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PLATON'S CRITIQUE OF DEMOCRACY IN THE POLITEIA (*REPUBLIC*):
POLITICS AS EPISTEME

PLATON'UN POLITEIA (*DEVLET*) ESERİNDE DEMOKRASİ ELEŞTİRİSİ:
EPISTEME OLARAK POLİTİKA

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine Plato's critique of democracy in the *Politeia (Republic)*. This study consists of three parts. First part of this study Plato's critiques of democracy will be examined. There are two arguments that constitute critiques of Plato on democracy. The selfishness of people and unqualified rulers are introduced as his two important critiques. The first argument is that Democracy encourages people to be selfish and strengthens their selfish feelings. This leads to the weakening of social ties and excessive individualism. The second argument is that since the numerical majority determines the government in a democracy, unqualified people become the head of the state. Second part of this study, Plato's critique of democracy will be explained by his understanding of politics as episteme. He clarifies his ideas and understanding of politics basically based on his metaphysics and epistemology. His political philosophy is directly related to his understanding of epistemology that is the core aspect of his metaphysical theory. By politics, as episteme, it means that people who have true knowledge of politics and expertise in this field. According to Plato, politics as episteme does not belong to any ordinary citizen who lacks skills including using reason properly through dialectics and disciplining passions only philosophers have this knowledge and features that differentiate them from others. The distinction between belief and knowledge creates politically hierarchical governing. In the last part of this study, Plato's critiques of democracy will be evaluated.

Keywords: *Democracy, Freedom, Episteme, Doxa, Equality.*

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ÖZ

Bu çalışma, Platon'un Devlet adlı eserindeki demokrasi eleştirisini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu çalışma üç bölümden oluşmaktadır. Bu çalışmanın ilk bölümünde Platon'un demokrasi eleştirileri incelenecektir. Platon'un demokrasiye yönelik eleştirilerini oluşturan iki argüman vardır. İnsanların bencilliği ve niteliksiz yöneticiler, onun iki önemli eleştirisi olarak tanıtılmaktadır. İlk argüman, Demokrasinin insanları bencil olmaya teşvik ettiği ve bencil duygularını güçlendirdiğidir. Bu, sosyal bağların zayıflamasına ve aşırı bireyselleşmeye yol açar. İkinci argüman, sayısal çoğunluk bir demokraside hükümeti belirlediğinden, niteliksiz insanların devletin başı haline geldiğidir. Bu çalışmanın ikinci bölümünde, Platon'un demokrasiye yönelik eleştirisi, siyaseti episteme olarak anlamasıyla açıklanacaktır. Onun siyaset anlayışı temel olarak kendi felsefi sistemindeki metafiziğe ve epistemolojisine dayanır. Siyaset felsefesi, metafizik teorisinin temel yönü olan epistemoloji anlayışıyla doğrudan ilişkilidir. Siyaset, episteme olarak, siyasetin gerçek bilgisine ve bu alanda uzmanlığa sahip olan kişiler anlamına gelir. Platon'a göre, episteme olarak siyaset, diyalektik yoluyla akli doğru şekilde kullanma ve tutkuları disiplin altına alma gibi becerilerden yoksun olan sıradan bir vatandaşa ait değildir; yalnızca filozoflar bu bilgiye ve onları diğerlerinden ayıran özelliklere sahiptir. İnanç ve bilgi arasındaki ayrım, siyasi olarak hiyerarşik bir yönetim yaratır. Bu çalışmanın son bölümünde, Platon'un demokrasiye yönelik eleştirileri değerlendirilecektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Demokrasi, Özgürlük, Episteme, Doksa, Eşitlik.*

Introduction

As a political regime, democracy appeared in Athens where people defend and criticize this regime. It is believed that systematic administrative thinking originated in ancient Greece (c. 400 B.C.), which is also considered to be the birthplace of modern administrative thought. The administrative unit where the pre-democratic experience began and developed was the city-state (polis). It also governed every aspect of Greek society. These city-states were Sparta, Thebes, and Athens. The close bond that exists between the State and each citizen, however, is what matters. The ties were so strong that it was impossible to imagine a citizen residing outside of his state. The Greek leadership mindset is also influenced by this intimate relationship. The first philosopher to offer a methodical political and administrative framework was Plato (Takala, 1998: 787). Especially from the beginning of democracy, Plato, who was an important political philosopher and lived in a democratic regime, examined it critically.

