature of the idea introduced by Socrates of a universal moral standard that is higher than and rationally independent of the gods, along with its "shattering" and destructive consequences. Lännström (2013) argues against them by stating that Socrates' religious innovation did not itself constitute impiety, let alone being perceived as radical even for the contemporaries. Nevertheless, I think that the implications she spells out (44 ff.) can still be taken as radical for a society.

the ultimate good itself: the preservation of a political body, equality, peace, or justice. I take Rousseau's *political* religion,[171] Walter Benjamin's *political (or politicized)* art, and Coeckelbergh's *political* technology to be such examples. However, is my interpretation of Plato also semantically justified—as if Plato speaks of political X or regards the criticism and the social reconstruction stemming from examining a single element as political in the sense defined so far? The answer is yes. There are three relevant passages in the *Laws* where the Athenian describes the following as political: (1) the Egyptians' way of treating poetry (II. 657a4-5); (2) a way of setting value hierarchy (III. 697c2-3; Cf. V. 726a-729b); and (3) a certain kind of choreography distinguished from another (VII. 815d2). This usage of the term "πολιτικόν" confirms that the exercise of political knowledge involves using and ruling over things, the things correctly used and lawfully controlled, and the final product of that knowledge. My reading of these three passages and their parallels with contemporary works will be discussed further in Section 5.4. For now, we can conclude by acknowledging that the idea that everything can be political can reasonably be attributed to Plato.

This concludes our preliminary examination in this introductory chapter. The first part (Section 1.1.1-1.1.3) demonstrates that Plato's status as an illiberal or his opposition to democracy does not, in itself, render him an anti-political thinker or irrelevant for not having made any contribution to the discourse of the political. In the second part (Section 1.2.1-1.2.4), I presented four common and general points shared by contemporary theories of the political: (1) the political difference (the distinction between politics and the political); (2) legitimating and explaining the possibility of radical political change; (3) the concern with the disappearing of the political or the question of what a genuinely political community, state, or society is; and (4) the idea of the pervasiveness of the political that everything can be political. Lastly, in Sections 1.3.1-1.3.4, I sought to identify these shared points within Plato's political thought. I believe that this attempt to see these features across both sides can demonstrate that elements within Plato's political thought that have led some to regard him as non- or even anti-political (such as his apathy toward day-to-day politics, his excessive intrusion of politics into the private sphere through the state, and attempts to define what political community, state, or society is) can, in fact, attest to Plato's alignment with the contemporary theorists of the political. I acknowledge that my argument is deficient of an ontological explanation of how Plato's conception of Ideas or

[171] See n. 77 on p. 34 above.

Forms can serve as “a productive abyss” for unlimited plurality of possible forms of social order in the sense of post-foundationalism. However, I expect that the subsequent discussion will at least show that the successful construction of an ideal city or society lies in the reflection on and subsequent regulation of all social elements, not in the name of politics in the ordinary sense, but in the name of the practice of philosophy, which corresponds to the political.

Chapter 2
The Rule of *Epistêmê* and the Nature of Political *Epistêmê*

2.1. Questions to be Discussed for the Political in Plato

The previous chapter established an outline for understanding how the concept of the political is situated within Plato's political thought. Firstly, it was argued that Plato is not anti-political, despite being labeled as anti-democratic and illiberal. The chapter also identified four theoretical perspectives, drawing on contemporary political thinkers engaged with the concept of the political, and sought to discern their presence in Plato's texts. In conclusion, the chapter indicated that one can meaningfully engage with the concept of the political in Plato's work.[172] For Plato, the political pertains to questioning an established order, envisioning an alternative one, and bringing about radical political change in reference to the Good itself and Justice itself (Section 1.3.2). This stands in

[172] The term τὸ πολιτικόν does not correspond to the concept of the political. According to LSJ, τὸ πολιτικόν is used in Hdt. VII. 103. 1 (καίτοι εἰ τὸ πολιτικὸν ὑμῖν πᾶν ἐστι τοιοῦτον οἷον σὺ διαιρέεις, ...) and Thuc. VIII. 93. 3 (ἐφοβεῖτο μάλιστα περὶ τοῦ παντὸς πολιτικοῦ.) with the meaning of a political community. In the passage of the *Laws* VI. 757c, this term is used, as follows: "for also in respect to our political community, this [distribution of *to prepon* according to the merit of each citizen, or *to prepon*] is always the justice itself with certainty." (ἔστιν γὰρ δήπου καὶ τὸ πολιτικὸν ἡμῖν ἀεὶ τοῦτ᾽ αὐτὸ τὸ δίκαιον.) Hüttinger 2004, 28 criticizes Meier's work with regard to the concept of the political by referring to the meaning of *to politikon*. but this is a misunderstanding that equates it with the Greek neuter singular noun without considering the background of the concept of the political in the context of contemporary political thought.

contrast to the everyday politics, which concerns managing community affairs within an established order through activities often involving power (Section 1.3.1). Understood this way, the scope of the political becomes so expansive that we may say everything can be political, as every element within a society can be rendered questionable and thus become a site of potential political transformation (Section 1.3.4). The potential for such radical political change, however, can disappear within a society; a truly political state or society is one in which the very conditions for this potential are preserved (Section 1.3.3).

To read Plato in terms of the concept of the political and to support the claims above, two essential premises must be assumed. First, the political *epistêmê* required of both the philosophers in the *Republic* and the true statesman in the *Statesman* must be the epistêmê of Forms. Second, throughout his various productive phases, Plato does not lose sight of the vision of rule by the political *epistêmê* in any one of his political dialogues. These premises are necessary to justify the aforementioned claims and to demonstrate that Plato worked with a concept of the political involving questioning the established order, envisioning a new one, and bringing about radical political transformation. How these premises come to play such roles—namely, how they align with and support the aforementioned claims—will be examined in Sections 2.2.4 and 2.3.4–5.

Regardless of my specific aim, these two premises have been the subject of extensive debate within Plato's scholarship and have been challenged by alternative interpretations. The first and more crucial premise reflects a traditional position in the debate about the nature of the political *epistêmê*. Given the metaphysics-related epistemology of the *Republic*, especially in Book V of the *Republic* (473c11-480a13), it appears evident that this epistêmê is of the Forms. However, many studies have advanced a competing perspective, arguing that the epistêmê qualifying philosophers as rulers appears, insofar as it is of Forms, to be inapplicable to politics. This is because what matters in practical life, including politics, is the immediate question of what to do here and now. Consequently, those who challenge the view that the *epistêmê* is of the Forms have sought to reinterpret it instead as being of particulars. Since, for Plato, the political is inseparable from some mode of operation of the *epistêmê* of the Forms, I will critically engage with attempts to locate the significance of his political philosophy through the epistêmê of particulars (see Section 2.3).

The second premise reflects unitarianism—one of the two major interpretive frameworks in Platonic scholarship, alongside developmentalism. Against this premise, it has been

argued that Plato changed his mind at some point in time. This view, when applied to his political philosophy, suggests that the role of the *epistêmê* of Forms is relativized in his later thought. According to this view, Plato gradually abandoned the idealist hope he envisioned in the *Republic*—namely, the rule by philosopher-rulers equipped with the *epistêmê* of Forms—and instead came to place greater value on institutional elements of political reality, such as laws, offices, and constitutions. Section 2.2 explores the issue of the (dis-)continuity between the *Republic* and the *Statesman* with respect to personalism and institutionalism. Here, I advocate a *strong* continuity according to the unitarian reading: the project in the *Statesman*—which envisions the second-best constitution—does not represent Plato's shift from a preference for personalism to that of institutionalism, but rather can be read as an evaluation of how a constitution appears if it is ruled by the political *epistêmê*. So far, various unitarian readings have already been proposed to explain discrepancies by citing differing philosophical concerns in each dialogue or differences in assumptions about ideal or non-ideal human conditions.[173] Among them, Christopher Rowe's reading of the *Statesman* (2001, 2006) has been especially influential. According to Rowe, Plato, in the *Statesman*, as in the *Republic*, continues to uphold the exclusive legitimacy of rule by the wise and never endorses either the intrinsic value of law or the goodness of a constitution not ruled by the wise. In contrast, I adopt a version of the traditional interpretation that maintains a certain distance from this stance, arguing that in the *Statesman*, second-best constitutions can be accompanied by good laws made by a wise statesman, even if he does not directly wield power. This view confirms that even in the *Statesman*, Plato does not abandon the vision of rule by the wise, as presented in the *Republic*, but rather sees laws as instruments to be used by such wisdom.

[173] The first explanation is suggested by Lane 2023, esp. see 73 ff. ('from different angles and according to different understandings of philosophy itself') and 2006, 171: 'their ... purposes are quite different.' As for the *Laws*, Horn proposes to reading the *Laws* as '*praxisbezogen*' in 2013b, 15 ff.; For the second explanation for the discrepancy between the *Republic* and the *Statesman* appealing to the philosophical myth of history, See Horn 2001 20-21, 2002, 244 ff. and 2013a, 18-19. The myth, which is said to have been introduced to address non-ideal human conditions, also has been regarded as an argument for the developmentalist reading towards Plato's pessimism and realism (see Kahn 2013, 231-235) but this view has been criticized by Rowe 2008, 240-241. I agree with the claim that the *Statesman* assumes and bases its discussion on non-ideal human conditions, but reject the second explanation which implies that the optimum political choice, the philosopher-rulers in the *Republic*, is as unrealistic as Kronos' rule and therefore should not be taken seriously. See Section 2.2.3 below as for what I identify as "ideal" and "non-ideal" conditions.

2.2. Unitarianism and Developmentalism in Plato's Political Philosophy

2.2.1. Standard Developmentalism

Let me first review the standard developmentalist reading of Plato's political philosophy. Plato's theories were never systematically presented, thus sparking debate over whether his philosophy reflects a single, consistent idea or whether it evolved over time. For instance, what still remains a topic of debate is whether the theory of Forms, which is prominently developed in the middle dialogues (the *Phaedo*, *Republic*, *Symposium*), is also present in the early works (like the *Euthyphro*). Furthermore, it is still unclear whether Plato maintains this theory in later dialogues. For instance, the *Theaetetus* examines the nature of knowledge without reference to Forms, the *Parmenides* critiques the theory of Forms through self-reflection, and in the *Laws*, Forms play a less central role in ideal governance than in the *Republic*.

The frameworks of Developmentalism and Unitarianism are widely recognized as basic models for interpreting Plato's political philosophy across his three major political works: the *Republic*, the *Statesman*, and the *Laws*.[174] It is certain that there are differences. However, it remains unclear whether this constitutes a change, and if so, whether this change is psychologically motivated by Plato's personal experience or philosophically by a shift related to his metaphysics.[175] In any case, I understand this apparent shift as his recognition of the importance and value of *ta politika*. In Section 1.3.1.1, I have specified what the term "*ta politika*" refers to. This term is used in a threefold sense: (1) public, civic affairs; (2) political (mostly institutional) activities and processes for handling them; and (3) all actions needed to pursue one's private goods and recognition under given social conditions. Obviously, Plato would not reevaluate *ta politika* in the third sense, such as the behaviors of Callicles or Alcibiades. However, it seems that he had realized the importance or intrinsic value of *ta politika* in the first two senses. The role of rule, office, law, and

[174] For the instances of debates, see *Platon Handbuch* 27: the theory of Ideas, the problem of pleasure, Socrates' ambivalent attitude to positive laws in the *Apology* and *Crito*, the type of Socrates' or other protagonists' narration. '*Solche scheinbaren Inkonsistenzen und Unausgewogenheiten fordern Erklärung*.'
[175] Klosko 2006, 195-6 attributes the shift in Plato's later political thought to two main influences: theoretical changes in his metaphysics and his practical experiences in Syracuse, with the latter particularly evident. This inference is doubted by Horn 2001, 16 and 28 as '*eine bedenkliche psychologische Unterstellung*.'

constitution, which Melissa Lane calls "the ideas of the political,"[176] is recognized and discussed more deeply in the later dialogues. For instance, the action of persuasion and the skill for it, and the (democratic) participation in offices are no longer entirely rejected in the *Statesman* and the *Laws*;[177] various forms of political regime in the *Statesman* are discussed in a way contrasted to that of a caricatural, cynical representation as in the *Republic*.[178] Plato's attitude toward the rule of law and legal procedures swings most dramatically in the later dialogues towards a positive direction in such a way that they could become a substitute for the rule of a wise person.[179] These differences even create the impression that the role of philosophy, philosopher-rulers or philosophical *epistêmê* appears to have diminished in the later dialogues.[180]

Developmentalist reading has tried to explain this increasing interest in *ta politika* by resorting to Plato's pessimism and realism and has argued that this reflects Plato's abandonment of his original idealism.[181] (Also, there is a developmentalist reading based on Plato's gradual optimism: see Bobonich 2002). As for the first interpretation, we may say that Plato wanted to be more realistic while dealing with politics. Klosko tries to explain this shift by invoking the events Plato experienced during his journeys to Syracuse. He says that '... a clear pattern of political involvement emerges in connection with the Academy. The unavoidable implication is that Plato, who is often dismissed as a utopian thinker whose works are often analyzed completely removed from the political events of

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[176] Land 2023, 32 and 83: 'Plato as a realist' in recognizing the reality of 'existing practices.'

[177] For the oratory and persuasion, see Schofield 2006, 63 ff. For the discussions of the role of office in Plato's works, see Sørenson 2018, 401-402, esp. n.1 and 2. Lane 2023, *esp*. Chapter 3-4 and 7. For the value of political activity as undertaking offices in the *Laws*, see Bobonich 2002,438-449 and Horn 2013b, 4: "*Bürgerstatus*".

[178] For Plato's attitude of distancing from reality and theorization of degeneration of constitution in the *Republic*, see Frede 2011, 199-203. The changed, more serious attitude in the *Statesman*, see Horn 2001, 19-20: '*ein innovatives Element des Politikos ist dagegen zweifellos jene sechsstufige Verfassungslehre* ....'

[179] Horn 2001, 18-19 identifies the point as 'eine markante Differenz', simultaneously being accompanied by Plato's explicit ambivalent evaluation and indication of the deficiencies of rule of laws. Klosko contrasts two views on the rule of laws in the *Republic* and the *Statesman*, in the former, laws are 'useless' or 'unnecessary', but in the latter, 'vague and general' (2006, 204). However, Ellison 2019 shows that there are many passages in the *Republic* that law has an important role, the observation I agree more with.

[180] Schofield 1999 discusses some points in the late dialogues that apparently attest to disappearance of philosopher-kings. For the diminished role of philosophy because of rare reference to it in the *Laws*, see Horn 2013b, 3. '(i) *Philosophie*'.

[181] Plato's late realism has been widespread as a standard view: see also Schofield 1999, 30 and 34-35; Klosko 2006, 195-200, 215-216, 219-221, 261-262 is regarded as a standard developmentalist reading by Rowe 2007, 27 n.1; This standard view is taken also by Hüttinger 2013, 149-150. For Rowe's critical review of developmentalism, see 2001, 64-66. For the refutation of the particular point of Plato's realism in his older age, see e.g. Horn 2013b, 19-20.

his society, is actually quite the opposite.' According to him, the later political works are themselves a piece of evidence. 'In this work [the *Statesman*] we detect a falling off from the ideals of the *Republic*, and consequently a greater interest in existing states and how they work. ... Plato's work in the *Laws* is based on a vast accumulation of detailed knowledge of the laws and institutions of numerous Greek cities.'[182] One can easily link this realism with the (philosophical) pessimism. The crucial requirement for establishing an ideal city, such as Kallipolis, is the unison of philosophy and political power (*Resp*. V. 473b-e), as mentioned in Plato's autobiographical letter (the *Seventh Letter*). After experiencing the political failure of him and his friends, his pessimism deepened so much that he revised his original model of the rule of philosopher-rulers that is too ideal and too utopian and made it more "sane, pragmatic, and close to reality."[183] This standard developmentalism consequently concludes that there is inconsistency or incompatibility between the *Republic* and the works that followed because of his change of mind, triggered by his involvement in political affairs. This interpretation, supported by Klosko and derived by Horn (2001) from Eric Voegelin's reading of Plato, has been criticized by the latter as "*eine bedenkliche psychologische Unterstellung*"[184] because it leans solely on biographical claims based on unreliable testimonies and fragmentary sources that resist comprehensive reconstruction.

I outline my own unitarian interpretation as follows: the later political dialogues present the actuality or its concrete instances for how the outcome would be of *ta politika* used by the *epistêmê*. In particular, the *Statesman* (297b5-303d3) should not be read as expressing his change of mind but as appreciating the value of the rule of law in the city not directly ruled by philosopher-rulers. I see this passage as suggesting the possibility that law can be used well by the *epistêmê* in several ways and thereby become good, and the rule of such good law deserves the designation of the second-best. The two ways this interpretation undergirds my reading of Plato in terms of the political will be discussed in Section 2.2.4 below. Before developing my approach, I briefly review another version of unitarianism that I think overlooks the status of law as something to be used and the other ways in which the *epistêmê* operates and influences society.

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[182] All quoted from Klosko 2006, 199-200.
[183] According to developmentalism, Plato lost his hope for feasibility of the best state model in the Republic and instead favored '*ein nüchterneres, pragmatischeres und realitätsnäheres Modell*' (Horn 2001, 9).
[184] See Horn 2001, 16 and 28.

2.2.2. Christopher Rowe's Unitarianist Reading and Its Critics

Christopher Rowe's unitarianist reading of the *Statesman* aligns with the trend in Plato's scholarship, in which unitarianism has become more acceptable and prominent.[185] He starts with a critical evaluation of the developmentalist, a critique that I agree with.

> 'this kind of explanation [for the possibility that Plato's thought evolved and changed] should be used as a last resort. ... [I]n interpreting philosophers, we should begin by taking their arguments seriously, and bring in other factors – that is, to explain the arguments themselves, only if all else fails.'[186]

Rowe's approach to rebutting the argument that Plato changed his mind about personalism and shifted to institutionalism is first to invalidate the statements in the *Statesman* that seem to support Plato's approval of democratic legislation and the laws it produces and then to reconfirm Plato's absolute preference for Socratic personalism over the rule of law or constitutionalism.

In order to prove that Plato never recognized 'the intrinsic value of laws' nor demonstrated his 'qualified endorsement of the laws,' Rowe offers a new interpretation of the text.[187] For this, he first argues that the passage in 300b, which endorses the traditional reading's claim that Plato positively assesses the laws without *epistêmê* should be read differently by developmentalist interpreters. Second, Plato intends to convey that "good" laws, or in other words, "the imitations of truth" (300c), are made by a wise person with political expertise. Accordingly, Plato does not care how valuable (a set of) laws created by non-experts are, as long as they are based on ignorance. Thirdly, what Plato meant by "to imitate the true single constitution" is just "a strict adherence to the established laws", whether good or bad, due to its primacy over lawless constitutions (301a). That is to say, Plato believed that, regardless of the quality of a given legal order, the legality itself was the second-best constitution, since that kind of legality also happens to be in the best constitution. Although his interpretation has had much influence on Plato's scholarship,[188] a more or less "modified" traditional reading has freshly begun to be advocated against this

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[185] For the mention of this trend, see Horn 2001, 7-9; Rowe 2007, 27-28; *Platons Handbuch* 178-9.
[186] Rowe 2001, 64.
[187] Rowe 2006, 107-8.
[188] See Lane 1998, 155-161, 2006, 182-3 and Klosko 2006, 212-214 and Kahn 2013, 229 for their acceptance of Rowe's view.

anti-traditional reading. The following section will review the recent research and point to its limitations. Here, focusing on Rowe's interpretation, I criticize his approach because it does not effectively clarify the interacting connection between philosophy or philosophers and political affairs or processes, which can be articulated in terms of the "using-used" relation between politics (the political) and law (*ta politika*).

Rowe's interpretation that there is no evidence for any actual good legal order due to the absence of any explicit mentioning of the legislation by philosophers does not seem to align with one of the most basic motives of Plato's philosophy: the relation of the using-used and of the original-imitation. We have seen in Sections 1.3.1 and 2.2.2 that politics in the ordinary sense are *ta politika* and include law and office. Now, we observe that Plato articulates the connection between the philosophers or their *epistêmê* to law in terms of the "using-used" relation. As for the passage in question, it has been observed by Sørensen (2016, 2022) that the expert statesman 'legislate[s] *by means of* ancestral customs [Author's italic].'[189] This relation between wisdom and law is based on the following two ideas often found elsewhere in the works of Plato: the first idea that is found in many passages in Plato's text is that law is a product like shoes, poetry, speech, or wealth: *Nomos* by lawgiver is a type of text produced by an author and is comparable to a speech written by a speechwriter or orator or a poem composed by a poet (*Phdr*. 257c258c and 274b ff.; *Euthydm*. 289b-290d; *Symp*. 209d; *Nom*. 858c-859b).[190] The other idea that law is good or bad, fine or poor, and beneficial or harmful is evident also in texts apart from the *Statesman* (*Hipp. Mai*. 294c-d and 297e-298d; *Symp*. 210c; *Resp*. I. 338e-339a and 341a; *Tht*. 177e-178a). The combination of these two ideas is best demonstrated in the *Cratylus*. What is striking here is that the product of the former, *nomos*, is used by a dialectician. Furthermore, the notion of the "using-used" relation is connected here with another notion of the "original-imitation" relation, because Socrates states that the maker of a name is to be 'someone who looks to the natural name of each thing' (390e), the name that expresses 'the nature of one of the things that are' (422d), in other words, the truth (436b-c, 439a-b). According to the distance from the truth, an imitation is judged as either good or bad. As

[189] Sørenson 2016, 92 ff., 2018, 411-412 and 2022, 14 ff.. He reads the dative in 295a7-8 (*patriois ethesi*) conveys the meaning of the instrumentality of law serving to wise person. Lane 1998, 155 also describes law as 'tools' as 'memoranda' the expert may use *only* in his absence. See also Trivigno 2021, 167-171 for the usual employment of law in an ideal constitution ruled by the true statesman and see Trotz-Liboff 2023 for its usefulness like that of a *pharmakon*. For a stronger idea that a wise ruler *must* use law in order to rule his city, see Yoon 2024 and Mckeen 2025.

[190] See Nightingale 1999 for the idea that legislation is a genre of written text.

law in the *Statesman* is said to be an imitation of truth (*Plt*. 300c5-7) and hence something only conditionally good, I see no reason to exclude law and the art or expertise of lawgiving from the list of what is to be used by a philosopher or the *epistêmê*.[191]

It seems that Rowe overlooks this relation. It is certainly true that law is by its nature inferior to the rule of the political *epistêmê*: in relation to the only one truest constitution and the ideal rule of the true statesman, no constitution or set of laws can be perfect.[192] However, this inferiority is not genealogical but ontological (as Horn 2021b, 184 points out, 'the relative inferiority of law, not ... its worthlessness'): The most salient evidence is that even a knower with political expertise, once he has determined a set of laws for his subjects and left them, will rule them contrary to his own laws after he makes a return. This is because of the ontologically inherent inferiority of laws, which implies that even the laws made by the political expert himself become flawed as time passes and the state of affairs changes.[193] Granted that the inferiority of law does not come primarily from its inherent ontological status as imitation or a thing to be used, not from its content, we can still assess a set of laws as more or less good and bad, regardless of the epistemic source from which they are drawn. In order to differentiate between good and bad laws, Plato attempts to put forward the existence of an objective normative standard, primarily in the *Sophist* and subsequently in the *Statesman*. It seems that Plato's view is not that only the

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[191] See *Plt*. 297d: 'τοῖς ταύτης συγγράμμασι χρωμένας.' Lane 2006, 183 conveys the exactly same idea: 'the statesman will indeed *use laws* to establish the necessary common opinion between divergent groups of citizens. The statesman can unlike ordinary sophistic lawmakers shape the laws and modify them when necessary so that the good can be achieved despite the flux of circumstance. [italic is mine].' This idea extends to the constitution or constitutional rule itself: According to the myth of the *Statesman*, rule itself or *politeia*, the organized state of citizens, itself belongs to human conditions. One may think that when it is used by philosopher or true statesman, it is the single true constitution. However, the *epistêmê* of such wise person for using is itself distinct from the constitution the person reigns or does not. Horn 2021b, 194 points out that 'Plato explicitly says that all constitutions can be seen as better or worse imitations of the best political order, i.e. of the rulership of the true expert.'

[192] The advantage of Rowe's reading is, therefore, that it alerts the limitation of traditional reading in explaining why the reversal of Plato's attitude to rule of law throughout 297e-300a is not 'sudden and unmotivated.' See Horn 2021b, 184-5. See also Sørenson 2022,13: 'strictly inferior' and 18: 'strictly secondary'.

[193] For Rowe's awareness of this point, see 2007, 33: 'too general. ...'. If law's inferiority is ontological, then Rowe's harsh evaluation of the rule of law for its rigidity is inconsistent with his high regard for laws in *the Laws* in Rowe 2001, 73-4 and 2007, 37-39 and n.18. (albeit his saying that the law code of Magnesia is *putatively good* by being produced from Socratic dialectics (2007, 39). In the same vein, Lane 2006, 182 finds 'most startling' the contrast between the *Statesman*, on the one hand, and the *Republic* and *Laws* on the other. In the latter two dialogues, law is presented as 'a ... surrogate reason', but in the *Statesman*, rule of law in the constitutions of the *Statesman* has no value at all. My query is whether it is that the law of the *Laws* is just a law.

laws made by the true statesman are good, while all others are necessarily bad without qualification, but rather that laws can be better or worse depending on how closely they approximate the standard—whether by chance, by experience or through expertise. To confirm it, I invoke the introductory part of the *Laws*, where the Athenian praises the laws of Creta and Sparta (for Creta, see 705d; for Sparta, see III. 696a-b; for both: 634d, 636a-b) while also noting that they are not perfect, as they aim at the wrong goal—namely, a partial form of virtue (I. 631b, IV. 705d). Thus, we may acknowledge that the *Laws* itself admits the possibility that a law is spontaneously—without expertise—good and bad, and praiseworthy and blameworthy.

Furthermore, imitating a best constitution by an actual one is not a mere mimicry—i.e., it is not simply that the constitution imitates what occurs in the best constitution, such as the obedience of subjects to diktats issued by a wise ruler. This confusion exists in Rowe's reading of the same expression "*mimêsis*", implying that it be read in two different senses in 300c5 and 301a2: imitation as a good legislation, and imitation as a mimicry of what occurs in the best constitution.[194] However, if we understand the competent imitation of the best constitution to mean the enactment of good laws that such a constitution would likely possess, then bad imitation, by contrast, can be understood as the political behavior of a ruler who disregards a sound legal order—behavior that includes both violations of existing laws and the enactment of new but bad legislation. As for the latter possibility, nothing prevents us from reading 301b10-c4 as indicating that a worse constitution is when a constitution is, though it has good written laws and customs, ruled by a tyrant (or any other ignorant ruler), who does not respect the established laws but adds new and bad ones to the existing law code. It is a bad imitation in the sense that it consists not merely in rule without law, but in bad legislation contrary to a constitutional framework that the ruler is expected to uphold (The expression "μὴ φροντἰζωσιν" in 301a7 presupposes the prevalence of an established legal order. If the fact that they do not concern themselves with the law is an issue, then why should we not consider this existing law to be good if something bad happens from disobedience to the law?)

Of course, there is an unanswered question: From what genealogical source could a law be good under non-ideal constitutions, without being completely configured by a wise philosopher or statesman from start to end? The next section 2.2.3 will revisit this point

[194] See Rowe 2006, 115 and for the criticism, see Sørensen 2022, 19-20.

and discuss it in more detail. For now, here is another example that justifies the claim made so far that Rowe does not consider Plato's key motifs, such as the "using-used" or "original-imitation" relations, with the example of a kind of imitation.

We can apply the idea that the rule by the *epistêmê* is the original and all existing constitutions are more or less its good and bad imitations to an aspect like "education" in the constitution. Rowe stresses that Plato insists that all existing politicians are imposters[195] in the sense that 'they fail to look after the true interests of the citizens as a whole.'[196] However, calling them imposters implies that they at least believe they care about the subjects' souls—and to some extent, they might indeed do so. Otherwise, they should be called not simply "imposters" but "villains" or "exploiters". For Plato, it is more difficult to identify the impostor than the villain. According to the motif of the using-used relation, education—understood as the moulding the souls (*Resp*. II. 377c4: πλάττειν τὰς ψυχὰς)—is itself a conditional good. It serves as a medium through which any value system or vision of life can be transmitted to citizens.[197] The most urgent issue regarding this medium for Plato was poetry, because its role was enormously influential, which is why he "uses", but not "creates" or "devises", poetry (*Resp*. II. 376e-377a, *esp*. 377a5-6: μύθοις πρὸς τὰ παιδία ... χρώμεθα). Rowe correctly claims that 'the purpose of statesmanship, or the art of politics, and therefore of the city or the state which it governs, is the betterment of the souls of the citizens.' However, it is not true that 'none of the recognized forms of constitution in fact has that purpose; if any of them, *per impossibile,* acquired it, and the means to pursue it effectively (i.e., knowledge), it would in fact have become identical with the best constitution,'[198] because he thereby denies, or at least overlooks, the fact that bad constitutions also claim to lead citizens to a good life and that they also look after devices to educate citizens (e.g., theatrical plays in democracy).[199] If all politicians in an existing

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[195] Rowe 2000, 247; 2001,

[196] Rowe 2006, 111.

[197] Lear 1992 discusses that the aggregate of all these formal and informal teachings constitutes the mechanism of internalization of the culture into each individual citizen's character. While his example *par excellence* is poetry, his thought is valid also for other mechanisms, e. g. the experience of public affairs, public speech and admiration and praise for a particular way of life. I do not believe that they engaged in exploitation under the guise of education without benevolence. It is their conviction that they offered a good education that is precisely the core of the issue Plato was concerned with.

[198] All quoted from Rowe 2001, 73.

[199] The Athenian people, the politicians and sophists claimed to be the teacher of virtues. See *Ap*. 24d25a, *Meno*. 92d ff. *Prot*. 316b-c, 318e-319a, 324c-328c, *Gorg*. 517d-e, 519c, 520a, *Alc*. I. 100d-113b, *Resp*. VI. 492a-493d.

constitution are, not surreptitiously but overtly, exploiters of their citizens, then it is not a constitution but pure anarchy. The worst constitution—lawless tyranny—is so close to anarchy as to be "unlivable" (*Plt*. 302e12, 303b2. Cf. *Resp*. IX. 579d10-e3: a tyrant is, in fact, a ruler completely enslaved, the situation that represents a complete absence of rule by anyone). In contrast, all existing politicians do, in some sense, function as users, but they are, more or less, of the incompetent kind. It cannot be said that only education by philosopher-rulers or the true statesman counts as education, and that all other forms are not education at all. Rather, the former serves as the standard by which the latter—good or bad forms of education—can be assessed. The same certainly applies to constitutions and law codes. Therefore, it can be argued that Rowe does not consider Plato's key motif to be the "using-used" or "original-imitation" relation.[200]

2.2.3. The Genealogical Source of a Good Law: Law used by *Epistêmê*

As mentioned in the previous section, it is evident that the traditional reading wants to answer the genealogical question of what is the source of good law in the non-constitutional constitutions. According to Plato, the source for good law is the 'accumulation of rich and long-term experiences', and it seems to testify to the developmentalist reading with regard to Plato's shift towards conservatism.[201] While Rowe has criticized this, as mentioned above, a more or less "modified" traditional reading is again being advocated. Referring to this trend and establishing my slight divergence from it, this section probes the implicit possibility of applying the "using-used" relation to the passage in the *Statesman* more extensively as a dynamical relation between political *epistêmê* (on the side of the political) and laws (*ta politika* understood as politics in its ordinary sense).

This version starts with the correction of some misconceptions of Rowe's reading. It provides an alternative translation of the expressions on which Rowe's dismissal of the legal order of non-ideal constitutions is based. This is to show that Plato affirms the value of the ordinary procedure of lawmaking and approves of the possibility of such a way to

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[200] Of course, this using-used relation is complex: we can say, following Ellison's observation (2019, 249), that in the *Republic*, 'law is presented as the *agent* that, as it were, *uses* education for that aim [in context, production of lawfulness].' However, it is not difficult to be told from Plato that this law is again used by philosophy or dialectics. This amounts to saying that philosopher-kings or philosophy uses education or poetry through laws.

[201] Ricken 2008, 200.

success in order to make good laws based on "experience", "careful advice", and "deliberation", "cleverly or with good intention" (300b1-6).[202] Since Rowe's inference begins with the assumption that there is no other way than the true statesman's expertise in which a set of laws becomes good, we need not accept now its consequence of the legalist ideal that the second-best constitution imitates the best one by just stubbornly sticking to "laws" in general, as this also happens in the best constitution in the absence of an ideal ruler. According to the new interpretation, Plato's criticism of the rule of law and its limitation holds even while acknowledging the positive value of non-expert sources of the law mentioned in the text as "ancestral traditional norms and customs" or "traces of the archaic constitution".[203] I agree with it, since I have argued that every product, including a law code, can be good or bad, and insofar as it belongs among things to be used, it is ontologically inferior. As a way of attributing positive value to such laws, Sørenson's observation, as mentioned above, is insightful: 'the ancestral customs serve as the *materials* [Author's italic] the statesman uses in his legislative activity.'[204] According to his approach, the best constitution and the second-best one have a commonality: both constitutions follow the rules according to the city's long-held traditions, which are good from any genealogical source.

In this section, I present my divergence from the traditional reading. To some extent, this author agrees with this neo-traditional reading trend according to which the legislative work of non-ideal cities should not be considered entirely doomed, whether it is "a trial-and-error method",[205] democratic deliberation and inquiry, or the strict adherence to the law proving its value through its long-term persistence.[206] I also agree with the idea that the expert statesman, when legislating, uses ancestral laws. However, it is problematic to accept "the striking assimilation of expert legislation to traditional laws"[207] in terms of the genealogical source, not in terms of the ontological status. I think that Sørensen's appeal to the "use" of ancestral rules and customs by an expert statesman for defending the value of traditional laws is insufficient unless the notion of "use" is considered in the broader

[202] Sørenson 2016, 95-97 and 2022, 5-6. Horn 2021b, 184-185 explicitly acknowledge following his reading.
[203] Sørenson 2016, 92-95 and 2022, 15-18. Cf. Horn 2021b, 188-9.
[204] Sørenson 2016, 93.
[205] Horn 2021a, 100.
[206] For the common chasing the traces of the ancestral or traditional laws that must be accessible, see Horn 2021b, 189. For the relative value of democratic legislation, see Horn 2021b, 193: '(c) *The caricature of democracy*'.
[207] Sørenson 2022, 17. Cf. 2016, 95.

context. What I mean by this is that if any knower or wise person who is not a ruler but in any way participates in constitutionally permitted politics, then he or she can be described as using the law of the constitution of which he or she is a member. Accordingly, it leads to a situation where the *epistêmê* is brought to bear and reflected in giving overall guidelines for legislation and dictating a concrete law provision. Sørensen seems to argue that the laws of ideal rulers and those resulting from experience, counsel, and democratic deliberation (300b) would ultimately be the same—while keeping separate the two genealogical sources of a good legal order. However, it is not plausible that the law of non-ideal constitutions would be good without some form of involvement from *epistêmê*. We can argue that this involvement, in whatever form, can be described as "use" by *epistêmê*, and that in this way, well-used legislation may differ in quality from the legislation built upon through democratic procedures, especially in terms of internal coherence or the likelihood of making a good legislative decision, if the latter merely muddles through immediate, arising crises.[208] In order to reinforce the premise of unitarianism, I must prove that the idea of "use" of law by political *epistêmê* holds both in the *Republic* and the *Statesman*. It will further facilitate the claim that political *epistêmê*, for the reason that it is the *epistêmê* for using, is of Forms. (This point will be discussed in the next section 2.3). Here we begin to address how the idea of "use" of law applies both to the best constitution's legislation, as Plato envisaged it established under the ideal conditions, and also to the second-best constitution's legislation under non-ideal conditions, a feature that is one of the central themes of the *Statesman*.[209]

On the one hand, let us suppose the ideal circumstances in which the philosophers reside

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[208] *Pace* Sørenson 2022, 17: 'Far from assuming a sharp difference in quality between laws derived from expertise and tradition respectively, ...' and 20-21 in which he makes argument for the ultimately same outcome of two kind of legislation and for the clear-cut distinction of two genealogies of such good law. If there should be no ultimate difference between legislation of expert statesman and that of democratic legislative way, then can the depiction in the *Republic* of the people persistently generating new laws (IV. 425e) also regarded as one of second-best constitutions? On this point, the parallel drawn by Trotz-Liboff (2023) between the *Phaedrus* and the *Statesman* is illuminating. According to him, a speech composed by one who truly knows bears what he calls a "logographic necessity," possessing formal completeness and coherence, just as a living animal possesses a head and limbs in proper proportion and unity. In light of the *Statesman*'s discussion of *measure (to metrion)*, we may well expect legislation to resemble such a well-formed speech—something crafted with insight, proportion, and internal necessity. Of course, reality falls short of this ideal: it is rare that a wise person governs or legislates from beginning to end. Precisely at this point, one can observe a difference in the *quality* of laws, depending on which genealogical source—expertise or tradition—they derive from.

[209] This conception of ideal and non-ideal condition for political life is mentioned in passing by Lane 2006, 183-184.

in the ideal city as rulers, as described as the only, most decisive condition for the "rest from evils" (V. 473b-e). Indeed, the *Republic*, in spite of its lack of consideration of the nature of law and the necessity or advantage of the rule of law, is an extensive legislative work.[210] There are two moments in Plato's approach to legislation in general: one provides the justification for a law, justifying why it needs to be enacted, whereas the other specifies the law's detailed provision. These two moments are exemplified by numerous cases of legislation in the *Republic*, such as Plato's theology and the guidelines for poetry; the standards for physical health; and the role of mathematics in guiding our mind toward structured reality, along with the laws determining the curriculum of the guardians. In the *Laws*, they are further embodied consciously in the form of a preamble and particular legal provisions within Magnesia's law code. The relation between these two moments is best described through the concept of "use": the knower of the reasons for such legislation—who possesses the knowledge of Forms in Plato's terms—rules the legislator and uses the products particular to the legislator, i.e., the laws. This point will be repeatedly made and discussed throughout this thesis (see Chapter 3 for the law for medicine and the relevant passage in the Laws). Therefore, I agree with Sørenson's emphasis on the separation of the political *epistêmê* and the expertise for legislation grounded in the *Statesman* 294a6-7. These are related to two distinct instances or stages of legislation: the philosophical contemplation and its embodiment.[211] Likewise, Lane tries to identify the constitutional form in the Kallipolis in which "senior" rulers, who have knowledge of the *telos* of the rule, "rules" "junior" rulers who are officeholders.[212] The same relation observed in terms of *ruling* with respect to persons is similar to that of *using* with respect to offices or assigned functions. Hence, it is in effect meaningless to debate whether a particular political dialogue represents Plato's institutionalism or personalism, insofar as the using-used relation remains observable.[213] The rulers of an ideal city govern their city by means of

[210] For the list of the passages serving as evidence for it, see Ellison 2019.

[211] See Sørenson 2022, 18. Hence, Hannah Arendt's claim that for Plato, legislation is the highest form of politics can be refuted: he is aware of the ontological status of law as a product and political activity as conducted with reference to Forms or Ideas. She would further argue that such reference makes politics in Plato's sense a kind of production or working, which I wanted to dispute in Section 1.3.2.

[212] Lane 2023, 222 ff. See also Sørensen 2018.

[213] For Plato's ultimate and constant preference of personalist rule in his ideal city, see Horn 2001, 16; 2021a, 94 about the Statesman; 2013, 14-15 and 2021a, 98-99 about the Laws; However, he also argues that this personalism does not necessarily imply particularism. See 2021a. 'Recent criticisms' of the traditional reading that Plato in later dialogues turns to the institutionalism, such as that of Klosko, see Ellison 2019, 243 n.2.

laws and offices.[214]

Whereas the ideal condition is stipulated in the *Republic* in which the *epistêmê*-holders are actually rulers and all subordinate goods—including law, constitution, and the office—are all as available for their use, it may be argued that this notion of "use" can also be applicable in a non-ideal condition. In this case, the possessor of the political *epistêmê*, who is legitimately called a statesman even when they are a private individual (259a-b), is not the ruler (e.g., illustrated in 295e-296a, 299b-c) or the ruler—whether a tyrant, the masses, or the coalition of the rich—has no expertise in administering ideal rule (297b-c, 300d-e, 301b-302b). [215] Moreover, Plato seems to consider the situation of "their occasional absence" and even the *physical* impossibility of commanding in every case for every individual (295b).[216] These non-ideal conditions call for the rule of law. Since I agree with the traditional reading of the passage in question, according to which the non-ideal constitutions can make good laws, we can argue that the democratic or any other legislative procedure can succeed in making good laws. What this section proposes is that it is by virtue of the political *epistêmê*, available in the non-ideal constitutions in forms other than the direct possession by ideal rulers. That is to say, there can be several scenarios of how a law is used by a knower. More specifically, we will see what the instances of the genealogical source of a good law mentioned in 300b look like in actual political relations.

In the first instance, the formal persuasion or advice of the legislative body or authority by a private citizen is mentioned in 296a8-11, 298d5-7 and 299c3-5. Plato in the first passage recognizes the common sense of many people that if 'someone recognizes laws that are

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[214] Jinek 2021, 121-123: 'The rule of philosophers, and thus the aristocratic constitution, is by no means precluded by the existence of democratic laws. Instead, these laws are incorporated and adapted to ensure stability and the philosopher's governance.'

[215] Let me exclude the scenario that no one in a city has the political *epistêmê*. See *Plt*. 292e-293a and for the optimistic estimation of the number of true statesmen, see Horn 2021b, 191. I also follow Rowe's commentary on 301d8-e2 (2005, 233): 'all of this is consistent with the possibility that such people [expert statesmen] are actually available, even if not in power.'

[216] At this point, I follow Trivigno 2021, 168: 'The use of laws is, however, necessary because it is impracticable for the statesman to 'sit ...' The statesman can *in principle* tailor his instructions to suit each individual, making sure to get it exactly right in each case. But this would require *in practice* something entirely impossible, ...' For the stronger notion of the necessity of law, see Yoon 2024 and McKeen 2025. Although Trivigno's argument against the practical necessity of law (170-171), I'm not sure how meaningful it really is to point out that it's *imaginable* for a politician to govern solely by executive decision, without recourse to law, because a statesman is, after all, the ruler of a group composed of many individuals. See also Sections 5.2.3 and 5.2.4 (3)-(4).

better, ..., then he must introduce these laws by persuading his city to accept them in each case.' The second passage describes a normal democratic legislative procedure, and the third is reminiscent of Socrates persuading jurors in the *Apology*. If the persuader or a citizen participating in the procedure has political *epistêmê*, and if they are able to persuade the city, then the law so produced will be good. This amounts to "chasing together after the traces of the truest constitution" (*Plt*. 301e3-5: συνελθόντας ..., μεταθέοντας τὰ τῆς ἀληθεστάτης πολιτείας ἴχνη).[217] Illustratively, this scenario is discerned through a thorough reading of the *Apology* by Jakub Jinek (2021). According to him, Socrates is represented as a 'sovereign thinker' equipped with his 'true philosophy' and revealed wisdom[218], who simultaneously respects and strictly follows the Athenian laws more than Athenians themselves.[219] The *Apology* exemplifies how the rule of philosopher-king or political expert is practiced within the framework of an existing legal order.[220] This work also offers a lesson on the conditions of the second-best city: namely, that a political expert without the power to rule must accept the existing laws and secure the consent of fellow citizens in order to realize what he knows[221]—a condition lacking in the historical Athens, which is why Socrates was ultimately frustrated as a potential philosopher-ruler. In this way, the non-ideal constitutions can make good laws and imitate the best constitution.

The following scenario sounds somewhat speculative but is still worth reconstructing and considering: the *epistêmê* may be available in the form of private mentoring by a wise citizen for office-holders or other fellow citizens with influence. Indeed, Plato's dialogues are full of exemplary cases—or at least full of his attempts—of Socrates' mentoring actual politicians.[222] If philosophers could better the condition of the state only by governing it

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[217] See Horn 2021b, 188-189 reading this passage as a sign for Plato's optimism regarding the traditional legislative process.

[218] Quoted from Jinek 2021, 108-113.

[219] For the instances showing his obedience to the litigation law and other kinds of law, Jinek 2021, 119-120.

[220] See Jinek 2021, 110: 'Socrates, although potentially a philosopher-king sovereign over the law, voluntarily submits to the law of Athens. This connection to the Athenian city in its 'most formal' aspect, which is the law, is the counterpart to his divine nature, and together they form the unity of the character of Socrates depicted by Plato.'

[221] Jinek 2021, 112: 'As an expert, he could also aspire to the role of a potential ruler in the city, i.e. the role of a philosopher-king, but this is conditioned by two things: by his acceptance of existing laws and by the consent of his fellow citizens.'

[222] For the further discussion of the mentoring, see also 5.3.4. below. I take the relationship of Anaxagoras and Pericles in the *Phaederus* 269e-270a to be an explicit representative case of a mentoring relationship. Of course, Socrates is represented as performing as a mentor for young men, for instance, for Cleinias in the

themselves, then why would Plato have depicted Socrates as a mentor to citizens, or emphasized his duty to convince the city, unless some form of political betterment—even if indirect—was expected? This plausible speculation begins with Plato mentioning how impossible it was physically for the expert in politics to always give instructions for the best outcome 295a10-b5. It implies that, in places where non-ideal constitutions prevailed, the possessor of political *epistêmê* might provide guidance to a few citizens, like Socrates before he was accused. The result of this is described in 299b: He 'inquires', 'makes clever speculations' (σοφιζόμενος), 'babbles' and 'corrupts' others—all reminiscent of Socrates, who served as a mentor to young people. If Socrates succeeded in mentoring Alcibiades or Callicles, who had aspirations for political power, then he would have guided them on matters such as when to persuade as an orator (304c-d) or whom to fight against as a general (304e-305a). As we shall see in Chapter 4, the relation between the genuinely political *epistêmê* and the three precious subordinate political expertise does not have to be read as only within the confines of a constitutional framework. Here, we see again the dual moments of political activity: the possession of the knowledge of the Good on part of the mentor, and particular decision-making about what is to be done in any situation by the practitioner. If such a well-trained practitioner legislates, whether as a king or following democratic procedure (as Pericles did), then the law so produced can be good. The rule of a king with *doxa* (301b)—the best among the non-ideal constitutions—can be considered to be suggesting precisely this scenario. We are told later that the true *doxa* can be appropriately implanted by a true statesman and a good lawgiver (309d). Through decent education, the good and the just in particular situations might become visible (δοκεῖν) to the king, in the state of true *doxa*, as genuinely good. If the king himself lacks *epistêmê*, his possession of true *doxa* would originate from one of three sources: (1) laws crafted by a statesman with expertise as an exemplary legislator, (2) laws produced by a legislator who was guided by a statesman, or (3) the king receiving direct guidance from a statesman. What matters here is not so much which of these sources is involved: the possibility of the non-ideal rule by a king with true *doxa* leads us to consider how *epistêmê* can shape society's governance, not through direct rule by philosophers, but through its indirect influence over those in power.

If this reconstruction of the arguments for the possible sources of a good law is acceptable,

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Euthydemus, Alcibiades in the eponymous dialogues, as well as a mentee of Asphasia in the *Menexenus* and of Diotima in the *Symposium*.

then the passage of 300c5-7 can be clearly comprehended. Rowe takes "*tauta*" in this passage to denote, as an apposition, the law directly issued by wise rulers.[223] Sørensen thinks that "*tauta*" is the law democratically made, and this passage means that it must be *substantially* (in terms of its contents) the same as the law made by wise rulers. I suggest that the democratically produced law ("*tauta*") can be said *equivalently* to be the law made by wise persons. Although this good law is made by a wise philosopher or statesman from start to end, non-ideal constitutions still have the potential for radical political change by allowing for the influence of the *epistêmê* on a society.

Thus far, the two genealogical sources of a good law in the non-ideal constitutions—in other words, the ways in which *epistêmê* is available to a society and can lead it to the approximation of the ideal state—have been articulated.. The two scenarios—the democratic procedures involving deliberate participation and private mentoring for politically active persons—can also be understood as cases of the use of law by *epistêmê*, or as the rule over the lawgiver by the possessor of *epistêmê*, albeit not through the direct issue of orders by rulers to each citizen. Thus, the seriousness Plato devotes to discussing the rule of law does not prove his loss of hope for the possibility of rule of *epistêmê*. Instead, it emphasizes his awareness of the necessity to establish the ontological inferiority of law and the explanation for its usefulness when used by *epistêmê*. Consequently, the political *epistêmê* continues to be the *epistêmê* for using law even in the *Statesman*.

2.2.4. *Epistêmê* of Forms for "Using" and the Dynamics of Politics and the Political

The confirmation of the (however implicit) existence of the *epistêmê* of "using" in the *Statesman* supports my reading of Plato in terms of the political in two ways: Firstly, in the *Euthydemus* implicitly (289a-292e) and in the *Republic* more explicitly (X. 601c-602a), the *epistêmê* of "using" is described as the *epistêmê* of the Good itself and Forms. I have argued that the transcendent character and the openness of the Good or the Forms serve as the objects of reference for those endeavoring to question a given existing social order, envision an alternative new one and bring about radical political change (see Section 1.3.2). If this *epistêmê* manifests its effects not only when its possessors are rulers but also when they are loyal citizens—in various forms such as mentoring, democratic participation, and so on—, then one may say that Plato's political thought *in general* approves the possibility

[223] Rowe 2001, 71-72 and 2006, 106.

of radical political changes.

Secondly, it helps articulate the dynamics between politics and the political in Plato's terms. In Section 1.3.4, it has been stated that for Plato, everything can be political if that political *epistêmê* is for using other expertises and the resultant subordinate goods that the expertise produces. The same applies to politics or political issues in the ordinary sense. Political activities, law, constitution, and office, along with peace, agreement, and social order, are also to be used by the genuinely political *epistêmê*. The moment in which a constitution is reformed by a radical change within it can be described as the moment in which a possessor of the political *epistêmê* makes a legal judgment that is incommensurable with the given existing legal order (see p. 51-52 in Section 1.3.2 above). In a sense, this 'challeng[ing] the laws' of Socrates is what Sørensen calls 'extra-legal judgment'.[224] However, his view that his extra-legal judgment is not intended as an overall improvement of a given existing legal order (what he calls 'legal improvement' on the same page) risks disparaging Plato's other legislative projects. Kallipolis or Magnesia can be seen as a better constitution, based on the principles to which the incommensurable legal judgment made by the possessor of the political *epistêmê*, such as Socrates, resorts to: like his radically peculiar judgment about gods and religion, private property, women guardians, and so on. The extra-legal judgment must be made as a legal judgment that is interpreted in such a way as to lead to a reform of the constitution and the advent of a radically new political order.

This point is crucial. Wolin credits Plato as the founder of the theory of constitutionalism,[225] a view recently reinforced by close readings of his major political works. Wolin also points out that Plato's constitutionalism arose as a counter to the democratic tendencies in their time. Broadly speaking, constitutions function to "set limits" on both politics and democracy. Here, democracy is defined as the rule of the people constituted on the basis of homogeneity to create a new commonality, aptly described as 'a political moment.'[226] For Wolin, democracy is "fugitive" in that it only designates a moment of transgressing an existing, established constitutional order. The depiction of the dynamics of the political and politics as a cycle oscillating between transformative action originating within but extending beyond the established order and

[224] Sørensen 2022, 8-13. Cf. Rowe 2001, 67.
[225] Wolin 1994, 17-18.
[226] Wolin 1994, 23.

the order's own stability illustrates a common theme among theorists of the political: they also think that these two forces are not simply opposed but are mutually constitutive. Rancière defines politics as a fleeting disruption of the "police" order—a structure that enforces social roles and hierarchy, yet paradoxically creates the very conditions for politics and moments for equality to emerge.[227] Laclau and Mouffe, speaking of antagonism, put effort into theorizing a concept of a contingently discursively articulated society, only temporarily totalized by hegemony, which precedes antagonism. In my view, What Plato is doing is not different. An interpretation of the *Statesman* can be that Plato similarly theorizes a dynamic of a society between politics and the political. Thus, we may conclude that a constitution, which ensures citizens' adherence to rules and allows space for expert opinion that challenges the established legal order by offering alternatives, can be considered the second-best ideal.[228]

2.3. What is the Nature of the Political E*pistêmê*?

Despite the connection between the *epistêmê* of "using" and the *epistêmê* of the Good, as well as the *Statesman*'s (implicit) characterization of the political *epistêmê* as one for using *ta politika*, including law, doubts persist about whether *epistêmê* of the Forms can be appropriate for politics. It has already been demonstrated in section 1.3.2 that the *epistêmê* of Forms plays a critical role in questioning the existing order and envisioning a new one, enabling radical political change. However, the ordinary conception of politics—which has been problematized in sections 1.2.1 and 1.3.1 and termed the "rule-centric"—has led many scholars to reframe the *epistêmê* as one of particulars, arguing that only such an *epistêmê* is relevant to politics.

I contend, however, that their conception of *epistêmê* makes Plato's position vulnerable to critics who have attributed to him a doctrine of worldly omniscience for ideal rulers—a position even Plato himself would have most likely rejected. Instead, I argue, considering the purpose of my project, that Plato's concept of the political does not concern itself much with "politics as rule" as with something genuinely political in the sense of questioning an existing established order stabilized by rule and envisioning a new order by surpassing the rule. It has been explained how Plato's political thought relies on the transcendent

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[227] Rancière 1993, 53: '*L'activité politique est* ...' and 55: '*Tout ce qu'elle fait* ...'.
[228] Cf. *Resp*. IV. 426b-427a, where Plato is already wary of a strict and rigid legal order and constitution that allows no room for any radically reformative attempts.

character of the Forms or the Good itself, which does not determine any particular order in this world after its actualization. Thus, to maintain consistency with the argument presented in Section 1.3.2, I must demonstrate the validity of my first premise: that the political *epistêmê* is of Forms. Once this is established, I will present how its nature is constituted at the end of this section and outline the discussions of the subsequent chapters of this dissertation that are designed to explore how the political *epistêmê* so understood operates in politics.

2.3.1. Application Problem and the E*pistêmê* of Particulars

Generally, the interpretative claim that Plato's *epistêmê* is of Forms, which I have put forward as the first premise of my project, has not often been questioned. In response to Plato's first theoretical attempt to differentiate between *epistêmê* and *doxa*, the traditional reading puts forward the following assertion based on Plato's ontological distinction between two kinds of entities—a Form and the sensible many, the latter depending for their being on the former—that *epistêmê* and *doxa* are differentiated by each taking exclusively one of these kinds of entities as its object. Complaints have arisen about Plato's treatment of the *epistêmê* that qualifies philosophers and is required for their ideal rule: one can hardly understand how the *epistêmê,* as defined in the *Republic,* is relevant to politics, as George Klosko highlights this problem articulately:[229]

> Plato does not explain exactly how this [philosophical *epistêmê*] is beneficial to the state, while the necessary connections are difficult to surmise. This is not surprising given the remoteness of absolute Goodness from the lives and concerns of ordinary human beings. If we rough out a sketch of what the rulers of the state actually do and what they must know to do it, it can be seen that knowledge [*epistêmê*] of the Good is not directly required.

One response to this difficulty, which can be termed "application problem" of the *epistêmê* of Forms to the political reality, is to circumvent it by accentuating its ethical impact, rather than the epistemic, as a necessary condition for the ideal rule. It amounts to arguing that those who have the *epistêmê* are not preoccupied with the desire for political power, as this *epistêmê* turns their ethical orientation to moral good (*Resp*. VII. 521a-b, 540d-

[229] Klosko 2006, 174. For other concerns with this problem of applicability, see also Annas 1981, 261-264.; Schwab 2016, 42; Peprah 2021, 124-5.

e).[230] The epistemic deficit of its possessors is filled either with various branches of *epistêmê* more directly relevant to ruling or other cognitive competencies, such as *phronesis* and *empeiria*.[231]

This response of neglecting the epistemic aspect of the *epistêmê* would be inadequate if we consider the crucial role that Plato assigns to the political *epistêmê* in his political thought. The application problem should be (re)solved in order for Plato's political thought to be meaningfully read. From such concerns, some scholars have argued that *epistêmê* should be *of particulars*. Depending on the framing question—whether developmentalism or unitarianism—this interpretative strand branches into three positions, as far as I can identify: (1) Gail Fine's original interpretation of the *epistêmê*-doxa distinction in the *Republic*; (2) Melissa Lane's emphasis on the *kairos* as the object of the political *epistêmê*; and (3) Schofield's interpretative claim regarding Plato's preoccupation with the vision of the architectonic form of knowledge as the political *epistêmê*. Each of these positions will be briefly reviewed.

Firstly, if one does not wish to assume a developmental view in Plato's dialogues, a solution to the "application problem" should be found within the *Republic* itself. Gail Fine, in addressing this problem, challenges the traditional standard view that Plato's *epistêmê-doxa* distinction is drawn based on the distinction of different objects: *epistêmê* relates to eternal, unalterable entities, i.e., Forms, whereas *doxa* pertains to mutable, sensible particulars.[232] Though not explicitly stated in her first article (Fine 1978), what motivates her alternative interpretation of the political is to 'avoid ... unattractive consequences' if one adheres to the traditional understanding. She writes that, if we accepted the *epistêmê*-doxa distinction (understood by her as knowledge-belief) in terms of each of the objects,

> 'Plato is quite sceptical about the limits of knowledge: although at least

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[230] Klosko 2006, 175 and Schofield 2006, 161-162 stresses only its 'moral effect' or 'practical benefit' in its function of 'shap[ing] the philosophers' own characters that they are equipped for statesmanship.' Also, see Peprah 2021, 138.

[231] There are two ways of supplement the *epistêmê* of the Good, either by saying that philosopher-rulers also have skills or disciplines relevant to ruling (as Klosko 2006, 174 suggests) or by saying that they have other cognitive faculties through training and experience, as Smith 2019, 61 and Peprah 2021, 128-129 and 136-138.

[232] For the overview of the debate and the previous literature review for traditional reading, see Moss 2021, 18-26 and 35-42. I would add Popper's comment in his *Open Society and its Enemies* (1995, 23-29 and 83-87), which was a harsh criticism, but not a misrepresentation doubting Plato's commitment to the two-world theory.

> philosophers can know Forms, no one can know items in the sensible world. No one can know, for example, what actions are just or good; no one can know even such mundane facts as that they're now seeing a tomato, or sitting at a table. ... Fourth, this sceptical result would be quite surprising in the context of the Republic, which aims to persuade us that philosophers should rule, since only they have knowledge, and the knowledge is necessary for good ruling. If their knowledge is only Forms – if, like the rest of us, they only have belief about the sensible world – it is unclear why they are specially fitted to rule in this world. They don't know, any more than the rest of us do, which laws to enact.'[233]

Due to these concerns, she tries to read Plato's arguments for the *epistêmê-doxa* distinction by referring to the proper objects of each in a way that does not affirm Plato's commitment to the two-worlds theory.[234] The pivot of her argument is the veritative sense of the verb "is" (εἶναι), which allows her to interpret knowledge of "what is" as the knowledge of "what is the case" or "what is true", and belief in "what is and is not" as the capacity to believe in some true and false propositions.[235] She argues that reading the argument in Book V with other meanings of "is" ("*is-e*" and "*is-p*") unilaterally presupposes such entities as Forms and the two-worlds theory, which, according to Fine, cannot be considered Plato's intention.[236] Furthermore, as cited above, it renders Plato's political-philosophical demand—the rule of philosophers—irrelevant.[237] If knowledge and belief are understood as two distinct capacities differentiated by the content they capture,[238] rather than by the nature of the object itself,[239] there is no reason why they cannot both be directed at the same object. She then derives the introduction of Forms from the passage where it is evident that Plato uses "*is*" in a predicative sense,[240] connecting these to her veritative reading based on "*is-v*". Specifically, she argues that when a proposition about an

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[233] Fine 1990, 86. An implicit mentioning of the problem, see Fine 1978, 121-2, referring to the philosopher's return to the cave. See also Annas 1981, 194: 'How can the Guardians' knowledge be relevant to doing this [directing others], if its objects belong to a different world from the world of objects of belief?'

[234] For the mentioning of the two worlds theory, see Fine 1978, 122, 126, 129, 133, 137 and 139.

[235] Fine 1978, 124-6 for her arguments for is-v reading as a promising one. For her retention of is-v in some problematic steps of argument, see 131 and 135-7.

[236] Fine 1978, 125-6 and 129 on the condition of 'noncontroversiality'; 1990, 87: 'dialectical requirement'.

[237] See the third and fourth consequences of the traditional reading of *epistêmê*-doxa distinction on Fine 1990, 86.

[238] Fine 1978, 124 and 129 on 'content.'

[239] Fine 1978, 128 on 'accomplish.'

[240] Fine 1978, 133 ff.

object is phrased in terms of sensible—that *is, F and is not F*—it may be either true or false. In contrast, when it is phrased in terms of Forms—unchanging definitions or essences—the proposition about the object is always true, making it a suitable object of knowledge.[241] In this way, Fine resolved the application problem in the *Republic* and paved the way to the claim that Plato's *epistêmê* in the *Republic* is an infallible knowledge of political affairs that belong to the sensible realm. This interpretation depends on a "content-based" conception of the *epistêmê-doxa* distinction.

Alternatively, according to the developmentalist view, it might be contended that it is only after the *Republic*—in the *Statesman*—that the application problem ceases to tease the readers. Klosko frames the relationship between the Republic and the Statesman in this way: while in the former dialogue, 'Plato is unclear on how this [Form of the Good] translates into abilities relevant to ruling a state', later in the *Statesman*, he starts to relate the political *epistêmê* to practical affairs, which witnesses 'his overall concern with the sensible world and its workings.'[242] What has been argued in the interpretation of the *Statesman* by Melissa Lane, from which Klosko adopted quite a bit, represents this viewpoint. In her monograph (1998) of the *Statesman*, Lane claims that the peculiar nature of the political *epistêmê* is not sufficiently addressed and the contribution of the *Statesman* lies in its emphasis on 'time as the dimension of political action', which goes 'unnoticed in the *Republic*.'[243] For her, the political *epistêmê* is the knowledge of the good in time—in a given moment—and of *kairos* in its temporal sense: the best moment for a political action to be conducted.[244] Her compelling basis for stressing *kairos* is the sharp contrast Plato himself brought up in the *Statesman* between the rule of *epistêmê* and the rule of law. Lane contends, 'fixed laws pose a mortal threat to appropriate action responsive to a constantly changing kairos'[245] According to her, while Plato may recognize

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[241] For the Forms and their functions, see Fine 1978, 136-137 and 1990, 86: '... once one knows Forms, one can apply this knowledge to sensible so as to know them too; the philosopher's knowledge of Forms, for instance, helps him to know (although it is not, all by itself, sufficient for knowing) which laws ought to be enacted' and 94-95 and 114-115.

[242] Klosko 2006, 206-207.

[243] Lane 1998, 3 and 2006, 180.

[244] See Lane 1998, 132-136, 139-146 and 193-202, 2006, 183 and 2021, 209. 'the statesman's expertise is inherently temporal, ruling over those forms of expertise with the power to take fisrt-order actions by determining at the second-order level what is opportune moment, the kairos, for them to act or refrain from acting.' See also Lane 1998, 149-150 for the limitation of the *Republic* regarding 'the changes ... in time'. Another way of understanding *kairos*, see Ricken 2008, 214-6 and Fisher 2022, 714-175.

[245] Lane 1998, 150.

the limited value of stability provided by law, he ultimately believes that the authority 'must be ceded ... to knowledge,' which enables its possessors to recognize *kairos* and respond with flexibility to the particular needs of a given situation.[246] In accentuating this contrast, Lane positions Plato within the realm of ethical or political particularism, as suggested by Plato's use of vocabulary like "*to metron*", "*to prepon*", and "*to akribes*" (*Plt*. 284e). Her emphasis on k*airos*, therefore, leads to particularism as opposed to generalism based on fixed legal and ethical norms[247], and supports the argument that *epistêmê* is of particulars rather than universals.

Endorsing neither developmentalism nor unitarianism, Malcolm Schofield (2006) states that Plato is preoccupied throughout his entire career with the notion of the political knowledge related to ruling a political community and thus discusses the possibility of *epistêmê* in architectonic form across various dialogues. This kind of political *epistêmê*—the architectonic knowledge—constitutes two political ideals or two visions for the political ruler juxtaposed in tension with each other in Plato's works, namely, 'scientific governor or manager'. While Plato's aspiration of this vision is prominent in the *Charmides* and *Euthydemus* and revisited in the *Statesman*, another one finds its fullest expression in the *Republic*, where philosopher-rulers are characterized as moral prophets or spiritual leaders,[248] and the *epistêmê* qualifying them is analyzed as the metaphysical, moral, and theoretical knowledge of Forms. Although, according to Schofield, Plato's ultimately associated with the vision of the *Republic*, not that of the *Statesman*.[249]

> His worry about the lack of practical orientation in the knowledge of the Good is not entirely resolved in the *Republic*. Although the knowledge of the eternal well shapes the character of its possessors, the philosophers,[250] and there is an

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[246] Lane, 1998, 198-200.

[247] Lane, 1998, 194 ff. For the argument that Plato should be regarded as an ethical particularist due to his personalism of philosopher-rulers in the *Republic* and the belittlement of rule of law in the *Statesman* and his own criticism, see Horn 2021a 93-98 and 2021b, 187.

[248] There are according to Schofield two divergent visions of political knowledge: For Mill's idea, see Schofield 2006, 138-140, 144, for Jowett's one, see 141-2, 162, and for their contrast, see 146, 164 and 172.

[249] According to Schofield 2006, Plato's investigation of architectonic form of the political knowledge remains an experimental probe which is conducted by distancing himself from the idea itself. Schofield writes that the Statesman's project is the evidence for it that 'Plato did not abandon interest in the prospects for architectonic political knowledge' (164), but that to the question of whether 'Plato [is] now unequivocally commending to his reader the idea that the application of architectonic political knowledge is the ideal recipe for producing a flourishing human society', the answer is negative (173).

[250] Schofield 2006, 161-2. He cites *Resp*. VI. 500b-d and writes, 'it is because the moral order of eternal

> additional implication that philosophers also possess practical expertise,[251] his conclusion is that the '*Republic*'s philosopher is ... no political manager or 'scientific governor'.[252]

Then, how can knowledge be architectonic? According to his descriptions, it should be knowledge for using by commanding its subordinate expertises, like the relationship between a statesman as a user and a lawgiver used and ruled by him (it should be noted that these two expertises can be present in one person but analytically distinct: see Sections 3.3-4 and 5.2.2) as discussed in the previous section.[253] Though not explicitly following the developmentalist narrative, he establishes the contrast between the *Republic* and the *Statesman* in terms of the objects of knowledge, in the former, the eternal, and in the latter, particulars.[254] Since he adopts to a great extent the reading of the *Statesman* by Melissa Lane, it would be Schofield's thought that in order for knowledge to have a practical aspect and thus an architectonic form, Plato's political *epistêmê* must be conceived as pertaining to the particulars, applying directly to political affairs.[255]

In summary, what the three views, (1) Fine's "content-based" understanding of the *epistêmê- doxa* distinction in the *Republic,* (2) Lane's conception of the political *epistêmê*

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reality has shaped the philosophers' own characters that they are equipped for statesmanship: it is their goodness as much as their wisdom that counts.'

[251] Schofield 2006, 162-3: '... his expertise was not simply reducible to the knowledge won through theoretical study. ... the philosophers will have practical expertise too ... something altogether more modest – the experimental methods of the artist.' Cf. Reeve 2006, 82-6.

[252] Schofield 2006, 164. Also see 157: 'no hint ... [for] construing philosophy or philosophical understanding of the good as the architectonic knowledge', no practicality; 160: Forms are simply the objectively and eternally existing entities, 161: Nor has it any intrinsically practical orientation like the architectonic political knowledge sketched in *Charmides* and *Euthydemus*, and (subsequently) in the *Statesman*.' The sharp distinction between both *epistêmês*, see also Peprah, 2021, 121: '[I]f politics and philosophy are to coincide before Kallipolis can see the light of the sun, then the proposal is that whoever becomes a ruler in Kallipolis must have political and philosophical epistemic competence, precisely because both politics and philosophy belong to different domains of knowledge (the former mainly practical and the latter theoretical).'

[253] For his definitional remarks of architectonic knowledge, see Schofield 2006, 145: 'achieving its objectives principally ruling or controlling subordinate forms of expertise'; 147: 'measured judgment is an architectonic form of knowledge, 161: 'there is no focus on its [philosophical *epistêmê*'s] use of other forms of expertise', 'architectonic political knowledge in the practical [domain]'; 170-2 for comparison of it with Aristotle's idea of practical wisdom.

[254] See Schofield 2006, 172: 'Nowhere do we get a sharper sense of the guilt separating the philosopher of the *Republic*, his thoughts focused on the eternal, and the statesman of the *Statesman*, in his preoccupation with the flux of human affairs where practically nothing ever remains stable.'

[255] The practical orientation and particularity are meaningfully discussed outside of Plato's scholarship. See, for instance, Arist. *EN*. VI. 6. 1141b15-17; 11. 1143a28-35 and Raz 1985, 303. For my own discussion of this point, see Section 5.2.1.

in the *Statesman* as the knowledge of *kairos*, and (3) Plato's vision presented by Schofield as the architectonic form of knowledge, converge to is the idea that Plato's *epistêmê* is of particulars. Even if these arguments were part of an effort to address the application problem, the conception of *epistêmê* as infallible knowledge and the claim that its object is particulars have been subject to significant criticism.[256] For instance, Horn (2021a, b, c) argues that particularism is not a single opposite to the generalist legalism and that Plato, though criticizing legalism, still remains something of a generalist, because the knowledge that constitutes virtue or *epistêmê* (in the sense of expertise) consists of knowledge of general rules for action.[257] Fine's reading has been criticized by Horn (2011) as an interpretation that cannot be supported by the text in question[258] and also by Moss (2021) in her more extensive monograph on the *epistêmê*-doxa distinction, rejecting the understanding of the pair of *epistêmê*-doxa as the pair of knowledge-belief from the outset.[259]

Without engaging deeply with these arguments and counterarguments, the following section aims to continue the discussion by highlighting a dangerous implication of this idea that political *epistêmê* is of particulars. Construing Plato's *epistêmê* as concerning particulars renders his political thought vulnerable to critics by attributing to him a doctrine of the "ideal rulers' worldly omniscience." This view states that Plato's ideal rulers know everything about the here and now. This point will be further explored in the next section 2.3.2. Also, I will contend that the presupposition that politics belongs to the sensible realm and hence the political *epistêmê*, if we may speak of it, must be of particulars, is not necessarily true. It represents only a "rule-centric" conception of politics, which the theorists of the political wanted to overcome by means of their development of the concept (see Section 1.2.1 above). If the concept of politics is replaced with the concept of the political and is applied to Plato, then we might realize that what is required for the political—namely, questioning an existing order and envisioning a new one—would not be

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[256] Moss 2021, 21-22 for mentioning the application problem as the motivation of Fine's and others' similar interpretations. For the solution to this given by the proponents of the Distinct Object reading, including Moss, see 2.3.4. below.

[257] Horn 2021a, 93-98. Here, he mentions also *epistêmê*-doxa distinction for arguing that, if *epistêmê* is acquired by philosopher-rulers who are capable of ruling without law, then their knowledge will not be particularist, because it is without doubt that *epistêmê* is of Forms (97-8). See also Horn 2021b, 92-94, 2021c, 33ff.; See also McKeen's (partial) agreement with him, see McKeen 2025, 17 n.19 and 19 n.23.

[258] Horn 2011, 227 ff.

[259] For her rejection, see Moss 2021, 4-8, 137-8 and 205-6. For the motivation of what she calls "Overlap reading" based on the identification of the two pairs, see 22-25.

the particularist knowledge but rather knowledge of the higher realities, that is, the Forms, including the Good itself. In this way, we can understand why the first premise that *epistêmê* must be of the Forms is essential for reading Plato in terms of the political (See further Section 2.3.3).

2.3.2. The Worldly Omniscience of Plato's Ideal Rulers?

Plato's dialogical writing style did not work to his advantage in interpretations of political thought. On the one hand, it is true that the dialogue in the *Statesman* focuses on the definition of political or kingly *epistêmê* and a political man (*ho politikos*), translated as "statesman". It is obvious from this explicit objective that this dialogue is intended to highlight Plato's conception of how a political expert. On the other hand, Plato also speaks of a truth accessible to only a few and contends that the knowledge of this truth distinguishes them as legitimate rulers.[260] Despite Plato's own endeavor to prove the existence of such a truth and justify this paradoxical claim—and the scholars' efforts to explain the rupture between the *Republic* and the *Statesman—the combination of the core theses of both dialogues has* shaped and reinforced the popular impression of Plato, as well as the perspectives of political thinkers who are not Plato scholars. The common understanding here is that Plato expected politicians leading a country to be equipped with knowledge of every necessary action regarding administration—knowledge that surpassed that of their fellow citizens, which is termed the doctrine of "worldly omniscience of ideal rulers." Admittedly, it sounds not only unrealistic but also tecnocratic-elitist, patriarchal, undemocratic, which might have significantly contributed to the perception of Plato being an anti-political thinker. Attributing the notion of "worldly omniscience of ideal rulers" to Plato can be observed in both camps: those like Karl Popper and Robert Dahl who directly criticize Plato, and those who establish Plato as a representative of a typical position—the advocacy of the technocratic or *epistocratic* ideal—within the history of political thought.[261] After reviewing their critiques, I aim to contend that their concept of politics is "rule-centric" and further to demonstrate that even Plato would not adhere to such a position. This misapprehension is closely tied to the assertion that Plato's *epistêmê* is of particulars. According to Plato's own remarks, *epistêmê* is stable and infallible.[262] If it is to

[260] See Dahl 1989, 53 and 65 where he cites the *Statesman* to construct Plato's vision of guardianship, while indiscriminately employing ideas from the *Republic*.
[261] Fisher 2022, 703.
[262] See e.g. *Resp*. VI. 477e, *Gorg*. 454d, *Tht*. 187b. See Moss 2021, 113 ff. (Ch.4), especially 116-8, for the

be of particulars in order to be relevant to politics, and if Plato's political experts are true experts in politics due to their possession of the *epistêmê*, then it would automatically lead to them infallibly making sound judgments on what to do in any given situation concerning civic affairs. By reviewing several critical discourses on Plato, I demonstrate how this interpretation functions as a pretext for attacking Plato. Their criticisms generally assume there is no truth in politics and therefore no expert in politics.

Popper is the first author worth mentioning in this context. In his *The Open Society and Its Critics* (Ch. 9), Popper contrasts two approaches for producing social change: utopian engineering and piecemeal engineering. As part of his reasonable and hostility-free critique, he presents three main arguments in support of piecemeal engineering over utopian engineering. First, he argues that there must be a blueprint for utopian engineering, which is inherently impossible and, in reality, not viable. 'Social life is so complicated that few men, or none at all, could judge a blueprint for social engineering on the grand scale.' Second, there are always difficulties for a ruler, however benevolent, 'to find whether the effects of his measures align with his good intentions' and also 'whether his measures achieve the desired benevolent aim' in the case of authoritarian enforcement of the ideal blueprint. Thirdly, considering the flux of time, the blueprint once established should be corrected at every moment. For these reasons, Popper decries Utopian social engineering and its radicality, attributing such a method of betterment of society to Plato on the grounds of his conviction that the ideal and the means for its realization can be rationally discovered.[263] Popper is not wrong in emphasizing the inherent complexity and unpredictability of sensible, worldly realm—particularly in the purview of social and political life, and It is for this reason that many, including Popper himself, have rightly maintained that politics cannot be the object of infallible knowledge.[264] From these valid premises, however, Popper and others proceed to a mistaken conclusion: they mistakenly take Plato's references to political *epistêmê* as claims about the existence of infallible political knowledge, and from this misreading, they infer that Plato's ideal rulers are qualified political experts on account of possessing *such* knowledge.

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general features of *epistêmê* resulted from its relation to Being.

[263] All these quoted from Popper 2003, 168-170. See also 140-1 for his criticism that 'Plato's ideal philosopher approaches to omniscience' and it is a betrayal of Socrates, who regarded open and critical thinking as the hallmark of a philosopher.

[264] For the ancient thinking that there is no political *epistêmê*, see p. 101 and n. 273 below.

In demonstrating the superiority and legitimacy of democracy in his *Democracy and Its Critics* (1989), Robert Dahl also criticizes Plato by making a similar observation and inference. Like Popper and others, he also thinks that in politics, no knowledge or expertise in Plato's sense exists. Dahl presents the concept of guardianship as a way in which critics reject the supremacy of democracy as a form of government. It challenges the fundamental assumption of democracy, which is that the demos is capable of ruling itself.[265] As one of the most notorious proponents of this camp, Plato is counted as an original thinker of the rule by expert guardians. At the core of the argument on guardianship lies the conviction that the knowledge required for ruling can only be made accessible to a few. The main part of Dahl's counterargument is that 'a science of ruling', what Plato labels as "royal science", does not exist and thus cannot be known. In morality, unlike in mathematics or natural science, there has never been any proof of the existence of any single concrete moral judgment regarding what to do.[266] Furthermore, according to Dahl, there is no rational or moral basis to endorse the judgment of a particular group regarding the common good, since it depends on the individual judgment of citizens.[267] Without knowledge of the end—whether it is moral good or common good—even the guardians' alleged possession of extensive instrumental knowledge—whether engineering, natural science, or technical expertise—is meaningless. This argument culminates in a metaphysical view that the world of politics is like a cave, where there is no validity of truth,[268] and where no political judgment can claim certainty as every decision must be victim of trade-offs between equally binding but conflicting values.[269]

The common argumentative structure of these theorists' reading of Plato begins with the premise that the knowledge for politics—knowledge of what one ought to do in a given situation—neither exists nor can be obtained in reality. According to these theorists, Plato presupposes such knowledge exists and ascribes it to his qualified philosopher-rulers. Consequently, his ideal ruler is omniscient, which is entirely illusory. This view of Plato is

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[265] For the challenge, see a fictional anti-democratic figure Aristos' arguments in Dahl 1989, 59 ff.

[266] According to Dahl 1989, 65-67, the fact that 'their "objective moral truths" invariably prove to be highly debatable' proves that a moral science does not exist.

[267] See Dahl 1989, 70-74 for his argument that the rational knowledge of objectively true common good is impossible.

[268] Dahl 1989, 78; Cf. Arendt 1998, 20, 75 and 226 characterizing it as a realm of human affairs and the space of polis for them and their futility, see 188-208. For closer reading of the Parable of the Cave and emphasizing the cave as a space of *doxa*, see also 2005, 29-31.

[269] Dahl 1989, 75-76.

still widespread: Josiah Ober iterates the argument similar to that of Popper and Dahl in criticizing the undemocratic ideal epistemic regime.[270] He explicitly targets Plato and his vision of Kallipolis and argues that it is unrealistic on account of the fact that there are no general experts in politics, nor individuals armed with every kind of expertise required for pursuing the common interest and with the capacity for acquiring the highest principle. Even in the context of contemporary discussions—for instance, the debate on the relationship between AI and democracy—Plato appears as the quintessential figure who represents the anti-democratic view, emphasizing the art and expertise of ruling a state.[271] However, does Plato really believe that the ideal rulers should be omniscient in their politics in this world? What do these theorists mean by politics when they interpret Plato's demand for political *epistêmê* as knowledge for ruling? The following section will discuss these two questions.

2.3.3. The "Rule-Centric" Conception of Politics and the Significance of E*pistêmê* of Forms in Conceptualizing "the Political"

This section will first address the first contention that Plato would not disagree with those who believe that a comprehensive, absolutely infallible knowledge of the complex and multifaceted situations in the real (for Plato, sensible) world is impossible. While they interpret *epistêmê* as knowledge possessing certainty, as opposed to belief, and focus solely on the qualities Plato attributes to it, they simultaneously overlook what objects it pertains to—particularly the exclusion of knowledge concerning sensible particular things. This is a crucial element of the traditional interpretation of the *epistêmê*-doxa distinction in Plato's scholarship. For instance, though Dahl does not see it, Plato would agree with the trade-off of values in the sensible reality, the very point made by Dahl himself to demonstrate the impossibility of the existence of a science of politics. But this is the very idea Plato upholds in correlating the fallible, unstable *doxa* with the sensible realm. This is comparable to the relation between constitutional law, which is filled with all true propositions about values, and the practical issues its application faces, such as trade-offs (For further details, check Section 2.3.4-2.3.5 below). Plato does think that this world is an imperfect imitation of true reality and, therefore, shares with them this view that what could be understood by them

[270] Ober 2017, 144-145.
[271] Coeckelbergh 2022, 64-65

as political knowledge cannot exist in this world.[272]

Then, is Plato in accord with Aristotle and Isocrates, who saw the engagement in *ta politika* confined to the domain of *doxa* and believed that there is no *epistêmê* regarding politics,[273] even though he clearly posits a *epistêmê* for *politics*? If the *epistêmê* of philosopher-rulers does not align with the knowledge of particulars, e.g., "this law is just to pass" or "this policy is politically good for our city", and Moss admits that 'even the philosopher-rulers lack the kind of completely stable, clear, precise grasp of the perceptible world of the kind that could qualify as *epistêmê*,'[274] one may ask why philosopher-rulers with *epistêmê* of the Good and of Justice deserve to be called experts in politics. But this question is valid only within the framework of a certain conception of politics, within which Plato's innovation in positing a "political" *epistêmê* and demanding it for those who engage in *ta politika* is obscured. Through the introduction of *epistêmê* and the Forms into politics, the kind of politics Plato aims to establish is undoubtedly something other than a politics that demands certain and infallible knowledge of the particular.

Therefore, as for the second question, I contend that those who have interpreted Plato as demanding worldly omniscient knowledge in relation to politics from rulers and then criticized him based on the impossibility of such knowledge operate with what I call a "rule-centric" conception of politics. Moreover, those within Platonic scholarship who argue that, to be relevant to politics, *epistêmê* must be of particulars, similarly share this conception of politics, thereby rendering Plato vulnerable to those criticisms. What is referred to as "rule-centric" here is not that different from what is referred to as politics in the ordinary sense, contrasted with the political (refer to Section 1.2.1). The idea is a mixture that manifests as the art of ruling or governing in modern conception; as the

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[272] Moss 2021, 123: 'The perceptible world is an image of the Forms'. For the impossibility of the cognitive state of *epistêmê* of particulars, see Schwab 2016, 67-69 and 74, one of the proponents of the traditional reading of *epistêmê-doxa* distinction, referring *Resp*. VII. 508d5-8 saying that "circumstances" is not the object for *epistêmê*. 'Other circumstances, however, may be difficult to recognize.' For the general features of *doxa* in relation to the perceptible world, see Moss 2021, 122 and 155 ff.

[273] See the review of the ancient authors beyond Plato who share Distinct Objects reading, see Moss 2021, 42-45. For Aristotle, she refers to *EN* VI. 1139a6-12 and 1140b26-28, for Isocrates to *Antidosis* 271. A similar view can be observed in Arendt 2005, 9 and 33, and 2017, 97-8, where she makes a distinction between philosophy as unpolitical understanding or wisdom, and *phronêsis* as political insight in human affairs. While she sees in Plato's political philosophy the attempt to set a standard for human affairs in the name of truth, which is hence anti-political, I am arguing that the truth neither operates nor exists in the manner she worries about. Instead, it is the reality of the Forms that constitute such a truth that can better explain and induce radical political change (see Section 1.3.2 above).

[274] Moss 2021, 123.

process of deliberation, exchange, and consensus among free and equal individuals, characteristic of liberal frameworks; and as a subsystem within society where power operates as a structural principle, expressed through institutionalized processes of decision-making and behavior analyzed by political science.[275]

In fact, Ober's remark illustrates this understanding articulately: 'Politics can or ought to be reduced to a search for the best answers about common interests and their advancement.'[276] Such conception of politics seems to be shared by Popper. Even though Popper does not explicitly define what politics is, he speaks of the decisions of legal norms, 'designing of new institutions and the adjusting of old ones'—'for health and unemployment insurance, ... , or anti-depression budgeting, or education reform'—and outlines all these for 'searching for, and fighting for the greatest and most urgent evils of society'.[277] In his criticism of Plato, Dahl also frequently uses the terms "government" and "decision-making" rather than "politics" without attributing any further meaning to politics elsewhere.[278] Some even refer to this stance as a 'Platonic temptation,' as if it were Plato who seeks to turn politics into a matter of philosophical truth and expertise, claiming that Plato is the one who has a 'technocratic' conception of politics.[279] I use the term "rule-centric" as all-encompassing because the politics so understood is—referring only to collective decision-making of the best solution for common interest—more closely related to the stability of the existing order, which is the primary aim of rule and government. This is rather different from what I refer to as *the political* or *genuinely political*. If Plato's ideal

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[275] This encompasses Arendt's conception of modern, distorted politics as a means (1998, 229-230; 2017, 36-37, 65 ff.) or a subsystem or a great household economy (1998, 33 ff., 44 ff.); the contemporary conception condemned by Rancière as "police" and by Badiou as "state" aimed at the stability of ana existing order in the name of rationality and agreement; and the institutional conception according to which politics is confined to formalized processes and institutional frameworks (constitutionalism), a view which Sheldon Wolin contrasted with dynamic politics characterized by citizen participation and political imagination.

[276] Ober 2017, 142.

[277] For these, see Popper 2003, 61 ff., 133-135 ('political problems') and 167-169. What he presents as the aim of politics appears to be a superficial problem-solving approach, which is a limitation of piecemeal social engineering, as Arruzza 2012 criticizes: 'If liberal democracy and piecemeal engineering set the boundaries of rationality in politics, the notion of change derived from this is actually a very limited one.' (269) For his reluctance to give a general definition in scientific inquiry, see Popper 29-32. That is why he does not define what he thinks is "politics."

[278] For the conception of politics as a collective but competitive attainment of agreement, see e. g. Dahl 1989, 78 on prudence (contrary to philosophical search for truth) and a strategic choice of 'the alternative that is the best' and 252: 'in political life, the game of politics need not be zero-sum; if politics is not zero-sum, political opponents are not necessarily implacable enemies; and negotiation and bargaining can lead to mutually beneficial compromises.'

[279] Coeckelbergh 2022, 75.

rulers are expected to be effective within this conception of politics—understood *prima facie* as a collective and/or institutionalized activity of finding the best solution for a given situation—then they would indeed need to be be omniscient in this world, having knowledge of particulars.

Thus, the views of the aforementioned Plato scholars, who interpret Plato's political *epistêmê* as pertaining to particular matters and his expertise as oriented towards optimal decision-making, reinforce the misconception that Plato understood politics solely through a rule-centric conception and make it impossible to prevent his vision of political *epistêmê* from being dismissed as an unrealistic illusion. In terms of the political, the political expertise acquired in virtue of the *epistêmê* lies not in the ability to make a particular true judgment in every individual case, but in the ability to transcend, that is, to question a given social order and to envision a radically new one. For this, political experts should reference not currently and positively valid goods, justice, or benefits, but rather the Good itself and other Forms, a view that aligns well with Plato's thesis that *epistêmê* is of the Forms.

Political particularists might reply that the best judgment made within a given situation would encompass all that is necessary for this purpose. Of course, the emergence of a political moment, in actuality, occurs specifically as a concrete action of political judgment within a given situation. Along with this, the appreciation of the particulars involved in the situation must be accompanied. However, in order to do justice to the innovative aspect of Plato's introduction of political *epistêmê* (contrary to Aristotle and Isocrates), an account based on Plato's thesis of object-based distinction between *epistêmê* and doxa should be provided. On the one hand, it needs to be explained how *epistêmê* of Forms—or of some general, unchanging and higher principles—can give rise to a genuinely political kind of knowledge. On the other hand, there must also be an account of why the philosopher, as the possessor of this *epistêmê*, deserves to be called a political expert, even if it is recognized that *epistêmê* cannot be maintained with respect to particulars, and that philosophers, like others, can make mistakes with regard to particulars. The discussions of political particularists among Plato scholars seem to lack such accounts;[280] instead, they

[280] In addressing the *Republic* in her recent monograph, Lane 2023 argues that Plato's remark that the philosopher-rulers, the supervisors of subordinate officers and those reigning in this sense, know the Form of the Good (Ch. 7: 213 ff.). Also, she emphasizes the *telos* of rule, i.e. the good of the ruled is the constitutive part of any kind of rule (Ch. 5). However, she seems to be less interested in the determination of the *telos* of

reinforce the opinion that Plato was unaware of the possibility of the political—emphasizing only politics as ruling or governing. Therefore, it makes his solution to the rule of knowledge vulnerable to attacks that deem it illusory. In this way, we can realize how crucial the first premise that Plato's *epistêmê* of the Forms is in the project of reading Plato in terms of the concept of the political. Only then can Plato's ideal ruler be reinterpreted not merely as an expert in rule but as one who is proficient in bringing about radical political transformations.

2.3.4. A "Modified" Traditional Interpretation of *Epistêmê-Doxa* Distinction

The political particularists who are supposed to solve the application problem failed to do so, only revealing a flawed understanding of politics and obscuring what is innovative in Plato's speaking of *political epistêmê*, which is an oxymoron for Aristotle, Isocrates, and democratic Athenians.[281] One can turn to the proponents of the traditional reading of the *epistêmê*-doxa distinction based on the kinds of objects each cognitive capacity or state pertains to and examine their solution to the application problem. This would be answered by looking into how the *epistêmê* of Forms relates to making true judgment on the good and the just in each particular situation. In response to the widespread worry that philosopher-rulers may be practically or politically incompetent—due to their lack of stable, infallible and certain knowledge (which Fine identifies as *epistêmê*) of particulars—one solution that has been proposed is that, by virtue of the *epistêmê* of the Forms, their cognition of sensibles is conditioned in such as way that it enables them to effectively deal with practical affairs. The consensus is that it is Plato's idea that *epistêmê* of Forms is indispensable for ensuring the truth of judgments regarding the sensible (true *doxa*). It is plausible that, if we consider Plato's metaphysics in the middle period in terms of the original-copy or image relation, the *epistêmê* of Forms "informs," "helps," and "guides" the *doxa* of the sensible, or "is used" for that. Thereby, the *doxa* or philosophers' opinions, are

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rule. While I deem her analysis of constitutional structure and its operation (e. g. safeguarding of rulers) in Plato's ideal city significant and agree with her point that 'the ways in which he presents the Good as operationalized in making political arguments do not always require a full account of the nature of content of that Good' (21-22), the general expectation of readers of Plato is to hear what he says about the determination.