Before analyzing Plato's critique of democracy, the meaning of this regime needs to be given. In the *Dictionary of Western Philosophy*, democracy is defined as follows: "from Greek *demos*, people + *kratia*, mighty, powerful, literally, rule by the people" (Bunnin and Yu, 2004: 168). Beside that it described in another dictionary as follows: "(Gr. *Democractia* rule by people) n. a system of government in which all citizens are entitled to participate in political decision making, be it directly, or indirectly through elected

representative” (Mautner, 2005: 144). In the *Historical Dictionary of Ancient Greek Philosophy* democracy is described as follows:

“*Demokratia*, “Rule by the people.” In classical Greece, “democracy” meant *direct* popular rule by the (male) citizens. Thus, a viable democratic state was limited in size to the number of people who could assemble on a regular basis. In ancient democracies, most government positions were assigned by lot, for relatively short terms (one year is common); military leaders and others requiring specialized knowledge were elected by the assembly and were subject to instant recall by the assembly” (Preus, 2007: 83).

From the above quotes, although we have direct or representative democracies today that include both women and man for participating politics, In the Ancient Greek society women was not included as subjects who participated politics. Except from this difference, it is clear that participating in politics and making decisions on policies directly or indirectly is one of the main characteristics of democracy. Today it is well known that to be a participant in politics and make decisions on policies there should be equality among citizens, which means citizens have an equal right to participate in politics such as with the one-person one-vote rule in the democratic government. As Cunningham, who is the writer of “The Theories of Democracy”, states that contemporary democratic theories give importance to the “active participation of citizens in public affairs; the interaction of citizens as equals; and mutual trust and respect among citizens” (Cunningham, 2002: 23). For this reason, equality as a principle presents itself as a precondition of democracy today. Without equality democracy loses its sole and foundation. To realize this, a democracy defender knows that people should have the same equal rights such as to be ruled and rule in democracy.

In Ancient Greek society, politics was the main problem of society and discussion on how to live a just society was a serious question in the city states. As Sinclair points out that whatever the final reason for the creation of city-states, the sheer number of them indicates that political issues, including the creation of political institutions and their effective operation, must have received a lot of attention early on. These contributed two distinctive features to Greek political philosophy that it never completely lost: first, a strong practical bent; and second, a constant search for the ideal or perfect state (Sinclair, 1951: 6). Democracy was one of the important political regimes and as a regime it was the center of this debate in Ancient Greek society. Especially, Athens was the democratic city state among others in Ancient Greek society and general characteristics of democracy is that citizenship was restricted to adult male Athenians who were the legitimate children of legally wed Athenians. All aspects of democratic participation, including voting in the Assembly, serving on a judicial panel, being appointed by lottery to a magisterial board, and running for higher military or political office, such the generalship, depended on having citizenship (Jones, 2008: 34). After this definition both from Ancient Greek’s and Contemporary understanding of democracy and characteristic of it above, I will try to explain Plato’s critique of democracy in the *Politeia (Republic)*,

which is his magnum opus. This book is about politics and the ideal state that Plato tries to establish as a political regime. As Rogers put forward Plato's main interest is directly related to politics and his ideas on science and scientific knowledge primarily aim to find his political view (Rogers, 1936: 76). Plato's ideas on democracy were always used to criticize and explain the defects of democracy. We are using Plato's critiques of democracy today when we debate democracy as a regime. These critiques provide an evaluation of democracy and give us an opportunity to correct it from a philosophical perspective. As Aristotle points out if we comprehend the reasons behind the demise of regimes, we must likewise comprehend the reasons behind their preservation. Because destruction is the antithesis of preservation and opposites produce other opposites (Aristotle, 1992: 323).