[281] The oxymoron in a twofold sense: either the impossibility of political *epistêmê* (*Resp*. VI. 488b-489a, *Plt*. 299a-e), or the exceptional nature of the political *epistêmê*, distinct from other forms of expertise, due to its ubiquitous quality—meaning that it is not possessed solely by a select few (Plato assumes that it is the case in general for any expertise: see *Ap*. 25b, *Crito*. 47a-48a), but is accessible to all (*Ap*. 24e-25a, *Prot*. 319 ff. *Meno*. 92e ff. *Alc*. I. 110e-112d).

"privileged", "expert" or "authoritative". Similarly, Horn explains the relation between them in terms of *Ableitung*. In sum, *epistêmê* is required for expert cognition of the perceptible but is itself only of Forms.[282]

While I broadly agree with this position, the main contention still lies in its implicit acknowledgment of the philosopher-rulers' potential for errors that occur at the level of doxa, such as judging (*doxazein*) something bad as good or something unjust as just. This would be inevitable, since it happens due to the fluctuating nature of objects of *doxa*, which relies again on the inherent feature of the sensible world. It is a correct view in that it does not attribute worldly omniscience to the philosopher-rulers.[283] Yet, it seems regrettable that its proponents do not find another ground beyond the worldly omniscience or their having true *doxa* for the claim of philosopher-rulers to be experts in politics. It renders Plato's position in respect to political expertise and that of Aristotle and Isocrates ("there is no *epistêmê*, but only doxa for politics") undifferentiated, as well as leaves space for a developmentalist narrative that the *Statesman*, by creating the impression of finally amending the incomplete political expertise that left room for errors within the *Republic*.[284] However, since I have already argued that *epistêmê* is oriented to the Good itself—beyond the law—and constitutes an instance for using the law in the *Statesman* (see Section 2.2.4 above), I will not address this issue aside from now of how *epistêmê* in the *Statesman* relates at once both to Forms and to particular, or perceptible. Furthermore, I expound on how Plato's ideal rulers deserve to be called experts in politics without worldly omniscience, that is, how they do so even though they can make mistakes in their

[282] Fine 1990, 86: '... once one knows Forms, one can apply this knowledge to sensible so as to know them too; the philosopher's knowledge of Forms, for instance, helps him to know (although it is not, all by itself, sufficient for knowing) which laws ought to be enacted.' This is why she speaks of "*epistêmê* of particulars" (Cf. 1978, 136 ff). For the criticism that such an identification of *epistêmê* with "knowledge" is an anachronism, see Horn 2011, 292, Kahn 2013, 77, esp. n.41 and 85, n.54 and Moss 2021, 4-8, 22-26. For the solution to the application problem the proponents of traditional reading, Sedley 2007, 260-261 and Moss 2021, 123, 125-6 (the verb quoted is from her), for the *Ableitung*, see Horn 2011, 309-310. For the expressions applied to *doxa*, see Schwab 2016, 43: 'On my interpretation, although Socrates thinks that facts about perceptible are not possible objects of *epistêmê* because they do not follow from facts about natures, he nevertheless thinks that philosophers' opinions concerning perceptible are expert and, hence, authoritative.' He uses the term 'informed', and 77-8, which is quoted by Moss 2021, 129 n.33. For the critical comment on this view, see Peprah 2021, 129-135.

[283] Moss 2021, 123: '[W]hether we like it or not, there is clear evidence that even the philosopher-rulers lack the kind of completely stable, clear, precise grasp of the perceptible world of the kind that could qualify as *epistêmê*.' In note 21, she refers to Arruzza 2018, 115. Also, see Schwab 2016, 72 and 77-78.

[284] In fact, Moss 2021, 131 leaves the relationship between the political expertise of the *Statesman* and the *epistêmê* of the Republic unexplained, only mentioning that the notion of political expertise is developed 'in quite a different way' such that it can deal with 'changing affairs'.

particular judgment regarding the good and just in this actual, sensible world. Their political expertise acquired by virtue of the *epistêmê* consists of the ability to transcend, that is, to question a given social order and to envision a radically new one. As I have consistently maintained, my account relies on the distinction between politics as ruling and the political.

If politics is understood only as ruling or governing, there rises a twofold insufficiency of *epistêmê* for such activity.[285] Firstly, it requires philosopher-rulers to possess technical and cognitive competences beyond philosophical *epistêmê*. As mentioned above, Klosko thinks that rulers should be equipped with various branches of expertise for public affairs.[286] I argue that, while they are indispensable for philosopher-rulers *qua* actual rulers, possessing these qualities is not the most essential feature of philosopher-rulers'. According to the definition of the political mentioned above, what is genuinely political is not their ordinary ruling activities, but their proper ones, the questioning and envisioning concerning the Good or the Justice itself. To do this, philosophers with the *epistêmê* use the products of the expertises of subordinate producers and officers (in terms of the *Republic*, "auxiliaries") and, in this sense, rule over them. If we remain faithful to the meaning of the genuinely political, philosopher-rulers manifest themselves as experts in politics when they bring about a radical political change by referring to the Good itself in each subordinate field, such as by giving a radically new definition of "education" or "health", which will lead to a radical change in the conventional way of thinking of people and eventually of the whole society. (I will explore this in greater detail in Chapter 3 through the example of medicine). It helps us avoid the criticism that political experts must know everything relevant to politics. No, their expertise lies in their ability to use the subordinate relevant expertise.[287]

Secondly, according to Stephen O. Peprah (2021), in order for philosopher-rulers to make a true judgment in every situation, the *epistêmê* alone is not sufficient, but should be

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[285] The view that 'that by knowledge Plato means only knowledge of the Good (metaphysical *epistêmê*), this being a sufficient condition for good governance' is called "the sufficiency condition thesis" by Peprah 2021, 119. While he tries to reject this thesis, I am skeptical of his approach.

[286] Klosko 2006, 174 f. He also rejects what Peprah calls "the sufficiency condition thesis", but supplements many practical expertises, not the experience or the faculty of judgment as Peprah does.

[287] For the distinction between "domain experts" relevant to politics and general experts in politics, see Ober 2017, 144-145. While Ober acknowledges no existence of the latter, Plato would assert that the genuinely political expertise cannot be reduced to any subordinate, technocratic, ruling-relevant expertise, because it is of Forms.

accompanied by *phronêsis* and experience. However, I am skeptical of his argument,[288] because Peprah's interpretation results from his insufficient attention to the distinction between politics and the political, and therefore from his reduction of political expertise to the expertise of the mere ruling and governing. For ruling, philosopher-rulers must be capable of making a sound judgment for any given particular situation, and this can be described as an application of *epistêmê* to the actual circumstances. However, if one reads Plato, as Peprah does, assigning an independent status to practical wisdom, faculty of judgment, and experience as epistemic competences for judgment and attributing such capacities to his ideal rulers, then such a reading amounts to granting them again the "worldly omniscience," just as the particularist attempt to make *epistêmê* be of particulars does. It also overlooks the subversive role of *epistêmê* in challenging the existing order. If politics is reduced to merely the task of deriving applications from a definition or principle of certain values, the significance of *epistêmê*, or political expertise, as the ability to question the very notions of justice itself or the Good itself within the imperfections of reality and to bring about a radically new political change is diminished. This, too, parallels the way particularists reduce politics to the issue of making the best decisions for maintaining the stability of the existing order.

To clarify the distinction between the political and the ruling and between philosophers and rulers, let me discuss the epistemic status of the "rulers" and the ontological status of things they deal with. Insofar as politics means various ordinary political activities—such as producing law, rulings of judges, agreements, making speeches and persuasion, peace and war—that is, anything that claims to be just (see *Charm*. 170a10-b5), these are not exceptions to the things that are used by the possessor of the *epistêmê* of Justice itself (see Section 1.3.1. above). While philosophers inquire into and (provisionally) determine what Justice itself is, these political activities—particularly ruling, comprehended as making decisions and issuing orders to subjects—are the functions of officers or auxiliaries, who are *used* and *ruled* by philosopher-rulers in charge of dealing with practical affairs. It would not be incorrect to call all these activities politics as opposed to the political. This distinction will be further discussed in detail in Chapters 4 and 5. That is, while the philosophers *qua* philosophers have *epistêmê* due to their profound grasp of reality, such

[288] This is weakly supported by the text, because Plato, in Plato's terminology, *epistêmê* and *phronêsis* are used interchangeably, unlike in Aristotle (Moss 2021, 27, 33-4) and that the concept of judgment as we understand it is relatively modern.

as Justice itself or the Good itself, the rulers rule with *doxa* in their involvement with the sensible realm of things that may seem good or just. It is argued that the value of Plato's ideal rulers lies not in an infallible faculty of judgment but in their capacity for *epistêmê* that can transcend the fixed and already established order. Philosopher-rulers would make errors in relation to particular cases, but this is due to the inherent feature of this sensible world, in which they inevitably operate with *doxa qua* rulers, officers, and auxiliaries, not *qua* philosophers.[289] It is not because they are omniscient in worldly matters, but because they have capacity to question a given order and envisioning a new one, that Plato's ideal rulers deserve to be called *experts in the political*—and this only by virtue of their *epistêmê* of the Forms. The possibility of them making errors in this world does not require interpreting *epistêmê* as of particulars, nor does it necessitate introducing a cognitive competence equivalent to judgment in order to resolve the application problem.

2.3.5. The Nature of E*pistêmê*: The Grasp of Forms and Their Interrelations

The last question to be addressed is the nature of such *epistêmê* that enables its possessor to act genuinely politically. As has been stated, the *epistêmê* is of Forms in the sense that they really and fully are (F). Due to the ambiguity of such determination and its openness to interpretation, Moss considers various possibilities for understanding "what is" or "being" without committing to any single one, instead referring to them collectively as 'ontologically superior'[290] and interprets on this basis *epistêmê* as 'a deep grasp of ultimate reality.'[291]

As the primary constituents of this reality, there are Forms, by assuming and recognizing, which we can answer the question of what is Good and what is Justice.[292] However, *epistêmê*, both as a cognitive capacity and as a cognitive state, has two aspects in relation

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[289] My argument that the persona of the philosopher and the persona of the ruler are distinct within a single philosopher-ruler becomes clearer when examined through the question of whether the guardian in *The Republic* is both a legislator and a follower of the laws. For the reign of philosopher-rulers under constitutional limitation, see Lane's discussion of rotation of holding office in 2023, 239-243 and for their obedience to law, see Ellison 2019, 261. When Ellison claims that 'the philosopher-kings ... need no law to do their own work ... - the ruling the city and shaping the citizens to resemble the divine image', this ruling beyond the law can be understood as bringing about a political change.

[290] Moss 2021, 86 ff.

[291] Moss 2021, 88 and 136.

[292] For his own terms such as '*atomische Epistemologie*', '*die eidetische Einheit*', '*d[ie] Einfachheit und Unteilbarkeit*' and '*teillose Einheiten*', see Horn and Rapp 2005, 25-6 and 2011, 233-240.

to the Forms—not only is it a *static*, finished state, but also a *dynamic*, ongoing state.[293] The reason why the endeavor to define a Form inevitably gives rise to ongoing inquiry can be explained in various ways. Primarily, it is because Forms are transcendent entities whose existence can be acknowledged but which eventually elude full discursive articulation, enabling them to be captured only provisionally and imperfectly.[294] I take it to be a metaphysical, epistemological version of an idea that Plato inherited from Socrates's religious conviction—that no human being can acquire perfect *epistêmê* regarding the Good or the Just (see *Ap*. 23a, 42a; *Phd*. 65a-67e; *Parm*. 134c-e). Furthermore, this offers a metaphysical and ontological explanation for why it is hardly expected of human beings to become experts with regard to the Good or the Just, unlike in medicine or mathematics, where one can become an expert in which the measurement in material things is already agreed on (*Euthyph*. 7b-d; *Alc*. I. 111b-c, 112a-d; *Phdr*. 263a-c; *Tht*. 171d-172b).

However, this point does not imply that Plato advocates an intuitionism as a way of understanding the nature of *epistêmê*.[295] Rather, the grasp of Forms—exercising the *epistêmê* as a capacity and entering such a state—is not a matter of immediate or intuitive insight but a gradual unfolding that demands intellectual engagement and reasoning. The progression toward the cognition of X itself is initiated from the situation we face in the realm of *doxa*, in which conflicting judgments can coexist, as described in the Finger passage (*Resp*. VII. 523a ff.). In geometry, the incommensurability of two lengths necessitates contemplation of the nature of number and the unit itself (see p. 51-52 in

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[293] When Moss describes *epistêmê* and *doxa* as 'cognitive contact with what Is and cognitive contact with what seems' (2021, 10), I believe that the term "contact" can include both knowing and inquiring. This is corroborated by the passages where *epistêmê* is described with such expressions in the *Republic* as "ζητεῖν... πορευομένη [ἐξ] ... ἐπὶ ... " (VI. 510b5-7), "ἐπιβάσεις καὶ ὁρμάς"(511b5), "πορεύεται ἐπὶ ..."(533c9). In the *Statesman*, too, one who has *epistêmê* is described as "inquiring" (299b4-5: ἀλήθειαν ... ζητῶν, 299e8: ζητεῖν) which is prohibited by law. For the relation between knowledge and inquiry, Politis' reading (2021) is convincing, saying that 'Plato's account of knowledge is dependent on the process of enquiry through which it comes about' (2021, 69) and that 'What Plato's invocation of reasoning, as opposed to sense-perception, provides is, in the first instance at any rate, an account of what is involved in searching for the essences and Forms of certain qualities, not an account of what is involved in positively getting to know and knowing them' (2021, 88).

[294] For Socrates' reluctance regarding the description of the Form of the Good and only his employment of a metaphorical expression, see *Resp*. VI. 506d ff., VII 517a-c. For the analogy between the impossibility or difficulty of directly gazing at the sun and that of fully comprehending the Forms see VII. 515e-516b.

[295] Horn and Rapp 2005, 16 for the traditional intuitionist interpretation of Plato's epistemology: '*Platon habe als das wahre Wissen einen nicht-diskursiven, nicht-methodischen, spontanen und vorpropositionalen epistemischen Zustand der unmittelbaren Erfassung intelligibler Objekte angesehen. ... Platon differenzierte innerhalb der philosophischen Ideenerkenntnis ziwschen ... dem methodisch-diskursiven Erkennen und dem spontan-intuitiven Erfassen*.'

Section 1.3.2 above). Likewise, when more than two opposing laws seem equally just, previously unjust circumstances may be perceived as just. This presence of imperfect judgments within *doxa*—the cognition of particular things—necessitates an elevated form of cognition of *epistêmê*, corresponding to the political moment where one is forced to question the established order to determine what is Just and Good. Once the grasp of the Good or of Justice itself is attained, it transforms and reconfigures one's *doxa*, synthesizing previously conflicting judgments on justice or the good into a coherent whole. This transformation allows one to act politically, making a judgment for a radical political change. This may be regarded as impossible, unintelligible, and paradoxical, but the person who has undergone the transformation believes it to be true and just, because what appears just to others is no longer perceived as just by the same individual, and vice versa. According to Plato, what defines political expertise is not an intuitive insight or mystical encounter or touch, but methodical and discursive reasoning with the ability to detect such conflicts and rise to the contemplation of Justice or the Good through *epistêmê* and justify one's judgment for a political change about it. This methodical-discursive approach to grasping Forms will be endlessly repeated as an inquiry into Forms, due to the human limitation that prevents us from ever fully attaining such knowledge.

On the other hand, the ultimate reality is not composed of many isolated entities of Forms, but rather is constituted by an interconnected network of Forms as a whole.[296] This idea is tenuously implied in the *Republic* through the phrase of 'moving on from Forms to Forms, and ending in Forms' (VI. 511c2. Cf. *Cratyl.* 438e: 'learning them [things that are] through one another ... through themselves', 439a: 'learn about them through themselves') and also suggested in the *Parmenides* 146b3-5.[297] It is in the *Sophist* that it is explicitly stated with a terminology of *koinônia* and (*syn*)*meixis* (252e-254b) to illustrate the interrelation and mutual participation of Forms. This concept is further developed in the *Timaeus*, where the Forms are portrayed as consisting of a unified system—a living, organic whole.[298] Therefore, it can be inferred that the *epistêmê* is the dialectic inquiry into and grasp not only of individual Forms, but also their interrelations (253c7-8: τὴν τῶν ἐλευθέρων

[296] When Schwab 2016, 57-58 reduces the *epistêmê* to knowing the facts about the Forms in his analysis, he seems to me to construe it as comprising a set of propositions that articulate the interrelation of Forms.
[297] Walter 2023 for the argument that the notions of "part", "whole", "same" and "different" 'are connected to each other, namely, by definitional dependencies' (426). See also 430 for his conclusion.
[298] See Kahn 2013, 184-5: 'What is new [Timaeus' opening statement of ontological dualism] is not a different, more limited set of Forms but the conception of this set as a unified organism, as Living Being.'

ἐμπεσόντες ἐπιστήμην, d2-3: τῆς διαλεκτικῆς ... ἐπιστήμης). This network, or a *kosmos* of Forms is exemplified in Plato's own remark by several representative metaphysical forms, but it can also be assumed that practical forms, such as justice, goodness, benefit, beauty (excellence), and their relationships, similarly constitute such a network. As evidence for this claim, I would like to invoke Socrates' proclamation of five principles of justice in the *Crito (49b-c, e),* before Socrates fudges the speech of the personified laws of Athens.[299] Likewise, in the *Greater Hippias*, starting from 293e11 ff., Socrates questions whether attributes such as appropriateness, usefulness, benefit, and goodness can be regarded as beauty itself.[300]

The idea that the nature of *epistêmê* includes the grasp of the interconnected system of Forms makes us compare the content of *epistêmê* and the "Constitution." Just as *epistêmê* is here a capacity and a cognitive state both for knowing and inquiring of Forms and their network, likewise in a constitution, each abstract concept of value is defined, and the relation between them is determined and hierarchically ordered. Reframing a constitution by reinterpreting and redefining its content corresponds to the stage of a political moment between questioning a given existing order and making a judgment that will bring about a radical political change. If we accept this conception of *epistêmê* as a constitution and hold the premise that *epistêmê* is of Forms, it can resolve the following difficulties that lead Plato's scholars to assume that *epistêmê* must concern particulars in order to be relevant to politics and those that lead his critics to assume that it cannot, in itself, exist:[301]

(1) The evidence Dahl invokes to dispute the existence of political knowledge, the necessary trade-off between conflicting values, is explained by the discrepancy between the constitution as a set of normative principles and reality. It is true that a constitution, which consists of concordant and integrative principles, cannot be fully realized, and we often encounter situations that require trade-offs between values. Often, we also observe that previous definitions are so outdated that they no longer apply to an unprecedented case,

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[299] I find the similar idea in Fisher 2022, 720: I think that 'philosophical principles, such as 'the just is what is fair' or 'the good is what is beneficial'' articulate the interrelation of Forms.

[300] Here, Socrates reports the conversation with an anonymous visitor that he begins to suggest that merely answering the question of what beauty is through examples is unpromising, and that it should now be understood in relation to more abstract values.

[301] It is in Plato's epistemology striking and '*irritierend*' that '*Erklärungsbedürftig ist für Platon nicht so sehr, wie ein Erkenntnisanspruch legitimiert werden kann, sondern wie es umgekehrt zu Irrtümern, Verwechslungen, Sinnestäuschungen oder Fehleinschätzungen kommen kann*.' (Horn refers to *Tht*. 188c-189c and *Soph*. 237e ff.)

such as antagonism or disruption, which theorists focus on, stressing the dissociative moment of the political. But this does not in any manner imply that the constitution is meaningless and its study pointless. In fact, it offers the basis for its reform. Analogically, this attempt to reform can be understood as what philosopher-rulers conduct with their *epistêmê*.

(2) A second issue is related to the fallibility of rulers, even when guided by a constitution—understood here as the outcome of previous improvements. To comprehend this, we can offer a theological-anthropological explanation: ontologically, human beings might be unable to completely grasp the specifications of the Constitution based on the Good and Justice itself, tenets which are universally valid for any human society. If the Constitution is considered as a network of Forms, the aetiological explanation for the imperfection of ideal rulers is illustrated in the *Phaedrus*' myth, where the soul, like a charioteer, joins in the march of the gods and observes 'things outside the heaven' but 'some things it sees, and others not' (247c-248a). Any actual constitution will most probably lack awareness of emergent values and their relationship to the current ones. However, the possibility of mistakes in judgment does not dismiss the meaning of the Constitution, its significance, and the necessity of knowledge on the matter. Rather, this very possibility serves as empirical evidence and practical impetus for the potential improvement of the Constitution. Therefore, even while assuming the *epistêmê* of Forms, we may explain the possibility of making mistakes or its imperfect application without undermining its ontology-related epistemic status.

In this way, one could understand how the first premise that the *epistêmê* is of Forms can not only be compatible with my attempt to read Plato in terms of the political – since the assumption of truth and knowledge of it exclusively accessible to the few is one obstacle for this project (see Sections 1.2.2. and 1.3.2.) – but instead it should be necessarily determined as a crucial premise and contribute to the explanation of the possibility of the political moment for a radical political change.

2.4. Recapitulation and an Overview of the Following Chapters

So much for the outline of my interpretation of Plato's political philosophy. One is a unitarian thesis: namely, that Plato did not lose sight of his vision of the rule of political *epistêmê* even in the context of consideration of the positive value of the rule of law. In Section 2.2, it has been revealed that the existence and role of political *epistêmê* is implied

as the *epistêmê* for using law and therefore of Forms. This can be observed if we carefully read the passage in which the rule of *good* law is put forward as the second-best. It is not true that the preference between the rule of law and the rule of *epistêmê* has been reversed in Plato's later political dialogues. The other, more crucial premise I have defended is that the political *epistêmê* is of Forms. In Section 2.3, I have demonstrated that those interpretations of asserting the opposite thesis to this premise—the thesis of *epistêmê* of particulars—lead to a misrepresentation of Plato that he allegedly expects his ideal rulers to be worldly omniscient and thereby makes his thought vulnerable to the criticisms of him based on a "rule-centric" conception of politics, which corresponds to what has been challenged and overcome by the theorists of the political. *epistêmê* must be of Forms and their relations if it plays a role in a political moment in which a given existing order is questioned, a new one is envisioned, and a radical political change takes place in two distinct moments.

The next few paragraphs will outline arguments to be discussed in subsequent chapters. The remainder of this dissertation is, broadly, structured to present arguments that substantiate and elaborate upon those two premises.

Chapter 3 will advance the argument for a continuity between the *Charmides*, *Euthydemus*, and *Republic* III, along with a part of *Laches,* through intertextual analysis. In doing so, it will demonstrate that two visions of political *epistêmê*—regarded by Schofield as divergent: the architectonic *epistêmê* for *ruling* over other experts and *using* their products *(*examined in the *Charmides* and *Euthydemus*) and the philosophical *epistêmê* of the Forms (as explored in the *Laches* and *Republic)*—converge effectively as a single, unified *epistêmê*. This turns out to be the case in the "Asclepius Passage" (*Resp*. III. 406a-408c), which provides a compelling example of how the *epistêmê* about good and bad, which is ultimately grounded in the *epistêmê* of the Good itself, operates as the *epistêmê* of *using* and *ruling* in relation to subordinate forms of expertise, in this case, medicine. Here, Asclepius is represented as possessing the two kinds of expertise and knowing how to use and rule the first-hand, productive expertise. It can be seen how his knowledge functions as an epistemic basis for legislation on medicine in Plato's ideal city and how the questioning of what is truly (medical) good leads to a radical political change taking place in medicine as a site for the political. In the last section of the chapter (3.5), I examine the role of the *epistêmê* of the Good itself within a society. The issue explored is how philosopher-rulers, although not as worldly omniscient as technocratic rulers, are

nevertheless able to generate, in a civil sense, the conditions for well-functioning (economic) cooperation by inquiring into and striving to understand the Good itself.

Chapter 4 will compare the disciplines referred to as *dianoia* in the *Republic* VI-VII with the three "precious" expertises—oratory, generalship, and judgeship—discussed in *Statesman* 303c-305e. I will apply the six features that Plato identifies to characterize the cognitive state or capacity called *dianoia* to these three expertises distinguished from political *epistêmê* in the final phase. To put it succinctly, their expertises produce particular just things according to the established laws that predetermine what constitutes justice in an existing society This is analogous to how Plato himself characterizes *dianoia* as a cognitive state that accepts principles as hypotheses and draws a particular conclusion for an individual case. The distinction between the expertise of civic practitioners and that of a political expert in Plato's sense is significant for my project in three ways. First, it enables a more systematic understanding of how politics and the political can be differentiated in Plato's own terms. The three precious expertises and their experts are political in a sense, but not in the way that political *epistêmê* and the true statesman are genuinely political. Furthermore, having established the parallel between *dianoia* and the three precious expertises, it becomes evident that the political *epistêmê* in the *Statesman* is of the Forms, since the parallel of the lower pair implies the parallel of the higher pair—*noêsis* and the political *epistêmê*—and *noêsis* is of the Forms. Lastly, it helps explain why and how Plato explains radical political change. The three precious expertises are exercised entirely within a given constitutional framework. However, when political *epistêmê* functions well in a society, the just actions its possessor seeks either to persuade others of or to themselves put into effect are beyond such a limitation. It is in this sense that the change taking place at that moment can be called radical.

Chapter 5 further reinforces the first premise that the political *epistêmê* is of Forms even in the context of the *Statesman*. It amounts to challenging one version of political particularism, namely, Melissa Lane's reading of the Statesman, according to which Plato conceives of political expertise as consisting in the knowledge of the *kairos*, the good in time. Accordingly, she portrays the true statesman in this dialogue as a direct commander who issues orders about what to do here and now, which is the superior form of rule over the rule of rigid and static law. In opposition to her reading, I argue, referring to the *Phaedrus* and the *Laws* Book IX, that the political *epistêmê*, if its possessor is to make the best judgment on the good and justice in a given situation, must consist in knowledge of

Forms or the equivalent general principles (Section 5.1). If the argument that the objects of the political *epistêmê* are ontologically superior holds, then it follows that ruling through practical affairs is, by their ontological status, inherently imperfect and deficient, meaning that any political judgment cannot be absolutely correct. Building on this, I further argue, considering the limitations on rulers' activity, that the true statesman cannot be a direct commander but rather a lawgiver producing ontologically inferior yet genealogically good laws. I expect that this alternative reading of mine can help dispel the charge brought against Plato—that in the *Statesman*, he envisions a technocratic, worldly omniscient ruler (Section 5.2). Thereafter, in Section 5.3, I explore various scenarios in which the political *epistêmê* might manifest within a society. Both ideal and non-ideal versions pertaining to these scenarios have already been discussed in Section 2.2.3. Finally, in Section 5.4, I discuss how political *epistêmê*, in any form, brings about a radical change in a particular sphere of society. The idea that everything can be political is understood here as suggesting that every sphere of society—be it art, religion, myth, or technology—can be a site for radical change. To ground my argument textually, I analyze several passages in the *Laws* where Plato uses the term *politikon* in a somewhat unusual manner. If this point is well established, it resonates with contemporary efforts to uncover the political significance of various elements of society, as seen in ideas like "political art" and "political technology."

Chapter 3
The Identification of the *Epistêmê* for *Using*, for *Ruling*, and of the Good itself: *Charmides*, *Euthydemus*, *Laches*, and Asclepius Passage in the *Republic*

3.1. Two Visions of Political *Epistêmê*

As already discussed in Section 2.3.2, Malcolm Schofield finds in Plato's works two visions of political *epistêmê*. Schofield contends that Plato pictures two kinds of *epistêmê* when he envisions a rule of knowledge as his political ideal. One is the architectonic form of knowledge that rules and uses other subordinate expertises and recognizes what to do in that situation. The other is knowledge of, and the ability to inquire into, Forms, which Schofield describes as metaphysical, theoretical, moral, and philosophical, construing it as contemplation, study, understanding, wisdom, and knowledge.[302] The former vision of political *epistêmê*, in other words, the 'technocratic' vision of 'scientific governor' or 'political manager'[303] is explored representatively in the *Charmides*, the *Euthydemus*, and the *Statesman*. In these dialogues, the nature of political *epistêmê* is considered to be architectonic in two senses: first, it is directive—'achieving its objectives principally by ruling or controlling subordinate forms of expertise;'[304] second, it is 'the knowledge

[302] For his use of terms to describe *epistêmê* in the *Republic*, see 140 and 159 ('metaphysical'); 143 and 161 ('theoretical'); 146, 150, 159, and 185 ('moral'); 156, 157, 160, and 179 ('philosophical')..
[303] See Schofield 2006, 138-140 and 144-146; for its contrast with the ideal of the *Republic*, see 164 and 179-180.
[304] See Schofield 2006, 145, referring to *Plt*. 259e-260c.

required for using' that 'make[s] us happy by its architectonic use of subordinate skills.'[305] As argued in previous sections (2.3.2 and 2.3.3), it is common understanding among Plato's scholars that knowledge of this nature—Schofield does not consider *epistêmê* and knowledge distinct from each other in the epistemological sense, unlike scholars who are interested in its epistemological significance—must be of particulars if it is to be practical and directive (*epitactic*).[306] As long as the rule of knowledge in the *Republic* is understood as the rule of *epistêmê* of Forms, it is contrasted with such an architectonic structure of political knowledge. In the *Republic,* 'Socrates does not call it [the philosophical, moral, metaphysical, and theoretical knowledge in the *Republic*] architectonic', nor does it have 'any intrinsically practical orientation like the architectonic political knowledge'.[307]

Not following developmentalism or unitarianism, Scholfield argues that there is a tension between these two visions and that Plato explores the possibility of realizing both of them in separate dialogues. As for the first vision, it is in the *Charmides*, *Euthydemus,* and *Statesman* where Plato's 'preoccupation', 'interest in the prospects for architectonic political knowledge', 'fascination with the idea of architectonic political knowledge'[308] can be observed. However, it is striking for Schofield that Plato presents this vision only through the mouth of characters other than Socrates, as if the author was trying to distance themselves from such an idea. Based on this, he concludes that Plato is skeptical of the idea that 'the application of architectonic political knowledge is the ideal recipe for producing a flourishing human society.'[309] Indeed, the architectonic knowledge in the *Charmides* is presented as distinct from the knowledge of good and bad (174d4-6). Moreover, in the *Republic*, where the rule of knowledge is most ardently advocated, the *epistêmê* in charge is presented as being of Forms, not architectonic or practical.

The thesis presented in this chapter is that throughout Plato's works, there is only a single and consistent *epistêmê*—the *epistêmê* of the Good itself (and Forms)—that Plato requires for his ideal rulers as political *epistêmê*.[310] Accordingly, I align with the unitarian

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[305] See Schofield 2006, 151.

[306] For 'directive' or 'directing', see Schofield 170-171. For 'ruling and controlling', see 145. Lane 2021 prefers the term '*epitactic*', the transliterated form of ἐπιτακτική, pointing to Plato's interchangeable use of terms for ἐπιτακτική and ἐπιστατική in Lane 2021, 202 n.24.

[307] Schofield 2006, 161.

[308] See Schofield 2006, 144, 164 and 182.

[309] Schofield 2006, 173 ff.

[310] I will use the term "*epistêmê,*" because I argued that the meaning of *epistêmê* is only partially captured by the term "knowledge." I will also use "knowledge" when engaging directly with scholars writing in English.

interpretation that Charles Kahn (1996) developed, which contended that the introduction of the knowledge of the Good in the *Republic* is anticipated by the remarks of the '*epistêmê* about good and bad' (*Charm*. 174c, d, e; *Lach*. 199c6-7; *Prot*. 313e; *Crito*. 48b6) in the early dialogues,[311] as well as it serves as the ultimate solution to the *aporia* left undetermined in the *Euthydemus* about the nature of the political *epistêmê*.[312]

To support this thesis, I begin with the *Charmides, where* Schofield also finds two divergent visions in Plato's works. Since temperance, defined as the *epistêmê* of *epistêmê* in the *Charmides,* is essential for a well-functioning economic cooperative system based on division of labor and specialization, the *epistêmê* of *epistêmê* is hypothetically presented as a proper political *epistêmê,* against which the *epistêmê* about good and bad is juxtaposed as its rival. The next section (3.2) will compare the *Charmides* and the *Republic* in order to show how the Kallipolis and the *Charmides* are both temperate cities in the same sense and how the *epistêmê* of the Good itself can operate as the political *epistêmê* that creates such a temperate city. The possibility of the *epistêmê* of *epistêmê* being rejected in the *Charmides* confirms a related argument: that the *epistêmê* of *epistêmê,* as a form of knowledge of the *epistêmê* of particulars enabling its possessor to know every necessary action that needs to be taken in any given situation, leads to the doctrine of the "worldly omniscient" ruler (see Sections 2.3.1-2.3.2 above).

That Schofield's claim does not reflect Plato's own view will become clearer as we analyze the *Euthydemus, Laches,* and the "Asclepius Passage" in the *Republic* (III. 405c7-408c5). These texts will show that the political *epistêmê* in the *Euthydemus* for *using* and *ruling* (Section 3.3.1), the *epistêmê* about good and bad in the *Laches* (Section 3.3.2), and the *epistêmê* of the Good itself are, in effect, intended by Plato to be one and the same *epistêmê*. The Asclepius Passage, discussed in Section 3.4, synthesizes these three aspects into the ideal figure of Asclepius, who most likely has the *epistêmê* of the Good itself and

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[311] Kahn 1996, 103-104 points to the significance of the *Crito* as a dialogue that is positive about expertise and the expert in right and wrong, even though it explicitly employs the terms "ἐπιστήμων" and "ἐπιστήμη." The *Meno* and the *Gorgias* do not specify the *epistêmê* Plato is concerned with, but are, in effect, intended to show the possibility of *epistêmê* about good and bad in general, not conditional good or bad.

[312] For what he calls the "ingressive interpretation" of Plato, according to which the relation between the earlier Socratic dialogues and the *Republic* is described as proleptic (not necessarily in a chronological sense), see Kahn 1996, 39-42, 48, and 59-65. For references to resolving the aporias of the *Euthydemus* through the *Republic*, see Kahn 1996, 208-209, and 324-325. Since in the *Euthydemus*, πολιτικὴ τέχνη, πολιτικὴ ἐπιστήμη, and βασιλικὴ τέχνη are used virtually interchangeably, I will standardize the terminology in this text to political *epistêmê*.

uses his medical *epistêmê* (ἰατρικῇ χρῆσθαι) to understand whom to cure and whom to let die. This evaluation, as mentioned in the *Laches*, is possible because of the *epistêmê* of good and bad. This knowledge is what makes Asclepius be called a "statesman" (ὁ πολιτικός). Gradually, it will become clear that there is no real divergence or tension between two visions of political *epistêmê* that Schofield misidentifies in Plato.

3.2. The *Charmides* and Several Ways of Political *Epistêmê* being Available and Exercised

The dialogue *Charmides* is centered on the definition of temperance (σωφροσύνη)**.** It is, of course, clear that temperance is good and beneficial (159d8, 160b8-9, e6-10, 169b4-5, 175a9-b2). Through a multi-layered dialectical process, the interlocutors arrive at a provisional definition: the *epistêmê of epistêmê* (166e5-7). Two objections are immediately raised by Socrates: first, such reflexivity in *epistêmê*, as in all other cases, seems impossible (167c-169c); second, even assuming that it would exist in the case of temperance (169d3), it appears that having *epistêmê* of *epistêmê* (and of its absence) is not so beneficial, unless its possessor has a first-hand *epistêmê* of a particular domain. In the case of a doctor, Socrates contends that someone who is temperate but has no *epistêmê* of medicine is not capable of examining other doctors on their expertise in medicine. Only a *temperate doctor* can do this (171c). But again, under the assumption that 'the temperate man knew what he knew and what he did not know (...) and were able to investigate another man who was in the same situation' (171d2-5), Socrates considers that such knowledge might be beneficial by envisaging the picture of an ideally governed community in his dream (171d-173d).

According to the description of the unrealistic ideal city, a ruler with *epistêmê* of *epistêmê* does things on his own in those fields in wich he has *epistêmê*. In areas When it comes to another field he knows nothing about, he entrusts things to an expert in the field in question. But the preceding argument highlights that, for a ruler to rightly entrust things to an expert, he must know particulars about the field in question, that is, he must be able to judge 'if what he [each expert] says is truly spoken and what he does is correctly done' (171b), which is impossible without the *epistêmê* of that field (in this sense, this state is 'impossible' or 'insecure').[313] However, Socrates goes on further arguing that, even

[313] Respectively, Kahn 1996, 204: 'So the political situation just described is impossible'; Schofield 2006, 148: '(A) [the possibility of an architectonic form of knowledge which can have at its command a whole range of

supposing that such a temperate and omniscient ruler exists, his achievement of governing his city 'free from error' (ἁμαρτίας ἐξῃρημένης: 171e7-172a1) and 'scientifically ' (ἐπιστημόνως: 173d1, 3, 6, 8, e7, 9) is not so great, because the good of every first-order *epistêmê* (health, safety at sea, money, victory in a war, and so on) falls short of bringing about happiness (173e6-174c2). Socrates concludes that what we need is rather the *epistêmê* about good and bad (174c2-3 and d5-6).

One may now ask a question: which of the two deserves to be called the political *epistêmê*, the *epistêmê* of *epistêmê*, or the *epistêmê* about good and bad? Schofield draws our attention to the dramatic setting of the *Charmides*, where it is not Socrates but Critias—a man determined to become a political leader, who puts forward the vision of political *epistêmê* as the *epistêmê* of *epistêmê*. It is also in this setting that Socrates investigates, but holds off passing a judgment on, 'the possibility that measured judgment' (Schofield's translation for *sôphrosynê*) 'is an architectonic form of knowledge, which in controlling the administration of household and city constitutes a great good'.[314] From this, Schofield concludes that the *Charmides* 'leaves us not just with a tension between the rival claims of the architectonic knowledge it explores and moral knowledge, but with a bare, unelaborated conclusion as to what matters most.'[315] According to his reading, the *epistêmê* of *epistêmê*, which is adequate to being political *epistêmê*, turns out to be impossible, while the political role or function of the *epistêmê* of good and bad is unclear.

However, there are also some strong reasons to be tempted to resist his reading. Before anything else, the secondary literature points out that the dialogue and its whole context are not designed to deny, but rather to intimate the possibility of *epistêmê* of *epistêmê*, or self-knowledge.[316] Moreover, Kahn makes it clear that the exploration of *epistêmê of epistêmê* stems from Plato's motivation to justify Socrates' philosophical activity and to provide an epistemic ground for it, thereby suggesting that, despite its aporetic end, this

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subordinate bodies of knowledge and expertise] is insecure.'

[314] Schofield 2006, 147. On the status of *epistêmê* of *epistêmê* or self-knowledge as political *epistêmê*, see Tsouna 2022, 26-27: '[T]he point to retain at present is that, unlike Socratic self-knowledge, Critianic self-knowledge as 'science of science' is intended to apply, first and foremost, to the public sphere and points to a technocratic ideal of political governance.' For Plato's choice of the ambitious Critias as the protagonist of this dialogue, see Tsouna 2022, 47.

[315] Schofield 2006, 150.

[316] On the possibility of the temperance defined as *epistêmê* of *epistêmê*, see Woolf 2023, 178, 185-6, and 207, and the requotation from Schmid 1998, ix in Tsouna 2022, 19-20. 'We cannot take the refutation of a definition at its face-value.'

dialogue should not be read as simply dismissing *epistêmê of epistêmê*.[317] Setting aside a meticulous and subtle reading of the dialogue itself for now, I aim to seek somewhere else the reason why Critias' definition of temperance as *epistêmê of epistêmê* is sustained. A good place to begin is with the description of the ideal city in *Charmides* 171d-172a, which brings to mind the Kallipolis of the *Republic*—the dialogue in which, according to Schofield, not the architectonic but moral or theoretical *epistêmê* is the core idea of focus. The fact that, in both cities, citizens do their own works suggests that the rule of the *epistêmê* of *epistêmê* in the *Charmides*, in a way, is realized also in the ideal city envisioned in the *Republic. This observation supports* the claim that the unsettled *aporia* in the *Charmides* regarding the definition of temperance as *epistêmê* of *epistêmê* might be an instance of Socratic irony.

Julia Annas has already proposed an intertextual reading of the *Charmides* and the *Republic*.[318] Of course, at first glance, the temperance attributed to the citizens of the *Kallipolis* may not seem identical to the *epistêmê* of *epistêmê* described in the *Charmides*. However, a closer examination reveals that the two can be understood as complementary or even converging concepts. In the *Republic*, temperance is labelled as one of the cardinal virtues of the city at the outset (IV. 427e9-10). A more detailed inquiry into what this virtue is begins at IV. 430d5 on the basis of the assumption that there are two parts in a city and in a person—the better and the worse. The common understanding of temperance as self-control or a kind of order becomes intelligible when we accept the following argument: that the better desires may or may not rule over the worse. In terms of politics, the rule of the better over the worse is described as a situation where citizens of the city have come to an agreement on who should rule. In this sense, the final definition of temperance is presented as *homonoia* about who should rule and be ruled (IV. 432a6-b1). This *civic* temperance rests on the temperate citizens in the individual sense, as articulated in terms of the well-established order between the three parts of the soul (IV. 443d-e).

It seems plausible that the discussion of temperance in the *Republic* is a specification or application of the *epistêmê of epistêmê* from the *Charmides*, with a particular focus on political *epistêmê*. The temperate behavior of the citizens in the fictive ideal city of the

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[317] Kahn 1996, 198 ff. concludes that the purpose of the *Charmides* is to justify the Socratic philosophical examination by means of *epistêmê* of *epistêmê*, implying that the first-order *epistêmê* to be tested concerns what is good and bad.
[318] Annas 1981, 115 ff.

Charmides, where everyone, by virtue of one's own self-knowledge or under the temperate rule, does only what he knows and does not dare to do what he does not know, applies to political *epistêmê* as well. In the Kallipolis, the ordinary citizens, in addition to knowing that they are capable in their own respective expertises, also concede that they lack political *epistêmê*. Therefore, "doing one's work" in the ideal society primarily means that the ordinary citizens do not get involved in politics, knowing they have no political expertise. For the *Republic* as a dialogue, given its actual significance, the greater problem is not the interchange of productive occupations but the encroachment and interference between the classes (IV. 434a-b). It is the latter sense of self-knowledge—the knowledge that they lack political *epistêmê*—that holds more significance.

However, to examine whether someone has political *epistêmê* or not is possible only for the possessor of the political *epistêmê*—the *epistêmê* of the Good itself. As mentioned in the *Charmides*, without a primary, first-order expertise, *epistêmê* of *epistêmê* is worthless. If we assume the "highly ideal condition" where everyone possesses the *epistêmê* of the Good itself, there would be no need for the rule of someone over another: an evocation of Rousseau's description of democracy as a constitution suitable for gods (see Section 5.3.2).[319] Under the still ideal condition mentioned in the *Republic* (see Section 2.2.3 for ideal and non-ideal conditions and Section 5.3.3 below), the philosopher-rulers have the *epistêmê* of the Good itself and can examine others (in the last stage of the selection of the rulers in *Resp*. III. 412c-414a and VII. 537b-d, 539e-540a).[320] For those, whom the philosopher-rulers judge to lack political *epistêmê*, they provide laws to be followed and education that leads to "doing one's work", thus relinquishing the participation in politics and adhering to the law to appear good (δοκεῖν), even though they have no understanding of the Good itself.

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[319] Cress' translation of *On the Social Contract* 2011, 200 (III. Ch. 4): 'Were there a people of gods, it would govern itself democratically. So perfect a government is not suited to men.'

[320] Regarding the relationship between the *epistêmê* of the Good itself and the *epistêmê* for examining others, that is, the *epistêmê* of *epistêmê* of the Good itself, the text tells us that the examination of whether one has an expertise or not involves letting the examinee do or say what must be done or said if he is truly an expert. Thus, one could say that *epistêmê* of *epistêmê* is reduced to the *epistêmê* of something. Hence, I agree with Tsouna 2022, 255: 'temperance or the 'science of science' plays a secondary and parasitic role with regard to the first-order science. ... Socrates' idea seems to be this. If temperance is merely discriminatory knowledge, it cannot provide a substantive domain of application for learning, perceiving, or judging. Rather, these capacities and the corresponding activities need to be situated within the realm of some substantive, first-order expertise. ... And he [a temperate doctor] can test other people's claim to medical expertise in a firmer and surer manner than other doctors, because he also has temperance.'

Accordingly, I argue that the definition of temperance in the *Charmides* as *epistêmê* of *epistêmê* holds, but in two different ways according to whether it is accompanied by the *epistêmê* of the Good: (1) philosopher-rulers have *epistêmê* of *epistêmê,* i.e. the *epistêmê* of the Good and are thereby qualified to evaluate whether others have it or not. In this way, they are genuinely temperate. (2) On the other hand, ordinary citizens might have the *epistêmê* of *epistêmê* in the sense that they know that they have no *epistêmê* of the Good itself and therefore do not undertake any tasks they have no knowledge of. Instead, they follow, out of trust, the law their rulers have established. More fundamentally, they have been conditioned in such a way that the obedience of the law appears good to them. As many scholars have pointed out, their temperance is not entirely intellectual but only behavioral, and in this sense, not a genuine virtue.[321] Indeed, Plato did not expect all citizens living in his ideal city to possess the *epistêmê* of the Good itself to the same extent as the philosophers. However, true *doxa*—the cognitive state in which a really good (sensible) thing appears to be good—is enough to ensure they can live a successful life (*Resp*. IV. 429b9-c1, c8; 430b4, 442c2).

On the other hand, the role of those who possess the *epistêmê* of the Good itself extends beyond the exclusion of unqualified people from politics; it also includes government. According to Schofield's argument, these people only have moral *epistêmê,* and as a result, won't be able to operate as scientific political managers, like the kind of temperate ruler in the *Charmides*. However, although the *epistêmê* of the Good itself seems irreconcilably distinct from the architectonic *epistêmê* expected in the *Charmides,* the outcome of the rule of philosopher-rulers equipped with it looks the same picture of the ideal city in the *Charmides*. In other words, the important question here is: how can the *epistêmê* of the Good itself sustain a well-functioning society based on the division of labor and make it economically prosperous? There are several possible scenarios: (1) It is not plausible to hope that, in Critias' scenario, a ruler can give orders to all citizens after evaluating them and determining their area of expertise. This will only be possible when the ruler is worldly omniscient (see *Charm*. 171c1-10 and Sections 2.3.1 and 2.3.2 above), which means that he

[321] Klosko 2006, 82 ff. 126, 135; Bobonich 2002, 42-45: 'The *Republic*, like the *Phaedo*, rejects the claims of non-philosophers to possess any genuine virtue; McKeen and Smith 2018, 156: 'Non-philosophers in the καλλίπολις are also ruled by reason .... In non-philosophers, however, the reason that rules their souls comes from without, from the philosopher-rulers.' They argue that *homonoia*, as Plato's definition of temperance, should not be understood as mere agreement on who should rule, but rather as like-mindedness in the sense that like-minded people share a similar psychological constitution. For this sense of *homonoia*, see also *Plt*. 311b9.

knows everything that has to be done in every sphere of a society, and thereby he should be at once doctor, shoemaker, scientist, teacher, and so on. (2) Alternatively, then, we imagine that everyone is temperate, but in an ideal way: they have *epistêmê* of the Good itself, and so they fully understand why the temperate action (doing only what they know) is good and beneficial for them. (3) Or again, the temperance of ordinary citizens, which is less intellectual and implanted into them through education and law, makes them behave temperately because it seems good for them to specialize in their own expertise and not to meddle in others' tasks. In this third scenario, the *epistêmê* of the Good is substituted in their minds by the law and lawful *doxa*.

The main issue, then, is how the *epistêmê* of the Good itself—or a cognitive equivalent—can govern other productive, occupational expertises not only for civic good (ensuring the political participation of truly qualified), but also for civil good (promoting economic prosperity through diligent and specialized labor). This point will be revisited in Section 3.5. (I think that the *epistêmê* of the Good itself does play a role in producing goods of a society, but only to a limited extent.) For now, in order to elucidate the relation between the *epistêmê* of the Good itself and first-order, occupational, and productive expertise, we proceed to the *Euthydemus* and the *Laches*. In the first two dialogues, *using-used* and *ruling-ruled* relationship between the former and the latter is further clarified. Eventually, our inquiry will arrive at the "Asclepius Passage" in the *Republic* III.

3.3. The Various Aspects of the Political *Epistêmê* in the *Euthydemus* and the *Laches*

3.3.1. The *Euthydemus:* the Political *Epistêmê* for Using and for Ruling

The *Euthydemus* is, though for the most part, centered on showing a contrast between the sophistic eristics of sophists and the philosophical, protreptic elenchus of Socrates,[322] another Socratic dialogue in which, Schofield says, the architectonic expertise as the political *epistêmê* is considered.[323] This section briefly reviews the context leading up to the central passage in question (288d-293e). While the two brothers are bewildering their

[322] For Plato's intention in the *Euthydemus*, see Erler 2017, 88 and 93; Kahn 1996, 322; *Platon Handbuch* 92.

[323] Schofield 2006, 150-151: 'At the beginning of the second Socratic episode, the dialogue takes up the question of the identity of the knowledge needed for happiness. This is the context in which the *Euthydemus* introduces the notion of political expertise as an architectonic form of knowledge.'

young prey, Cleinias, with their sophistic arguments, Socrates pushes them to show their serious talents and wisdom and proceeds to outline the kind of argument they should be making. The first argument of Socrates aims to demonstrate a thesis that he had earlier challenged the brothers to prove (275a). Through a typical Socratic exchange with Cleinias, Socrates states the first argument that wisdom is one of the goods and the same as fortune (280a) and that wisdom is the only thing that is in itself good (281d). (Hence, it follows that we ought to seek to be wise, that is, to philosophize (282c).) Asked by Socrates 'whether he [Cleinias] ought to acquire every sort of knowledge [*epistêmê*] or whether there is one sort that he ought to get in order to be a happy man and a good one, and what it is' (282e), Dionysidorus this time shows off with some sophistry arguments, which made Ctesippus—one of Cleinias' lovers—enraged. Eventually, it is again up to Socrates to answer the question he had raised: 'what sort of knowledge [*epistêmê*] would we acquire if we went about it [philosophy] in the right way?' (288e)

Remarkable in this second argument of Socrates are Cleinias' distinction between the *epistêmê* of how to make and that of how to use, and his characterization of the political *epistêmê* as the latter, that is, as the *epistêmê* of using other goods (290d). Schofield says this is the 'consequent proposal that political expertise will make us happy by its architectonic use of subordinate skills'.[324] The key idea is that the product of an *epistêmê* is not by itself good: gold, health, even immortality or *homonoia*. What renders each of these goods *genuinely good* is the *epistêmê* for using (*chresthai*) them: the kingly art or the political *epistêmê*.[325] However, the problem is that neither Socrates nor other interlocutors could determine the nature of such an art. The discussion falls into an infinite regress: It is said in the first protreptic argument that *epistêmê* (teachable wisdom) for using other conditional goods is the only truly good thing (281b, e, 282c). The political *epistêmê* then turns out to be the *epistêmê* that is good. However, what does it provide for us? (291e) Its product must be something good (292a); but if the good is *epistêmê*, then the political *epistêmê*, newly defined (292b), must be one that produces *epistêmê* in others (292d). Then, what does it produce for us? ... descending *ad infinitum*.[326]

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[324] Schofield 2006, 151.

[325] For Plato's interchangeable use of these terms in the *Euthydemus*, see n. 288 above.

[326] Kahn 1996, 61, 208 ff., 321 ff.; Schofield 2006, 154. In Erler's comment on the overall content of the dialogue (53): '*Die Sichtung verschiedener Künste ergibt, dass ein Wissen nützlich ist, das Herrstellung- und Gebrauchswissen vereint. ... Hier bricht die Rahmenhandlung in den Bericht des Sokrates ein, denn Kriton unterbricht ihn und greift Sokrates' Argument auf. Dabei ergibt sich, dass keine Kunst, auch die*

The established view is that this aporetic perplexity is only apparent: Charles Kahn argues that it can be solved once the readers have looked at the whole picture, from the *Euthydemus* (and the *Charmides*) to the *Republic*. Only by assuming the existence of the Good itself and elucidating how the knowledge of it works, the *Euthydemus*' aporia is cleared up. He says,[327]

> In Plato's view it is the Good itself, the good as such, that must be the object for royal knowledge, for the art of the philosopher-kings. And such knowledge will be useful precisely because, in the hands of the rulers, it will guide the right use of the workings and products of all the other arts, as it governs the whole society in the light of what is genuinely good, including the right use of those *prima facie* goods, such as prosperity, freedom and civic harmony, which were rejected in the argument of the *Euthydemus* as capable of being misused.

In contrast, Schofield, referring to the same quotation from Kahn, continuously distances the idea of the *Euthydemus* from that of the *Republic*. According to him, Kahn is right about the *Republic* in connecting the two dialogues by showing that 'philosophy supplies the true expertise needed for political rule', but wrong in his false identification of the 'philosophical understanding of the good' with the 'architectonic knowledge which uses all the other arts'.[328] However, I disagree with this interpretation. If we should assume that the *epistêmê* of the Good itself in the *Republic* is the political *epistêmê* Socrates and Cleinias report they were searching for, we find that Plato clearly seems to have in mind that those who have the *epistêmê* of the Good itself use (χρῆσθαι: 289a-291e) and also rule (ἄρχειν: 291c8, d3, 292a4-5) other subordinate expertises.

Now, to prove the thesis proposed here that the *epistêmê* for using in the *Euthydemus* is the *epistêmê* of the Good itself in the *Republic*, we will delve into Cleinias' remark that 'geometers and astronomers and calculators ... hand over the task of using their

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königliche Herrschaftskunst nicht, das geforderte Wissen ist, und die Frage bleibt offenbar ungelöst.' As I stated in Section 1.3.1, the distinction between political *epistêmê* in ordinary sense and political *epistêmê* of the Good itself can be drawn in the *Euthydemus*.

[327] Quoted from Kahn 1996, 209; Erler 2017 accepts this line of interpretation in his introduction: '*In diesem Zusammenhang ist es zu sehen, wenn im Euthydemos neben Absurditäten auch philosophisch relevante Probleme zur Sprache kommen, ... Die Aporie am Ende von Sokrates' zweiter protreptischer Rede z. B. erweist sich als durchaus vermeidbar, wenn man jene ‚königliche Kunst' mit dem Guten als oberstem Objekt des Wissens in den Blick nimmt, von dem Platon in der Politeia spricht*.' (56). See also 84-85, 99-100, and 178-9.

[328] Schofield 2006, 156-7.

discoveries to the dialecticians' (290b10-c6). This remark is not understandable without the context of *the Republic*, the discussion of the relation between *dianoia* and dialectics.[329] Here, we find some hints at what the dialecticians, by using the findings of subordinate specialists, "provide (παρέχειν) and accomplish (ἀπεργάζεσθαι)" (291b6-7, 291e1, 292a1-2, 4-5).[330] The answer to this question is found in the *Republic*, as Kahn writes: 'Just as mathematics makes use of visible models and diagrams in order to think clearly and consistently about intelligible structures, so dialectic makes *use* [italic is mine] of mathematics itself as a conceptual model to achieve a knowledge of Forms.'[331] Refraining from the approach connecting the *Republic* and the *Euthydemus*, Schofield would insist as follows:[332]

> There is no hint in the text of Plato [the *Republic*] construing philosophy or philosophical understanding of the good as the architectonic knowledge which uses all the other arts. ... The demanding education in mathematics and dialectic that they are to follow is geared precisely to the job of equipping them with the synoptic understanding of the connections between the sciences and of their relation with the nature of reality. Socrates does not call it architectonic.

If the use of the term "ἀρχιτεκτονική" itself is the issue, this cannot serve as a criterion to distinguish the *Republic* from the *Euthydemus*, as we all know that this word appears only in the *Statesman*. More importantly, if we understand that one of the primary objectives of the philosopher-rulers is to educate the candidates of rulers so that they may have the *epistêmê* of the Good, they *use* the mathematical disciplines for education for others—just as they *make use* of the knowledge themselves to acquire the knowledge of the hierarchical structure of intelligible reality. This is why Plato adds to the description of the dialecticians the line of 290c6: "those who are not entirely ignorant of them [their findings], at least." (ὅσοι γε αὐτῶν μὴ παντάπασιν ἀνόητοί εἰσιν).[333] It suggests two points with regard to the

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[329] Kahn 1996, 308-309, 325.

[330] Although "what is to be done and accomplished" is a question posed regarding kingly art, the same question should be applied to regarding dialecticians, because they, as philosopher-rulers, play a major role in bringing happiness to other citizens in their city, as well as to themselves.

[331] Quoted from Kahn 1996, 295.

[332] Quoted from Schofield 2006, 157 and 161.

[333] In my interpretation, I take αὐτῶν to refer back to τοῖς εὑρήμασιν in the preceding clause, and to depend syntactically on ἀνόητοί, not on ὅσοι. This allows for my own translation. This reading diverges from both the existing translations, which connect αὐτῶν as a partitive genitive with ὅσοι, such as Erler's German translation ("*jedenfalls diejenigen von ihnen, die nich ganz und gar unverständig sind*") or the English

nature of dialectics or its experts: first, their primary goal is not to get the knowledge of geometry or astronomy for its own sake; second, even if their knowledge is of a different kind from that of the scientists, they could not pursue their dialectical knowledge without knowing the disciplines (see *Resp*. VII. 533a7-8: 'the power of dialectic could reveal it only to someone experienced in the subjects we've described ...'). In the *Republic*, harmonics is literally described as 'useful in the search for the beautiful and the good' (χρήσιμον ... πρὸς τὴν τοῦ καλοῦ τε καὶ ἀγαθοῦ ζήτησιν) (VII. 531c6-7). The previous discussions are devoted to the elucidation of how each of the disciplines in the curriculum for the education of philosopher-rulers contributes to the acquisition of the *epistêmê* of the intelligible reality (e.g., VII. 525c8-d3 for 'χρήσιμον ἡμῖν'), whose culmination is the Form of the Good. Most explicitly, Plato writes that 'dialectic gently pulls it [our soul] out and leads it upwards, using the crafts we described (χρωμένη αἷς διήλθομεν τέχναις) to help it and cooperate with it in turning the soul around' (VII. 533d1-4). Just as in the *Euthydemus*, and similarly in the *Republic*, the relation between the dialectics, the inquiry, and the knowledge of the Good itself and the mathematical disciplines is described as the "using-used" relation.

Furthermore, in the *Republic*, the possessor of the *epistêmê* of the Good itself decides what to learn (τὸ μάθημα νομοθετῆσαι, τιθέναι or κεἰσθω in VII. 525b9, 526c7-8, 527c10-d1, 528e1). The necessity of a director (ἐπιστάτης) for promoting a certain subject in 528b5-d1; the supreme status of dialectic over subjects in terms of end (τέλος) in 534e2-535a1. Cf. Plt. 304b4-c6). Since another aspect of the term "architectonic" suggests the "ruling-ruled" relation between two expertises, it also fits the dialectics in the *Republic*, the objective of which is to acquire the *epistêmê* of the Good (See Section 4.3.7).[334]

Schofield argues that the philosophical understanding in the *Republic* does not have 'any intrinsically practical orientation like the architectonic political knowledge sketched in *Charmides* and *Euthydemus*, and (subsequently) in the *Statesman*', and that in the *Republic* 'there is no focus on its use of other forms of expertise'[335] However, it is unclear

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translation in Cooper's Edition ("at least, those of them do so who are not completely senseless").

[334] In the same vein, the dialectician is mentioned in the *Cratylus* as an educator who uses names a legislator produces (388b7-c2, d6-e6, 390c2-d8, 428e1-6), and what he teaches, and one comes to know as a result, is '*ta onta*' or a '*pragma*', terms associated with the Forms (435d-436c). This further supports the interpretation that Plato, at least when discussing dialectics in relation to *epistêmê* using other subordinate expertises, thinks of *epistêmê* as having the Forms as its objects.

[335] Schofield 2006, 161. See also 163: 'Plato could scarcely say more clearly that the rule of knowledge envisaged in the *Republic* is thoroughly Socratic, and not what was contemplated in the *Euthydemus* or (in a different version) in the *Charmides*: the hypothesis that political salvation turns on a special form of

why we should assume that political *epistêmê* in the *Euthydemus*, recognized as the *epistêmê* for using and ruling, must be something other than the *epistêmê* of the Good itself—especially when dialectics in the *Republic*, as the inquiry aiming at knowledge of the whole structure of the intelligible reality with the Good itself at its apex, clearly *uses* and *rules over* other mathematical disciplines in a way that aligns with the architectonic model. What does Plato have in mind when he says that the *epistêmê* of the Good itself uses and rules over other subordinate expertises? The argument presented in the next two sections below will not offer a new interpretation, but will just point to a passage in the *Republic* that has been overlooked in this respect, even by Schofield. I will argue that Plato already has the answer to whether and how the *epistêmê* of the Good uses and rules over other subordinate expertises. It is, however, via the *Laches* that I transition to the *Republic*, because this dialogue serves as a bridge, linking the *Charmides* and the *Euthydemus*—viewed by Schofield as sharing a divergence from the *Republic*'s vision—with the *Republic*.

3.3.2. The *Laches*: the *Epistêmê* about Good and Bad and the *Epistêmê* of *Telos* for Ruling

It is not difficult to discern that the *epistêmê* about good and bad things mentioned in the *Laches* (199c6-7. Cf. *Charm*. 174b10) is designed to anticipate the *epistêmê* of the Good itself in the *Republic*, to the extent that the knowledge or *epistêmê* necessary for judging if something is good to do is ultimately grounded on the *epistêmê* of the Good itself. The passage that is of interest starts when Nicias surprises old general Laches and Socrates by claiming that courage is a wisdom, having 'the knowledge of grounds of fear and hope' (τὰ δεινὰ καὶ τὰ θαρραλέα: 194e11-5a1, 196d1-2). Laches counters him with the following statement: 'other craftsmen [doctor and farmer] know ... but not all of them are courageous' (195b-c). In response, Nicias defines the scope of a doctor's knowledge. As Laches said, a doctor knows what is to be feared and what is not when it comes to diseases (195b) and about the patients' health. But Nicias adds that the things to be feared or not should be taken into consideration in the context of the good life as a whole. In a counter-intuitive but philosophically significant way,[336] he suggests that even health may be of little

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knowledge that is describable only in self-reflexive terms. ... The *Republic*'s philosopher ruler is therefore no political manager or 'scientific governor' on the model desired by John Stuart Mill.'

[336] The move to distinguish the absolute good from merely conditional goods is evident not only in the *Laches* but also in the *Charmides* and many other places in Plato's dialogues (as in the claim that "it would be better for such a person to die for his own sake"). Kahn 1996, 205 calls this thought experiment—one that presupposes a 'dimension of unqualified goodness and desirability'—'an extravagant thought,' noting its

advantage—or even harm—to its possessor, particularly when that person is unjust or morally corrupt. The ground for this claim becomes clear when it is set against the background of ethical, anthropological, and psychological premises in the *Republic*, that is, the eudaimonistic premises based on the concept of *ergon*.[337] As it turns out in the Asclepius Passage, these premises constitute the knowledge acquired and further pursued by the *epistêmê* of the Good itself (see the next section 3.4).

Several scenarios have been specified to describe how one can be temperate and do one's own work by virtue of being temperate, with the assumption that temperance has a form of second-order *epistêmê*—that is, *epistêmê* of *epistêmê* (see Section 3.2 above). If we stop considering the scenario of a worldly omniscient political manager with complete knowledge on everything, the following are the scenarios that emerge: The first one is where every citizen possesses the *epistêmê* of the Good itself and as a result can individually decide whether to undertake any tasks in the political sphere (the civic dimension of temperance), as well as understand that remaining true to one's profession is good (civil dimsension of temperance). The second one is that a ruler, who alone possesses the *epistêmê* of the Good itself, implements laws and designs the education system to cultivate both civic and civil temperance among the citizens, who cannot be expected to possess this higher *epistêmê* on their own. The same framework, mentioned in the *Charmides,* holds in the *Laches*, especially implying both scenarios: On the one hand, one who is already expert in his field can become courageous by having the second-order *epistêmê* that makes one courageous. As Socrates' remark in 196d4-8: a doctor and a seer may become courageous by having the *epistêmê* about things to be feared and not feared with respect to the good life as a whole, *in addition to* his own particular specialized knowledge.[338] However, Plato himself appears to treat this first scenario with a kind of

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'absurdity' and 'drastic nature'. Plato introduces this dimension in an effort to cultivate an understanding of the kind of life one should live and to adjust the objects of desire accordingly.

[337] One of the arguments against Thrasymachus (I. 352d-354a) anticipates this principle of *ergon*-based eudaimonistic premises that "everyone in a well-regulated city has his own work to do" (III. 406c) and that "his life is of no profit to him if he doesn't do his work" (III. 407a).

[338] *Lach*. 196d6: 'Unless he [a doctor] takes *additionally* this very *epistêmê*' (ἐὰν μὴ αὐτὴν ταὐτην τὴν ἐπιστήμην *προσ*λάβῃ). See also *Meno*. 88c6-d1: something becomes beneficial or harmful, only when the wisdom or ignorance *additionally* comes into being (*προσ*γενομένης δὲ φρονήσεως ἢ ἀφροσύνης). There is a certain lack of clarity in Hardy's commentary regarding the distinction and relationship between first-order professional expertise and second-order expertise concerning good and bad. While his critique of Yonezawa (2012)—who distinguished between Socratic *Klugheit* and Nicias' courage as a technical *Expertenwissen*—is valid in that these are not fundamentally distinct in the manner Yonezawa suggests, I see no reason why Hardy insists on restricting the term *Expertenwissen* (*epistêmê* in the original text) exclusively to first-order

practical skepticism—not rejecting it in principle, but regarding it as unlikely to be realized in practice—, as he explicitly remarks (196d4) that "this *epistêmê* is not indeed something possessed by every man" (τοῦτο δὲ οὐ παντὸς δὴ εἶναι ἀνδρὸς γνῶναι). Then, as my intertextual reading of the *Charmides* and the *Republic* suggested, the ruler, by virtue of the *epistêmê* of the Good itself, adds his subjects—whether doctors, seers, farmers or shoemakers—to have a different type of courage. This is the form of courage that is called the *Republic* "political" courage: the virtue not based in *epistêmê* (knowledge) but in doxa fostered through education and law under the governance of philosopher-rulers. [339]

What is to be addressed now is whether it is justified to identify this *epistêmê* about good and bad things—that is expected to define courage—as using and ruling the first-order, occupational *epistêmê*, such as medicine. As for the using-used relation, Plato's answer will turn out to be positive in the Asclepius Passage discussed in the next section. As for the ruling-ruled relation between two *epistêmai*, the passage 195e8-196a3 and the passage briefly discussing the relation between general and seer in 198e2-199a3 constitute a systematic account of the hierarchical relationship between *epistêmai*. The former passage (195e8-196a3) states through Nicias' mouth that 'the seer needs to know only the signs of what is to be, whether a man will experience death or illness or loss of property, or will experience victory or defeat, in battle or in any other sort of contest', and there is a higher instance in which a separate expertise is necessary to judge whether the experience is good or not. In the latter passage (198e2-199a3), Socrates mentions in passing the desirable relation between the expertise of general and the expertise of seer, in the course of which Socrates develops the *epistêmê* about what to be feared and not (198b5-7) into the *epistêmê* about good and bad (199c6-d1).

> And I suppose that both of you could bear witness that, in the case of the affairs of war, the art of generalship is that which best foresees (προμηθεῖται) the future and

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professional expertise, such as that of a doctor or craftsman (Hardy 2014, 118 and 150–152). Rather, it seems to me that the question to be asked is why Plato attributed the status of *epistêmê* or *technê* to the virtue that Socrates exemplified himself, and what philosophical innovation Plato sought to effect by this attribution (see p. 100-101).

[339] Kahn 1996, 167-8: 'Finally, it has been pointed out by many commentators ... if we add Nicias' formula to Laches' definition as emended by Socrates, we have a perfectly respectable definition of courage: perseverance and toughness of soul guided by the knowledge of what is good and what is bad, what is and is not to be feared. And this is not very different from the definition of courage that is actually given in *Republic* IV: the capacity to preserve a correct opinion about what is and is not to be feared, the dye in the soul that remains fixed despite the trials of pleasure and pain, fear and desire (429c-430B).' See also Manuwald 2000, 187 ff. for the common aspects between the courage in the *Laches* and that in the *Republic*.

> the other times – nor does this art consider it necessary to be ruled by the art of the seer, but to rule (ἄρχειν) it, as being better acquainted with (εἰδυῖα) both present and future in the affairs of war. In fact, the law decrees, not that the seer should command (ἄρχειν) the general, but that the general should command the seer. Is this what we shall say, Laches?

This passage goes beyond simply alluding to the episode Thucydides reports (VII. 50. 4) about the historical Nicias, delaying the retreat of the Athenian expeditionary force to Syracuse according to what the seers interpret (οἱ μάντεις ἐξηγοῦντο) and leading them to defeat. More significant is that this passage determines which *epistêmê* should rule and be ruled: considering the verb "προμηθεῖται,"[340] Socrates wants to characterize the expertise of a general as concerning a certain end, for the general and his expertise, that is, victory.[341]

If one generalizes this "ruling-ruled" relation between these two expertises, then it follows that this relation corresponds to that between the *technê* of fighting in armor and the *technê* for judging whether young men should learn it or not, which was the issue the interlocutors are deliberating now as the main motif of the dialogue. Socrates makes it clear that the latter *technê* is concerned itself not with the expertise to be judged, but with the end, to the achievement of which it contributes (185c5-d12). Having in mind the distinction between one *technê* and another *technê* regarding its end, we can understand why the expertise of a general should rule the expertise of a seer, because the latter consists of knowledge of what will happen, while the former has the knowledge to judge and apply whether that fact contributes to victory in war or not.[342] Since a victory in a war or battle is

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[340] I do not take the verb προμηθεῖται to mean simply "foresee"—otherwise, it would not be distinguished from prophecy—but rather "use forethought", "take care beforehand", "take heed" and "provide for," as LSJ notes. It can be translated in German as "*voraus bedenken*", "*Fürsorge hegen*", "*berücksichtigen*" or "*fürchten*." (See *Gemoll*)

[341] In *Charmides* 173c3-6, the idea is presented that a seer (μάντις) can be set up as a true prophet (προφήτης) under the rule of a temperate ruler. According to LSJ, there is a kind of division of labor between them: 'interpreter, expounder of the utterances of the μάντις' (ientry for *prophets* in LSJ, A.3), In terms of the episode involving Nicias, his seers failed to interpret the sign of the eclipse correctly.

[342] Admittedly, in Thucydides' episode of Nicias, the seers not only predicted what would happen but also prescribed what should be done, which differs from the role of the seer as described by Plato. Some researchers have noted that Nicias' flawed judgment was not merely a result of superstition; rather, it resulted from his (reasonable yet eventually mistaken) assessment of the military situation, the incorrect interpretations of inexperienced seers influenced by such an assessment, and Nicias' own practical considerations of how prophecy might affect the morale and behavior of his soldiers. See Flower 2008, 114-119; Marinatos 2022; Kyrtatas 2022. These studies show that a general could even shape the interpretation of

not the ultimate end for human life, to avoid such an infinite regress as in the *Euthydemus*, the most authoritative *epistêmê* must be assumed to be of the Good itself, which gives us an answer to what is really good in human life. Therefore, the *epistêmê* about good and bad, which Socrates fully articulated as the (incomplete) definition of courage by developing Nicias' original definition, can be described as ruling over other expertises concerning the ultimate end.

3.4. The Asclepius in the *Republic* III: A *Political* Doctor

3.4.1. The *Epistêmê* of the Good itself and the *Epistêmê* for Using

This section is supposed to discuss whether the *epistêmê* about good and bad in the *Laches* and the *epistêmê* of the Good itself in the *Republic* can be described as the *epistêmê* for using. Schofield repeatedly claims that the *epistêmê* of the Good is not presented as architectonic in the sense that it uses other expertises.[343] Yet, it actually is. In the *Laches*, once Nicias differentiates between the *epistêmê* with regards to what to fear and what not to fear in matters of health and illness, and a higher *epistêmê* that determines whether health or illness, survival or death, is itself something to be feared or not—that is, whether such outcomes are to be regarded as good or bad—and asserts that this latter *epistêmê* is not possessed by doctors nor seers (195c7-196a3), Laches remarks in response that Nicias must be describing some god as such a courageous person (196a6-7: θεὸν τινα). Now, we meet this god in the *Republic*: Asclepius. He appears in the text from Book III 405c7 to 408c5, which I call the "Asclepius Passage", as the courageous doctor, the user of the medicine, and therefore as a statesman (ὁ πολιτικός).

Asclepius, generally known as the god of medicine, is mentioned in the course of discussion in the *Republic*, as Socrates embarks on a discussion of physical training (*gymastikê*) for guardians (III. 403c8 ff.). He condemns the degeneration of medicine into a 'nursemaid to the disease' and critiques Herodicus (406a5-b9; Cf. *Gorg*. 448b) for devoting all time solely to treatment for extending life, while leaving the bad habits and poor education that caused it unaddressed (404d11-405b4, 405c7-d7). This medicine, Socrates contends, is shameful and takes too much time from the guardians, who ought to focus more on training. In contrast, Asclepius, though he is a competent doctor in that

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a sign by seers, something Nicias failed to do. Thus, the rule of the seer by the general means that the general controls the seer to interpret a sign in such a way that it supports his judgment and decision to be supported.

[343] Schofield 2006, 157, 160-1, 164. See also p. 94-95 above.

there are no illnesses he could not treat, did not 'teach this type of medicine to his sons' (406c2-3), but 'taught medicine for those whose bodies are healthy in their natures and habits but have some specific disease' (407c8-d2). Socrates' discussions regarding Asclepius and his use of medicine are highly significant for our discussion in the following three aspects.

Firstly, Asclepius' knowledge substantially specifies the greater good as more than mere bodily health, which can be understood as symptom relief or living longer, as mentioned in Nicias' counter-intuitive assumption in the *Laches*. There, Nicias reproves Laches for his attributing to doctors or other experts the knowledge that can evaluate, which, according to Nicias, they do not possess: (1) it is not the case that living longer is always preferable and dying is bad, and (2) that what is to be feared (or not) differs depending on whether it is advantageous for a person to live or to die. (195c7-d9). Given that knowing this fact and knowing what it is for a courageous and virtuous man to fear and not to fear are the conditions for a man to be courageous, this is exactly what Asclepius knows.

> Because he [Asclepius] knew that (εἰδὼς ὅτι) everyone in a well-regulated city has his own work to do and that no one has the leisure to be ill and under treatment all his life. It's absurd that we recognize this to be true of craftsmen while failing to recognize that it's equally true of those who are wealthy and supposedly happy. (406c3-8)

Furthermore, Asclepius is said to know also "these" (ταῦτα γιγνώσκοντα), which refers back to the following:

> Excessive care of the body, over and above physical training, is pretty well the biggest obstacle of all. ... Hence, wherever this kind of virtue is practiced and examined, excessive care of the body hinders it, for it makes a person think he's ill and be all the time concerned about his body (407b4-6 and c3-6).

All this knowledge is traced to the essential statements about the greater good: Though not fully articulated at this stage, the knowledge of Asclepius is reduced to these two principles: that every man has a proper function (*ergon*) and the failure of its fulfillment makes his life disadvantageous for himself (407a1-3), and that one should train one's virtue, as Phokylides taught (407a7-8). The knowledge of these two principles is presided over by the subject (*mathêma*) Plato posits later that enables one 'to distinguish the good

life from the bad and always to make the best choice possible in every situation' (X. 618c) and to provide and uphold what one knows (VI. 506a and VII. 534b-c), the subject of the Idea of the Good (VI. 505a). This hierarchic knowledge structure allows for the inference that the *epistêmê* about good and bad presented in the early dialogues and described as possessed by Asclepius is identical with the *epistêmê* of the Good itself. Whether Asclepius can be attributed as knowing the Good itself will be further discussed.

Secondly, Asclepius turns out to be not only a competent doctor (III. 406c1-2: οὐκ ἀγνοίᾳ οὐδὲ ἀπειρίᾳ), but also a good user of his medical expertise, in that what he knows constitutes the *epistêmê* that is characterized as the *epistêmê* for using medicine, which includes the *epistêmê* for judging whether or when to cure whom (III. 406e5-6, 408a2). Moreover, we can infer from line 406a6-7 ("not to use such a medicine") that Asclepius evaluates different kinds of medicine with different aims, judges what is good and bad, and decides to use only the good medicine.[344] As we have seen in the previous section, the relation between the *epistêmê* of the end, or the greater good, and the first-order, occupational *epistêmê* is described in the *Laches* in terms of ruling and being ruled and in the *Euthydemus* in terms of ruling-ruled and using-used. Of course, medicine belongs to things to be used (289b) and doctors to those to be ruled. What remained unclear was of what nature the *epistêmê* for using and ruling is: Is this a matter of either-or between an architectonic knowledge, or the *epistêmê* of the Good itself? According to the Asclepius Passage, however, this is a moot point, as it best serves as textual evidence for arguing against the divergence that Schofield draws between two visions of political *epistêmê* explored in the *Charmides* and *Euthydemus* and in the *Republic*, respectively.

The third and surprisingly most striking point is Adeimantus' response that Asclepius, knowing the abovementioned things and using the *epistêmê* of medicine, is a "statesman." Socrates immediately agrees to this point: (III. 407e4-5: πολιτικόν, ἔφη, λέγεις Ἀσκληπιόν. δῆλον, ἦν δ' ἐγώ ...). It is only in this line in the *Republic* where the author refers to a politician or statesman in a positive connotation, in contrast to the satirical, ironical use of this adjective in masculine singular or plural in other instances. (For instance, see IV. 426d3-5: those who are believed to be statesmen by people, though they are deceived; and see VI. 489c4: the statesmen who are compared to the ignorant and self-serving sailors).

[344] I will argue that it can be called "political" medicine, as will be clear in Chapter 5 below.

Asclepius is political not in the ordinary way that he conducts politics (τὰ πολιτικὰ πράττειν), but in the sense that he cares both for the city and for individuals by using or not using his medicine (III. 407d4: ἵνα μὴ τὰ πολιτικὰ βλάπτῃ, 407e2-3: οὔτε πόλει λυσιτελῇ), taking into consideration not only the physical health of a person but also the well-being of their life as human beings (III. 406e5-6: "in this way" ("οὕτω" ἰατρικῇ χρῆσθαι); 407e5: "because he [Asclepius] was such a man" (ὅτι τοιοῦτος ἦν)). This confirms once again my refutation of Schofield, who thought that Plato in the *Republic* said 'the philosopher is to be made into a king without possessing or acquiring expertise in kingship' or 'Socrates is simply redefining [the author's italic] kingship—and expertise in kingship as philosophy, or as philosophical understanding of the good', based on his observation that 'there is no mention of anything resembling the architectonic knowledge that the *Euthydemus* passage associated with kingship.'[345] Perhaps he overlooks the Asclepius Passage in the *Republic*. Ruling out an implausible explanation that Plato includes in a single dialogue two visions of the statesman and the political *epistêmê* in tension with one another, one may conclude that the philosopher-rulers in the *Republic*, who are qualified as rulers thanks to the *epistêmê* of the Good itself and of Forms, are the users of other subordinate expertises and rulers of their citizens.

There might be an objection that the knowledge Asclepius has concerning the use of medicine, the ultimate end of human life, and the reason why it is good for an individual, etc., can be identified with the *epistêmê* of the Good itself. In other words, it could be asked whether Asclepius knows the Form of the Good, since the relation of the Good itself to these concrete contents of his knowledge is not explicitly articulated in the *Republic*, let alone that the Form of the Good is not even mentioned in the Asclepius Passage. Here are a few reasons, though speculative, that indicate that he knows it. The first reason is that Asclepius is a god: Plato often accords the knowledge of the truth to gods (VII. 517b6-7. Cf. The following mention of the Form of the Good in 517b8) and ascribes divinity to those who have seen the Good itself (ὡς δαίμοσιν ... ὡς θείοις: VII. 540c1-2). Ample textual evidence throughout Plato's works supports that the gods are immortal and happy by having the knowledge of Forms.[346] Moreover, Plato recalls the regulations Socrates and the brothers developed in the Asclepius Passage regarding how to represent gods in poetry

[345] All quoted from Schofield 2006, 156.
[346] Here, I follow the thesis of Van Riel 2013, 61 ff., that Plato's gods are souls having intellect (*nous*) and cognize the Good itself, the object of this supreme cognitive capacity, and therefore are guided by it.

(III. 408c). Criticizing the conventional mythical tales of Asclepius, Socrates asserts that Asclepius, known as a son of Apollo, would never have accepted gold as a bribe (408b-c), which reiterates one of the regulations of representation in poetry about gods (II. 387e and 390d-391a. For Adeimantus' report of the common belief, see II. 365e). Considering self-sufficiency as a feature of a just person, it can be inferred that it is thanks to the knowledge of the Good itself that one soul can be just and moral from a human perspective. Secondly, as mentioned briefly, the Form of the Good is counted as the most significant subject to be learned in VI. 505a, and its content and effects are specified in Book X 618c-e—judgment concerning a beneficial life and the priority of the soul's condition from the perspective of the Good itself. It is not difficult to see that all these constitute the reason why Asclepius applies his medicine to some and not to others. Thus, it can be said that the Form of the Good serves both as the object of knowledge employed and as the cognitive basis for judgments enabling its application.

To recapitulate, Plato does not express two visions of political *epistêmê* in his works. The various aspects of what Plato puts forward as the political *epistêmê* finally converge in the figure of Asclepius: The *epistêmê* for using and for ruling in the *Euthydemus* is not distinct from the *epistêmê* about good and bad things in the *Charmides* and the *Laches*. Finally, this identification is ultimately proved in the Asclepius Passage in the *Republic* and reduced to the *epistêmê* of the Good itself.

3.4.2. Law on Medicine

Clearly, Asclepius represents a statesman or a political man who has the *epistêmê* of the Good itself and uses other expertises by employing it. Therefore, it can be inferred that he has two aspects to his personality—the civic person as a statesman and the civil person as a practitioner of any expertise. (We need not assume that the statesman's "use" always involves one person using the first-order expertise of another. It is entirely possible that a single individual possesses both political expertise and a first-order expertise. Even within such a person, the relation between the two can be described as “using-used” and “ruling-ruled”.)

The next step is considering the less ideal scenarios when discussing the *Charmides*: It would be unrealistically ideal that every citizen in a city has the *epistêmê* of the Good, so that they know that it is good to do one's own work both as a citizen and as a practitioner. For instance, imagine that all citizens in a city are divinely wise. Here, Asclepius does his

job without any error in such a way that his work contributes to the good of his city; he autonomously judges what is good for a person and decides whom not to treat and to let die, and so does every citizen in the ideal state when one uses one's first-order expertise. However, this would be possible only for gods like him. Then, there must be prescriptions as a surrogate for the *epistêmê* of the Good, imparting to the medical experts what should be considered a greater good than the life-prolonging treatment and assisting in judging an individual case. A passage following the Asclepius Passage, though slightly removed from it, makes a clear reference to this matter (III. 409e4-410a6). This passage substantiates the gist of the whole Asclepius Passage, and Socrates here asserts the necessity for legislating the law concerning the use of medicine.

> [Socrates] Then won't you legislate in our city for the kind of medicine we mentioned ..., so that together they'll look after those who are naturally well endowed in body and soul? But as for the ones whose bodies are naturally unhealthy or whose souls are incurably evil, won't they let the former die of their own accord and the latter kill themselves?
>
> [Glaucon] That seems to be best for the ones who suffer such treatment and for the city.

This passage is significant for this thesis in a twofold way:

Firstly, it dispels the prejudice that the law is unimportant in the *Republic* until the value of the rule of law is appreciated in the *Statesman*.[347] The idea that law substitutes the understanding of the Good and its philosophy has been said to be prominent in the *Statesman* and the *Laws*[348] but in fact, it already appears in the *Republic*. The law here substantiates the principles drawn from the knowledge of the Good itself. The necessity of law comes from the mortal condition that not all doctors can be wise regarding the good, nor behave like Asclepius, a statesman. If ordinary doctors or any practitioners do not have access to the *epistêmê* of the Good, which is the *epistêmê* for using their first-order

[347] Ellison 2019, 243 n.2 and 3 refer to cases where this prejudice is evident. Horn 2021a, 94 mentions that Plato's lack of engagement with institutionalism in the *Republic* and his preference for personalism in the *Statesman* can serve as evidence for the claim that Plato endorsed ethical particularism. Annas 1981, 105-6: 'Plato does not, in the *Republic*, give enough attention to the importance of laws. ... In later dialogues, when he loses faith in the possibility that there might be uncorrupted rulers, he comes to see laws ... as defining the status of the citizens.'

[348] See Rowe 2007, 33 and 38.

profession, then they still "use" it by abiding by such a law as Socrates specifies. It again confirms that the ordinary citizens of Kallipolis have virtue established on the level of lawful *doxa*, that is, in the state where a lawful treatment appears to be good. Therefore, a mortal doctor can be considered as wise as Asclepius if they obey the law.

Secondly, the conception of politics as a technocratic rule is not valid—much less can it be attributed to Plato himself. (See my criticism of the "rule-centric" conception of politics and of the wrong attribution of it to Plato in Section 2.3.3 above.) The unrealistic ideal city in the *Charmides* can be interpreted as an aspiration that ideal politics would be realized only through governance by an expert on *epistêmê*. Thus, people often believe that an expert in one field can become an expert in all fields (worldly omniscience, including politics). For example, they assume that if a doctor were to govern, all medical issues would be resolved, and all "ailments" of a country would likewise disappear. However, the political expert is, for Plato, an expert in the Good itself, Forms, and their interrelations (see Section 2.3.5), and therefore an expert who can question a given existing social order and envision a new one by bringing about a radical political change. If the expert is not only an expert in politics in Plato's sense but also an expert in his own profession, then the change can take place from a certain field on. This is further explained in Section 3.4.3, along with how the use of medicine leads to a change that can be called political for a whole society, as well as in the field of medicine. Schofield is right in thinking that while reading the *Republic*, '[philosophers'] otherworldliness is precisely what makes philosophers ... the right people to establish the ideal city and to govern it once established',[349] in the sense that their expertise has nothing to do with the production of some goods, and therefore they are essentially not doctors, farmers, engineers or even lawyers. However, it is not true that the theoretical *epistêmê* of the Good in the *Republic* does not have 'any intrinsically practical orientation'.[350] As we realized in the discussion of Kallipolis' medical law, it is not concerned primarily with physical health as such, but with the true meaning of health and the ultimate or higher end that physical health serves. Simply put, politics is not about technocratic rule aimed at finding the optimal solution to every problem, but rather about continuously asking what is truly good. Laws, then, can be seen as *provisional* answers to those questions.

[349] Schofield 2006, 158.
[350] Schofield 2006, 161.

3.4.3. The Political in Medicine

I now turn to the question of how the Asclepius Passage can be understood in the context of our modern world, exploring the contemporary relevance of the points developed so far. At first glance, Plato's views in the Asclepius Passage may provoke moral discomfort when examined through a modern lens. This perspective began with Karl Popper, who never refrains from criticizing Plato at this point:

> 'The role which he assigns to medicine throws light upon the totalitarian character of Plato's city where state interests dominate the life of the citizen from the mating of his parents to his grave. Plato interprets medicine as a form of politics, or as he puts it himself, he regards Asclepius, the god of medicine, as a politician. Medical art, he explains, must not consider the prolongation of life as its aim, but only the interest of the state. ... Accordingly, the physician has no right to attend to a man who cannot carry out his ordinary duties; for such a man is useless to himself and to the state.'[351]

According to Popper, this is an instance of Plato's totalitarian conception of justice, the absolute priority of the good of the whole over the good of individuals.[352]

Does Plato allow or even favor euthanasia or denial of medical care for the invalids: those who are congenitally or permanently disabled, preventing them from fulfilling social roles, including infants and the elderly, or those with injuries or illnesses for whom the cost, time, and effort of treatment outweigh the benefits of their potential social contributions? And is it because one's usefulness to the whole community should be prioritized over an individual's welfare and rights? Against such a denunciation, commentators supportive of Plato defend him by drawing more attention to the fundamental principles of his ethical theory: that there is a normatively objective standard for a good life of human beings, which is really good for an individual.[353] Though I personally agree with them that there is an objectively greater good beyond mere preservation or prolongation of life, it sets the bar too high to argue that the Asclepius Passage is important only if we assume that the person is an individual of unwavering moral conviction who unflinchingly subjects even oneself to Asclepius' (and Plato's) normatively objective standard. (After all, it is hardly acceptable to

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[351] Popper 2003, 147 (Ch. 8 Sec. 1).
[352] Popper 2003, 112-116 (Ch. 6 Sec. 6).
[353] See Annas 1981, 92-94 and Reeve 2006, 213-215.

claim that anyone who cannot live up to a morally perfect standard has no reason to go on living.) There is more at stake in the Asclepius Passage than the moral resolve of a single individual. Now, I propose a different reading that renders the Asclepius Passage more relevant to our context in a new way: it prompts us to reflect on how radical change can be brought about through the application of the political *epistêmê* in two ways, both in medicine and in the entire society.

If we are to do justice to Plato's position with regard to medicine, the form of the Asclepius Passage, rather than its substantial claim, should be paid greater attention: It asks what the greatest good is for human beings and how the concept of health should be redefined according to it, insofar as it is good. A good life in general may include service to the common public good or the exercise of one's occupational ability, as Popper reads Plato's claims, but not be exhausted by them. The claim that there is a greater good than illness-free, bodily health gives way to the thought that the good life also depends on the ability to manage daily life independently, the autonomy in choices regarding medical care, the end of one's life on one's own terms, and the mitigation of pain to improve quality of life. Atul Gawande (2014) decries that they have been overlooked by contemporary advanced medicine, focusing solely on prolonging life. Citing the *Laches*, though not connecting it with the Asclepius Passage as I do, Gawande argues that the courage in aging and sickness is the courage 'to confront the reality of mortality—the courage to seek out the truth of what is to be feared and what is to be hoped ... to act on the truth we find.'[354] It is not only through medical ethics but also through public and political discussion that one tries to question what is better for human beings than a meaningless extension of life and what should be aimed at in the name of "health". The expertise to discuss the issues such as "death with dignity" or "palliative care" to define the medical good greater than the prolongation of life, and particularly, to judge, e.g., whether, when, in which way and by whom euthanasia is allowed, or under which conditions and with whose agreement the (meaningless) life-sustaining treatment may be stopped, is distinct from the expertise of doctors.[355] Doctors' opinions may be valuable, but they should not be treated exclusively

[354] Gawande 2014, 269-270.