From the above perspective, this paper aims to examine Plato's critique of democracy in the *Politeia (Republic)*. This study consists of three parts. First part of this study Plato's critiques of democracy will be examined. The selfishness of people and unqualified rulers are introduced as his two important critiques. The first argument is that Democracy encourages people to be selfish and strengthens their selfish feelings. This leads to the weakening of social ties and excessive individualism. The second argument is that since the numerical majority determines the government in a democracy, unqualified people become the head of the state. Second part of this study, Plato's critique of democracy will be explained by his understanding of politics as episteme. In the last part of this study, Plato's critiques of democracy will be evaluated.

1. Plato's Critiques of Democracy in *The Politeia (Republic)*

In the *Politeia (Republic)*, which is his magnum opus, Plato claims that democracy arises from the decline of an oligarchy, which is based on the government of rich people over the poor, because of the gap between rich and poor, people living under bad economic conditions and lacking social goods demand change (Plato, 2004: 253). Before analyzing the critiques of Plato on oligarchy, the definition of oligarchy should be given. In the Dictionary of Philosophy this term with its etymological background is described as follow: ("Greek oligarchia, from oligoi (few) + archia (rule) n. by the usually wealthy few (Mautner, 2005: 441). This definition describes oligarchy as a regime which was dominated by wealthy few people. From that respect, Oligarchies become democracies because the ruling class is driven by an insatiable greed for wealth. To benefit themselves further by making loans and purchasing assets from others, they fail to impose the necessary regulations to curb the borrowing and spending practices of the wealthy sons. Thus, the loss of moderation is an inevitable consequence of honoring riches (Rosen, 2005: 312). Money and wealth create an unequal relationship among citizens and affect their understanding and worldview including science, religion art, and history. In the oligarchical worldview, everything depends on wealth, and this result in inequality.

Demanding equality between classes gives rise to the emergence of democracy. Plato depicts the beginning of democracy as follows: "Then democracy comes about, I

suppose, when the poor are victorious, kill or expel the others, and give the rest an equal share in the constitution and the ruling offices, and the majority of offices in it are assigned by lot” (Plato, 2004, p. 253). From this quote, we see that democracy occurs in history in the form of demanding equality. The main characteristic of democracy is the value of equality. It is mainly about demanding equality both economically and politically. Before explaining and analyzing Plato’s critique of democracy in the “*The Politeia (Republic)*”, Plato introduce and explain also his understanding of state in the “*Statesman*”, “*Letters*” and “*Laws*”. Before analyzing his idea of the ideal state in *The Politeia (Republic)*, I would like to explain his understanding of the state in his works above mentioned. In the *Statesman*, Plato depicts a type of statesman who has not real *episteme* (knowledge) of politics to criticize the unjust government. He clearly claims as follow:

“Thus we must go on to eliminate the members of the sovereign body in any form of government other than the scientific ; our reason being that they are no true statesman, but merely party-men. The causes for which they stand, we may say, are the merest phantasms, and their own personality no less phantasmal ; they are the world's supreme counterfeiters and sorcerers, and in them we may find therefore its supreme arch-sophists” (Plato, 1961: 330).

From the above quote, it is clear that people who do politics and govern a state are actually different from the others in terms of having the science of politics. Having the science of politics gives priority to people who have that episteme to govern a state. For this reason, there should be a hierarchy among citizens in a just state. As Kenny points out justice is when each class does its work without interfering with the other classes' jobs. By first splitting the human soul into three elements that correspond to the social classes of his state—desire (workers), spirit (soldiers), and reason (rulers)—Plato can give the same description of what it is that makes a man just (righteous). Since each portion of a just (righteous) man is fulfilling its duty and not the job of another part, reason rules him rather than desire (Flew, 1984: 271). In the soul how reason follows passions loses its balance and becomes ill, a state without a philosopher who has the real knowledge of episteme loses its balance and becomes corrupted. Plato tries to depict the ruler of a just state also in the *Letters*. In this book, he clearly argues that the problem about unjust government is that people who governs the state are not the right type of person for that. In that regard, he claims as follows:

“I came to the conclusion that all existing states are badly governed and the condition of their laws practically incurable, without some miraculous remedy and the assistance of fortune; and I was forced to say, in praise of true philosophy, that from her height alone was it possible to discern what the nature of justice is, either in the state or in the individual, and that the ills of the human race would never end until either those who are sincerely and truly lovers of wisdom come into political power, or the rulers of our cities, by the grace of God, learn true philosophy” (Plato, 1962: 217).