[355] Gawande 2014 expresses the necessity of considering a greater good beyond the narrowly defined medical good as follows: 'The insight was that as people's capacities wane, whether through age or ill health, making their lives better often requires curbing our purely medical imperatives—resisting the urge to fiddle and fix and control. ... But it posed a difficult question: When should we try to fix and when should we not?' (174); 'Sometimes we can offer a cure, sometimes only a salve, sometimes not even that. But whatever we can offer,

authoritative or dispositive. This expertise is political in its proper sense, and even the doctors, when engaging with the issues, are doing philosophy *qua* philosopher *and* statesman, at least in that situation.[356]

If medicine is "political" in the sense that a doctor's expertise is *used* by a statesman who claims to possess knowledge of the Good itself, then an alternative sense is revealed where medicine is a part of "rule-centric" politics that aims at ruling and governing a society. In other words, medicine can be oriented toward the governance and maintenance of society *as it currently exists*; that is, medical practice serves the stability of an existing order, where the good is already given and politically determined. (For the two senses of "something being political", see Section 1.3.4; for the "rule-centric" conception of politics, see Section 2.3.3).

Foucault's macroscopic genealogical analysis of the historical development of medicine shows how the modern conception of medical good based on "spatialization of disease" has been shaped by, or intertwined with, the operation of political power on the individual body to supervise a society.[357] Turning to a more contemporary and familiar example, Erving Goffman's analysis of the similarity between prison and nursing home shows that caregiving (health, safety, protection) as a medical good is often used as a justification for social control over the lives of the elderly.[358] Occasionally, politics and medicine mutually reinforce each other's pursuit of their respective goods within an established order, e.g., the design or rule for health insurance to allocate significant spending on futile life-sustaining treatments.[359]

However, the concomitance of (bio)political power and medicine with such a conception of health and (medical) good has turned out to be limited. The political in medicine pertains to questioning the existing conception of medical good, envisioning a new one, and trying

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our interventions, and the risks and sacrifices they entail, are justified only if they serve the larger aims of a person's life.' (302)

[356] For the narrow focus of doctors on 'repair of health' and the absence of the view concerned with 'how we live in our waning days', see Gawande 2014, 150-1.

[357] Foucault 2003, 22-37 (Ch. 2) illustrates how the political demand to manage epidemics at the state level played a crucial role in facilitating the birth of clinical medicine.

[358] Goffman 1961 (recited by Gawande 2014, 91).

[359] For the case of Nelene Fox, where it was ruled unlawful for the insurance company to deny coverage for (futile and even uncertain) life-sustaining treatments, see Gawande 2014, 203-204. For the allocation of significant health insurance funds to medical interventions for terminal conditions with no hope of recovery, see Gawande 2014, 178-179, 202-203. 'Ultimately, death comes, and few are good at knowing when to stop. ... We fall back on the default, and the default is: Do Something. Fix Something.'

to bring about a radical change. For example, the introduction of "assisted living" for elderly patients, who otherwise would lose vitality under the guise of care, deprived of autonomy over their own lives.[360] Actually, such a change in the conception of health and the social reformations following it are imperative for any society, just as the bodily movements are necessary to maintain bodily health, as mentioned in Chapter 1 (see *Tim*. 88d-e and p. 47-48 above). In this context, the necessity of such a social change comes from the situation of demographic change, in which managing and caring for elderly individuals with limited remaining years in such a manner is not only ethically but also economically untenable.[361] Asclepius is ὁ πολιτικός, in that he represents an ideal figure who tries to do it by reference to the absolute good for human beings and is able to rule a whole society based on such a good by *using* his own expertise. I believe this to be the most far-reaching interpretation that can reasonably be derived from the Asclepius Passage.

3.5. Return to the *Charmides*: Can an Economic System Thrive Without Political *Epistêmê*? Or What Is the Role of the *Epistêmê* of the Good in it?

Let us take up the issue that we deferred earlier and examine it further (see p. 124 in Section 3.2 above): the one who possesses the *epistêmê* of the Good itself is evidently supposed to know that he has it and that he is able to evaluate whether others have it or not. As a result, civic justice or the common good in respect to politics can be promoted in such a way that only those well qualified, the philosophers, can be permitted to exert political power, and other citizens, producers, reconcile themselves to the notion that political involvement is not for them by virtue of their lawful character. However, can the *epistêmê* of the Good itself, being itself only an *epistêmê* for using, also promote the optimal production of goods in a society? Through what mechanism does the exertion of the *epistêmê* of the Good itself contribute to the increase of material wealth? This is the unresolved question that remains after reading the *Charmides*: the dialogue makes the impression that Critias' idea of temperance—as *epistêmê* of *epistêmê*—concerns itself only

[360] For the assisted living aimed at 'a place where people like Lou Sanders could live with freedom and autonomy no matter how physically limited they became', see Gawande 2014, 105 ff. In his terms, it had been regarded at its first appearance as 'hard to imagine' and 'fundamentally dangerous' by 'many longtime advocates for the protection of the elderly.' This is an instance of what I mean by "radical political change."

[361] For the limitations of existing healthcare and caregiving approaches in responding to demographic changes and societal aging, see Gawande 2014, 47-49: 'Few societies have come to grips with the new demography.' For Gawande's appeal for radical political change, see 283: 'We have the opportunity to refashion our institutions, our culture, and our conversations in ways that transform the possibilities for the last chapters of everyone's lives'

with efficient production without any errors, whereas the *epistêmê* of the Good itself is concerned only with the moral or civic good, not the material good. Therefore, Schofield sees no practical orientation in its functioning.

The answer to this question is that, to some extent and in the short term, a human society, as an extensive cooperation system solely aimed at its material preservation, can prosper without the *epistêmê* of the Good itself by producing conditional goods. In the *Charmides*, the ideal city in Socrates' dream encounters no hindrance in the production of goods, even though Socrates regrets the absence of the *epistêmê* about good and bad. In the same way, in the *Republic* (II. 369b-c), Plato observes that the human conditions alone—as human beings by themselves are insufficient, they need each other—make possible the construction and maintenance of a city of producers (the "First City" or "City of Pigs"), even though they are not yet virtuous in Plato's sense.[362] In the same vein, despite falling into disorder, the Atlantis in the *Critias* still appears "beauteous and blessed" due to its possessions and power (121a-c). Similarly, the historical Athens during Socrates' existence is filled with things the people desire and is even effectively governed under politicians deficient in virtue (*Gorg*. 517b, 519a). This implies that the *epistêmê* of the Good itself has no exclusive role in production. Regarding production and economy, the life of producers in the Kallipolis or any other Platonic virtuous city is not apparently different from that of ordinary producers, who are oriented to their own self-interest in a well-functioning economic cooperative system. The *epistêmê* of the Good itself and the prudence based on the calculation and maximization of interest will, to some extent, give rise to the same moderate behaviors: diligence and honesty. The *epistêmê* of the Good itself may be employed only to a limited extent in terms of the realization of basic goods. That is, doing one's own work and ruling others to do the same—behaving justly and temperately—can be motivated not only by the *epistêmê* of the Good itself, but also by pursuing one's self-interest.[363]

From a long-term perspective, the *epistêmê* of the Good itself must play its role at some

[362] The argument that the City of Pigs is feasible through rationality in its narrow sense—that is, the pursuit of private interest based on instrumental utility calculation—can be found e.g., in McKeen 2004 and de Lala 2018.

[363] For the allusion to examination among craftsmen in Plato's ideal city, whether someone has relevant expertise or not, see *Resp*. IV. 421e, V. 456d8-10 and 467a1-5, mentioning private examination in the form of parental training or apprenticeship. This is the education provided for producers in Kallipolis. See Reeve 2006, 189-190. See *Gorg*. 514a-e for public examination in political gatherings. *Epistêmê* of *epistêmê* is only problematized when it comes to the Good itself.

point in order to sustain the society when it faces an unpredictable crisis internally or externally. Any society must undergo some changes and discover its limits in responding to crises with its available resources (see p. 47 in Section 1.3.2). The political *epistêmê*, for bringing about a radical social change, plays its role at a critical juncture at which prudence, basic morality, and compliance with a social regulation diverge from the good based on the *epistêmê* of the Good itself. As seen in the Asclepius Passage, the pursuit of medical knowledge and the advancement of medical techniques are, in themselves, commendable endeavors. However, the judgment of whether the life extension they achieve is genuinely good lies beyond the scope of medical expertise. The introduction of such a new dimension of evaluation is imperative, e.g., in the face of unprecedented crises such as the climate crises—whose resolution is increasingly reduced to a matter of technological development, while leaving its underlying causes unaddressed. This evaluation with respect to the use of goods or other expertises, will ultimately contribute to the sustainability of a society and the sufficient provisioning of its needs. It is Socrates' (and Plato's) conviction that the rule of *epistêmê* will eventually turn out to be beneficial in a long-term perspective. This is confirmed by the following remarks in terms of individuals: (1) It is implied in the *Apology* that 'not from wealth virtue comes into being, but from virtue money and other goods for human beings come into being privately and publicly' (*Ap*. 30b2-4).[364] (2) In the last book of the *Republic*, Socrates asserts that a just person experiences good things from both gods and humans, admitting that it was only a stipulation for the discussion to suppose that such a person suffers bad things in their life. In analogy, a wise statesman will make his city more sustainable and livable (*Plt*. 302a, 303a) by his virtue, which empowers its possessor to transcend law and constitution and to propose or instigate a radical political change. The more detailed elucidation of how the *epistêmê* of the Good itself operates in this morally neutral, production-oriented economic cooperative system, and how it affects a radical political change in a whole society, will be provided in Chapter 5 Section 3.

On a related note, if we are concerned about the potential failure or breakdown of the system, we might establish public mechanisms such as law enforcement, social order, or mutual oversight. Furthermore, we could devise institutions or policies to administer these

[364] The consideration of the role of political *epistêmê* and the contribution of a radical change brought about by it to the long-term preservation of a community and to the fostering of livable conditions allows us to avoid an unnatural translation of this sentence as follows: 'Wealth does not bring about excellence, but excellence makes wealth and everything else good for men, ...' (translated by Grube).

mechanisms or enhance their efficiency. These civic functions, which can be regarded as "politics" or *ta politika* as we understand the term in the ordinary sense, can still belong to prudent, calculating, self-interested, and instrumental reason. (Plato is right when he includes the expertise for lawgiving, persuading, and commanding the army in the overall expertise for production.) However, as long as it merely pertains to the governance of an existing social order, it cannot be called political in the same sense in which Plato describes the political. [365] Chapter 4 will delve into the relationship between the civic functions called political and the genuinely political action, exerting the *epistêmê* of the Good itself. It will reinforce one of the arguments presented in Section 1.3.1 about the difference between the political and politics. Additionally, another argument presented in Section 2.3—the second, more crucial premise that the political *epistêmê* is of Forms—will also be buttressed in the succeeding chapter. It will also help us understand in what sense the change triggered by the *epistêmê*-holder is called "radical" in reference to the constitutional order. These argumentative objectives will be achieved by drawing an analogy between *dianoiai* in the *Republic* VI-VII and the three "precious" expertises in the *Statesman*.

[365] It is similar to the point made by Schofield 2006, 129 in contrasting Protagoras' and Plato's views on justice: 'There is simply more to political decision-making than elementary justice and respect for others, even if ... justice is the ultimate criterion of a right decision. Ruling ... requires a theoretical and practical understanding far beyond the basics of morality.' Here, whether to use the term "ruling" or "the political" is just a matter of terminology. The emphasis must be placed on the possibility of deciding upon a justice that seems to transcend a given, existing social constitution. I dispute Schofield's claim that such genuinely political knowledge must be architectonic and concerned with particulars.

Chapter 4

The Parallel between *Dianoia* in the *Republic* and the Three Precious Expertises in the *Statesman*

4.1. Why is this Parallel Important?

This chapter centers on the parallel between *dianoia* in the *Republic* and the three "precious" (*Plt*. 303e9-10: "τὰ τἰμια") expertises ("3PE" below) associated with civic functions. Allow me to clarify the significance of this parallel in the context of our ongoing discussion in three key aspects.

First, this parallel reinforces my argument that Plato is aware of the political difference between politics and the political, as understood in contemporary political discourse. I have consistently argued that we can identify in Plato a distinction between politics in its ordinary sense and the political related to the political *epistêmê*. As I stated in Section 1.2.1, politics or political things in the ordinary sense are generally understood as those that aim, within a given institutional or constitutional framework, at maintaining stability through governing and ruling it (I referred to this as the "rule-centric" conception of politics in Section 2.3.3). Theoretically and practically, this understanding jeopardizes the autonomy or primacy of politics in shaping and leading society. As a result, the question arises: what is genuinely political in the sense that it pertains to a new vision and political transformation, what has come to be conceptualized as "the political." Turning to Plato's texts, I argued in Section 1.3.1 that politics corresponds to "*ta politika*" in ancient Greek texts in general and in Plato in particular, referring to (1) political affairs, (2) activities

regulating them, and (3) the private pursuit of goods in the game set within a given social order. As Rowe has pointed out, the orators, generals, and judges, whose expertises are discussed in the final stage of *dihairesis* in the *Statesman*, were referred to as *hoi politikoi* (plural form), precisely because they dealt with these matters (see Sction 1.3.1.1 above). However, according to Plato's final division, these experts are ultimately revealed to be subordinates of the true statesman, and the title *ho politikos* is exclusively reserved for him. This seems to indicate that, in Plato's view, the kind of politics these experts engage in is distinct from the politics exercised by the true statesman. Yet, it remains unclear whether this distinction was intended to reflect the political difference as conceptualized in contemporary discourse. Applying the discussion of *dianoia* and its counterpart, *noêsis*, to the *Statesman*, based on this parallel, helps us better understand the nature of the 3PE, the nature of political *epistêmê*, and its proper activity. It also explains how the pair of 3PE and the political *epistêmê* in the *Statesman* corresponds to the pair of politics and the political.

The second point of this chapter is to explain how *dianoia* and *noêsis*, and, analogously, the 3PE and the political *epistêmê*, relate to Forms in distinct ways. Given the object-based distinction between cognitive states or faculties (*doxa-epistêmê* or *eikasia-pistis-dianoia-noêsis*), I argue (see 2.3 above) that Forms are exclusively the proper objects of the highest cognition, while they are not the direct objects of *dianoia*, albeit *dianoia* maintains a certain relationship with them that is distinct from that of *noêsis*. If the relationship between *dianoia* and *noêsis* in the *Republic* parallels the relationship between the 3PE and political *epistêmê* in the *Statesman*, and if each item of one pair corresponds appropriately to its counterpart in another pair, then this provides a ground to argue for the second premise of my whole project, namely, that political *epistêmê* is also of the Forms in the *Statesman*. This resists the temptation to read the dialogue as focusing on an *epistêmê* of particulars (see Section 2.3.1). I have already shown that the political *epistêmê* in the *Statesman*, as the *epistêmê* for using law and the legislative expertise (Section 2.2.3), must be of the Forms. My close reading of the Asclepius passage in the *Republic* and other relevant dialogues in Chapter 3 supports the same conclusion—the *epistêmê* for using and ruling is the *epistêmê* of Forms. Chapter 4 aims to reach the same conclusion through a different approach.[366]

[366] Although I have scarcely mentioned the *Statesman* in Chapter 3, Schofield considers this dialogue part of

The last point I wish to make is as follows: If the second premise—that political *epistêmê* is of Forms—proves true, then it allows us to understand how political *epistêmê* relates to the concept of the political: The possessor of political *epistêmê*, unbound by any existing (constitutional, legal, or conventional) order, rules a society by bringing about a radical political change. The basis for my positioning of Plato as a theorist of the political is his affirmation of the possibility of radical political change and the account he gives for it (Section 1.2.2). In Section 1.3.2, I argued that Plato could appeal to the transcendent nature of the Good itself and Forms and to the incommensurability between two measures, which calls for contemplating the unit itself by intellect (p. 51-52 above). This is a suitable point to reconstruct Plato's account of radical change in political terms and to elucidate what it means for a change to be "radical." In short, the judgment and action carried out by the possessor of the political *epistêmê* are radical in that they are grounded solely on the Good itself or the Justice itself, without being bound in any way to a good or a justice that is valid within a given social order. As we shall see, the experts in 3PE operate under a preexisting legal framework in which justice is already established (see especially Section 4.3.5 below). This is how their cognition relates to Justice itself: they accept a justice determined by law, constitution, or the order of a genuine expert in politics as if it were absolutely just, and they limit their role to the realization of it alone. Their activity is not radical because they function within the boundaries of the preexisting constitutional order.

In addition to these three points, a further contribution to the interpretation of the *Republic* is expected from constituting and examining this parallel. One may wonder why Plato, in the *Republic*, with justice as its central theme, scarcely discusses the intellectual or cognitive process through which one can attain knowledge of the Form of Justice. He does it in terms of the unit (VII. 524e), Being (*to on*: 525a, 537c-d), an essence (*ousia*: 526e, 534b), and the Good itself (VI. 505a-bVII. 526e, 534b-c, 540a). He reveals that it is through conflicting perceptions, mathematical investigation, and the dialectical separation

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the series exploring political *epistêmê* as architectonic: the C*harmides*, *Euthydemus,* and *Statesman* (2006, 144-146). Insofar as my argument for including the *epistêmê* of *epistêmê* in the *Charmides* with the *epistêmê* about good and bad is justified, and similarly, the argument that the *epistêmê* for using and ruling in the *Euthydemus* anticipates the *epistêmê* of the Good itself in the *Republic*, then my reading in Chapter 3 alone makes it reasonable to infer that the political *epistêmê* in the *Statesman* is of Forms. The connection between the *Statesman* and the *Euthydemus* is also noted by George Klosk as follows: 'the statesman's art fulfills an unfulfilled aspiration of the early dialogues and represents an advance over the political theory of the *Republic*. There are close parallels with the *Euthydemus*. In that work, the art of ruling is described as a directive art, with the authority to tell other arts when and how they should be applied' (2006, 205).

of the Good itself from all other "images of the Good" (534c). However, since the *Republic* is a dialogue not only about metaphysics and ethics but also about politics and justice, we rightly expect a more comprehensive account of the Form of Justice and how we acquire the knowledge of it. We may think that the seeker of truth approaches justice in the same way he approaches mathematics in order to ascend to the principle of Justice itself.

I suggest that the officeholders or auxiliaries in the *Republic* can be said to have spent their period of service doing precisely that. Melissa Lane (2023) has already sought to uncover the significance of the *Republic* in reconstructing Plato's constitutional theory, particularly focusing on the complementarity between the *Republic* and other, more constitutionalist works, such as the *Statesman* and the *Laws*.[367] However, she says nothing more about the offices in the *Republic* than that they exist in the Kallipolis, and that the roles of ruling and reigning are distributed across age cohorts.[368] My attempt to draw a parallel between *dianoia* and the 3PE elucidates what cognitive state they are in or what cognitive faculty they exercise while performing their official duties. It also elucidates the difference between the ruling of the auxiliaries—which corresponds to politics in the ordinary sense, or "rule-centric" conception of politics —and (to borrow Lane's term) the "reigning" of the "senior" philosopher-rulers in relation to a constitution, law, and the Form of Justice. Based on this parallel, I argue that the 3PE in *the Statesman* can be referred to as "practical *dianoia*."[369] Just as the ten-years long study of mathematics is a preliminary contribution to cognizing the ultimate reality of Forms, their experience of dealing with (legal) justice and goodness in actual social contexts during their public service (ages 35-50), in which they exercise the 3PE, will have the same effect. (This point will be discussed mainly in Sections 4.3.5. and 4.3.6)

In order to establish the parallel between *dianoia* and 3PE, I shall first articulate various elements or aspects of *dianoia* in the *Republic*, drawing from both the text itself and the secondary literature (Section 4.2). Following a brief introduction to the 3PE in the

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[367] Lane 2023, 71-74.

[368] Lane 2023, 213 ff., especially 227-231.

[369] This point is made by Annas 1981, 250. She finds 'some oddities with the *Line*'s classification of cognitive states and their objects'. One of them is the idea that *dianoia* 'is confined to mathematical thinking', which is 'too restrictive.' I take her critique as raising the issue of why concepts related to justice, which correspond to mathematical concepts—a kind of object in *dianoia*—are not mentioned. Although not explicitly expressed, I believe that the time auxiliaries spend between the ages of 35 and 50 represents a period during which they are in the state of *dianoia*, dealing with various images of justice and ultimately becoming convinced of the reality of the Form of Justice.

Statesman, I will apply the features of *dianoia* to the 3PE, examining whether each of these features has a corresponding counterpart on the side of 3PE as described in the *Statesman* (Section 4.3). In the final section of this chapter (Section 4.4), I summarize my discussion, focusing on the three points at which this parallel between *dianoia* and 3PE is significant for my overall argument in this project.

4.2. What is *Dianoia* in the *Republic*?

Before discussing *dianoia* in *Republic* VI-VII, I will briefly review the context in which the dialogue arrives at this point. Regarding the feasibility of constructing an ideal city through speech, Socrates claims that the smallest innovation required to transform the city into the ideal one is that either a philosopher becomes ruler or a ruler comes to practice philosophy (V. 473c-d). The justification for this is likened to the greatest wave (V. 472a, 473c). In order to define who the philosopher is (V. 474b-c), Socrates first establishes the existence of the Forms and their distinct nature from sensibles. He then identifies two cognitive faculties-- *epistêmê* and *doxa*—which are set over (*epi*) the Forms and the sensibles, respectively. Philosophers are defined as 'those who in each case embrace the thing itself' (V. 480a11). Thereafter, he devotes a considerable portion of Book VI (up to 503e) to proving the claim that 'those who are to be made our guardians in the most exact sense of the term must be philosophers' (VI. 503b). The question that follows this claim is 'what subjects and ways of life will cause them [the saviors of our constitution] to come into being, and at what ages they'll take each of them up.' (VII. 502c10-d3).[370] At the center of the discussion lies the problem of explicating the Good itself (504e-505a). However, Socrates is reluctant about the question of what it is (506d) and asks for his interlocutors' indulgence as he employs analogies to elucidate it (VI. 506e-507a, VII. 533a). It is in the analogy of the *Line*, situated between those of the *Sun* and of the *Cave*, that *dianoia* is first identified and thematized.

In the *Line* analogy (509d-511b), Socrates divides a line, proportionally and unequally, into two parts, representing the two kinds of reality in a certain proportion according to clarity: the sensible reality (ὁρώμενον, δοξαστὸν) and the intelligible (νοητὸν, γνωστὸν) reality. He then divides each part again into two sub-parts in the same proportion, this time letting each represent the reality of the image and the original. *Dianoia*, a mode of inquiry

[370] Since answering these questions is completed by the end of Book VII, Books V to VII of the *Republic* can be considered a single, overarching argument for the rule of philosophers.

(ζήτησις: 510b or VII 533b), a disposition (ἕξις: 511d), and a state (πάθημα: 511d), takes the third sub-part of the entire Line.

The secondary literature primarily revolves around two key issues: Since the *epistêmê-doxa* distinction in Plato is based on their proper objects, *dianoia*, if it is to be considered a cognitive state and faculty *sui generis*, must also have its own proper group of objects, distinct from those of other cognitive faculties. So, what can they be? This problem becomes even more complicated due to Plato's assignment of equal length to *dianoia* and *pistis* in terms of clarity, according to his own description of the *Line* (VII. 534a). Given that the features of the cognitive faculty are determined by the nature of its objects[371] and that Plato himself describes *dianoia* as "clearer than *doxa*, unclearer than *noêsis*" (VII. 533d4), the controversy persists over how the objects of *dianoia* and Plato's own descriptions of it *dianoia* in the *Line* can be coherently reconciled.[372] Rather than attempting to directly answer the question of what the objects of *dianoia* are and how much clarity it has, I follow Gerson (2018) in assuming that *dianoia* involves cognizing mathematical truths from hypotheses assumed to be true, leading to sound conclusions deduced from them (though I remain uncertain whether mathematical truths can strictly

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[371] For the homogeneity or similarity between the features of a cognitive state and those of its objects, what she calls the "like-by-like doctrine," see Moss 2021, 71-80 (general), 116-118 (*epistêmê*), and 161-180 (*doxa*). See also Lesher 2010 for his study of σαφήνεια of cognition as determined by the things that are 'directly presented' (180) to a person. For Storey's adoption of this view and his discussion of clarity, see 20-25. At any rate, a dilemma emerges about *dianoia*: if its clarity is on par with that of *pistis*, then its objects must be sensibles. However, this would be inconsistent with the fact that *dianoia* belongs to the intelligible section of the *Line*. On the other hand, if it is clearer than *doxa* but less clear than *noêsis*, there must exist a third category of objects to which such a degree of clarity can be assigned. Yet, the question of what can be posited between Forms and sensibles remains unresolved.

[372] Regarding *dianoia*'s degree of clarity and its proportionate length on the *Line*, there seems to be a consensus that 'Plato simply did not embrace the obvious inference that *dianoia* and *pistis* are equal in clarity' (Moss 2021, 188 n.50). Storey 2022 argues that Plato's claim about the equality of clarity should be taken at face value, while still maintaining that this does not negate the relative superiority of *dianoia* over *pistis*. He, in the end, explains their difference as follows: *dianoia* and *pistis* have the same degree of clarity due to their involvement in sensibles; however, *dianoia* involves properties that 'we are compelled to use reason' to grasp what it is (Storey 2022, 54-55). While Annas 1981, 251-2 regards the problem of the objects of *dianoia* as insoluble unless 'the scheme of the Line breaks down', a number of attempts have been made to answer this question of what *dianoia*'s objects are: are they mathematical intermediates, as believed since Aristotle (*Met*. I. 6. 987b14-18, VII. 1028b19-21) and doubted by Annas 1981, 251 and Burnyeat 1987 and 2000, 22-35? Or are they images of Forms (Smith 1981), and if so, in what sense—mental images (Byrd 2018), abstract images as hypothesized intelligibles (Moss 2021, 181-190), or simply the sensibles (Storey 2022, 33-34, 45-46)? See also Cornford 1932a, 1932b. Since a comprehensive discussion of the objects of *dianoia* and their clarity fall beyond the scope of this paper and exceeds my capabilities, I will rather take an approach that extracts the key characteristics of *dianoia* in a way that circumvents these two questions of its objects and clarity as much as possible, and then apply them to the 3PE.

be called "objects" of *dianoia*).[373] Accordingly, as my argument regarding the parallel between *dianoia* and 3PE progresses, this parallel allows us to say that 3PE constitutes a state or expertise for recognizing things that conform to the constitution (*das Verfassungsmäßige*: see further Section 4.3.5 below).

Below, I list several features of *dianoia* that are explicitly presented in the text and widely accepted by the secondary literature. According to the text and commentators,[374] one who possesses or engages in *dianoia*:

(a) acknowledges the existence of intelligible reality and tries to think about it (4.3.2)

(b) relies on the use of perceptible images as illustration of intelligibles, rather than grasping them directly (4.3.3).

(c) only hypothesizes the existence and nature of intelligibles, rather than giving accounts of them (4.3.4).

(d) proceeds from principles to conclusions with logical conformity at the level of images (4.3.5).

In addition, *dianoia*

(e) leads to the investigation of Forms (4.3.6).

Below, I will examine how the features from a) to e), identified primarily in relation to *dianoia*, also apply, one by one, to the 3PE. From this analysis, I will demonstrate that a parallel can be established between them, allowing us to understand both through analogy. Before embarking on this, I provide a general introduction to the 3PE by answering the question of why 3PE are described as kindred (συγγενῆ) to political *epistêmê* and precious (τἰμια) in the following sub-section (4.3.1). In the last sub-section (4.3.7), I will discuss an additional aspect of the parallel, previously discussed in the context of the *Euthydemus*

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[373] Apart from this debate mentioned in n. 371 and n. 372 above, the discussion in Gerson 2018, 50 sheds light on the issue of the objects of *dianoia*: according to him, they are, basically, the propositions of mathematics, including definitions, axioms, and theorems, each representing 'a manifestation of Being' (49). It includes what Moss calls 'hypothesized intelligibles' or 'abstract images', as well as judgments about each sensible. See also Moss 2021, 183: '*dianoia* is ... *about* Being [her italic]'.

[374] I adopt the features (a), (b), and (c) almost exactly from Moss 2021, 186-187. See also Annas 1981, 280-282; Reeve 2006, 71-79 for (b); Storey 2022 for (a), (b), (c), and (e); Cornford 1932a and Kahn 1996 for (b), (c), and (d); Burnyeat 1987 for (b) and (d); Burnyeat 2000 for (a), (b), (c), (d), and (e); de Waal 2022 for (b) and (e).

(3.3.1), namely, the rule of subordinate *epistêmê*s by the highest *epistêmê*, both in the *dianoia-noêsis* pair and in the 3PE-political *epistêmê* pair.

4.3. The Parallel between *Dianoia* and 3PE

4.3.1. Introduction to 3PE: Why are they Kindred to Political *Epistêmê* and Precious?

The three precious expertises—oratory, generalship, and judgeship—are distinguished from political *epistêmê* in the last phase of the new, extended *dihairesis* (287b-305e). The penultimate separation is made between the sophist and the statesman (291a-303d). The former includes those who govern a city without possessing political *epistêmê* of the justice and the good—all real-world politicians who, despite their ignorance, either disregard the law or adhere to it excessively. It is their ignorance, or lack of political *epistêmê*, that makes them "alien and hostile" to it (ἀλλότρια καὶ τὰ μὴ φίλα πολιτικῆς ἐπιστήμης: 303e8-9).[375] The 3PE are then introduced as "precious and kindred" (τὰ τίμια καὶ συγγενῆ: 303e9-10). I argue that the account of why the 3PE are considered kindred and honored (hereafter, I choose "honored" rather than "precious" (Rowe 2005) for τίμιος) is decisive in determining their nature.

In the ordinary sense, it is understandable why 3PE and their experts are considered honored and kindred to political *epistêmê*. As Ricken comments on 303d-305e, there was virtually no separation between sovereigns (kings or those with other titles), on the one hand, and judges and generals, on the other.[376] The resemblance between a king or a ruler and an orator is not difficult to draw: Aristotle states that the advancement of rhetoric has led competent public speakers to wield power (*Pol*. V. 5. 1305a11-13),[377] and Thucydides reports that Pericles, who 'was at that time ... the most able in speech or action' (λέγειν τε καὶ πράσσειν δυνατώτατος: I. 139. 4; Cf. *Prot*. 318e), was the "foremost" man (πρῶτος: I. 139. 4 and II. 65. 9).[378] Moreover, the rulers, whether they appear as generals, judges, or orators, are honored as such (τιμιώτατοἰ, allegedly due to the "gold" in them: see *Resp*. III.

[375] Rowe 2005, 237 e7-9: 'Existing politicians are 'hostile' to statesmanship in the straightforward sense that they represent its diametrical opposite (ignorance).'
[376] Ricken 2008, 210-211. He refers to Aristotle's historical reports: for the king as general, see *Pol*. III. 14, 1258b22 f.; II. 9. 1271a39 f.; V. 5, 1358a7 f. For the king or the people as judge, see *Leg*. 767a and 768a-b and *Pol*. III. 1. 1275a23.
[377] See Kerferd 1983, 17 referring to Bury 1975 (*History of Greece*, London, 241): 'The institutions of a Greek democratic city presupposed ... the faculty of speaking in public ...)
[378] For evidence that Pericles was a successful orator, see Heitsch 1993, 160 n. 337 and 164-165.

415a5), just as the fatherland (τιμιωτέραν πατρὶς: *Crito* 51a9) and the law (more precisely, the lawful things: see *Resp*. VII. 538e6). In democratic Athens or other cities, it is for the sake of such honor (and the authority and power it entails) that the skills for acquiring it are valued and considered precious. (For the preciousness of an *epistêmê* in achieving something good, see *Euthyd*. 292b and 304b. Although not using the term "τίμιος", the claim that oratory skill is valuable for its objectives, pleasure and power, is generally found in the *Gorgias* and *Phdr*. 257e ff. Also in this respect, *epistêmê* is considered more precious and honored than *doxa* (see *Meno* 97d-98a).[379]

The reason why the experts in 3PE are kindred to the king or ruler and why they are and should be honored lies in the fact that they all speak about justice and the good. A king or supreme ruler, in any form, declares what is just and good for the whole and rules his or her city by being respected and honored. Likewise, orators (including speechwriters), generals, and judges, as ordinary politicians (οἱ πολιτικοί), speak about the good and justice (*Plt*. 293d, 294a, 295e 304a, 304b. Cf. 'the greatest things': 302a and virtues: *Soph*. 223a. See also *Phdr*. 261c).[380] Moreover, justice and the good, however they are understood, are constitutive elements of their expertises. No orator ever claims to persuade something unjust, no judge claims to deliver an unjust verdict, and no general claims to wage an unjust war. The kinship between 3PE and political *epistêmê* consists in this commonality: both concern themselves with justice and the good. (I will revisit this preciousness and kinship in Section 4.3.2).

Then, what sets 3PE apart from political *epistêmê*? First, 3PE are expertises 'with the capacity to perform [practical tasks]' ("αἱ δυνάμεναι [ἐπιστῆμαι] πράττειν": 305c11-d2. Cf. πρακτική: 258d8-e5), whereas political *epistêmê* belongs to the cognitive kind of *epistêmê* (γνωστική: 258e, 259d). When asked about their specificity, since many expertises fall under this productive class (258d-e), one can say that the 3PE produce what claims to be just and (politically) good,[381] as opposed to the products of other craftsmen, like

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[379] See, for instance, *Pol*. II. 9. 1271a15-16: 'no one would ask for office who did not love honor' (Reeve's translation, 1998). For people's pursuit of honor by participating in offices in any form, see VI. 4. 1318b21-27.

[380] Rowe 2005, 236: referring to other studies, he comments that 'the standard expression for 'politicians' is not *politikoi* – 'statesman', or Plato's 'experts in the art of statesmanship' –but actually 'orators and generals' (ῥήτορες καὶ στρατηγοί).' See also Hansen 1983 and Ricken 2008, 210-211.

[381] See Raz 1985 for the idea that a law has authority by being able to have authority: 'first, that one can fail to have authority because one is incapable of possessing it (though even those capable of having authority may fail to have it); second, that since the law claims authority it is capable of having authority.' (302) His point is relevant to my discussion because, while the law claims authority in the name of justice, determining its

blacksmiths or shoemakers. While there is no such thing as "just" plow or "just" shoes, specific policy proposals or declarations of war[382] are always regarded as embodying justice and are expected to do so. "Embodying justice" could be further explained by the Stranger's implicit distinction between various kinds of mediators (*Plt*. 260d-e and 290a) and political *epistêmê*. Their tasks are to deliver, announce, and transcribe "what is just" without engaging with justice itself, as their concern is only to transmit the content intact, not to engage with it as a matter of justice.[383] Since orators and other experts in 3PE produce what they claim to be just and good, and since they do not fall under either of the two categories (mediators or producers of what cannot claim to be just and politically good), they are presumed to know what justice is, of which Plato introduced a Form. (Here, the same mechanism is at play where people assume that poets must have some knowledge simply because they have composed alluring poems about virtues: *Resp*. X. 598b-599a, 600e-601b).

Secondly, the 3PE are differentiated from political *epistêmê* in their source of justice and the good. While political *epistêmê* is self-directing (αὐτεπιτάκτης: 260e5), judging what is good and just with regard to *kairos* and issuing orders, the 3PE are to be ruled and 'to do what has been prescribed for them' (305d). The precise form and content of this prescription will be discussed later. (See further Section 5.2. For instance, is it given as order like "Do this or that now and here"? Is it the only way political *epistêmê* can rule 3PE?) What is clear from the text, however, is that it is given in the form of law, as evidenced by the remarks on the judgeship (305b). Because they are ruled, controlled, and limited by sovereign or law, they can be understood as officeholders, distinct from the arbitrary, ignorant rulers, namely, sophists who may have 3PE but misuse these expertises.[384]

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content, what is just, is the task of the legislature. Can it be argued that his idea supports the view that law, as a peculiar entity capable of claiming authority in human society, is used by political *epistêmê*?

[382] For arguments that war is just when one suffers injustice, see Thuc I. 71.1, 76.2-77.6, 124.1, and many other speeches in it. See also *Resp*. V. 471a-b, where war is seen as a correction of injustice.

[383] This is suggested in 260d11-261a2: the group cannot be considered a political expertise 'just because they all have the feature of issuing directions'. The class of kings belongs to the "self-directing" type of expertise.

[384] Lane 2013 and Lane 2023, 134 argue that the appointed offices in 310e-311a 'can be understood as corresponding to the three precious and kindred forms of expertise'. For 'officeholding as a distinctive kind of rule' see Lane 2023, 9-17, 53-71. As far as I understand, officeholders are rulers subject to various constitutional limitations. Lane's project in *Of Rule and Office* is to show that Plato subjects the rule of his ideal city to such institutional constraints so that it may be exercised according to its *telos*, the good of the ruled. In our context, the experts in 3PE are rulers who exert power over the community and others, under

Although the features (a) to (e) that I argue are shared by *dianoia* and 3PE will be drawn primarily from the *dianoia* side, Plato's own remarks on the 3PE that I have analyzed so far already imply these features. That they belong to a kind of productive expertises corresponds to features (b) and (d), and that they are controlled by a higher instance of justice and the good is linked to features (a) and (c). I will now go through these features one by one.

4.3.2. Acknowledging the Existence of Intelligible Reality and Trying to Think About It: An Ethical Attitude

Now, I turn to the first common feature between *dianoia* and the 3PE: both are characterized by their acknowledgment of a higher reality. In the case of *dianoia*, it is clear that mathematicians and scientists work based on their assumptions of the fundamental principles, including definitions, axioms and theorems. Their existence is more apparent in the case of *dianoia*, due to the effectiveness of mathematical and scientific truth, regardless of whether they have an interest in pursuing these fundamental principles (VII. 525c, 526d, 527d-e). Some use mathematics and science solely for the sake of their practical value, such as for buying and selling," "trading" (VII. 525c-d), commanding and deploying armies (526d, 527c), farming and navigation (527d), and playing musical instruments (531b). Even when they do not know at all in what manner or according to what logic the effectiveness of their intellectual activities depends on the higher reality of fundamental principles, for which Plato introduces Forms, they cannot deny their existence.

In contrast, disagreements emerge more frequently in politics than in mathematics or physics because of the nature of justice and the good (*Euthyph*. 7b-8a, *Phdr*. 263a-b, *Alc*. I. 111b-113b and *Tht*. 172a-b). Moreover, Young Socrates in the *Statesman*, who strongly argues that regulation by law is absurd in many expertises (*Plt*. 299e), nevertheless feels uncomfortable about the rule without law (293e). (If the principle of justice—whether as a Form or otherwise—truly exists and if the possibility of wisdom regarding it can be trusted, then Young Socrates would not need to be anxious about the rule without law.) Considering some devastating consequences of denying the existence of a higher reality for justice and the good, Plato seeks to establish its existence and to distinguish the family (γενεά) of the true statesman and the 3PE experts—those who acknowledge this higher

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the control of law and its equivalent, the sovereign. For the role of law in this regard, see also Sørensen 2018.

reality when speaking of justice and the good in public life—from the family of sophists (291b, 303c2; *Soph*. 268d: ταὐτης τῆς γενεᾶς τε καὶ αἵματος). This distinction relies on their attitude toward the higher reality, which, for Plato, refers to the Forms and their interrelations.

This separation is no less an issue in other dialogues than it is in the *Statesman* and is therefore not novel. The contrast between sophists and true experts in politics first appears in the fictional conversation with *doxa*-lovers (*philodoxoi*) in the *Republic* V (476c-e and 479a-480a), who disagree with Socrates' own claim that their cognition is not of what is, but only of things that are and are not. This degradation by Socrates and Glaucon of the cognitive status of the *doxa*-lovers would likely ignite their anger; however, it is carried out purely epistemologically up through Book V. However, this epistemological concern also carries ethical implications.[385] The allegory of the Ship of State (VI. 488a-489a) and Plato's depiction of the ambience of the Athenian democracy reveal the dangers of this denial of a higher reality. In the allegory, the *doxa*-lovers reappear as the sailors who deceive the shipowner and threaten anyone claiming that the art of navigation can be taught, for such a claim exposes their ignorance and reveals the groundlessness of their seizure of power. Since the navigation expert serves as a metaphor for the philosopher, and given that teachability can be attributed only to *epistêmê* rather than *doxa* (as argued in the *Meno*), along with the firm realist foundation of *epistêmê* emphasized particularly in *Republic* Book V, the denial of the higher reality leads to the denial of the rule of experts. This consequence becomes more explicitly expressed in political terms in the subsequent criticism of the democratic mechanism of Plato's time, where the true political craft (*technê*) is substituted by the sophists' wisdom (*sophia*), which is reduced to a mere knack of picking up on the convictions (*dogmata*) of the masses (VI. 493a6-494a9).[386] By appreciating the Ship of State and Plato's critical view of democracy, we again face the same contrast represented by the *Cave*, but now with an ethical spin. The prisoners, who glorify the guesswork in interpreting the twists and turns of shadows (VII. 516c8-d4), while staying utterly clueless about the world outside the cave, serve as another example of *doxa*-

[385] As Moss argues, Plato's epistemology "is driven by ethical concerns" (See Moss 2021, 138–139 and 234 ff.). Simply put, cognition of the higher reality—that of the Forms—enables individuals to bring about the public good as rulers and to lead a happy private life. The doctrine of philosopher-rulers provides the foundation for the former, while the comparison between the philosopher (the just man) and the tyrant (the unjust man) justifies the latter. See also VI. 493a–494a, 505b–d, and IX. 586a–c for Plato's remarks on the miserable life of *doxa*-lovers.

[386] For the identification of *dogmata* with *doxa*, see *Resp*. VI. 506b and Moss 2021, 186.

lovers. By contrast, the philosophers and their auxiliaries the former educated and selected are unlike the ordinary politicians in the sense that they are not *doxa*-lovers. They acknowledge the existence of the Forms of Justice and the Good, as well as the possibility of *epistêmê* in politics, the proper objects of which are Forms. In this sense, philosophers and their auxiliaries are similar to mathematicians, and in fact, they themselves have been students of mathematics and sciences, disciplines that are especially useful in fostering such an acknowledgment.

Turning to the trilogy from the *Theaetetus* through the *Sophist* to the *Statesman*, we see Plato struggling with the arguments of those who are led to deny the possibility of *epistêmê* by not acknowledging a higher reality that underpins our thought and language. The *Theaetetus* is an extensive yet implicit *reductio ad absurdum* to demonstrate that without assuming the Forms or their "stable" equivalents ("the elements much more clearly known": *Tht*. 206b8-9), *epistêmê* remains undefinable.[387] The plot of the *Sophist* focuses on the collective effort of the interlocutors to capture the sophist (συλλαβεῖν αὐτόν: *Soph*. 235b10), who denies any distinction between what something (F) is and what merely *seems* to be but *is not* (F) (τὸ μὴ ὄν: *Soph*. 237a-258e. Cf. *Plt*. 284B-c). As a result, the outcome is the denial of both falsehood and truth (*Soph*. 240d-241b. Cf. *Tht*. 187d ff.).

The ethical significance of this position, which appears purely theoretical in two dialogues, fully comes to light in the *Statesman*. Plato's concern here seems to me that one who neither acknowledges the existence of a higher reality—in Plato's terms, the reality of interrelated Forms (*Plt*. 285a-b, 286a)—nor contemplates them by asking what is truly just or what is truly good must face the consequence of being unable to meaningfully discern truth from falsehood. Most devastating is the impossibility of the political *epistêmê*: there can be no expertise regarding justice and the good (284b-c. Cf. *Tht*. 177c-179b for the denial of expert authority as a consequence of the doctrine of absolute flux). This is even

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[387] Sedley 2004; Kahn 2007, 39: 'With regard to content, we can say that the argument of the *Theaetetus* has the structure of a double *reductio*. ... If we bear in mind the account of knowledge given in the *Republic*, ... the reasons for failure in the *Theaetetus* will be clear. In this standard Platonic account, the concept of knowledge is, on the one hand, grounded in the metaphysics of Being and, on the other hand, sharply distinguished from sense perception and *doxa*.' Also, Horn and Rapp argue that the objects of *epistêmê* are the objects having '*Einfachheit und Unteilbarkeit*', which confers '*Irrtumfreiheit*' on cognition (2005, 25-26). He identifies the elements (*stoicheia*) in the *Theaetetus* with the "*eidetische*", "*teillose*", and "*einzige Einheiten*," which are the proper objects of the *epistêmê* in *Republic* V (Horn 2011). For this interpretative strand, see also Burnyeat 1990, 238 and n.133: 'another time-honored way ... to say that the whole dialogue ... is designed to offer indirect support to the two-world epistemology,' and Moss 2021, 230-233.

worse than when *epistêmê*, through which we judge something good correctly, is simply unattainable or hard to attain, because we cannot expect to make correct decisions, either privately or politically. (Should we then hope, as Socrates ironically says in *Meno* 99c-d, that politicians are simply divinely inspired and equipped with sound *doxa* (*eudoxia*)?) In that case, people enact as law what merely appears good and just (as in the case of Athenian democracy),[388] or they are ruled by those who regard what pleases political elites to be good and justice. That they are wrong in acknowledging such a reality is the real harm that necessarily befalls the state (302a-b). It is therefore these sophistic political elites and democratic legalist citizens whom Plato would label as *doxa*-lovers, like the sailors in the *Ship of State* or the bound prisoners in the *Cave*.[389] Yet, one might insist that someone who denies the Form of Justice and of the Good could still be an orator (or speechwriter). Thus, Plato goes further to demonstrate that oratory cannot subsist as an "expertise" without presupposing the Forms of Justice and the Good. We see Socrates refuting Gorgias, who attempts to separate his oratory expertise from the knowledge of justice without success (*Gorg*. 459d-461a). In the *Phaedrus*, the good orator or speechwriter and the dialectician become almost inseparable (*Phdr*. 261a: '... unless he [Phaedrus] pursues philosophy properly, he will never be able to make a proper speech on any subject either.' See also 5.1.2 below). In a similar way, it is noteworthy that Socrates refers to only those who acquitted him as jurors (*Ap*. 40A2-3), consistent with his claim that 'the excellence of a judge lies in this [concentrating attention on whether what I say is just or not], as that of a speaker lies in telling the truth' (*Ap*. 18a4-6). It seems to me that Plato does think that oratory, generalship, and judgeship—expertises inherently concerned with justice and the good—must be grounded in the Forms of Justice and the Good in order to endure as *epistêmê*.