From the above quote, Plato clearly make a relationship between philosophy and politics. Politics is only done by people who really interests philosophy and he gives priority to reason over passions. Plato constitutes his understanding of politics in his other important book called *Laws*, which is another other important work related to politics. In that book, he claims as follow:

“Wrong is the name I give to the domination of the soul by passion, fear, pleasure or pain, envy or cupidity, alike in all cases, whether damage is the consequence or not. But where there is the conviction that a course is best—wherever a society or private individuals may take that best to lie where that conviction prevails in the soul and governs a man’s conduct, even if unfortunate consequences should arise, all that is done from such a principle, and all obedience of individuals to it, must be pronounced right and for the highest good of human life, though detriment thus caused is popularly taken to be involuntary wrong” (Plato, 1934: 252-253).

After this introduction about how Plato sees politics in his main works related to state, I would like to turn Plato’s critical arguments against democracy in *The Politeia (Republic)*. His critiques of democracy are mainly based on two arguments. The first argument is that Democracy encourages people to be selfish and strengthens their selfish feelings. This leads to the weakening of social ties and excessive individualism (Plato, 2004: 259- 261). The second argument is that since the numerical majority determines the government in a democracy, unqualified people become the head of the state (Plato, 2004: 264).

Plato’s first critique tells us that excessive equality and liberty that is provided by democracy to the people in law create selfish people in the state. Plato claims that democratic man feeds his appetite on-the-fly and lives day by day in this regime. He alternates between drinking a lot and listening to the flute and drinking only water and following a diet at other times. He occasionally goes in for physical training, but other times he just sits about and does nothing. He sometimes focuses his time on what he perceives to be philosophical activities. But he participates in politics often, hopping up and down and saying and doing whatever comes to mind. He will be carried in that direction if he admires certain military guys; if not, he will be carried in a different direction by money makers. Though he describes his existence as joyful and free, it is devoid of both order and necessity (Plato, 2004: 259). From this perspective, people in democracies become selfish, only caring about their self-interest in society for Plato. This selfishness is a kind of illness that destroys society as whole, and it is also against Plato’s ideal state that is proposed by Plato as an alternative regime. His ideal state is constructed of the similarity between the human soul and the state. He depicts this similarity as follows.

SOCRATES: “Mustn’t it, in turn, be a kind of faction among those three— their meddling and interfering with one another’s jobs; the rebellion of a part of the soul against the whole in order to rule in it inappropriately, since its nature suits it to be a slave of the ruling class. We will say

something like that, I imagine, and that their disorder and wandering is injustice, licentiousness, cowardice, ignorance, and, in a word, the whole of vice.

GLAUCON: That is precisely what they are” (Plato, 2004: 133).

This quote above shows that Plato’s ideal state is not based upon equality among citizens. His ideal state gives priority to reason in the soul, and it represents the philosopher as ruler in the state. In the *Theaetetus*, When Plato criticizes the Protagoras’ view “man is the measure of all things” (Plato, 2014: 17), He clearly sees this thought as a relativizing truth. If man is the measure of all things that makes impossible to claim truth as universal knowledge. From that respect, Plato clearly opposes this view as follows:

“And about matters that concern the state, too— things which are admirable or dishonourable, just or unjust, in conformity with religion or not—it will hold that whatever sort of thing any state thinks to be, and lays down as, lawful for itself actually is, in strict truth, lawful for it, and that on those questions no individual is at all wiser than any other, and no state is at all wiser than any other (Plato, 2014: 49)”.

Instead of Protagoras’ controversial view on truth and knowledge that depicts knowledge as perception and changeable from one person to other, Plato tries to prove that there is universal and unchangeable truth and knowledge. From this regard, he makes distinction between *doxa* and *episteme* in the *Theaetetus*. He depicts knowledge as follow:

“And anyone who, along with a correct judgement about any of the things which are, gets hold of its differentiation from everything else as well, will have come to have knowledge of that thing, of which he previously had a judgement (Plato, 2014: 107)”.