4.3.3. Relying on the Use of Perceptible Images as Illustrations of Intelligibles, rather than Grasping them Directly

Although acknowledging a higher reality explains why philosopher-rulers and mathematicians/scientists in the *Republic*, on one hand, and the true statesman and the experts in 3PE, on the other hand, belong to the same family (συγγενῆ), it does not

[388] Horn 2021b, 193: 'democrats do not consider politics to be an art or a science. In Plato's eyes, democrats misunderstand lawgiving as a practice of permanent deliberation or as rigid rule-following.'
[389] Ricken 2008, 209 mentions the *Ship of State* to identify ordinary politicians in existing constitutions: like the sailors on the *Ship*, they are well-versed in taking power.

distinguish them from each other. The following three features will accomplish this distinction. The main point in this section is that both those in *dianoia* and those in 3PE use perceptible images as illustrations of intelligibles rather than grasping them directly.

In the text, *dianoia* is characterized as a cognitive state that uses perceptibles as images of Forms (VI. 510b4, 510d5–511a1, 511a6–9). Socrates confirms this by pointing out how mathematicians and scientists work with visible, perceptible figures or movements (VII 527a-b and 529a-530b). However, one should recognize that these are mere images of reality and not to be treated as objects of learning themselves. In this light, Moss rightly identifies Socrates' ability to illustrate the reality of Forms through perceptibles as *dianoia*.[390] According to her, the introduction of *dianoia* as a distinctive cognitive state resolves an interpretatively puzzling line that seemingly supports Plato's thought that there is *doxa* of Forms. When asked about what the Good itself is (VI. 506d), Socrates hesitates to give a clear answer and instead deploys metaphor, simile, or allegory to represent the world articulated by the Forms and their interrelations. Of course, he is aware that the *Cave*, the *Line*, the *Sun*, etc., are mere images and that, as images, they come with inherent limitations in representing reality.[391] Thus, if we follow Moss's analysis of *dianoia*, we should refer to three kinds of entities to arrive at a general account of *dianoia*: (1) the perceptible objects, which *dianoia* uses as images; (2) the hypothesized intelligibles, which are abstract images of Forms, Forms-*qua*-hypotheses; and (3) the Forms themselves that people "dream about." According to her, *dianoia* is *about* the Forms, but what it deals with or what it is *set over* are still images.[392]

What are the images and the hypothesized intelligibles in the context of the *Statesman*? The question of the latter will be answered in the next section (4.3.4). Here, I will address the question of what images are in terms of politics. In general, images in the *Republic*, whether εἴδωλον, εἰκών, νόμιμα, or ὁμοίωμα, refer to the perceptibles contrasted with what truly is (τὸ ὂν or τὰ ὄντα).[393] To elaborate further, these things are always many, the objects of perception (beloved by *doxa*-lovers), images that are part of or share a Form (as in the *Cave*), what is F and not F (Book V), and what seems F but is not really so (such as the

[390] Moss 2021, 186-190.
[391] Moss 2021, 190-193. The limitations of writing or language itself in containing *epistêmê* (in the *Phaedrus* and the *Seventh Letter*) can also be explained through their status as images. See Kahn 1996, 371 ff..
[392] Moss 2021, 189-190.
[393] For *nomima*, see Moss 2021, 19 n.10.

image of virtue in Book X and the image of Justice in Book IV).[394] Besides, what is crucial for our context is that in terms of politics, the most illuminating description is that they are imitations produced in accordance with the Forms (Book 10). In Chapters 2 and 3, I argued that Plato considers all expertises, apart from political *epistêmê*, to be aimed at production, with products that are only conditionally good. This applies equally to the products of the art of politics in its ordinary sense (as discussed in *Euthydemus*). As a result, the just things or politically good things are the images of the Form of Justice and the Good itself.

As noted in 4.3.1, it is clear that the experts in the 3PE, ordinary politicians (those actively involved in politics), or officeholders, deal with particular just and good things. The orator's (and speechwriter's) task is to propose decrees and persuade others by crafting a story or a speech suited to a particular situation, specified in terms of, for example, "whom," (*pros tinas*: 304d4; *hekastais*: 304e5) "how," and ""who, for what, and how (persuading or compelling), or nothing to do". Generals achieve victory in a war declared just, according to considerations of "who and how, or whether to fight." Judges deliver legal judgments (κρίσις or δίκη) that claim to be just. Their justice is always something ordered as just by the statesman; Plato's vocabulary here clearly implies that they operate within particular, specified contexts. In this sense, they can be described as producers of images of justice and the good (305c11-d2. Cf. πρακτική: 258d8-e5). In the *Republic*, guardians are sometimes described as craftsmen: III. 395C: "of freedom"; VI 500d: "of public virtues", because their justice and good are understood as just and good within the given particular circumstances. A proposal, judgment, and execution of an order may be just at one time but not at another, good for some but not for others.

One might wonder if it also applies to the sophists, recalling that they too make images (εἰδωλοποική, εἰκαστική, φανταστική: *Soph*. 234e-236d, 264c-268d). However, the first

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[394] Moss 2021, 97 specifies four ways of contrasting entities across different ontological level in the framework of Plato's two-world metaphysics: '(Contrast 1) What fully or purely is versus what is between being and not-being (*Republic* 479c–e); (Contrast 2) Being versus becoming (genesis) (*Timaeus* 27d–28a, *Republic* 534a, *Sophist* 248a, *Philebus* 59a); (Contrast 3) What is F (or what the F is) versus "the many F things" (*Phaedo* 74d–76d, *Republic* 507b); (Contrast 4) What is versus its likenesses or images (*Phaedrus* 250a–250b, *Republic* 597a)'

Horn 2011 expounds '*in welchem Sinn ist das „Eine" Gegenstand des Wissens, wahrend das „Viele" Gegenstand des Meinens sein soll*' (226) by introducing an eidetic, not numerical, concept of unity, that is, partlessness and signularity (*Teillosigkeit* and *Einzigkeit*: 235 ff.). Only each Form has this unity, while all other entities deficient in being appear as many.

feature I just discussed, the attitude of acknowledging a higher reality, makes a significant difference between 3PE experts and sophists. The former recognize that their products, which claim to be just and good, are merely images in relation to the principles of justice and the good as their originals. They understand the difference between what is (F) and what seems (F), or what *is* and *is not* (F). They acknowledge that it is, in principle, impossible for Justice itself or the Good itself to be fully realized in the sensible realm, and they *concede* that their role is limited to dealing with images of justice. If they believe that what they are doing is not production of images of justice and instead insist that their proposal, decree, judgment or any political action is just, without any ontological consideration of what justice truly is, then they are sophists. They attempt to ground "being just" not on the Form of Justice, but on something else, such as the interest of the stronger (I. 388c-399a) or the whims of the people (VI. 493d-e. Cf. *Tht*. 167c, 172a-b), simply declaring that it is justice. The result is the production of false images of justice and the good.

While sophists, by rejecting these principles, generate false images and ultimately lack true expertise to act as orators, generals, or judges (see p. 160 above), true experts in the 3PE produce true images by acknowledging the existence of the higher principles of justice and the good that they must follow. Just as those in *dianoia* in mathematics and the sciences can discern whether a solution or an answer is correct or incorrect, there can be true *doxa* in which one can correctly judge just and good within the practical realm. In this way, the guardians of Kallipolis are able to produce a true image of justice,[395] while ignorant politicians deceive others with a false judgment, treating a seemingly just or unjust thing as if it were truly just.[396]

The discussion of imitation as a product of image is most detailed in the *Republic* X and the *Sophist*. There, Socrates distinguishes between two kinds of producers—one who follows the order of a knower and another who does not (X. 601e-602a). In the case of poetry, even if the products of both kinds of poets—poems—are images, the product of the former, though less pleasant (III. 389b), is worth admitting into the Kallipolis (X. 607a),

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[395] See how advocates of the traditional understanding of the object-based distinction between *epistêmê* and *doxa* clarify the production of true images of Justice or the Good from *epistêmê* in 2.3.4 and n. 282 above.

[396] Reeve 2006, 226-7 rightly contrasts what he calls "T-imitation" (a type of imitation performed by tragic poets: 223) with the imitation of philosopher-rulers mentioned in the *Resp*. V. 500c2-5. For the argument that *mimêsis* is a kind of production, and that translating it as "imitation" overly fixates on what is imitated, that is, the intended object, see Harte 2010, 77-78 and 69 n.1.

while that of the latter belongs to the kind of poetry that Plato harshly criticized for appealing to the irrational part of the soul. In the *Sophist*, this contrast is drawn more clearly between εἰκών (likeness) and φάντασμα (illusion), as well as between their corresponding forms of expertise (εἰκαστική vs. φανταστική), or between the imitation of a knower and that of an ignorant person (ἱστορικὴ μίμησις vs. δοξομιμητική: 267b ff.). Plato not only stresses the ethical attitude of mortal humbleness but also seeks to establish the epistemic source from which one produces true images. The points I have made so far are not always clearly expressed in all remarks about the experts in 3PE, but they are evident in remarks of the judge and judgeship (305b-c): they "take over" and "refer to" things already established as law when adjudicating, implying an epistemic standard. Looked through the lens of the *Republic*, judges produce true images when the Good itself, and the knowledge of it, serves as the criterion; but do not, if, for example, pleasure serves as the criterion (as with the judges likened to children in *Gorg*. 522a-b). Therefore, Plato requires that anyone who wishes to engage in politics in a democracy—that is, to become a judge or an orator—must first pursue an inquiry into the Forms of Justice and the Good or their equivalents (in Plato's ideal city, compliance with the laws made by the wise rulers would be sufficient for political aspirants to serve as officeholders).

The idea that *dianoia* and 3PE can deal exclusively with images and are not involved, both constitutionally and intellectually, in inquiry and knowledge of what is Good itself and Justice itself raises an interesting point. It explains why *doxa* is sufficient for auxiliaries, explicitly in the *Republic* and in general (in the *Statesman*, the true *doxa* mentioned in 309c and 310e is enough for officeholders in 311a). It has been interpreted as a form of Plato's pessimistic realism: while the perfect guardians (φύλακες παντελεῖς: 414b) possess the cognitive competence required for *epistêmê*, those who are short of it remain auxiliaries. But I believe that the reason and consequence should be reversed: it is not that they are auxiliaries because they cannot go beyond *doxa*, but rather that they do not need *epistêmê* because they are auxiliaries as practitioners.[397] In the passages where Plato emphasizes the role of *doxa* in the guardians (III. 412b-414b, IV. 429a-430c), his concern is almost entirely with whether the guardians can fulfill their duties (ἔργον), not with a

[397] Therefore, based on the outcome, it can be said that both *epistêmê* and true *doxa* provide correct guidance for human beings in political action, as seen in *Meno* 99a ff., if politics is understood as the handling of particulars.

theoretical discussion.[398] What is at stake is whether they can do what they are supposed to do (III. 412d-e; 413c). For this, it is natural that Plato's language reflects only his interest in *doxa* (III. 412e, δόγμα and δοξάζειν: 413a). In the second text (IV. 429a-430c), what is expected of them is specified as "things that the lawgivers declared" (IV. 429c2) or simply "laws" (IV. 430a), which implies that a lawful attitude does not constitute knowledge. As becomes clear here, it is practice, including war and service as a soldier (IV. 429b), that interests Plato.[399]

4.3.4. Only Hypothesizing the Existence and Nature of Intelligibles, rather than Being Able to Give Accounts of them

Another notable characteristic of *dianoia* is that it takes principles, such as axioms and definitions and theorems as given hypotheses for investigation, without providing an account for them (VI. 510c5-d1, 511a4-9, c8-d1, VII. 533c2-6). This feature is familiar from learning mathematics and solving math problems. As Burnyeat suggests by invoking the *Elements*, 'there is no other way of doing deductive mathematics than by deriving theorems and constructions from what is laid down at the beginning.'[400] Scientists and mathematicians study squares or diagrams, but without questioning their nature or investigating them further, they only make statements that are drawn from, for example, the definition of a square or the inherent properties of an isosceles triangle (they can do it, but no longer *qua* mathematicians or scientists, rather, *qua* philosophers). When Plato describes the objects that students of *dianoia* engage with as "honored" (VI. 511a7-9: τετιμημένοις for the mathematical objects), I take this to stress their readiness to accept these principles even without demonstration (otherwise, they would be described as

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[398] All discussions up to Book IV, regarding poetry and physical education, from the luxurious city to the selection of ruling guardians, originate from this very question about the practical goal: see II. 374d-e. There are only a few allusions to the later theoretical discussion, such as "knowing λόγον (402a, cf. 533c)", "στοιχεῖα" (402a) as analogs of the Forms, and "*epistêmê*" (409c) of judges for knowing what is unjust (and just).

[399] Thus, I do not agree with Klosko's comments on civil virtues (2006, 82-86). He states that 'because he believes correct opinion is inherently weaker than knowledge, Plato seeks to compensate by choosing as his auxiliaries individuals who have strong characters and educating them with extreme care.' (85) However, two things contrasted with each other in the IV. 429a-430c are not *doxa* and *epistêmê*, but civil *doxa* and slavish *doxa*. The inherent insecurity or deficiency of *doxa* is not thematized here, so his reading is a retroactive projection of the (content-based) distinction between doxa and epistêmê in Book V to this passage.

[400] Burnyeat 2000, 37. (also cited by De Waal 2022, 146). See also 27: 'It is the hypotheses that make it possible to use 'visible forms' (diagrams) to think about abstract, non-sensible objects. Socrates says that mathematicians argue about visible forms in order to reach results about something else. Without a more or less explicit idea of what that something else is, the procedure would be aimless.'

"known").

Now, what does it mean for an orator, general, and judge to hypothesize without offering an explanation? Two points stand out:

First, the axioms and definitions given at the beginning of all mathematical and scientific investigations function analogously to law, which serves as a set of principles for any public decision-making. When *t*he experts in the 3PE humbly acknowledge that there exists Justice itself or the Good itself, which they may not address directly, this means they accept the prevailing conception of the good and justice as embodied in law. As noted previously (see also 2.2 above), the law's inherently inferior nature means it is not the Justice itself but rather its image, an *abstract* image.[401] Here, by "abstract," we mean that law represents a provisional conclusion answering the question "What is F?" and therefore can guide politically active citizens and lawful officeholders, being readily applicable to particular circumstances (see 3.4.2 above regarding law substituting for understanding of the Good itself or philosophy and 4.3.5 below). Due to its status as an image, law has ontological limitations: it takes the form of orders, "do this or that," without providing reasons. This is corroborated by the critique of writing in the *Phaedrus*, where a written text 'remain[s] most solemnly silent' and 'continues to signify just that very same thing forever' when questioned in pursuit of further understanding (275d-e). The same applies to law as text (278c. Cf. *Nom*. IX. 858c-859a).[402] Thus, a state of lawfulness constitutes a form of *doxa*, a state where things appear to be a certain way without a rational justification (*Resp*. III. 401e-402a; see also VII 538c-d for the children of the ideal state, obedient to the law, and echoing the legislators about the just and the fine). Moreover, law requires provisional obedience for action while allowing only for retrospective modification, since the ideal of a wise ruler prescribing for every subject in every situation remains unrealistic; therefore, he must use law as a necessary instrument for ruling.[403] Before the moment of the political, law serves as the ground of justice and the good in a

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[401] Moss 2021, 189.

[402] Trotz-Liboff 2023, 410ff. for the application of the critique of writing in the Phaedrus to the law of the Laws.

[403] Sørensen 2018 reinterprets the value of the rule of law in Plato as residing not in the 'subordination of the rulers to a legal ... order' or in 'institutional checks or regulation' (407), but rather in its status as 'the generalist instructions of an expert' (411), and thereby 'an approximation to ideal rule of knowledge' (414). Law can play this role, even though it provides no complete explanation of why one must follow it. For the issue of whether and to which extent a ideal ruler requires law, see Trivigno 2021, Trotz-Liboff 2023, Yoon 2024 and Mckeen 2025 and n. 189 on p. 76 above.

given society, just as we must accept a theory or a system of axioms to solve a given mathematical or scientific problem, remaining open to the possibility that the theory or the system itself may need revision. (For instance, we do not expect an elementary school student solving a problem about the hypotenuse of a right triangle to ask, 'Are we assuming Euclidean geometry?').

Now, the other point concerns the demarcation of the respective domains of expertise: It is by virtue of political *epistêmê* that one can engage with Justice itself or the Good itself, determining and knowing what they are. Hence, this is the proper expertise for reconsidering an established law. In contrast, experts in 3PE accept the law as given, just as mathematicians and scientists accept their hypotheses as starting points. Those in *dianoia* and experts in 3PE operate within an already established (intellectual and practical) framework. Questioning the existing framework or attempting to substitute it with another is not a role assigned to *dianoia* or the 3PE. Within constitutional boundaries, *3PE* are exercised to effectively realize justice, as determined by the law, through its application to particular cases.

To put it in terms of the distinction between the political and politics, 3PE pertain to politics (not to the political), as defined and understood so far, in that they do not aim to question the validity of a given preexisting social and legal order. They may do so, but no longer *qua* orators or judges; instead, *qua* philosophers or statesmen, in Plato's sense. This idea becomes clear when we consider our expectations of experts in 3PE in ordinary public life: we do not expect a judge to reflect on the nature of Justice itself, thereby neglecting existing law and issuing its own judgment independently. A judge must maintain neutrality between political factions that hold differing views on what constitutes justice. If a judge abandons this neutrality, they become politicians.[404] Likewise, we do not expect a general to claim superior wisdom about justice over politicians. If a general claims to have a better understanding of justice than ordinary politicians or the law, then his claim or his action based on it constitutes precisely a *coup d'état*. If he does so, he acts not *qua* general, but *qua* politician.

[404] Ricken 2008, 212: 'Keine Kunst kann über s*ich selbst herrschen; … Die untergeordnete Kunst kann sich selbst ihre Gesetzte geben; wie der Musiker die ihm vorgegebenen Gesetze der Harmonie* (*Resp*. VII. 531bc) *anwendet, so der Richter die Anordnungen des Gesetzgebers*.'

4.3.5. Proceeding From Principles to Conclusions about Particulars with Logical Conformity

Dianoia is characterized as the state (*hexis*: VI. 511d4, *pathema* in the soul: d7) of investigating (*zêtein*: VI. 510b5 and 511a1) from hypotheses left unexplained, taken as beginning, to end with conformity (*homologoumenôs:* VI. 510d2), in the course of reasoning. Of course, *dianoia* shares some overlapping aspects with *dianoianoêsis* or *epistêmê* in the narrow sense (whose proper method is dialectic).[405] Both involve moving from what has been previously established to what follows, in accordance with or conformity with the former (*noêsis*: 511b, *dianoia*: 510b, 510d). *Dianoia* is deductive in a strict sense,[406] while Plato's dialectic, as deductive inference first introduced in the *Meno* and applied in the *Phaedo*, is deductive in the sense of "according" (συμφωνεῖν and συναδειν), which is 'stronger than logical consistency and weaker than logical entailment'.[407] This is why dialectic is, for Charles Kahn, 'more like the notion of theory construction in mathematics or physics'.[408]

In my view, the crucial distinction between *dianoia* and *noêsis* in our context, is that the object with which the investigation begins in *dianoia* is particular, and the conclusion it reaches is about particulars. The most exemplary case appears in the *Meno*, where the example questions for mathematical reasoning concern "this" particular diagram. In order to emphasize the role of hypothesis, Socrates states that setting hypotheses is necessary for making judgments about "this" particular thing (86e4-87b2). Also, in the conversation led by Socrates with Meno's slave, which proves Plato's so-called "theory of Recollection," what interests him is "another figure twice the size of *this* one, with the four sides equal like *this* one" (82d5-6). This is sought on the basis of hypotheses such as the definition of a square (82b10-c2) and the proposition taken for granted—that the line stretching from one corner to the other of a square, called "diagonal" (85b4), cuts the square into two equal

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[405] Schwab 2016, 59-60: dialectic is a method, while *epistêmê* is the cognitive state itself.

[406] For the deductive nature of mathematics, see Kahn 1996, 294: 'a partially or provisionally axiomatized system of deduction', and 362: 'as a deductive science mathematics ...'; Annas 1981, 274: 'hypothetico-deductive procedure of putting forward a hypothesis and then testing its application to observed facts'; Burnyeat 2000, 13-19: 'Greeek mathematics typically involves deduction from hypotheses, ... The great value of mathematics is not ... the rigorous procedures of mathematical proof,' in contrast to dialectic, which 'is not deductive proof, but philosophical discussion aimed at testing and securing definitions, ...' (45).

[407] Kahn 1996, 315.

[408] For his understanding of dialectic as a generalization of its version in the *Phaedo*, see Kahn 1996,315-317; Reeve 2006, 78 describes its result as 'a dialectically defensible, fully mathematized, unified theory of everything.'

isosceles right triangles (84e4-85a2). In a similar vein, harmonists must determine whether *a* given set of tones forms a harmony (VII 531a). When Plato criticizes the harmonists of his time, he targets their method, which relies on their ears rather than the analysis of ratios. In my view, the demand we glean from Plato's remarks is that they should use hypotheses to reach conclusions. For instance, they should rely on provisional knowledge such as "which numbers are consonant and which are not" or "what the explanation of each is" (VII. 531c).[409] Based on them, they make judgments about a given set of sounds through deductive inference. The conclusion a geometrician or harmonicist draws from hypotheses concerns a particular and is itself both a sensible truth about that particular and a manifestation of Being.[410]

How can this feature of *dianoia* be translated into the practical realm? As discussed, the experts in 3PE are those who consider what is good and just; they recognize that they deal with images of justice and the good; and they begin with what has already been established as just and good, namely, the law. Their goal is to produce the best and most just outcome in a given situation, derived from general principles that embody the Good or Justice itself to a more or less limited extent. Orator is placed in a position where one must craft a speech suited to a particular occasion, as seen in the selection of a speaker for the funeral oration in *Menexenus* (234b) or in private gatherings where a hymnic speech (dedicated to Eros) is delivered, as in the *Symposium* and *Phaedrus*.[411] Judges find themselves in

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[409] On the same question about a particular set of sounds, there were two harmonicist approaches in antiquity: the "empirical harmonicists" believe that 'the principles governing musical relationships are autonomous', like Aristoxenus who claim 'that harmonic properties such as consonance are primarily subjects of experience for a musically trained ear and cannot be traced to numerical ratios' (Isola 2016, 22). The "mathematical harmonicists" think that they are subject to mathematical theories which are understood through numerical ratios'. For these two approaches, see Burkert 1962, 350-351: '*zwei Schulen von Musiktheoretikern*'; For harmonics as a numerical science, see Crickmore 2003, and quotations in Eirini 2023, 336. Though Plato may align himself with the latter, he does not confer on them an educational value: see Burnyeat 2000, 13-14.

[410] De Waal 2022 stresses the status of the diagram as a particular image or instance of the Form, which enables investigators to move toward generality and discover the truths of reality. In this sense, the objects of *dianoia* are, on one hand, sensible objects, as argued by Storey 2022, and on the other hand, mathematical truths that are "the manifestations of the Being," as Gerson 2018 claims. For a similar formulation, see also Burnyeat 2000, 22 and 42: 'Mathematics provides the lowest-level of articulation of the world as it is objectively speaking.'

[411] Each particular speech either reflects knowledge of its subject matter or is evaluated based on such knowledge, after being delivered. For such evaluation, see *Symp*. 199d-201c (for Agathon's speech) and *Phdr*. 263d-266b (for Lysias' and Socrates' speeches). The thought process from knowledge to speech can be described as *dianoia*, while the evaluation is carried out by the user of the speech and the one who rules the speaker. In this sense, making and evaluating a speech differs from a purely dialectical inquiry into its subject

situations where they must discern whether "this" person—e.g., Socrates—is guilty or not, and whether he should be sentenced to death for "this" wrongdoing. This applies equally to private life: Socrates himself had to decide whether to escape from prison, just as in the *Laches*, decisions had to be made regarding what his sons should learn. Philosophically, as seen in the *Meno*, we always proceed from hypotheses to conclusions, since the argument aims to demonstrate a particular attribute of virtue. Whether a policy, decision-making, action, law, or speech is good and just, or how one produces something good and just in the manner described, are questions to be dealt with in the state of *dianoia*, or are the questions that prompt us to enter the state of *dianoia*.

Let me attempt to illustrate schematically how experts in the 3PE conduct their activities in a manner analogous to the investigations carried out by those in *dianoia*, i.e., mathematicians and scientists. For instance, a sovereign might declare that justice lies in equality of distribution. Whether or not the content of the knowledge of the Form of Justice can be expressed in language, such as "doing one's own work" or "equal distribution," it cannot be fully realized in the sensible realm due to metaphysical limitations. (Alternatively, every formulation remains open to the reinterpretation or further questioning about the terms it contains, such as "What is equal?" or "What is distribution?") Addressing these questions belongs to dialectic, not to *dianoia*. Thus, it becomes necessary to represent the Form of Justice through its image, namely, the law—general and abstract enough to address diverse cases involving justice through specific determinations: equality among whom (men, women, citizens, non-citizens), by what standard (merit, absolute equality), and in what regard (wealth, rights, opportunities). Given such a law, 3PE experts apply these established rules to particular situations, seeking what is best and most just here and now. What they seek to produce is justice, as if it were really a perfect realization of Justice itself. They respect the law without challenging it, recognizing that it is not their proper task. Thus, while the objects of the theoretical *dianoia*, including mathematics and the sciences, are mathematical truths ("the mathematical"), the objects of the practical *dianoia*, including 3PE, are the things in accordance with law ("*das Verfassungsmäßige*").

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matter—in this case, Eros. Politis 2021, 84-85 uses the *Phaedrus*' central question as the example to illustrate his understanding of dialectical investigation as 'the sense-based, aporia-based justification of Forms'. There, the question is 'whether it is better to enter into an intimate friendship with a person in love with one or, on the contrary, with one not in love with one.' (84). Dialectical inquiry involves identifying and asking further questions necessary to answer the original question. This does not pertain to any specific speech.

Hence, I agree with Moss claiming that philosopher-rulers 'are much more like people who have something higher than *doxa*, namely, *dianoia*, in that they 'recognize perceptibles as mere images of Forms', and are 'exercising some cognitive power not yet named: one that, like *dianoia*, looks back and forth between perceptibles and intelligibles.'[412] However, if the distinction between *dianoia* and *noêsis* proves to be constitutional and theoretically significant, through the parallel between *dianoia* and 3PE in the *Statesman* (and accordingly, between *noêsis* and political *epistêmê*), then a distinction should be drawn between two moments in the cognition of the philosopher-rulers. As I stated in Section 2.3.4, proponents of the object-based distinction between *epistêmê* and *doxa* attempt to dispel concerns raised by critics—those who think that, when the philosopher-rulers possess only *doxa*, they lack the competence to deal with the images of justice and the good. These defenders appeal to the true *doxa* through the application or derivation (*Ableitung*) from *epistêmê* to *doxa*. I diverge from this view by arguing that philosopher-rulers' value lies not in the accurate judgment about the sensible realm but in their capacity to engage in the genuinely political. Once they must engage with the sensible things, the cognition of *noêsis* necessarily gives way to *dianoia*: they adopt existing laws and accordingly exercise 3PE to make sound judgments on the good and justice in particular cases.[413] But this constitutes *politics*, not *the political*.

I believe this distinction between the political and politics helps us answer whether even philosopher-rulers obey the law or rule their city independently of it.[414] That they are viewed as lawmakers for Kallipolis while also having no need for law themselves gives rise to a paradox—their status appears to be both within and beyond the law. Based on what I have argued so far, I propose a solution to this issue: On the one hand, they are law-abiding *qua* rulers or practitioners operating in the state of *dianoia*, not *epistêmê*. On the

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[412] Moss 2021, 130.

[413] Reeve's idea of dialectic is an opposing view to mine. He interprets Plato's descriptions of dialectic as involving both an upward and a downward path. Once the philosopher-rulers grasp the reality represented by the world outside the cave, they take the downward path and cognize the things inside the cave, not according to opinion but according to knowledge (2006, 77-78). This view fails to do justice to Plato's fundamental idea that cognition is defined in relation to its proper objects. *Epistêmê* (or *noêsis*)—the infallible, most stable, and clearest cognition of the Forms—is not for the sensible things. In the cave, another kind of cognition must be at work. Must it then be *dianoia*?

[414] Ellison 2019, 260-261: 'What, then, is the relationship between the law and its legislators, the philosopher-kings? ... Some [laws] they are specifically commanded to obey. ... I find it likely that philosopher-kings will be willing to go against the letter of the law, if doing otherwise would be manifestly foolish, contrary to justice, or harmful to citizens.'

other hand, they are sovereign *qua* philosophers, unbound by existing law, and can legislate through an unhypothesized investigation in *epistêmê* (VI. 511b-c, VII.533c-d). Of course, the *Republic* conflates the role of sovereign and constitutionally bound officeholder, since, as Schofield rightly points out, the proposal of this work is that 'philosophers should themselves become kings' and kings 'in ruling it [the good city] once it has been established.'[415]

However, if the distinction between *dianoia* and *noêsis* matches the distinction between the sovereign (unbound to law thanks to his *epistêmê*) and the officeholders (who exercise 3PE), then such a parallel can also be drawn within the division among philosopher-rulers themselves. Indeed, Melissa Lane (2023) draws a distinction between "junior" guardians (35-50 year-old 'apprentice rulers' holding military commands and responsible for political affairs: VII. 539e-540a) and "senior" guardians, who are sovereign or rulers *par excellence*. In Lane's terms, those who 'reign' (*basileuein*) imply the absence of any further constitutional authority above them and ruling without being ruled by anyone.[416] As compensation for Lane's dissatisfaction that 'little is said about the nature of the "offices" held by the thirty-five-to fifty-year-olds' and the observation that Plato mentions the existence of offices in the Kallipolis 'without much detail',[417] I suggest that my discussion at least sheds light on the intellectual capacities and corresponding public activities of these junior rulers. I argue that the rulers of this kind are the experts in 3PE and possess *dianoia*. That they are warriors and experts in generalship is strongly emphasized throughout the *Republic* (II. 374b-e, III. 415d-e, IV. 429b, V. 466e-468a, VII. 522e, 525b, 526d, 537a, d, 539e-540a). Although Lane reserves judging for senior guardians,[418] junior rulers likely work as judges, as seen in the *Laws*, where Plato defers the discussion of legal judgment on specific cases and entrusts such tasks to the jurymen who 'have received a good education and been examined by all kinds of tests' (IX. 875d-876e).[419] The experts in

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[415] Schofield 2006, 184. This is a divergence between the *Laws* and the *Republic*. In the *Laws*, he says, the political strongman (corresponding to the philosopher as founder) is not a manager or ongoing ruler.

[416] See the whole Chapter 7 in Lane 2023, 213-246. Lane draws a distinction to show that the rule of the Kallipolis is constitutionally well-limited, in that it is subject to the reign of senior rulers, which functions as a constitutional safeguard. Another safeguard is 'legal provisions' (231), such as 'The legal deprivation of property and kinship, along with the legal institution of wages for officeholders; the conservation of age-related eligibility and rotation; the limited, age-related powers.' (244) For the term "reign," see 236-7.

[417] Lane 2023, 231.

[418] See Lane 2023, 241-2. Her argument is primarily based on the III. 409b4-5: 'a good judge must be not a young person, but an old one.'

[419] On the subordinate role of judges and courts in the *Laws*, see Horn 2021c, 26.

oratory, described as those who are 'capable of persuading masses and crowds through the telling of stories and not through teaching' (304c10-d3), correspond to the storytellers of the "Noble Lie" in the *Republic*.[420] This persuasion is likely one of the tasks assigned to the apprentice rulers. Even though this discussion of what exactly these junior rulers do in their cities as officeholders is speculative, my point remains valid: Insofar as it is only the philosopher-rulers who are able to enter *noêsis*—inquiring into and grasping, to varying extent, the full reality of Forms and their interrelations through the proper method of dialectic—their auxiliaries, the junior apprentice rulers, must exercise rule without any cognitive contact with that reality. Since it is explicitly stated that legislation belongs to the senior group, the task of the subordinate rulers is to apply the law, which is necessarily an image of what the philosopher-rulers have seen outside the cave, to the sensible world in the cave. My point is that such an activity is, by definition, conducted only in the state of *dianoia*.[421]

4.3.6. Leading to the Investigation of Forms: How do 3PE lead to the Good and Justice itself?

If the analogy between *dianoia* and 3PE holds strictly, then 3PE, just like mathematics and related disciplines that help students grasp the higher reality of Forms, should likewise be able to make the same contribution, especially with regard to the Form of Justice and the Good. This also explains how the fifteen years the guardians spend performing their duties through the 3PE contribute to their full development as philosopher-rulers.

Plato believes that the study of mathematics and the sciences facilitates the realization of the existence of a higher reality, the image of which is what they are actually dealing with. 'The goal of the mathematical curriculum is repeatedly said to be knowledge of the Good

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[420] Rowe 2005, 237 d1 and Ricken 2008, 212 point to the passage in the *Republic* in their commentary on the passage in question in the *Statesman*.

[421] If those in *dianoia* only "mechanically" apply the pre-established law to individual cases, while the rule of philosopher-rulers goes beyond the law, then might the latter be regarded as the decent persons (οἱ ἐπιεικεῖς: *EN*. V. 10) in Aristotle's sense? My answer is yes, provided that *epieikeia* is not construed through the lens of particularism. Aristotle says of the decent legislator as someone who act correctly beyond the established law, such that 'he would have prescribed, had he known, in his legislation' (*EN*. V. 10.5 1137b22-24, translated by Irwin 1999). This means that the legislator enacts laws that are capable of encompassing the particular case (For the refutation of the particularist understanding of *epieikeia* see Horn 2021c, 34). That is, he does not merely react to individual cases, but rather seeks out the principles that ought to be reflected in legislation. When new principles are discovered through particular cases, he legislates on their basis. (Of course, if he is not in a position to legislate, he may just act contrary to the law—but this depends on the contingencies of his situation as a decent person, not on any defining feature of his decency.)

(526de, 530e, 531c, 532c). That ten-year immersion in mathematics is the propaedeutic prelude (531d, 536d) to five years of concentrated training in dialectical discussion (539de), which will eventually lead the students to knowledge of the Good.'[422] To explain why, the following points can be made. First, mathematics fosters an attitude of acknowledging the existence of a higher reality (see 4.3.2).[423] Its objective validity proves the existence of truths that are 'context-invariable', thereby affirming the reality of 'abstract, non-sensible things.'[424] Plato seems to believe that the repeated and varied problem-solving in mathematics leads to the *epistêmê* of mathematics in general (*Meno* 85c-d). Second, mathematics and the sciences reveal the hierarchical structure of intelligible reality, serving as an example for it. Socrates says that the study of subjects belonging to *dianoia* is beneficial only when it grasps their kinship to each other (κοινωνία and συγγένεια and how they are οἰκεῖα: *Resp*. VII. 531c9-d3). Similarly, we are told that future guardians should develop a unified vision (σύνοψις) of these kinships and "the nature of that which is" (VII. 537b7-c3).[425] According to Moritz Vogel (2024), the order of subjects in the curriculum reflects a hierarchy of objects for each of them. The simple principles (here, the units and numbers) at the top serve as the presuppositions of thought (*Denkvorausgenzungen*) for more complex objects of the subordinate subjects (motions, sounds, solids, and planes), determined abstractly and precisely through the relations and proportions of numbers. The kinship inherent in this hierarchical structure of subjects and their objects in mathematics and sciences instantiates the general structure of intelligible reality. Finally, when incommensurable magnitudes emerge, inquiry into the one (unit) itself begins (VII. 524d–525e).[426] The unified vision of kinship and this whole structure facilitates dialectic, that is, the inquiry into the Forms by ascending to more fundamental presuppositions and their interrelations, from the simple to the complex.[427]

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[422] Burnyeat 2000, 5.

[423] Storey 2022, 43-44: '*acknowledge* ... the existence of intelligibles like the 'square itself'; and 51: 'It makes the guardians familiar and receptive to the study of intelligible entities.'

[424] Burnyeat 2000, 19-22.

[425] My reading of 537c2-3 (σύνοψιν οἰκειότητός ἀλλήλων τῶν μαθημάτων καὶ τῆς τοῦ ὄντος φύσεως) follows Slings, who omits *τε* before *ἀλλήλων*. Burnet, however, includes *τε*, and accordingly, both the English translation and Vogel 2024, 63 and 71 link *τῆς τοῦ ὄντος φύσεως* in parallel with *ἀλλήλων τῶν μαθημάτων* to *οἰκειότης*. However, the idea that the nature of what is—itself that which is to be grasped—has kinship with the disciplines that grasp something seems strange. Rather, it sounds more natural to understand that the unified vision of the kinship of subjects facilitates a unified vision of the nature of what is. This better fits Vogel's argument.

[426] Vogel 2024, Kap. 2, especially 95-101.

[427] Vogel 2024, 101: '*Die Zusammenschau leistet bereits einen ersten und wichtigen Teilschritt der*

Now, one may rightly ask how the study of mathematics and sciences not only leads to the inquiry into and knowledge of their own foundations (mathematical Forms) but also to the inquiry into and knowledge of the ethical Forms, such as the Good itself and the Justice itself. Burnyeat identifies the inquiry into the conceptual foundations of mathematics with the inquiry into values, because values, such as virtue (concord, justice), beauty, and unity, are expressed in terms of mathematics.[428] I propose a different view, which clarifies how *dianoia* and the 3PE are analogically the same at this point: Having acknowledged the existence of a higher reality through mathematical education, the future guardians undergo the same process in relation to the practical and ethical realm as they did in mathematics. That is, after five years of training in argumentation, they spend fifteen years in the cave, engaging in public affairs through the exercise of the 3PE (VII. 539d-540a).

Simply put, since apprentice rulers' work—both in theory and practice—involves applying the law to individual cases (all being images of Justice and the Good), their twenty-year service can itself constitute a recollection of the original Forms of Justice and the Good.[429] However, I propose a more nuanced picture of how they ascend to the Forms of practical, ethical values. It is likely that junior rulers find themselves troubled by cases where conflicting instances of justice or the good arise, like the Finger passage (VII. 523a-524e) or the problem of incommensurable lengths. In such cases, they are inevitably compelled to ask what Justice itself is and what Goodness itself is (see p. 51-52 in Section 1.3.2 above).[430] Such experiences, however, are perilous for young people who have just turned twenty and have not yet learned mathematics. This is explained by Plato's warning against the premature engagement with argument (VII. 537e-539c). These young people initially possess a lawful *doxa* regarding the good and justice, acquired through education (538c6-d5) in poetry and physical training. However, when challenged by argument (λόγος: d6-e3), they begin to doubt what they were taught under the law (e5-539a2), ultimately becoming lawless (*paranomos*: a3), disillusioned thirty-year-olds (a8-10) who have lost

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Dialektik.'; 102: '*noch einen Schritt weitergehen*'

[428] Burnyeat 2000, 46 ff. See also Storey 2022, 51: 'Some commentators argue that ... the content of mathematics is essential to the study of ethical concepts.' See also n. 72.

[429] As De Waal 2022, 151 ff. points out, 'the geometrical diagram is the paradigm case of a sensible object that has the power to prompt thought and recollection', as seen in the *Meno* and *Phaedo*. Law is described as an image of Justice itself and as "reminders" (ὑπομνήματα: *Phdr*. 276d3, ὑπόμνησις: 278a1. Cf. *Nom*. IX. 858c-d) of the justice, the good, and the fine.

[430] I found the same idea in Storey 2022, 54-56. "Just" and "good" are the properties that 'stimulate the kind of ontological enlightenment, ...'

any faith in what they once believed (c1-2). By contrast, if they have learned mathematics, they 'imitate someone who is willing to engage in discussion in order to look for the truth' (539c6-7), when confronted with such refuting arguments or experiences of conflicting justices. The problem, however, is that such challenges continue to arise even during the public service careers of prospective guardians (ages 35-50). They are "pulled this or that way" (ἑλκόμενοι πανταχόσε: 540a1), just as the youth are "pulled by argument" (Cf. τῷ ἕλκειν ... τῷ λόγῳ 539b5-6). Their experience of being "pulled" can be interpreted as a temptation by competing propositions—challenges to the lawful convictions they earlier held. In fact, it is precisely in their engagement with images of justice and the good that they are most likely to experience this pull. That is, when they encounter an image of justice that differs from what they know, the question "what justice or the good truly is" inevitably arises, though the ultimate answer is not theirs to determine. The parallel holds further because fifteen years of public service as experts in the 3PE contribute to their eventual development into philosopher-rulers by leading apprentice rulers to ask what X is, not as a mere game, but in a disciplined manner.

4.3.7. To be Controlled by a Higher *Epistêmê*

The last feature I wish to highlight is that both *dianoia* and the 3PE are governed by *epistêmê* or by the ruler who has the authority to decide whether a subject should be taught or not. As I argued in 3.3.1, the *epistêmê* of Forms possessed by the philosopher-rulers is also the *epistêmê* of using and ruling over subordinate *epistêmai* in the *Republic* (especially the mathematical and scientific expertises), with greater emphasis on its aspect of use. The other aspect, the *epistêmê* of ruling, is brought to light through comparison with political *epistêmê* in the *Statesman*. In this dialogue, political *epistêmê* is the *epistêmê* that determines whether to learn a given *epistêmê* or not. At first look, the *epistêmê* of deciding whether to learn and the *epistêmê* of ruling—in the sense of deciding when, where, or to whom it should be exercised, may not look the same.[431] However, if the political *epistêmê* is to be understood as the *epistêmê* for evaluating the conditional good brought about by a productive *epistêmê*, both in general and in particular, then for Plato, these two aspects are not disparate. For instance, not only is speech in general good as a channel of wisdom to the citizens, but also *a* speech is good insofar as it helps lead them toward a virtuous life. In both cases, political *epistêmê* is defined as being of the Good

[431] For the interpretation of *kairos* that rejects its temporal nature, see Ricken 2008, 214-215.

itself.[432]

Admittedly, the first aspect of ruling *epistêmê*, namely, the decision whether to learn a subject or not, is prominent in the *Republic* VII. This idea dominates the entire discussion of the preliminary education for guardians and surfaces most conspicuously in the debate over whether solid geometry should be included in the curriculum (VII. 528a6-d1). The point here is that "the researchers (ζητοῦντες) need a director (ἐπιστάτης)"(b6-7), whose role is "to give an account of its usefulness" (c5-6) and to "take the lead in valuing it", together with the whole city (c1-2). This director must be someone who already knows the hierarchical structure of intelligible reality, as reflected in the structure of mathematical reality, and who knows why forming a unified vision (σύνοψις) is necessary for future philosophers. In short, he is the one who knows what is good about learning each subject, which is reduced ultimately to the knowledge of the Good itself. In this way, both 3PE and *dianoia* are ruled by the *epistêmê* of the ultimate good in the sense that the former decides which subject should be learned. The parallel between them is thus recognized at this point as well.

4.4. Conclusion: Why are 3PE not Genuinely Political?

In this concluding section, I demonstrate how the parallel between *dianoia* in the Republic and the 3PE in the *Statesman* substantiates my threefold purpose: (1) to clarify the distinction between politics and the political in Plato; (2) to reinforce the argument that political *epistêmê* is of the Forms; (3) to answer the question of in what sense the change brought about through political *epistêmê* is radical.

As I argued in the concluding part of Chapter 3, civic functions (deliberating, judging, and administering) are included in any (highly differentiated, complex, and extensive) society for the governance of an economic cooperative system for producing goods. When a society holds a basic conception of the good as the maintenance of material living conditions and economic prosperity, and to the extent that this aim is supported, it develops a form of justice and law that determines and specifies it.[433] Even Plato admits that every city

[432] For this differentiated but complementary relation between two aspects of the political *epistêmê*, see Ricken 2008, 212: '*Durch die Anwendung auf die Kunst des Redners, Feldherrn und Richters wird dieser grundsätzliche Unterschied differenziert und ergänzt. Die herrschende Kunst entscheidet nicht nur über das Erlernen, sondern auch darüber, ob die erlernte Kunst im einzelnen Fall angewendet oder zu einem anderen Mittel gegriffen oder überhaupt nichts unternommen werden soll.*'

[433] Höffe 2011, 56-57 understands the First City as '*ein freier Markt, der die strengsten Maßstäbe des*

originally stems from human need (*Prot*. 322b-d, *Resp*. II. 369b-c. Cf. *Plt*. 271e for the idea that the need for a constitution (*politeia*) primarily comes from the need for material subsistence). It naturally aims at economic prosperity through the efficient production of more goods. The public affairs dealt with in such a society are *ta politika*, and those engaging with it are called *hoi politikoi*. The 3PE in the *Statesman* count as expertises for engaging in *politics* in this sense. However, how might such a society, as a well-functioning economic cooperative system through specialization and division of labor, respond effectively when confronted with its limits? Some crises may be overcome through routine public deliberation and decision-making, consistent with Popper's idea of piecemeal engineering, allowing for band-aid solutions.[434] But what if this society remains fixated on production efficiency, preoccupied solely with the seamless operation and management of the current order while stifling the possibility of radical change?[435] There is no reason to assume that every radical change necessarily aims at the radical realization of a specific historicist or aestheticist vision.[436] Rather, it is likely that a society is bound to face numerous adverse consequences in the long term without bringing about a radical change, such as a climate crisis, geopolitical tensions, or a drastic decline in birth rates. I have argued that, according to Plato, as well as in line with the spirit behind the introduction of the term "the political," the political pertains to questioning the existing order, envisioning a new one, and bringing about a radical political change. While politics, understood as managing and governing for stability, is ubiquitous, it cannot be said that the political exists in every society.

What constitutes politics in the sense of managing and governing for stability, and why is it not genuinely political? In addition to what I argued in Sections 1.2.1 and 1.3.1, the parallel

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neuzeitlichen Anarchismus erfüllt'.

[434] Aruzza 2012, 276: Plato's radicalism 'provides us with better and more relevant tools to consider change in the political domain than Popper's defence of piecemeal engineering and liberal democracy.'; 278-9: 'How could fallibilism argument apply to situations which are so corrupted that no partial reform is possible anymore?'

[435] Ober 2017, 107: 'the environments in which human societies function are typically mutable ... via exogenous shock ... endogenously through the ongoing development of institutions and norms.' In n.6 on the same page, he interprets Plato's thought as an example of attempts to arrest the process of endogenous change. However, as long as any actual state exists in the sensible realm, suffering external changes is inevitable. Plato's actualized ideal state is, as Arruzza 2012, 275 argues and as I point out with reference to the *Timaeus* (see p. 47-48 in Section 1.3.2 above), must be able to initiate counter-movements in response.

[436] Popper sees radicalism as inevitably linked to historicism and aestheticism. I have presented an alternative view in 1.3.3 above that the maintenance of political unity can be interpreted as a condition for a society to sustain and promote livable conditions.

I have drawn in this chapter provides an answer: Plato's innovation in the *Statesman*, already anticipated in the *Gorgias* by the portrayal of Socrates, who claims to be the only true politician (521d6-8), lies in the idea that the 3PE are not themselves the political *epistêmê*, nor are their experts statesmen—just as mathematicians and scientists are not philosophers. They are politicians in the sense that they engage in politics understood in its ordinary sense: they deal with the affairs of a city by participating in public activities. However, Plato considers their activities to be a form of production, not the use of goods based on what is considered truly good, the knowledge of which constitutes the political *epistêmê*. In this chapter, I further argue that, for Plato, the 3PE do not concern Justice or the Good itself, but rather just and good policy, law, action, and decision, each of which is an image of justice and the good, claiming to be justice and good (Section 4.3.3). It is the law, as an 'abstract images' of justice and the good, and as the provisional conclusion of the inquiry into the question of what Justice itself and the Good itself are, that enables them to produce these images of justice (Section 4.3.4). Their job is to apply the accepted law to individual cases (Section 4.3.5). It is not that they perform deficient or wrongful acts; they are not sophists or ordinary politicians producing something seemingly just and good, but rather those having faith that the Justice itself and the Good itself really exist and acknowledging that they are unable to speak of them (Section 4.3.2).

However, the reason why they are not genuinely political is that all descriptions of the 3PE, analogous to those of *dianoia*, indicate that the 3PE are not themselves of Forms. Just as it is not *dianoia* but *noêsis*, which rules (Section 4.3.7) and uses (Section 3.3.1) the disciplines belonging to *dianoia*, is of Forms, so too the *epistêmê* that is described as ruling and using the 3PE is of Forms. I have argued that the political pertains to questioning an existing social order, envisioning a new one, and bringing about radical political change (Sections 1.2.1-1.2.2). It is in this sense that the activity of the possessor of the political *epistêmê*, such as Socrates, is *genuinely political*, as discussed in Sections 1.3.1-1.3.2. I have also argued that, for this concept of the political to be applied to Plato, the political *epistêmê* must be of Forms. This is because the desire for the inquiry into and realization of the Forms, due to their openness and transcendence, is precisely what enables such a genuinely political activity (1.3.2 and the second, more crucial premise in Chapter 2).

Now is the time to clarify what "radical" means. The 3PE begin with hypotheses that determine what justice and the good are, and their function is to produce things judged to be just and good according to those hypotheses, which are given in the form of law. The

reason why the rule of law is the second-best is that even the law itself, with which the 3PE start, is a mere image of justice and the good, due to its inherent ontological deficiency. The term “radical” applies when a challenge is made to the law that is understood as the ultimate principle determining what counts as justice and the good within a society at a given moment. As illustrated in Section 3.4 (p. 142 n. 359 above), a judge (or a jury) who rules that denying insurance coverage for unverified life-prolonging treatment is unlawful operates in line with an unexamined hypothesis: “health is defined in terms of life extension”. This assumption is embedded in both the explicitly established law governing healthcare and in the broader normative and moral framework upheld by society. However, for Plato, and in general, life extension is not health itself, let alone the Good itself. Of course, it does not mean that the jury or its judgment is unjust or morally wrong; rather, it means that its product—a legal judgment—is always less good (and hence an image of the good) from the perspective of Asclepius or the true statesman. It follows that when a judge questions what health itself is or what is unconditionally good for a patient or for human beings, the judge is no longer acting *qua* judge but *qua* statesman, like Asclepius. Similarly, in the case of the general, his/her expertise and virtue lie not in questioning what is good and just for the entire society, but in achieving a just victory in a war that has already been declared just. If a general attempts to go beyond this role, it amounts to claiming that he or she is a politician. (Of course, many such attempts by generals throughout history have ended merely as coups). In any case, questioning the legal order itself and bringing about change in it can be considered radical, as it may lead directly to the creation of a new order. A judge or a general cannot act in this way *qua* judge or *qua* general. If they do, they are acting as statesmen, claiming to have political *epistêmê* of the Forms. The 3PE are political, but not in this sense.

Chapter 5
The Political in the *Statesman*

In this chapter, I engage with the *Statesman* and an influential reading of it while building on the arguments presented thus far. The goal is to substantiate two central premises for reading Plato in terms of the concept of the political: Plato believes that political *epistêmê* must be of Forms and that he does not change his view on it until the composition of the *Statesman* (and probably of the *Laws*). In Section 5.1, I reinforce my claim that political *epistêmê* in the *Statesman* is of Forms or equivalent general principles[437] by arguing that it is not sufficient to define it as the knowledge of the *kairos*. I have already demonstrated that political *epistêmê* turns out to be of the Forms when understood as the *epistêmê* for using law (Section 2.2) and other goods (Chapter 3). I have also argued that it corresponds to *noêsis* in the *Republic* when the parallel between *dianoia* and 3PE is firmly established

[437] Disclaimer: Whether we may say of Forms in the *Statesman* is debatable. It is true that in the *Statesman* (as well as in the two preceding works of the trilogy), there is no direct reference to the theory of Forms, nor a clear treatment of the metaphysical status of entities (mentioned, for instance, in 285a-b and 286a) that might be interpreted as Forms. While I argue for the continuity with the *Republic*—where Plato's commitment to this theory is most clearly articulated—through the discussions from Chatper 2 to 4, it remains uncertain to what extent this legitimizes speaking of Forms in the *Statesman*. In addition to this, as I have pointed out elsewhere in this dissertation, it can be adduced that the *Theaetetus* demonstrates—by *reductio ad absurdum*—that the definition of *epistêmê* requires the existence of certain stable entities; that the *Sophist* explicitly introduces fundamental Forms; and that in dialogues written after the *Statesman* (such as the *Philebus* and the *Timaeus*), the theory of Forms reappears. The question of whether εἶδος in these contexts should be understood as "Form" or rather as "kind" opens up a much broader inquiry into the metaphysics of Forms—one which I cannot fully undertake here. What I do wish to stress, however, os that the absence of explicit references to Forms should not be taken to mean that Plato regarded political knowledge as concerned with particulars. Nor should the presumption that political knowledge must be of particulars serve as a ground for excluding possible allusions to the Forms in this dialogue. In the interest of terminological consistency, I continue to capitalize "F" in "Forms" in Chapter 5, though I do not thereby claim to resolve all interpretive difficulties surrounding Plato's late treatment of this theory.

(Chapter 4), leading us to think that political *epistêmê* is indeed of Forms. Here, I will argue that the judgment of kairos presupposes knowledge of Forms or equivalent general principles, a claim I will support by examining how Plato, in the *Statesman* as well as in the *Phaedrus* and the *Laws*, conceives of expertise concerning a subject matter (e.g., speech, health, and justice). In Section 5.2, I challenge Melissa Lane's emphasis on the statesman's (or the political *epistêmê*'s) role in directly commanding subordinate experts on "when" to do "what." I argue that the political expert can perform their tasks not by issuing direct orders to everyone, but by creating good laws. In this way, he acts as a political weaver. These challenges aim to overcome interpretations that read Plato through the lens of political particularism, a reading that is not only inconsistent with my own reading but also has its own weaknesses (see Sections 2.3.2 and 2.3.3).

In Section 5.3, I will present five scenarios illustrating how political *epistêmê* manifests and operates within a society, building on our previous discussions (see Sections 2.2.3, 3.2, and 3.5). Each scenario depends on how the political *epistêmê*, law, and other civic experts in the 3PE relate to one another. They range from the absence of political *epistêmê* to its possession by private citizens to its concentration in the hands of the ruler. The ultimate goal in every scenario nevertheless remains the same: for each citizen to lead a just life while fulfilling their role—both as a public official or as a professional—and for the society as a whole to be political in the sense that it brings about radical political change and long-term prosperity. Lastly, in Section 5.4, I explore what happens in these different political communities by focusing on the site of the political and the idea that "everything is political." In Plato's ideal state, everything is political in the sense that no element of society is irrelevant to the success of the state, and everything can be political insofar as evaluations and critiques of various (pre-established) elements of society can become sites of radical political transformation. Drawing on certain passages in the *Laws*, where Plato describes seemingly non-political things as πολιτικόν, I examine how these ideas can be understood within Plato's thought.

5.1. What is the Nature of the Political *Epistêmê* in the *Statesman*? Knowledge of Generals or of Particulars?

5.1.1 Is the Political *Epistêmê* in the *Statesman* of the *Kairos*?

Having discussed the standard developmentalist reading between the *Republic* and the *Statesman*, along with other interpretations, specifically a divergence reading (Schofield,

2006) and a complementarity reading (Lane 1998, 2023), there still appears to be a more or less broadly accepted consensus that the *Statesman* does not clearly express a commitment to the theory of Forms.[438] By contrast, I have already argued that political *epistêmê* turns out to be of Forms when it is understood as the *epistêmê* of using law (Section 2.2) and other goods (Chapter 3), and that it corresponds to *noêsis* in the *Republic* when the parallel between *dianoia* and 3PE is well established (Chapter 4), leading us to think that the political *epistêmê* is indeed of Forms. From these arguments, it would follow that certain phrases in the *Statesman* (285a-b: 'the community (κοινωνίαν) of the many things,' 'one likeness' (μιᾶς ὁμοιότητος), and 'some real class'(γένους τινὸς οὐσία); 286a: 'the things that are without body, which are finest and greatest') can be interpreted as glimmers of the Forms in interrelationship. However, I will set aside the metaphysical discussion of the middle and late dialogues for now and instead examine the passage that most clearly seems to convey the idea that *epistêmê* is of particulars (305c10-d5).[439]

> If then one looks at all the sorts of expert knowledge that have been discussed [3PE], it must be observed that none of them has been declared to be statesmanship (πολιτική). For what is really kingship must not itself perform practical tasks (πράττειν), but control (ἄρχειν) those with the capacity to perform them, because it knows (γιγνώσκουσαν) when it is the right time to begin and set in motion the most important things in cities, and when it is the wrong time (ἐγκαιρίας τε πέρι καὶ ἀκαιρίας); and the others must do what has been prescribed (τὰ προσταχθέντα) for them.

Here, political *epistêmê* is said to command (ἄρχειν and προστάττειν) other subordinate expertises and to know the *kairos*, that is, when to do something. This passage is read to imply that the possessor of the *epistêmê*, understood as infallible knowledge, knows precisely what to do here and now.[440] Like other particularist readings of Plato's conception of *epistêmê*, this view attributes to Plato a doctrine of worldly omniscience on

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[438] Lane 1998, 16 for Owen's reading and her adoption of it. For further reluctance by commentators, see Kahn 2013, 228 n.12; Ricken 2008, 241-2; McKeen 2025, 19 n.23.

[439] The translation used here is Rowe's. Lane 2021, 195 calls this passage S1, as it contains the first of three defining passages of political *epistêmê*. For her own translations, see Lane 1998, 142; 2021, 208; and 2023, 129.

[440] Lane 1998, 132-136 and 142-146: 'mastery of the *kairos*' or 'knowledge of timing'; 2006, 180: 'ruling knowledge is ... knowledge of the good in time (the *kairos*) ... such inherently flexible knowledge'; 2021, 204, 208-209; 2023, 116, 129.

the part of the wise ruler, rendering his political thought vulnerable to criticism (see Sections 2.3.2 and 2.3.3). I will now argue that this is not the only way to interpret the passage in question in the *Statesman*, nor the contexts before and after it.

The first point to note is that the division is made not between *expert persons*, but between *expertises*. This is important because it opens up the possibility that the statesman is a title for anyone who possesses political *epistêmê*, regardless of their first-order profession.[441] In other words, the distinction between political *epistêmê* and the 3PE does not necessarily entail a rigid division between the persons who possess them. For instance, the image of a king with political *epistêmê* issuing orders to each expert in 3PE is just one possible, and somewhat simplistic, scenario. We have also seen that a doctor himself can be called "statesman" by Plato, thanks to his knowledge of "whom to cure and whom to let die," though it is likely reserved for an almost divine person like Asclepius (Section 3.4). This case suggests a more complex interaction between political *epistêmê* and the 3PE than the simplistic one: "statesman orders, orator, judge, and general obey." When a king himself judges and legislates in terms of justice or the good correctly, he can only do so both as a political expert and as a practitioner—that is, *qua* judge at one time and *qua* legislator at another.[442] Without this personal ordering-ordered relation, the using-used and ruling-ruled relationship between expertises can be analytically identified within the same person. I will revisit it in Section 5.2.

Secondly, it is questionable to claim that political *epistêmê* is inherently tied to *kairos*. Lane characterizes the statesman as one who possesses "the knowledge of *kairos*."[443]

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[441] "First-order" and "second-order" are the expressions of Lane 1998, 141-2: "first-order" contrasted to 'the second-order control which statecraft exercises over the other arts'.

[442] Hence, when we say "philosopher-ruler," "philosopher-legislator" (Wolin 2016, 65), we have to keep in mind that such person possesses both the expertise that make one a philosopher and another that makes one legislator (generally, a ruler), just as Asclepius possessed both political *epistêmê* and medical expertise. The same applies to the relationship between political *epistêmê* and oratory skill. The possibility of the "philosopher-orator" is suggested in the *Phaedrus*, but it emerges more explicitly in later thinkers who were deeply influenced by Plato. According to Cicero's *De Oratore* and Al-Farabi's *The Perfect City* V. 15. 12-13 both emphasize that the ideal ruler must possess not only philosophical expertise but also oratorical skill. This, in turn, implies that the two are distinct faculties. For Cicero, see Atkins and Trotz-Liboff 2025 and for the translation of Al Farabi's passage, see Walzer 1985, 246-253: 'a fine diction, ... tongue enabling him [an ideal ruler] to explain to perfection all that is in the recess of his mind'; 'good at guiding at the people by his speech to fulfill the laws ...'

[443] Lane 1998, 5, 136, 139, 144, 146, 163, 164, 177, 185, 186, 199. According to her own footnote n.12 on page 5, she seems to understand "*epistêmê*" as "knowledge." If so, it is not problematic for her how *epistêmê*, understood through the object-based distinction between *epistêmê* and *doxa*, can be of the *kairos*, which is always particular.

However, her emphasis on the temporal aspect of political *epistêmê* seems inadequate to me. We do not say that mathematical expertise consists merely in knowing the "correct answer." Rather, being an expert in mathematics involves knowledge of axioms, definitions, properties, and theorems, from which correct answers are derived (see Section 4.3.5, where I discuss how the objects of *dianoia* are mathematical truths or "the mathematical"). Likewise, should we not say that political *epistêmê* also involves some knowledge of fundamental principles or of the structure of reality—or, more precisely, that it is a cognitive state or power for investigating them? As I previously argued (Section 4.3.2), Plato, struggling against those who deny the reality of the Forms, upholds the existence of a higher reality and affirms the possibility of cognitive access to it in the form of *epistêmê*. All of Plato's philosophical pursuits—from the *Theaetetus* through the *Sophist* to the *Statesman*—aim to demonstrate that our world is structured in such a way that human judgments, made in particular situations, can be determined as true or false. At the same time, they seek to establish a solid foundation for human expertise in making true judgments. This concern is most urgent in the *Statesman*, a dialogue that attempts to define political *epistêmê* (284b–c). Of course, one might dispute the position I advocated in 2.3.5 that the reality is articulated through the Forms and their interrelations. One might also readily take on the task of presenting a new account of reality based on the later dialogues, in which scholars often hesitate to use the capitalized term "Form."[444] However, if only the *epistêmê* of reality—or any expertise that consists in knowing general principles or the ability to inquire at that level—enables its possessor to make judgments of the *kairos* or to know the *kairos*, then reducing it merely to knowledge of the *kairos*, as Lane suggests, seems insufficient.

In this light, I take Plato's use of the verb γιγνώσκειν in the S1 passage above, distinct from ἐπίστασθαι and its derivatives, to indicate that an *epistêmê* is the prerequisite for knowing or recognizing *kairos* but is not itself of the *kairos*.[445] While *epistêmê*, *gnôsis*, and *phronêsis*, along with their derivative verbs, are used somewhat interchangeably in the *Republic*, there has been discussion suggesting that in the *Theaetetus*—which shares

[444] In secondary literature, it is common to refer to the entities in the classical theories of the *Phaedo* and the *Republic* as "Forms." See e.g., Kahn 2013, 19, for the classical theory of "Forms" in the *Parmenides* Part One under examination and 94 for "forms" in the *Sophist* and the *Statesman*, where 'the Eleatic Stranger will discuss neither the metaphysical status of these forms nor their instantiation in the sensible world.' Lane 1998, 16 finds in the Statesman 'no arguments of the kind appealing to 'Forms' in the *Phaedo* or *Republic*.'

[445] Rowe translates it as "know," while Skemp 1952 as "perceive," Talyor 1961 as "understanding," and Ricken 2008 as "*erkennen*."

context with the *Sophist* and the *Statesman*—γνῶσις καὶ ἐπιστήμη are used differently. Traditionally, this distinction is understood as that between acquaintance knowledge and propositional knowledge. That the knowledge of Forms constitutes a kind of acquaintance knowledge, acquired through the sight (of mind), has often supported intuitionist readings of Plato's epistemology in the *Republic*, which is, however, not necessary to accept.[446] In my view, γνῶσις and γιγνώσκειν (or γνωρίζειν) appear to denote knowing in the sense of "recognizing" something as present before one and identifying it as such, based on information already known. This understanding is supported not only by the usage of the term in *Theaetetus* as "recognizing who someone is" (e.g., Theaetetus) but also by several other passages. For instance, it appears when the *Republic* conveys the idea that guardian candidates "recognize the rational account" (αὐτὸν [τὸν λόγον] γνωρίζων: III. 402a3) of the good and just, they feel kinship with thanks to their education in poetry and physical training. The very next passage compares such recognition to recognizing the same letter within different words (III. 402a-b), which is also reiterated in the *Theaetetus* (206a), *Statesman* (285c-d), and *Philebus* (17a-e). If ἐπίστασθαι and ἐπιστήμη are to be understood as associated with the state of possessing expertise, then such recognition must occur repeatedly in order for someone to acquire the expertise. This would be accompanied by a theoretical inquiry into general principles and is itself a result of the expertise thus acquired. As we will see in the passage in the *Phaedrus*, the *kairos* for delivering speech is recognized (272a7) after one gets familiar with the nature of the soul and the essence of the subject matter.

Therefore, Rowe's translation, adopted by Lane, of line 305d32-4, in which the political experts "knows" (γιγνώσκουσαν) when to begin, or has "knowledge" of the *kairos*, should be read as follows: for the true statesman, thanks to his overall expertise in political affairs in general (which is left unspecified how to gain in the *Statesman*), the *kairos* is recognizable, and he *knows* it but only in a different way from how he *knows* the general principles relevant to politics. This is consistent with the *epistêmê-doxa* distinction based on their respective objects. To support this point and to clarify what I meant, I now turn to a passage in the *Phaedrus* that is highly relevant to our discussion, as it bears certain similarities in language and structure with the passage of the *Statesman* in question.

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[446] On Plato's conscious differentiation between γνῶσις and ἐπιστήμη in the *Theaetetus*, see Lesher 1969, 76-78. For the general distinction between these two terms, see Lyons 1963, 199 and Snell 2009, 22-23. For the refutation of intuitionism, see 2.3.5 above.

5.1.2. The *Phaedrus*: Oratory and Political *Epistêmê* of Forms or Their Equivalents

The passage in the *Phaedrus* we are looking at begins with Phaedrus' question of how to 'acquire the art of the true rhetorician, the really persuasive speaker' (269c9-d1), leads to Socrates's answer: "nature (φύσις), knowledge (ἐπιστήμη), and training (μελέτη)" (270d4-5). The knowledge that must be acquired is once described as "endless talk and ethereal speculation about nature ... the nature of mind and mindlessness" (270a), referring to the case of Pericles and Anaxagoras.[447] For Plato, it includes knowledge of the truth of the subject matter of a speech (259e, 264b6-c6, 277b), and of the nature of the soul at which persuasive speech aims (270e-271d7, 273e, 277c), acquired by means of dialectic newly defined (265d-266c). One might insist that what matters is not truth but appearance (259e-260d, 272d-e), but it turns out that it will be in vain without the knowledge of truth (260d-261a, 262b-c, 273d-e; Cf. *Gorg*. 459d-461a on the impossibility of speaking well about justice without knowledge of it). The following passage, 271d7-272a8, is significant for our discussion as it clearly states that "recognizing ((δια)γιγνώσκειν) the *kairos*" occurs only after one has acquired knowledge of general principles.

> The orator must learn (νοήσαντα) all this well, then, by beholding them as it occurs in the actions of real life, be able to sharply perceive what follows.[448] ... When he has learned all this – when, in addition, he has grapsed (προσλαβόντι) the right occasions (καιρούς) for speaking and for holding back; and when he has also understood (διαγνόντι) when the time is right for Speaking Concisely ... then, and only then, will he have finally mastered the art [oratory] well and completely.

"All this" that the orator must learn refers directly to the many kinds of souls and the corresponding many kinds of speeches, but also implicitly and substantially to the truth

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[447] Heitsch 1993, 165–168 argues that Socrates' praise of the knowledge Pericles acquired from Anaxagoras is actually exaggerated and ironic. He demonstrates this by comparing the passage with others in Plato's and other authors' texts, showing that expressions Plato employs, such as "ἀδολεσχία', "μετεωρολογία," and "ὑψηλόνουν" carry connotations of a certain derision—a tone suggesting his disagreement. In any case, what matters for my argument is that an orator must possess some higher form of knowledge, leaving the question of how to determine it for later. For a similar view, see Rowe 1986, 204-205, 269e1-270a8.

[448] My translation of 271d8-9 (θεωμένον αὐτὰ ἐν ταῖς πράξεσιν ὄντα τε καὶ πραττόμενα, ὀξέως τε αἰσθήσει δυνατὰ ἐπακολουθεῖν) differs from Nehamas & Woodruff's ("put his theory into practice and develop the ability to discern each kind clearly as it occurs in the actions of real life") and follows Heitsch's translation ("*der muss dann, indem er beobachtet, wie es in der Praxis ist und geschieht, imstande sein, aus der eigenen Wahrnehmung scharfe Konsequenzen zu ziehen*.").

about the subject matter and the nature of the soul (262a9, 272d4, and d8). The point I want to stress here is the generality of the knowledge concerning the truth about or the nature of each thing and soul. I do not deny the importance of the *kairos*, which is particularly emphasized in this passage.[449] However, I argue that equal emphasis should be placed on those remarks that suggest the existence of higher principles and the possibility of cognitive access to them, principles that serve as the epistemic foundation for recognizing the *kairos* or making judgments in particular cases of speech. Socrates says: 'unless he [Phaedrus] pursues philosophy properly, he will never be able to make a proper speech on any subject either' (*Phdr*. 261a). In contrast, deniers of the existence of the truth[450] insist that 'there's no need thus to make a solemn affair of these things [all the knowledge prior to recognizing the *kairos*] (ταῦτα δεῖν σεμνύνειν) nor to lead them up on high (ἀνάγειν ἄνω), bringing them round at great length (272d2-3).[451]

Without such knowledge of a general kind, knowledge that cannot be exhaustively expressed in language or written text, the judgment of the *kairos* would be based either solely on the selfish pleasure (then, Lysias' speech for the "sexual pleasure seeker" fits the *kairos*), or on the calculation of self-interest or utility (then, Socrates' first speech for the beloved boy fits the *kairos*), or simply on a divine hint (making a correct judgment on the Socrates' previous speech that it is wrong not through a cognitive source but as if divinely inspired; *Phdr*. 262d Cf. *Meno* 99c-100a and *Ion* 533d-536d and 542a-b).

Plato's method here is to draw an analogy between the medical expertise of Hippocrates and oratory (270b-e). This form of medicine is contrasted with a deficient kind (268a-c), the possessors of which claim to be medical experts merely because they have memorized prescriptions for partial and individual cases from books or through chance experiences. (Their pursuit (μέθοδος) is compared to walking with the blind in 270e.) To verify whether one truly recognizes the kairos in matters of health (καὶ οὕστινας ... καὶ ὁπότε ... καὶ μέχρι ὁπόσου: 268b6-8), what must be examined is their knowledge of the nature and forms of the human body (270d-e). What is contrasted here is not the generality versus particular

[449] See Heitsch 1993, 180-183.

[450] These people are compared to wolves (272c10-11). Is it a mere coincidence that sophists are also compared to wolves (*Soph*. 231a6-8)? On the metaphor of the wolf for sophists in the *Euthydemus*, see Leigh 2023.

[451] This English translation is from Nichols Jr. 1998. I take "leading on high" to refer to the dialectical ascent to ultimate principles in *Resp*. VII. 533d, and "great length" to suggest the general feature of philosophical discussion and demonstration mentioned in *Resp*. VI. 497d.

application, but rather expertise grounded in interest, inquiry, and knowledge of general principles versus mere application of rules derived from experience.[452] (This medical expertise will be discussed further in 5.1.3 below.)

There is no reason to think that political *epistêmê* is an exception. If *kairos*, or the good in time, is to be emphasized as the evidence and outcome of political *epistêmê*, in contrast to the rigidity and imprecision of law, then commentators on the *Statesman* must identify the epistemic foundation that enables its possessor to recognize *kairos*. From the continuity with the *Republic* to the more immediate coherence found in the *Theaetetus* and the *Sophist*, and finally to certain passages in the *Statesman* (285a-b, 286a), I believe this foundation can be reconstructed as knowledge of the Forms and their interrelations. What is central to Plato's political philosophy is that in order to reliably and stably discern what is just and good in every situation, one must know something higher than what exists in the sensible realm.

5.1.3. The Legislative Expertise in the *Laws* IX

There is another parallel passage in the *Laws* that poses the same problem and the same structure of expertise. In the *Laws*, as in other dialogues, Plato seeks to ascertain that legislation is an expertise by affirming the appearance of "a legislator holding fast to the truth" (ὁ νομοθέτης ἀληθείας ἐχόμενος) who possesses the expertise (*technê*), while refuting—through the voice of the Athenian—the common opinion that 'no mortal ever passes any law at all and that human affairs are almost entirely at the mercy of chance' (IV. 709a-d). Legislation is said to aim at *to metrion*, and the expertise is said to consist in the ability to say 'what "moderate" means and how big or small it may be' (τί τὸ μέτριον καὶ ὁπόσον ῥητέον: e.g., for a funeral in IV. 719d-e). In other words, a lawgiver 'must always lay down precise limits, however wide or narrow they may be' about what constitutes the *kairos* (e.g. in economic exchange: XI. 916D-e), and determines the *kairos* for the care of orphans (XI. 928a-d). Then, is it sufficient to say that the legislative expertise, like any other expertises, is of *kairos*?

There is an interesting passage in the *Laws* IX, where the term "φιλοσοφεῖν" appears (only

[452] Hence, I agree with Horn's argument for a generalist reading of Plato that appeals to the theory of Forms. See Horn 2021a, 94-96.

twice in the text).[453] Here, the Athenian leads his interlocutors into a digression on penal law (*Straftrechtsexkurs*),[454] invoking it as a justification for their good fortune in having leisure for 'carrying out our own review of every kind of political system' (ἐν σκέψει ... καθιδεῖν) and 'conduct[ing] our review of legislation' (σύνοψις), being free from 'some irresistible necessity to legislate at a minute's notice' (IX. 857e3-858b4). This more theoretical and fundamental inquiry into the principles of penal law is compared to a doctor who, beyond persuading a free patient to accept a prescription (IV. 720b-e), seeks to make the patient himself into something like a doctor. The Athenian calls this education rather than legislation and describes it as closely related to doing philosophy, - 'recurring to first principles of physiology' (ἐπανιόντα),[455] that is, the investigation of the source of illness and the nature of the body. This could appear absurd to someone who considers recovery of health (the *kairos* of medicine) to be the sole concern for the patient (IX. 857d7-e1). This suggests that recognizing the *kairos* in treating a patient depends on knowledge of the general principles.

Analogically, then, what are the principles that must be explored, through digression, in order to legislate the penal law of Magnesia in accordance with the kairos? As discussed in the following conversation, these include the causes of wrongdoing (the distinction between negligence and injustice), Socrates' intellectualism (that no one does wrong deliberately), and the nature of punishment: on one hand, it may seem just but not fine to suffer punishment, in contrast to the principle that the just is also the fine. It is not certain that these principles can be reduced to the Forms and their interrelations (I conjecture that it may be possible, but demonstrating it would be unnecessarily laborious). What is clear, however, is that recognizing the *kairos* requires knowledge of general principles and sufficient leisure time to reflect on them. I see no reason to think differently about political *epistêmê*.

Therefore, rather than saying that political *epistêmê* consists in knowledge of the *kairos*, it is more meaningful to recall the object-based distinction between *epistêmê* and *doxa* and to apply the idea that *epistêmê* is, in Moss's terms, of "the ontologically superior" to the discussion of the political *epistêmê*. It must concern the principle of Justice itself and the

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[453] The term *philosophia* does not appear at all. For the scarce presence of the concept of philosophy in the *Laws*, see Horn 2013, 3.

[454] Schöpsdau 2011, 278ff.

[455] This expression is cited from LSJ's entry on *ἐπάνειμι*, specifically referring to this line.

Good itself. That the kairos—the just or the good in time—is recognizable through political epistêmê does not mean that Plato's political expert merely possesses infallible knowledge of particulars, as Lane and other political particularist readings assume. Rather, it implies that beyond any existing law or social order, there can be a kairos grounded in reality itself—and that the knowledge of reality serves as the epistemic foundation for recognizing the kairos.[456]

5.2. Epitactic Nature of Political *Epistêmê*: Is "Directly Commanding" the Only Way in which the Political *Epistêmê* Rules?

5.2.1. My Arguments against Statesman as Epitactic Expert and Political *Epistêmê* of Particulars

Now, I turn to what Lane calls the *taxis* of the rule of political *epistêmê*.[457] It is undoubtedly clear that the *taxis* of ideal rule must be one in which those who possess political *epistêmê* "rule" over others. However, I dispute the claim that this "rule" is exercised by directly commanding others to perform particular actions ("do this now") based on the knowledge the ruler possesses of every particular thing required at a given moment. This amounts to Lane's claim in interpreting the *Statesman*, according to which the statesman is a commander.[458] She seems to believe that the image of the statesman as a commander should be the main emphasis in the division of γνωστική into κριτική and ἐπιτακτική at 259d-260b and in the passage 305c-d (S1). Moreover, since she takes the position that political *epistêmê* consists in knowing *kairos*, she perhaps inevitably emphasizes its directive and commanding features:

> 'This second division of statecraft, establishing it as one of the arts which 'rules'

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[456] I agree with O'Meara 2017, 97-98 in finding some hints or implications outside the *Statesman* for 'what ... might the pattern be which political science must know': there might be 'major kinds' in the *Sophist* or the intelligible *paradeigma* in the *Timaeus*.

[457] For Lane's concept of *taxis* as one of two dimensions for characterizing a rule (*telos* and *taxis*), see 2023, 17-18: 'A *taxis* is an ordered set of roles and relationships (including institutions and procedures) through which a *telos* might be achieved. A constraint on the *taxis* of any kind of rule is that the ruler have in principle the epitactic power of issuing orders (*epitaxis*, singular) to the ruled.' See further 52-53. The *Statesman*'s focus, says Lane, is 'on the *taxis* of rule, with a subordinate role therein for offices.' (27). See also 36-37 and 116-117, as well as the whole Chapter 4.

[458] For Lane's claim that a statesman rules his city by directly commanding his subordinates, see 1998, 140-141, 163; 2013, 69-72; 2020, esp. 451-2 and 466 f.; 2021, 202-205 and 208-210. I agree with Fisher's view (2022), which diverges from Lane's or from 'any interpretation according to which the statesman directly manages or oversees any of the affairs of state' (See 703 n.5 and 717 n.29). I express my agreement with his views at various points below.

> and 'directs' other arts, is crucial to the success of its final definition. It indicates that whatever the content of the statesman's knowledge, his mode of exercising it is second-order: he does not produce things by hand himself, but directs others who are producers. ... The second-order control, which statecraft exercises over the other arts, has now been given content: it is exercised in virtue of a particular kind of knowledge. That knowledge is knowledge of timing.'[459]

In other words, if political *epistêmê* is to assert its superiority over law, its authoritative prescriptions must be temporally grounded. In short, 'statecraft is exercising an epistemic-cum-epitactic power which is at least in principle temporal.'[460] The idea that any order issued in the form of "do this" or "do that" pertains to *kairos* is not peculiar: Aristotle also holds that practical affairs involve connected particulars (*EN*. VI. 6. 1141b15-17; 11. 1143a28-35). Similarly, Joseph Raz, in refuting certain views about the nature of law, argues that 'a directive can be authoritatively binding only if it is, or is at least presented as, someone's view of how its subjects ought to behave' and also that it must be possible to identify the directive as being issued by the alleged authority without relying on reasons or considerations on which the directive purports to adjudicate'.[461] This claim—particularly its first half—implies that a directive or command must be particular in nature and formulated in such a way that it compels action without requiring further deliberation.

I have previously pointed out that this conception of the ideal ruler and ideal politics is rule-centric (2.3.3), and that one risks attributing to Plato a doctrine of the worldly omniscience of the ideal ruler, thereby rendering his political philosophy vulnerable to criticism, if one characterizes the knowledge qualifying the ideal ruler as the knowledge of particulars. It seems to me that Lane's claim is one such case. Is directly commanding and issuing orders to subjects the only way in which the political *epistêmê* rules a society? Of course, a command or the kairos ordered by an expert ruler could indeed be genuinely political: namely, it should be done or it is time to question of an existing order, envision of a new one, and initiate a politically radical change. However, this goes beyond a mere matter of emphasis, unless it is explicitly stated that the epistêmê of the statesman concerns the Forms (or equivalent transcendent principles) and their interrelations, and

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[459] Lane 1998, 141-142.
[460] Lane 2021, 204. See also 209: the statesman's expertise is inherently temporal, ...'
[461] Raz 1985, 303.

that kairos is merely an imperfect reflection or provisional realization of such knowledge. In Section 5.1, I argued that the knowledge required to recognize *kairos* must be of general principles, (an argument that challenges the particularist reading of Plato). Below, I challenge Lane's portrayal of the ideal statesman in the *Statesman* as a commander who directly issues orders. Alternatively, the expert in politics can appear either as an expert in the 3PE who *also* possesses political *epistêmê* (if we note that the distinction in 305c-d is not between persons but between kinds of expertises; see Section 5.2.2) or as a lawgiver, fully aware of the inherent inferiority of a legal order and unwilling to be merely content with its minimal adequacy (if the various portrayals of the statesman's expertise as weaver and lawgiver are coherently interpreted; see Section 5.2.3). Lastly, in Section 5.2.4, I will examine whether the model of the master-builder (*Plt*. 260a) exclusively supports the image of the statesman as a direct commander.

5.2.2. The Role of the Political *Epistêmê* Possessed by the Experts in 3PE

To stress once again, the distinction made in 305c-d is between expertises, not between persons. As I have shown in Chapter 3, political *epistêmê*, as the expertise for ruling and using, and other productive expertises it uses and rules, such as medicine, can coexist within a single person, as seen in the case of Asclepius, who is both a statesman and a doctor (Section 3.4.1). It follows that the 3PE, which are all concerned with producing something good or bad, or just or unjust (as discussed in Sections 4.3.1, 4.3.3, and 4.3.5), can coexist with political *epistêmê* in one person.[462] If Lane's interpretation is correct that the statesman, possessing political *epistêmê*, issues orders in the form "(it is time to) do this", then there are significant difficulties in understanding both the texts and Plato's idea as a whole of the political *epistêmê* and its functioning.

First, among the three patterns of the relation between political *epistêmê* and the 3PE,[463] let me begin with the third, which Lane acknowledges as 'exhibiting a variation in the

[462] I do not think that the usage of "statesmanship" (or whatever translation for "political *epistêmê*") and that of "statesman" needs to be clearly distinguished in every case. In many places in the *Statesman*, it is not necessary. However, it seems to me that the commanding-commanded relation holds only between persons, not expertises, if commanding (and the original Greek terms for it) means something interpersonal (Lane 2020, 451: 'interpersonally imperative- or order-giving role' and 466; 2023, 124: epitactic power of issuing interpersonal orders as central to ruling'). Of course, I do not deny that political rule has an interpersonal dimension, but it is mediated through law as a form of command (and the necessity for rule comes from the fact that there are people incapable of autonomously knowing what is good). Then, why should we fix on the image of the ideal statesman as a direct commander issuing orders like "now do this"?

[463] Lane 2021, 204, for descriptions of this pattern.

pattern so far identified.'[464] Here, she rightly points out that statesmanship and judgeship are not described in terms of a commanding-commanded relationship; rather, political *epistêmê* produces laws that are 'generalized second-order commands or orders', instead of issuing direct commands. In fact, if a king with the political *epistêmê* were to command a judge by saying, *"Now is the time to rule in this way,"* this would basically constitute a command, but in effect, political *epistêmê* would become indistinguishable from judgeship itself. But Lane is correct to note that 'the kind of second-order role for statecraft in relation to judgeship' can be reconstructed 'even without the language of ruling' in the form of commanding, and that in this variation, political *epistêmê* asserts its epitactic status and its distinctive epistemic feature. My question is, if Lane were to recognize the role and status of political epistêmê so easily, even in this third case, which deviates from the common pattern she identifies in S1, then why does she not acknowledge it in the other two instances? In other words, why should this way of legislating or issuing generalized guidelines in the form of law not be counted as a mode of ruling over oratory and generalship?

Let me now turn to the first and second cases: the rule of political *epistêmê* over oratory. The orator is typically a kind of producer, and his product—a speech or written text—is clearly described as an image of justice and the good (see Sections 4.3.1, 4.3.3, and 4.3.5). Consider the *ergon* of the orator and the oratory—the *dynamis* to produce a speech or a story. What exactly is the order issued by the political expert with respect to *kairos* understood in its temporal sense? Does the statesman dictate every single word of a speech that is deemed for a given moment? Or does he command the orator to deliver, *now*, a speech composed in a temporally and contextually neutral manner? If the order is simply, "At this moment, a speech is needed, so deliver one," then whose responsibility is it to compose the speech that fits the *kairos*: the statesman's or the orator's? None of these options seems entirely convincing to me. The first one eliminates the distinction between the two expertises;[465] the second is simply impractical; and the third neglects various

[464] Lane 2021, 207. See also Lane 1998, 143 n. 10 for her presumption about the reason for this deviation. Fisher 2022 cogently shows how the legislative activity of the political expert, issuing no direct orders but only generalized rules or guidelines, can be understood as weaving together the two kinds of people.

[465] This first scenario depicts the worldly omniscient ruler in the *Charmides*, who is presumed to know what an orator should speak on every occasion. However, one who knows it would already be an orator. Even if the ruler possesses the expertise for oratory, they should also possess all other expertise, which is unrealistic. See Section 3.2 above.

aspects of the concept of the *kairos* beyond its temporal dimension.[466]

The relation between political *epistêmê* and generalship is probably the only case that can be described in terms of a commanding-commanded relationship, in that "when to start and stop fighting" could be issued as an order concerning the *kairos*. As Lane sharply observes, the expression "mistress" (δεσπότις: 305a5), used for political *epistêmê* in relation to the generalship, leads us to imagine the picture of a mistress giving her slaves orders—"do it now."[467] However, equal attention must be given to considerations such as who the enemy is, what kind of enemy they are, and how the enemy should be treated. These are matters the political *epistêmê* is capable of deliberating on and expert in (οἵαν τε καὶ ἐπιστήμονα διαβουλεύσασθαι),[468] do not seem reducible to the *kairos* of when to fight and stop fighting. As we see in *Republic* V, war must not only be declared in accordance with justice but also conducted in accordance with it. Therefore, guidelines should be issued by political experts that war experts should observe to wage a war in a just and lawful manner. Drawing on these considerations, I argue that direct command is not the only way the political *epistêmê* rules over the 3PE*epistêmê*.

Furthermore, we should consider several scenarios regarding the relationship between "first-order" and "second-order" expertises. If one of the experts in 3PE *also* possesses political expertise, such that their actions and products—*qua* expert in the 3PE—are politically good and just, it makes little sense to say that one gives order while the other receives it within the same person. Rather, the operation of each expertise is analytically distinct. A particular just action or speech can come about only when a person, *qua* philosopher, inquires what Justice itself and the Good itself are and simultaneously acts, *qua* professional expert, within society. This scenario can be divided into whether the possessor of such political *epistêmê* is actually a ruler or a citizen in a democracy, a distinction that will be discussed in more detail in Section 5.3.5.

Alternatively, there is a case in which the possessor of the political *epistêmê* and the expert in one of the 3PE are distinct. If he possesses only political *epistêmê* without any first-hand expertise, he would be entirely impractical—like an economically incompetent (*Ap*. 23b-c,

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[466] See Ricken 2008, 214-215 and Fisher 2022, 714-715 and n. 24-27, for alternative understandings of kairos beyond its temporal interpretation.
[467] Lane 2021, 206 and n.33.
[468] Here, I believe that Plato's cautious use of ἐπιστήμων διαβουλεύσασθα indicates that political *epistêmê* is not simply knowledge, but rather an expertise for thinking about the general principles regulating war.

31b-c), socially weak (due to aversion to public engagement: *Ap*. 31c, 32e-33a; impediment to the exercise of civil rights: *Ap*. 17c-18a, *Gorg*. 486a-c), and otherworldly philosopher. The only way he could truly benefit society as a genuine statesman would be as a mentor to the first-hand expert (See Sections 2.2.3 above and 5.3.4 below). However, even in the case where the possessor of political *epistêmê* is actually a ruler, what Plato seems to envision is not the statesman as a commander but as a lawgiver who provides generalized guidelines in the form of laws. This applies not only to the relation between judgeship and political *epistêmê* in the *Statesman,* but also in the *Republic,* where rulers declare as law the guidelines for composing stories about gods and heroes (οἱ τύποι τῆς θεολογίας: II. 379a5) and setting out the principles Asclepius and his sons would apply to particular cases of curing (see Section 3.4.2 above). How significant is the difference between the image of the statesman as a commander of the *kairos* versus as a lawgiver? This will be further considered in the next section.