From above quote, it is clear that knowledge is not anyone’s perception or judgment about anything without justifying. Without justification by reason, all judgments should be seen as *doxa*. *Episteme* or knowledge should be a judgment with justification and it should be supported by reasonable arguments. Making difference among the arguments and ideas needs justification. After this connection between the universality of truth and definition of knowledge, I would like to turn the critique of Plato on democracy. Democracies as a regime generally undermine the importance of reason because its understanding of freedom gives priority to desires of soul over the reason. According to Plato, giving equal status and freedom to citizens without any restriction means promising everybody can be and do whatever they want. This is the source of selfishness that democracy creates. This attitude among citizens leads to the devaluation of the community (Plato, 2004: 261). As Santas points out, “...his criticism of democracy is precisely that it allows for the freedom to do as one pleases, including the freedom of choice of career, in utter disregard to his principle of social justice (Santas, 2010: 115). In that respect, Plato depicts the lifestyle of democratic regime as follows:

SOCRATES: For instance, a father gets into the habit of behaving like a child and fearing his son, and the son gets into the habit of behaving like a father, feeling neither shame nor fear in front of his parents—all in order to be free. A resident alien feels himself equal to a citizen and a citizen to him, and a foreigner likewise.

ADEIMANTUS: Yes, those sorts of things do happen.

SOCRATES: They do—and so do other little things of the same sort. A teacher in such circumstances is afraid of his students and flatters them, while the students belittle their teachers and do the same to their tutors too. In general, the young are the spitting images of their elders and compete with them in words and deeds, while the old stoop to the level of the young and are full of wit and indulgence, imitating the young for fear of being thought disagreeable and masterful.

ADEIMANTUS: Absolutely (Plato, 2004: 261).

Apart from this critique, Plato's other critique of democracy is that since the numerical majority determines the government in a democracy, unqualified people become the head of the state. Unlike Plato's ideal state in which philosophers rule the state and the ruler undergoes very strict training and has some superior characteristics compared to other people, it is enough for the ruler to be liked by the majority in the democracy (Plato, 2004: 264). In that regard, Plato depicts democracy as follows:

“And what about the city's tolerance, its complete lack of petty-mindedness, and its utter disregard for the things we took so seriously when we were founding the city—that unless someone had transcendent natural gifts, he would never become a good man if he did not play fine games right from early childhood and engage in practices that are all of that same sort? Isn't it magnificent how it tramples all that underfoot, gives no thought to what sort of practices someone went in for before he entered politics, and honors him if only he tells them he wishes the majority well?” (Plato, 2004: 255).

It should be noted that Plato's ideal state does not give the right to rule the country to anyone who has no qualities such as being educated, intelligent, psychically well, and virtuous. In that regard *paideia* (education) is the center of politics. In the *Historical Dictionary of Ancient Greek Philosophy*, *paideia* is defined as follows: “Education: reading, writing, and the arts” (Preus, 2007: 191). *Paideia* is an important subject and tool to transform society and build a just state. As we mentioned above, Plato tries to develop a state in which people should not be selfish like in a democratic regime. In that respect, as Werner Jaeger points out that Plato and other Greek educator's ideal on *paideia* is that determining how individualism would be suppressed and how each citizen's character might be formed on a single communal model was the major social challenge (Jaeger, 1945: 83). For that reason, Plato gives an important role to education in his ideal state.

In the second part of the study, I will explain why Plato thinks that the person who will rule must have certain qualities. That's why I only put forward criticism here. Apart from these critiques, Plato proposes that philosophers should rule the state (Plato, 2004: 113). To elaborate on this idea and explain the relationship between his epistemology and politics, we should ask two questions. The first question is who is the philosopher for Plato? The second is that why should philosophers rule the state? The answer to the first question shows us the features and abilities that philosophers ought to have. Then the answer to the second question gives us the reasons why philosophers should rule the state. Moreover, to answer these questions, the relationship between epistemology and politics will be shown in the following chapter.