5.2.3. Political Weaver not as Direct Commander but Lawgiver

In this sub-section, I argue that Plato's modeling of the statesman as a weaver supports the image of the statesman more as a lawgiver than as a direct commander. If we suppose that every citizen possesses political *epistêmê,* then each would know the Good itself and be able to judge what is good in time in their own life. However, since political *epistêmê* belongs only to a few, those who lack it must still be able to judge the *kairos* for the stability and prosperity of the community. If Lane is correct and the possessor of political *epistêmê* is an actual ruler, he would try to compensate for the absence of political *epistêmê* in his subjects by directly commanding the kairos to each of them. Socrates in the early dialogues appears to attempt this, but rather than judging the kairos on behalf of his interlocutors (and ordering it to them), he merely points out the lack of knowledge that serves as the foundation for proper judgment — and even this he does only with one or two individuals, not with the masses (*Gorg*. 474a-b. Cf. *Ap*. 37a-b, *Gorg*. 455a). The guardians in the *Republic* also do not rule by issuing direct commands on what to do at any given moment. Rather, they establish laws for the education of the citizens so that, by living according to a prescribed way of life, the rule of reason may take root in the soul.

This is precisely the task that the possessor of political expertise must undertake, a point Plato seeks to explain in the *Statesman* through the figure of the weaver. The model (*paradeigma*) of the weaver is well-known and regarded as Plato's definitive framework

for defining the statesman.[469] If the weaver (279b-283a) and the statesman belong to one and the same genus, then two questions that are commonly relevant to both experts or craftsmen arise: what they intertwine and how they intertwine (306a1-3). This is about the *ergon* of the political *epistêmê*, which will be discussed in Section 5.3.1.[470] The core of the statesman's weaving aims to instill in each citizen a disposition for self-government, enabling them, despite their inherent character deficiencies (whether 'excessive and manic' or 'cowardly and lethargic'; for the various ways of describing the two contrasted characters, see 307a-308b), to recognize for themselves the *kairos* for each occasion (310e7. Cf. 307b1, 9 and, 6 for "ἄκαιρα").[471] The "divine" bond that weaves and ties these contrasting dispositions together is the true opinion about the good, the just, and the fine (309c, 310e) implanted in each citizen's mind (309c-d).

What is noteworthy here is that this political weaving by the statesman is carried out by giving laws that the statesman, *qua* lawgiver, enacts for the city (309d, 310a). As discussed in detail in Chapter 2, the actual ruler with *epistêmê* makes laws because he is not omnipresent. However, the fact that he makes or uses laws does not undermine the superiority of the rule of the wise person over the rule of law. The ideal ruler, unbound by any existing law or legal order, can overhaul it and institute a new one that, even if improved under changed conditions, remains ontologically inferior and imperfect as law.[472] Moreover, the use of law by a wise ruler does not imply that political *epistêmê* and legislative expertise are identical. The former is distinct from the latter, probably in a way and to an extent similar to how it differs from, say, one of the 3PE, such as oratory. Hence, the true expert in politics must possess both the political *epistêmê* of the Good itself and the legislative expertise required to produce a good law. In any case, it is legislation—carried out by political weavers to care for the good of the ruled (the *telos* of the rule)—that, in the passage Lane labels S2 'complements the epitactic role of the statesman or king as master by clarifying that his mastery and rule must serve to care for those he rules.'[473]

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[469] Sampson 2020, 490, for a review of secondary literature on 'the importance of weaving in relation to politics in the *Statesman*', including O'Meara 2017, 87-105. See also Fisher 2022, 713-718.
[470] Rowe 2005, 239; Ricken 2008, 216.
[471] By invoking these lines, Fisher 2022, 714-715 argues that the *kairos* does not have an exclusively temporal meaning.
[472] I have argued in Section 2.2.4 that Sørensen's distinction between 'legal improvement' and 'extra-legal judgment' (2022, 8-13) is not very significant. My point here is that the true expert in politics can make true extra-legal judgments in specific situations thanks to the knowledge that enables them to also improve the legal order.
[473] See Lane 2021, 210 for her labelling of the passage at 305e2-6 as S2 and for her own translation. See Lane

(Even if the expert in politics does not legislate from beginning to end as a ruler, the situation is not beyond saving: we can still expect that true *doxa* will be instilled in citizens even in such a non-ideal situation, provided political expertise is present in some citizen who holds public office or contributes to the improvement of the legal order through democratic participation (see Sections 2.2.3, 5.3.4, and 5.3.5).

My question is this: If the statesman, as a weaver, binds together different character types through the divine bond of true *doxa*, enabling each citizen to recognize *kairos*, and if the inculcation of this true *doxa* is possible through legislation by the statesman, then why and in what way must the ideal ruler with political *epistêmê* still remain a commander? In short, what is the relationship between the statesman as commander (S1) and the statesman as weaver (S2)? Lane, in her *Method and Politics* (1998), has already posed this question and attempted to answer:

> Why, however, does it matter so much that the two groups [the people with opposite characters] perceive the *kairos* correctly, since the statesman has already been defined as possessing its perfect command? This is an important question which is seldom asked. It goes to the heart of the dual presentation of the statesman in the final process of definition: the statesman as the commander of the *kairos*, ordering the other arts to start and stop; and the statesman as the political weaver, concerned with intertwining two opposite groups of citizens. The rival arts were shown to be constitutionally incapable of assessing the *kairos* for themselves to initiate action in relation to the other matters in the state. Thus, the statesman had to judge the *kairos* for them. But in the case of the hostile citizens, the presentation of their conflict quoted above depicts them as engaging (if failing) in judging the *kairos* for themselves. If the *kairos* has to be discerned for the arts to act within the city, it has also to be discerned for the city itself to act as a whole. And this latter direction of the city is consistently presented in the Statesman as being done by the citizens themselves.[474]

2023 for her identification of the *telos* of Plato's rule as the good of the ruled. Specifically for her discussion of caring and weaving in the *Statesman*, see 131-133 in the Chapter 4, which substantially incorporates content from Lane 2021: 'While "caring" brings to bear the particular purpose and orientation with which the epitactic *dunamis* of statecraft (or of weaving) is to be exercised, "weaving" is the precise task that the statesman is to deploy his epitactic capacity oriented to caring to realize.'

[474] Lane 1998, 177-178. See also 163: 'Statesman's knowledge as commanding the other forms of expertise to

I am not sure if it has been adequately answered, as I see no reason to treat the two groups of citizens separately—one that must receive direct orders from the statesman and another that is capable of recognizing *kairos* through education and rule-following. It is true that the 3PE are not themselves expertises concerned with judging the *kairos* (as she puts it, they are 'constitutionally incapable'), but the experts in the 3PE, having been instilled with true *doxa*, are thereby able to recognize *kairos* like their fellow citizens.

Moreover, in the passage immediately following the one cited above, she argues that the statesman's rule over the city's public affairs is indirect, since the text states the statesman 'entrusts offices in cities to these [citizens] in common' (311a1-2), while his rule is direct only in matters of education and selection.[475] This represents a revision of her earlier view (1995) and is maintained in her later work (2013).[476] However, as she argues in the latter, it is precisely those who hold public office who possess the 3PE.[477] These individuals, having acquired true *doxa* through education, are capable of recognizing *kairos* on their own (since only such individuals would be selected for office in the first place). If this is the case, why should we read S1 as describing the statesman's direct command over experts in the 3PE? Going further, it is not even certain that the education of citizens and the selection of officeholders must fall under the statesman's direct rule.[478] Why should the rule of the statesman not be understood as consisting in legislation concerning the education of citizens and the selection of officeholders? And why could the concrete tasks related to education or selection not be carried out by already appointed officials?

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start and stop, in accordance with the *kairos*, is correct but incomplete.'

[475] Lane 1998, 177-178.

[476] See Lane 1998, 178 n.76. In Lane 2013, 69, she asks, 'What then is the statesman himself actually to do as a "ruler," if he does not hold any of the offices of the city that would conventionally have been understood to exhaust the function of ruling?' Her answer is that 'statesmanship is concerned in particular with education' (69) and concludes that 'as supervisor of education and chooser of officials and marital partners, the statesman has a more active and ongoing role in the city.' (Lane 2013, 71) In Lane 2021, however, she still says that 'the statesman is to rule over the other forms of expertise, giving epitactic orders to the three precious and kindred practitioners' (212), which, in my view, is inconsistent with her 1998/2013 position that the experts in 3PE are so prepared in character that they can recognize the *kairos* while holding office.

[477] Lane 2013, 54-63 and 67: 'We can now infer that the offices ... to be entrusted to the citizens are precisely those of the general, rhetor, and juror ....'

[478] Still in Lane 2021, 212 (same as 2023, 132), she seems to think that the statesman directly commands 'all of those practitioners who do the preliminary culling and preparing of citizens capable of receiving education' as well as 'the educators.' This is the position challenged by Fisher (2022), who, on page 717, proposes an interpretation of 311a4–6 ('chooses who will hold which office') as legislation concerning the qualifications for and the procedure of selecting officeholders. His proposal serves as one of the arguments against the idea that 'the statesman will have an active, ongoing role to play in managing the city.' For his disagreement with Lane (1998) and agreement with her position in 1995, see n. 29 on the same page.

In fact, I am not convinced that drawing a sharp distinction between the scope of direct and indirect rule is particularly meaningful. More significant is recognizing that Plato's introduction of political *epistêmê* is not aimed at identifying a technical expertise for the competent handling of all public matters. As Jeffrey Fisher (2022) points out, understanding Plato's statesmanship as 'a matter of directly controlling and administering the affairs of the city'[479] risks portraying Plato as a proponent of totalitarian rule—or, at the very least, a kind of technocratic rule that is, in practice, impossible to realize. (I have developed a similar argument in Section 2.3). Rather, it aims to explore the possibility of questioning a given social and legal order and bringing about radical political change. In this sense, rule within a constitutional framework—like the activities of experts in 3PE discussed in Chapter 4—has little to do with what we call "the political." Political *epistêmê* does not pertain to any specific task; it becomes relevant only when all elements within the constitutional order—public procedures, administration, and measures for regime sustenance—are subject to critical evaluation regarding whether they are truly good. This connects directly to the question of whether the philosopher-rulers in the *Republic* govern by adhering to law (see Section 2.3.4. n. 289 and Section 4.3.5). When nothing within the constitutional order requires questioning, they rule within the framework of laws they themselves have enacted, *qua* rulers. But when necessary, they engage in a kind of "the political" that only philosophers *qua* philosophers are capable of: questioning the existing order and envisioning a new one. The *kairos* they then recognize will be the *kairos* of radical political change.

5.2.4. Is Statesman as Master-bulider Direct Commander?

Lastly, I explore whether the model of master-builder for statesman exclusively supports Lane's interpretation that the statesman is a direct commander. To strengthen her own argument that the statesman is someone capable of commanding by issuing immediate directives concerning present action, Lane examines the historical context in which Plato placed the statesman within the same category as ἀρχιτέκτων (260a4-7), which she rightly proposes to translate not as "architect" but as "master-builder." She also examines what Plato's initially chosen but later abandoned master-builder model for the statesman is

[479] Fisher 2022, 703. To move beyond such an understanding, he interprets the *Statesman* as endorsing the role of the statesman in 'facilitating the citizens' successful self-governance or self-rule ... by inculcating true opinions about the just, the good, the fine, and the opposites of these in the citizens' (704. Cf. 716 and 724).

meant to underscore.[480] As she points out, the architectonic model in the *Statesman* has long been seen as a precursor to the Aristotelian approach to politics as 'an architectonic science, that is, a form of expertise',[481] consisting epistemically in 'an overarching understanding of the purpose of a given whole.'[482] While she acknowledges that the master-builder at the time was to some extent an expert in 'building techniques'[483] and characterized as having 'an understanding of such an overall *telos* of a building' and a 'comprehensive understanding of the design to be realized,'[484] she argues that Plato's emphasis lies more on its epitactic role in the practice in Greek architecture: the master-builder was one who is 'appointed by a city to give orders on site in overseeing the completion of actual building works.'[485] Her detailed study of Greek architectural practice further reveals that it was 'an episodic and civic role'[486] involving the supervision of manual workers and assignment of tasks to them, such that there is no proper distinctive expertise specific to the master-builder. She infers that this undermines both the Aristotelian conception of political knowledge as architectonic and the modern conception of ἀρχιτέκτων as an "architect" possessing theoretical general knowledge for architectural design.[487] These arguments, in my view, aim to prevent Plato's political knowledge from being characterized as abstract and general. If it were represented that way, political *epistêmê* would lose its practical character—the ability to discern what to do here and now (the *kairos* or the good in time)—and would resemble a fixed, decontextualized "blueprint" lacking concreteness, aligning with Popper's criticism of Plato or the Grand End theory in Aristotle's scholarship.[488] In conclusion, his choice of the master-builder model serves to emphasize the commonality it shares with the statesman: 'an interpersonal relation of

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[480] In this section, I mainly engage with Lane 2020, the main idea of which is integrated into Lane 2023, 126-129. For her further mentions of "master-builder," see Lane 1998, 141; 2021, 203. On the substitution of the weaver model for the master-builder model, see Lane 1998, 163 and Schofield 2006, 170.

[481] Lane 2020, 449. For her critical review of the Aristotelian approach to reading the *Statesman*, see 449-452 and 462-464.

[482] Lane 2020, 451.

[483] Lane 2020, 453. See also 462-464.

[484] Lane 2020, 464.

[485] Lane 2020, 454.

[486] Lane 2020, 453.

[487] Lane 2020, 461-466.

[488] Although Lane critically discusses Schofield's reading of the *Statesman* as supporting a vision of political *epistêmê* as architectonic knowledge (2020, 450-451, see 2.3.1), Schofield argues not only that Plato eventually relinquished such a vision (Schofield 2006, 173 ff.), but also that the political theory in the *Statesman* aligns more closely with Aristotle's 'practical wisdom' (171-172) than with the Grand End Aristotle suggests in the *Nichomachean Ethics*' opening passage.

overseeing the workers and ensuring the completion of their tasks, which will come about only through the issuing of interpersonal orders or commands.'[489]

Unlike Lane, I believe that her argument for the analogy between master-builder and statesman does not invalidate the idea that the statesman's expertise consists in knowledge of general principles, nor does it necessarily portray the statesman as a direct commander issuing orders on what to do now and here based on knowledge of the *kairos* in each situation. To support this, I make the following four points:

(1) I believe Lane's arguments tend to unduly minimize the importance of expertise for appointment as master-builder, though she does not entirely neglect it. In particular, she invokes *Gorgias* 455b-c to underscore that the role of master-builder is an appointed one,[490] but she does not consider 514a-d from the same work, where it is stated that one who possesses mastery of building should be empowered to 'take up the public business of the city when 'called on to carry out building projects' (εἰ οὖν παρεκαλοῦμεν ἀλλήλους, ὦ Καλλίκλεις, δημοσίᾳ πράξοντες τῶν πολιτικῶν πραγμάτων ἐπὶ τὰ οἰκοδομικά: 514a5-6). Although this passage does not use the term ἀρχιτέκτων, it clearly shows that appointment is based on expertise (ἐπιστάμεθα τὴν τέχνην ἢ οὐκ ἐπιστάμεθα, τὴν οἰκοδομικήν: 514b1-2), which necessarily includes knowledge of general principles.

(2) If we take a serious look at the analogy between the statesman, who commands as ruler, and the master-builder, who directs manual workers, we may ask, what is the source of these directives, and what is their nature? In the case of the master-builder, the source of all his directives to his subordinate workers is the political decision of a higher political body. Also, the nature of the source is not *architectural*, but *political*.[491] By being appointed as a master-builder, the expert in building becomes responsible for realizing a political vision within an architectural context. In this sense, the master-builder carries in

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[489] Lane 2020, 466.

[490] Lane 2020, 456-458: 'it is in virtue of that appointed role, not merely of the content of their knowledge, that they [*hoi architektones*] serve as advisors.'

[491] A contemporary example of this is the construction of *Centre Pompidou* in Paris. Fleury 2007, 159-181 shows how political values (*ouverture, égalité, démocratie culturelle)* are materially embodied through specific architectural elements of the building. I understand Lane's emphasis on the civic appointment of the master-builder as indicating that the master-builder possesses (or is entrusted with) knowledge of general principles that are neither architectural in themselves nor reducible to a list of prescriptive commands. His knowledge, therefore, is not merely about issuing directives, but concerns the general principles one must know in order to issue them at all.

his person two moments, or two analytically distinct but in effect integrated sources of his particular commands, like Asclepius—the doctor and the statesman. Likewise, in the distinction I have drawn between politics and ruling (or the political and politics), we can ask the same question: what is the source of the ruler's authority, and what is its nature? The source of ruling must be the knowledge of the Good itself, which consists of provisional conclusions from the inquiry into what is truly good. The nature of such a source is not itself "constitutional" (*verfassungsmäßig*: see Section 4.3.6), but genuinely political in our sense. If my view is not inconsistent with Lane's historical study of the Greek practice of architecture, then her emphasis on the civic role of master-builder shifts attention toward a source of political authority that transcends the current constitutional framework.[492]

(3) The master-builder could issue direct commands through physical interaction with manual workers and overseeing the construction site, but this is not necessarily the case: as Lane herself mentions in reference to a reading that challenges her own,[493] the role of the master-builder could have been that of the head of a 'collective and interdependent agency', which perhaps means that he functioned not as a direct commander but as a coordinating head within a collaborative system. Furthermore, Dominic O'Meara (2017, 2021) compares the *Statesman* 259e-260a to the *Timaeus* 41a-d, where the Demiurge orders his offspring gods to complete the sensible realm of the beautiful cosmos.[494] Here, we are told only of metaphysical caution and his order that they imitate his work, not an order in the form of "do this now."

(4) Even when the master-builder did issue direct orders to his subordinate workers, this does not mean the same must be the case for the statesman, whose worksite is the whole city, and the receivers of his orders are not simply producers but citizens or persons. For them, it is more appropriate to educate them toward a law-abiding disposition than to issue orders on what to do in every situation (as argued in Section 5.2.3).

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[492] O'Meara describes the submission of a proposal by an expert in building, whom he calls an "architect," and the subsequent voting on one or more proposals as preliminary stages in the execution of public building programs. To submit a proposal worthy of final selection, the expert must have expertise in building in general.

[493] Lane 20203, 127 n.30

[494] For a general comparison, see O'Meara 2017, 41 ff. For the Demiurge's delegating of the remaining work to the younger gods in particular, see O'Meara 2021, 218 (6), 220 (2), and 222 (9).

5.3. In What Form is Political *Epistêmê* Available and How Does It Operate?

5.3.1. The *Ergon* of the Political *Epistêmê*: The Fabric of State

The political *epistêmê* is also defined in terms of *ergon*, as Lane clearly points out, is the case for *epistêmai* as *dynameis*. The *ergon* of political *epistêmê* is described in passage 311b7-c7, which she labels S3: the fabric woven 'together, with regular intertwining, of the dispositions of brave and moderate people.'[495] Up to this point, Plato emphasizes sound judgment in accordance with due measure between two extreme human traits. It is evident that the philosopher-rulers in the *Republic*, or the true statesman-lawgivers, assume the role of the weaver. It is uncertain whether his product—the fabric of state—is one or several fabrics. The text S3 seems to suggest that there is only one fabric consisting of those who are well-prepared and carefully selected to hold office, while the rest of the people in the city are merely covered and protected by it as passive objects of rule.[496] However, I agree with Ricken's interpretation that the task of the statesman, in terms of weaving, is to make several fabrics rather than one.[497] Then, at least one fabric consists of the producers in the *Republic* or of the experts identified as "co-causes" of a city listed from 287e to 289b. Why should these producers be left unbound rather than woven together by the divine bond of true *doxa*? Unless these producers are also educated in such a way that the divine part of their soul is bound with that of those of opposite nature,[498] they will not recognize what is good in life: they will not perform their own work diligently, thereby undermining the material foundation of the state. Furthermore, they may unlawfully attempt to intervene in politics and subvert the taxis of rule. Creating within these productive citizens a state of *true doxa*—in which it appears good to maintain one's position in public life and exercise one's expertise in private life—is part of the broader task of the rulers, one aspect of which is surely to secure the material basis of the state. We are told in the *Republic* that this material foundation is presented as the basis for ethical behavior among its members (IV. 421d–422a), and in the *Statesman*, that the expertises responsible for laying this material foundation are those without which 'there would never come to be a city, nor

[495] See Lane 2021, 213-214. On the meaning of 'a woven cloth' of the statesman in the religious context at that time, see O'Meara 2017, 87 ff.

[496] The ambiguity arises due to the lines 311a1-2 and 311c3-4, especially the verb "*ampischein*", which is translated by Rowe as "covering" and by Ricken as "umkleidet".

[497] Ricken 2008, 228-230.

[498] Following Ricken 2008, 221-223 and 228-230, there is no reason to think that caring for birth and education, compared to preparation for material and intertwining, is not offered to "ordinary" free citizens, who constitute a part of a city.

statesmanship', even though the material foundation itself is not 'the product of the expertise of the king' (287d).

Meanwhile, the causes of these fabrics, including ultimately political *epistêmê*, are persons or their expertise engaged in activities not concerned with material products or tools, but that 'essentially put them [human beings] into relation with one another.'[499] If we visualize it**,** just as each thread in a piece of fabric is interwoven with others, so too are citizens entangled with one another through these relational activities, such as servitude, trade, prophecy, public administration, education, and more. In any case, I consider the 3PE along with educators and tutors (308e) as subordinate causes (ὑπηρετεῖν: 304e1, 305c7, 308d5; ὑπηρετική: 305a8), but very important ones, since they are concerned with preparing the raw materials and constructing the (divine and human) bonds of the fabric. Roughly speaking, it is through the work of educators and tutors that citizens come to possess a nature capable of living justly (309a–b). The experts in the 3PE then aim to shape this potential into actual, just lives—through rational persuasion by the orator and through external regulation of conduct by the judge. (One might think, although I am not sure, that the general, in commanding citizens to fight justly in just wars, also contributes to this external realization of justice.)

Finally, the one responsible for all these procedures, by using law and making good laws, is the political weaver, the statesman. If the *Statesman* has long been regarded as a somewhat impoverished dialogue on politics,[500] it is likely because it remains focused only on defining the statesman, his function, and the structure of a well-ordered city, rather than addressing questions such as whether it is feasible or whether it would make him happy in taking such a role. In any case, as long as political epistêmê is concerned with the Good itself, it will contribute to the governance of the state by realizing a provisional good through legislation according to its expertise and will transform the legal order when necessary.

In the following sections, I will explore five plus one possible scenarios to illustrate the

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[499] This quotation is from Carpenter 2021, 150. It remains unclear which of the expertises or classes of subordinates (ὑπηρέται) are regarded by Plato himself as "causes" of a city. One may rightly ask, for example, in what sense slaves and merchants are causes, even though their contribution pertains not to the good life of citizens but to the material foundation laid by the co-causes. See Rowe 2005, 216 c8-d1 and Carpenter 2021, 148 ff. for attempts to answer this.

[500] Schofield 206, 173-182.

various forms in which political epistêmê may be present and operate within a society. These scenarios are a synthesis of earlier discussions scattered throughout the dissertation and have already been outlined in sections such as 2.2 and 3.2. These scenarios range from an unrealistically ideal condition to one that is doomed—marked by the absence of political epistêmê (and of the political itself).

5.3.2. A Highly Ideal Scenario: When Everyone Is Wise

The first scenario is speculative but reconstructible based on Plato's remarks: a scenario in which every citizen possesses the *epistêmê* of the Good itself. They must, above all, secure the material conditions for life, and thus, according to *Republic* II, they will also possess the expertises necessary for a self-sufficient state. Since they know the Good itself through *epistêmê*, they know that doing one's own work is best. Therefore, this state perhaps resembles the First City in the *Republic* in appearance. Although we cannot determine the psychic condition of its citizens (whether they are all truly wise or merely rationally self-interested or assumed to be free from "unnecessary" desires), some commentators have claimed that this state is more just and admirable than Kallipolis. They argue that there are indications that the inhabitants of the First City are virtuous and that Socrates even praises this city as "true and healthy".[501] This city could be described as the "democracy of gods" mentioned by Rousseau, but there is no need for rule in general in such a city; thus, the 3PE are superfluous. When everyone is wise enough, why does one have to persuade and punish another? Generals and generalships are also useless under these ideal conditions: the origin of war does not lie until the rise of the second, luxurious city. I leave open whether this scenario of an ideal city inhabited by philosophically wise workers is worth further consideration in reading Plato's political thought.

5.3.3. An Ideal Scenario: When the Philosopher or True Political Expert is Ruler

The worse, but still ideal, scenario is when Plato's requirement in the *Republic* is fulfilled: philosophy and power are united (p. 82-84 in Section 2.2.3 and p. 122 in Section 3.2 above). This can be described in the *Statesman*'s terms as a scenario in which the possessors of political *epistêmê* have the authority to legislate and are also equipped with

[501] By reading Socrates' praise straightforwardly, Morrison 2007, 252-4 and Jonas et al. 2012 argue that the City of Pigs is indeed a just and virtuous city, even better than the Kallipolis. However, such a reading is not widely accepted.

other practical expertises through education and experience. Thus, as "senior" rulers (in Lane's term), they engage in legislation and the direct administration of some public affairs in accordance with the laws they themselves have enacted (Section 4.3.7). What is noteworthy here, as stressed in Section 2.3.4 and at the end of Section 5.2.3, is that the expertise for inquiring into what the Good itself and the Justice itself are, and for expanding one's knowledge of the Forms, is not identical with the expertise for legislating and ruling.[502] The legislative expertise does not primarily concern the Forms, but rather sensible things such as just actions, just laws, and just individuals. This is why, as I have argued, philosopher-rulers, even when they possess *epistêmê* of the Forms, occasionally make mistakes in their ruling within this sensible world. This idea is suggested in the *Republic* by the fact that the rulers of the Kallipolis

> ... must each in turn (ἐν μέρει) put the city, its citizens, and themselves in order, using it as their model. Each of them will spend most of his time with philosophy, but, when his turn comes (ὅταν δὲ τὸ μέρος ἥκῃ), he must labor in politics and rule for the city's sake, not as if he were doing something fine, but rather something that has to be done. Then, having educated (παιδεύσαντας) others like himself to take his place (ἀντικαταλιπόντας) as guardians of the city, he will depart for the Isles of the Blessed and dwell there (VII. 540a8-b7).

As I clarified elsewhere (Sections 2.3.4, 4.3.5, and 5.2.3), philosopher-rulers engage in philosophy *qua* philosophers and rule their city *qua* rulers. The cited passage shows that these two may not only be analytically distinct but also temporally separated. In any case, this clarifies how the political and politics are distinguished in Plato's conception of philosopher-rulers. In what sense is the city ruled by them genuinely political? During their term in office, they engage in "politics" in the sense that they rule within the existing constitutional framework established by the laws they themselves enacted. However, they are able to engage in "the political," arriving at new conclusions that allow them to revise and renew the existing legal order when a new term begins. Since this change occurs not

[502] I read *Plt*. 309d1 (τὸν ... πολιτικὸν καὶ τὸν ἀγαθὸν νομοθέτην) as "the one who is a statesman and the one with legislative expertise". He who has both political *epistêmê* and legislative expertise can instill true *doxa* into the mind of citizens. Also, *Resp*. VI. 497c-d suggests that there exists an expertise for pursuing 'a theory of the constitution' that guides the lawgiver who has legislative expertise. See also Sørensen 2022, 18: Legislation 'is a strictly secondary manifestation of expertise.' One may ask whether Plato treats legislative expertise as distinct from political *epistêmê*—much like 3PE. My point, as I have repeatedly argued, is that political *epistêmê* of the Forms and the legislative expertise exercised in the realm of the sensible are analytically distinguishable.

within the legal order but outside of it, it represents radical change (see Section 4.4). This scenario is considered ideal precisely because, unlike others, it offers a definitive possibility of radical political transformation.

Additionally, it should again be noted that their rule over producers is neither like Critias' in the *Charmides* nor like that of a master-builder-like statesman who issues orders to each citizen on what to do. Philosopher-rulers are not experts in every field, like medicine, shipbuilding, or metalworking, as argued in Section 3.2, nor are they worldly omniscient, as discussed in Section 2.3.3. Rather, their ruling promotes economic prosperity by instilling true *doxa* into the citizens, that is, doing one's work is best both privately and publicly.

5.3.4. The First Non-Ideal Scenario: Philosopher Mentors Ruler or Powerholder

Though not explicitly stated in Plato's texts or secondary literature, Plato may have thought that even when a philosopher is not an actual ruler, their *epistêmê* can still be politically effective by serving as a mentor to actual rulers or political elites (see p. 85-86 in Section 2.2.3). This is exemplified in the relationship between Pericles, who possessed knowledge of government and oratory, and Anaxagoras, the philosopher who provided him with contemplative, natural-philosophical knowledge. Plato portrays Socrates, especially in his early dialogues, as a mentor who makes those aspiring to enter politics aware of their ignorance and offers them guidance, and he himself engages with the young Dionysius in this capacity. Some of Plato's students from the Academy are also recorded to have become political advisors in a similar fashion.[503] Thereafter, the mentoring form of the availability of *epistêmê* in society is generalized by Plutarch's treatise titled "That a Philosopher Ought to Converse Especially with Men in Power," the epitome of which, for him, is also Plato's journey to Syracuse: 'And surely the teachings of philosophers, if they are firmly engraved in the souls of rulers and statesmen and control them, acquire the force of laws; and that is why Plato sailed to Sicily, in the hope that his teachings would produce laws and actions in the government of Dionysius ....'[504]

A further interesting point of this scenario stands out as follows: it explains why Plato

[503] See Trampedach 1994, 92-101 for the cases of Euphraios and Delios of Ephesus.
[504] Plut. *Mor*. 776a-787c. The translation from Fowler 1936, 47.

depicts the philosopher as useless or otherworldly. If the philosopher possesses only the *epistêmê* of Forms and lacks any other practical expertise, then he remains unproductive and, as a result, economically incompetent, socially weak, and politically negligible. Therefore, if such a useless philosopher is to exert influence on society, he must either possess other kinds of expertise for governing (as in the ideal scenario in Section 5.3.3) or meet someone equipped with them, like Pericles or Alcibiades. As a result, the philosopher-mentor enables him to acquire true *doxa* (see my interpretation (3) on p. 86 of "the king with *doxa*" in 301b2-3). If the ruler or a man in power is well persuaded, then the constitution can be genuinely political.

5.3.5. The Second Non-Ideal Scenario: When Philosopher is a Private Citizen

Another possible scenario involves political *epistêmê* being present in one or a few private citizens. This scenario aligns with some interpretations of Plato's ideal of the philosopher-ruler from the perspective of perfectionist liberalism: that every citizen should become a philosopher and actively participate in politics to realize what they know in public life.[505] In Section 2.2.3, I pointed to several passages (296a8-11, 298d5-7, and 299c3-5) where the formal persuasion or advice of the legislative body or authority by a private citizen is mentioned. I also referred to Jakub Jinek's study (2021) of the *Apology*, which shows how Socrates, portrayed as the bearer of political *epistêmê*, attempted to persuade the Athenian people (the rulers of the Athenian democracy) within the framework of a given legal order. Had his persuasion succeeded, he would not have been sentenced to death, and his proposed laws concerning piety might well have been enacted. The democratic participation of a true expert in politics can therefore be counted as another non-ideal scenario for a genuinely political society.

5.3.6. The Worst Scenario: No One in a Society Has Political *Epistêmê*

As discussed in Sections 1.2.3 and 1.3.3, theorists of the political have warned of its potential disappearance. For Plato, this scenario arises either when no one in a society possesses political *epistêmê* or when—even if someone does—all the channels through which that *epistêmê* could be exercised are blocked. A representative example of this is the sentencing of Socrates to death. In this scenario, no one questions the existing order, no

[505] See Section 1.1.3. n. 44 for some studies interpreting Plato's political thought in the light of liberal perfectionism.

one explores the possibility of a new one, and therefore, no one attempts radical change. As noted in Section 3.5, such a city may achieve a certain degree of success or at least manage to endure for a while, but in the long run, it is destined for decline.

5.4. What Happens in those *Political* Cities? Everything becomes Political There!

In this concluding section, I return to the discussion in Sections 1.2.4 and 1.3.4 to describe what happens in genuinely political cities—ideal and non-ideal—with a particular emphasis on "where" an existing social order is questioned, a new one is envisioned, and a radical political change is brought about (and "how"). In doing so, I reaffirm the last of the four points I noted as shared by both theorists of the political and Plato: the pervasiveness of the political.

(1) Firstly, as Popper and other liberal theorists critically observe, Plato, like other pre-modern thinkers, views everything as political in the sense that everything non-political or politically neutral matters is essential for a community to sustain and achieve its goals. Therefore, they must be regulated and controlled in the name of politics.

(2) If we remain faithful to the definition of the political we have established thus far, then everything can also be political in the sense that everything can be questioned in reference to the Good itself (since the Good itself is superior to all other actual goods) and can serve as a site for the political: where an existing social order is questioned and a radical political change takes place. In Section 1.3.4, I invoked Plato's questioning of seemingly fixed social elements like art and religion. Plato fundamentally challenged the relationship between gods and humans, which had been grounded in the notion of human sacrifice and divine reciprocity, by questioning both the nature of divinity itself and the religious authorities of his time. This radical critique led him to envision an ideal state founded upon a moral divine order.[506] Since, at the time, it was poetry—not canonical scripture such as that of Christianity—that served as the primary medium for religious imagination, Plato's critique of such conceptions of the divine also amounted to a questioning of the prevailing art

[506] According to Van Riel 2013, 13–14, Plato 'changes the emphasis from our external deeds to our inner disposition," the latter being a requirement for religious piety, as seen in *Laws* IV, 716e–717a. The Platonic idea (*Resp*. IV. 443c-444a) that outward religious actions merely reflect the good and moral inner state that precedes them would necessitate a fundamental reconfiguration of the city, one grounded in a new imaginary of the citizen—such as the introduction of the soul and the cosmos as manifestations of the gods—while still adopting the outer form of traditional *polis* religion: see Burkert 2011, 478–488 and 493 ff..

forms. His call for new artistic expressions thus reflected a radical rethinking of art itself. My analysis of the Asclepius passage (Section 3.4) shows that medicine can also be considered a site for the political. Given that a society has a conception of health that centers on longevity and the elimination of "abnormal" illness, it becomes so organized or totalized that it directs health insurance funds toward meaningless life-sustaining treatments merely to prolong life, emphasizing excessive protection over a dignified living for the elderly. When one asks, as Asclepius did, what true health is and what constitutes true well-being for a patient, it amounts to questioning the entire structure of society.

(3) Finally, something is called political when it has been questioned and then remains normatively and paradigmatically totalized in an ideal state, as in democratized Athens, where every element in a society was reconfigured following the advent of a new social order: the highly politicized one called democracy (see Section 1.2.4 and n.75: for instance, according to Christian Meier, tragedy as a political art constitutes a part of the totalizing whole of Athenian democracy). Likewise, we can infer that Plato's critiques of art, religion, science, ethics, and other domains are integrated into the vision of his ideal city. Therefore, in this sense, something is political in the ideal state.

Is this use of the term "political" allowed in Plato, semantically? As already noted in Section 1.3.4, there are several passages in the *Laws* where the use of the term "πολιτικόν" appears in a striking manner. Setting aside some usages where it refers to the civic dimension of things (e.g., V. 736d-737a; VI. 757c; XII. 963b), the following are predicated as political: (1) The Egyptian way of treating poetry (νομοθετικὸν μὲν οὖν καὶ πολιτικὸν ὑπερβαλλόντως: II. 657a4-5); (2) A legislator's way of establishing a hierarchy of values ('valuing riches above all or ... promoting one of the other inferior goods to a more exalted position' is οὔθ' ὅσιον οὔτε πολιτικὸν ἂν δρῴη πρᾶγμα: III. 697c2-3; Cf. V. 726a-729b); and (3) A certain kind of dance (εἰπεῖν ὡς οὐκ ἔστι πολιτικὸν τοῦτο τῆς ὀρχήσεως τὸ γένος: VII. 815d2). On a substantive level, it has already been sufficiently discussed how (1) poetry served for Plato as a site for the political: why it matters for a political community and how Plato's reform of poetry (and of traditional Greek religion) is connected with the transformation of the entire society. Therefore, when Plato calls poetry in his ideal city *political*, such political poetry (or art) denotes a form of poetry shaped by its user—the philosopher-kings or a true statesman —and allowed to remain within the ideal city. Likewise, (2) the reordering of the hierarchy of values—from external goods such as wealth, honor, and health to the goods of the soul, such as virtue and wisdom—requires a

radical reconfiguration of the entire social order to achieve the common good. Only when such a reordering is realized—intellect over appetite, which is hardly attainable (see Section 1.3.2)—can it truly be called political. Regarding (3), by judging that a certain form of dance is "not fit for a civilized community",[507] Plato implicitly acknowledges the existence of good dances—*political* dances—that constitute an essential component of the ideal state. This amounts to the "use" of dance grounded in the general understanding of the nature and function of dance from the perspective of the good life, as well as the limited utility of drunkenness, all discussed in the *Laws* I and II. Therefore, to call certain dances *politikon* supports my argument.

This threefold way of understanding how everything is political is also applicable to our contemporary context. As briefly mentioned in Sections 1.2.4 and 1.3.4, Coeckelbergh (2022) argues that AI and technology are political in the first sense—they have a political dimension and are not politically neutral, as their deployment as neutral instruments is embedded in pre-existing power relations and structures of inequality.[508] However, 'if we challenge these assumptions [of anthropocentrism: e.g., human/non-human distinction or the exclusive conferral of political status as citizen upon human beings], and open up the boundaries of the political to include non-humans',[509] with the high-level advancement of AI and technology, this leads us to 'question[ing] the very concepts and values themselves (e.g., freedom, equality, justice, democracy, power, human-centered politics). This further leads us to revisit important questions about the nature and future of politics.'[510] In carrying out such practical and theoretical undertakings, we are inevitably led to ask the central question: 'What political technologies do we need and want?'[511] This question has the same form and motivation as one Plato would have considered in envisioning his ideal city: what medicine, architecture, art, and religion should there be in an ideal city? A comparison can be made with Walter Benjamin's idea of art: Where technological

[507] There are two ways of understanding and translating "οὐ ἔστι πολιτικόν" here. One is that such dances, which represent drunken persons, are not political in the sense that they are not ruled out of the ideal city, but simply set aside for this discussion. Saunders' English translation ('put them [the Bacchic dances and the like] in a category of their own which a statesman may ignore as outside his province.') takes this direction. The other is that, as in England's translation (1921) and Diès' French translation (2007), these dances are political in the sense that they are 'not fit for a civilized community' ('*un genre de danse qui convienne à des citoyens*'), the approach that Pfefferkorn 2023, 220 n.8 takes. I follow the latter interpretation.
[508] Coeckelbergh 2022, 122-124.
[509] Coeckelbergh 2022, 125.
[510] Coeckelbergh 2022, 150.
[511] Coeckelbergh 2022, 153.

reproduction has radically transformed the meaning of art, as well as the status of its audience and the modes of reception, Benjamin calls for the use of film—a new form of art that emerged under these conditions—for what he considers a progressive purpose ('*Massen mobilisieren*' for '*Veränderung der Eigentumsverhältnisse*'),[512] describing this as the *politicization of art (die Politisierung der Kunst)*. In this case as well, the question posed in his *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit* is: What is political art? Beyond the claim that art is important to politics, "this" art is political in that it calls into question the entire tradition of art that preceded it and the social order surrounding it. It is also political in the sense that it belongs to an ideal—though not yet realized—socialist state.

Plato's genuinely political society or community is one where such an event occurs through all elements in every domain of society, and even through those that are yet to come. Whatever comes into being, Plato's ideal state is capable of using it because it is ruled, or at least influenced, by someone who questions an existing order *qua* philosopher or true political expert. Of course, as I have argued repeatedly, once his vision of a new order is realized—whether in the form of legislation that radically breaks from the previous one or through institutionalization of radical political change by the experts in 3PE—it emerges as a totalizing order that, due to its ontological status, is inherently deficient and constitutes both the site for the political and its very limits. In this way, politics and the political recur in alternation. Political *epistêmê*, in Plato's sense, is the expertise that operates not at the level of "good" ruling within an existing moral, legal order, but at the level of the political: that is, in thoroughly questioning it. Therefore, such a political expert does not need to have a technical knowledge of law, public affairs, or every domain that matters to our social life in order to rule over other experts and use their goods for the sake of the good of the whole society (*Gorg* 473e-a: I didn't know how to do it [calling for a vote]; *Resp*. III. 399a: 'I [Socrates] don't know all the musical modes.'). The expert is one who inquires into the Forms and their interrelations and attains the knowledge of them, however partial and provisional. What I have tried to explain is why only such a figure—the philosopher—deserves to be genuinely πολιτικός.

[512] See Nachwort of *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit* (2020, 73 ff.)

Afterword

In the matter of reading Plato alone, I hope that I have offered here an accurate interpretation of many key issues and contributed to further debates on them. My main theses, the two basic premises underlying my whole project, are as follows: Plato's political *epistêmê* is of the Forms, and Plato did not lose sight of the vision of rule of *epistêmê*, nor did he abandon such conception of the political *epistêmê*. My arguments in support of these two premises can be understood as the answers to the following questions: What is the nature of political *epistêmê*? If it is a form of knowledge, what content and form do its objects assume? If *epistêmê* is of the Forms, how can it serve as an epistemic competence for politics, which belongs to the sensible realm, and how can it contribute to the (material) prosperity of a society? Given that even philosopher-rulers or the possessors of political *epistêmê* have no clear and stable knowledge about particulars and practical affairs in the realm of *doxa*, how can we come to terms with the possibility that they can make mistakes in their ruling? Why should even Plato's wise rulers rely on laws and establish a constitutional order that includes offices? Where, in the *Statesman*, do we detect the theory of Forms as presented in the middle dialogues, along with Plato's vision of the rule of *epistêmê*, despite his new appraisal of the rule of law and seeming preference for institutionalism?

For political thought in general, I believe that my project of reading Plato through the concept of the political offers at least two theoretical advantages, which constitute the

reason why we should *read Plato* beyond merely demonstrating the possibility of such a reading.

First, it prompts us to rethink the ideal of expertocracy. In today's political landscape—increasingly shaped by technopopulism and calls for *epistocracy* over democracy—we are witnessing a trend where political expertise is reduced to mere technical problem-solving. Authority is often granted to those considered specialists in fields deemed critical: economists, natural scientists, lawyers, or, increasingly, even AI experts. This trend poses a profound challenge to the foundations of modern democracy. Plato is frequently cited as the prototype of this model—the philosopher-king as technocrat. However, if my reading is correct, Plato's "expert in politics" is not a technocrat, who is expected to be worldly omniscient. Rather, he is someone who aspires to and refers constantly to knowledge of the Forms. It is the *epistêmê,* the power to inquire into and knowledge of the Forms, that enables him to critique the existing society, envision alternative ways of life, and lead transformative change. If so, the political expert appears more as a marginal or even absurd figure—otherworldly, removed, and socially incomprehensible, just as Socrates was portrayed in Athens. This places him closer to the figures today's political theorists associate with radical critique: dissidents, militants, and activist intellectuals on the margins of dominant discourse. By studying Plato, we can arrive at a renewed understanding of the ideal of epistocracy.

Second, even as I foreground the political in Plato, I also seek to recover from his philosophy a rich account of *order*, *institutionality*, and the resources of the *state*. Much of twentieth-century political theory that emphasized "the political" did so through strategies of resistance—against the state, against sovereignty, against the institutionalization of power. But in the twenty-first century, we have seen such strategies appropriated by the right, which presents itself as the oppressed and as a minority. I believe that what must be reclaimed today is Plato's emphasis on the necessity of rational governance, his vision of the effective institutionalization of rule through law and public office, his recognition and detailed analysis of the various social domains that the state must control and supervise to protect them from sociological forces, and his conviction that political subjects must be educated in multiple ways for the sake of the preservation of human community and the creation of livable social conditions for all. Indeed, Plato has long been regarded as one of the most quintessential advocates of such principles. Yet, *the political* presupposes the existence of a social order stabilized and totalized through *politics*. We can attribute such a

view to Plato when, in the *Statesman*, "we see *both* a harsh rejection and ridicule of rigid rule-following *and* its re-introduction *and* even praise" [author's italic].[513] This ambivalence, I argue, does not merely reveal his own difficulty in fully accepting the positive evaluation of the rule of law.[514] Rather, it reflects a deep insight into the oscillating relationship between *the political* and *politics*—between the possibility of founding a new order and the necessity of operating within an existing one.

More broadly, Plato offers both a metaphysical affirmation and ethical encouragement to transcend existing social orders, as well as a profound commitment to the institutional and normative frameworks that enable collective life. The conventional image of Plato as a conservative thinker, one who defends rule of the qualified and the state monopolizing power and imposing unity, is—as Sheldon Wolin himself admitted—the product of 'a certain amount of distortion', one that fails to do justice to 'a thinker with his full share of doubts, ambiguities, and anguishing dilemmas.'[515] My project, then, is best understood as an attempt to clarify how genuinely Plato was concerned with the dimension of human life that contemporary political thinkers have sought to conceptualize through the term "the political."

[513] Horn 2021b, 177.
[514] Kahn 2013, 234: 'The argument of the *Statesman* makes clear how difficult it was for Plato to propose subjecting such a sovereign to any system of written rules.'
[515] Wolin 2016, 62.

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