2. Politics as Episteme in Philosophy of Plato

Plato's ideal state and understanding of politics directly relate to his epistemology and metaphysics. Political ideas of his could be read as an episteme in his political philosophy. To explain this claim, I would like to answer the questions above mentioned. Let us turn to the first question, what kind of qualities philosopher should have. Plato describes the philosopher who loves learning the truth, and philosophy (love of wisdom), and loves being as a whole. In addition, the philosopher cares about things that only make a good soul, not a good body, and that means the philosopher lives a virtuous life (Plato, 2004: 177-178). From this point of view, the person who knows the truth is the person who has episteme, that is, the philosopher. Here, the person who knows the facts about politics, that is, episteme, should govern the state. Plato makes a distinction between episteme and *doxa* to justify and make his argument clear. He uses his famous allegory of cave when he makes distinction between episteme and *doxa*. The cave represents the distinction between both metaphysical and epistemic reality versus appearance. In the cave there are prisoners whose legs and necks have been chained by someone since they were born, and they only see the wall in front of them. Prisoners see the image of things which are reflected in the fire behind them and there are also some people who carry things behind them. A prisoner cannot see both these people and objects. There is also another realm that is the out of cave. One of the prisoners was released and went out of cave. He/she sees the fire, people and things in the cave, and he also sees the outside of cave. He/she realized that things in the cave are not real and real things are outside. Metaphysically there are two worlds which are phenomenal and ideal world. The cave represents this empirical world which reflects only images and by which human beings get *doxa* only. The outside of cave is the ideal world that represents real being and by which human being gets the *episteme* (Plato, 2004: 208- 213). This is how Plato makes the distinction between *doxa* and *episteme*.

The philosopher who comes out of the cave arrives at the realm of ideas only through dialectics. According to Plato, using dialectical discussions a person who is a candidate to be a philosopher uses only his reason does not sense perceptions as the source of opinion and belongs to the empirical world. Episteme is only acquired using reason alone, so the

intelligible realm is known by using the dialectical method (Plato, 2004: 207). Besides that, Plato makes a distinction between belief (doxa) and knowledge (episteme) not only by using cave allegory but also depicting philosophers' qualities elsewhere in *The Politeia (Republic)*. He clearly explains philosophers' qualities as follows:

SOCRATES: Shall we say, then, that these people are passionately devoted to and love the things with which knowledge deals, as the others are devoted to and love the things with which belief deals? We have not forgotten, have we, that the latter love and look at beautiful sounds, colors, and things of that sort, but cannot even bear the idea that the beautiful itself is a thing that is?

GLAUCON: No, we have not.

SOCRATES: Will we be striking a false note, then, if we call such people "philodoxers" (lovers of belief) rather than "philosophers" (lovers of wisdom or knowledge)? Will they be very angry with us if we call them that?

GLAUCON: Not if they take my advice. It is not in accord with divine law to be angry with the truth.

SOCRATES: So, those who in each case are passionately devoted to the thing itself are the ones we must call, not "philodoxers," but "philosophers"?

GLAUCON: Absolutely (Plato, 2004: 175).

From the above quote, only philosophers have this knowledge and features that differentiate them from others. The distinction between belief and knowledge creates politically hierarchical governing. As Reid claims that Plato's most famous critique of democracy should be read as epistemic: rulers should be knowledgeable persons, and there are few people who have the quality of having knowledge as episteme to rule (Reid, forthcoming). Those who have episteme also have the right to rule the state and those who have only belief must obey the ruler who is a philosopher. Besides that, this episteme is not based on particular things and facts. It arises from the world of ideas. Episteme in *The Politeia (Republic)* refers to knowledge of unchangeable forms and ideas (Rist, 1967: 284). In that respect, a philosopher knows forms that are higher and real, especially political forms. In the realm of politics, a philosopher has true knowledge of political and ethical forms such as virtues. Especially the form of good is only attained by philosophers. Evidence in favor of it comes from the fact that the philosopher's concrete framework for arranging the state is supplied by the Idea of the Good (Rogers, 1936: 62).

The second question of why philosophers should rule the state could be answered by the conception of politics as episteme. By politics, as episteme, it means that people who have true knowledge of politics and expertise in this field. As we pointed out above, politics as episteme does not belong to any ordinary citizen who lacks skills including using reason properly through dialectics and disciplining passions. In that regard, democracy aims to increase individuality and freedom. For Plato, however, giving in to

those desires and embracing a democratic lifestyle would eliminate the ability to discriminate between what is higher and lower, making the good, the true, and the beautiful impossible. A democratic man by equality of pleasures is not committing himself to the life of virtue (Cheek, 1991: 60). Instead of this form of society consisting of people who generally follow their desires, Plato proposes a state model with people equipped with knowledge. Without having episteme of politics that philosopher should have, society as general is under the threat of decaying. The death of Socrates by Athenian people's vote is an example how a democratic state kill a philosopher. Plato's critiques also are related to the death of Socrates in democratic government and this event effects Plato's political ideas strongly. As Hannah Arendt points out that Plato sees the death of Socrates as the triumph of opinion over episteme. Plato tries to find absolute standards that guarantee opinions (*doxa*) cannot overcome episteme again (Arendt, 2005: 8). Besides that, when Plato makes the distinction between *doxa* and episteme to explain how people who has episteme of politics govern better than others who has just opinions(*doxa*), he uses craftsmanship argument.

He uses this argument because people who know things they work at are always better than those who do not have this knowledge. Like craftsmanship in any special job, it could be said that the philosopher is a craftsman of politics according to Plato. He uses different kinds of expertise and craftsmanship such as farming, carpentry, and mining to justify why philosophers should rule the state (Plato, 2004: 113). Although all of them represent expertise in specific fields there are main differences between other craftsmanship and ruling as a craft. As Parry put forward crucially, the dominating craft is not the same as farming, carpentry, brass, or woodworking. In a limited sense, these crafts watch out for the well-being of the city. The best internal and international relations are the universal good that the governing class aspires to, not just one particular facet of the city. The skill of governance considers the well-being of the entire community (Parry, 2003: 23). The others who have skills other than politics are not qualified to rule the state. If they are unqualified and incapable of ruling the state, they must be ruled by one who is qualified in politics (Rowe, 2001: 65). Because people with *doxa* do not have the truth about things, they cannot manage. Plato's state is ruled by philosophers who have this special knowledge by training in philosophy. At the age of twenty, candidates who are being trained for military jobs are chosen from a broader pool to become ruling officials in their ideal state. These candidates combine their military duty with academic study throughout the next ten years. A smaller group is chosen when they turn thirty to spend the following five years studying dialectic exclusively (Moore, 1988: 358). Especially dialectic is used as a method to educate people who would be philosophers (Plato, 2004: 232).

Plato's attacks on democracies are directly related to this craftsmanship analogy. As we mentioned above Plato's main critique of democracy shows that people are always self-centered and ignorant in democracies. For this reason, there are no people who do not care about politics and give priority to the well-being of the community. In democracies,

people are accepted as equal and have the right to vote and rule the city or state. Having the truth about politics and being a philosopher who has only episteme on politics are not criteria to rule the state in a democracy. Without having an episteme people could rule the city or state, but this is unacceptable for Plato. For this reason, Plato sees democracy as the ruling of ignorant people (Plato, 2004: 255). Wolff points out that when Plato attacks the idea of democracy, he generally uses the 'craft analogy,' which means being an expert on things. This analogy explains the relationship between episteme and politics like in medicine. For example, you would consult a doctor or other health specialist if you were unwell and needed advice on your care. In other words, you should speak with a person who has received specialized training for the task. The last thing you would do is call a meeting and ask participants to choose the best course of action by voting. Just as the health of an individual requires a doctor, the health of the state requires a wise politician (Wolff, 2006: 67). Just as a doctor who has special knowledge of the human body cures people and knows which things are good for the human body, a philosopher who has special knowledge of the human soul governs the state and knows which things are good for both human beings and the state. In the ideal state philosopher's function is to rule properly like in the soul reason governs other parts of the soul. The political technical sphere is demarcated and where the philosopher is deemed worthy of leadership (Bluck, 1959: 166). From the point of view of Plato, in democracies, there is no such person as a philosopher in the ideal state. In that respect, Plato's ideal state is a kind of aristocracy in which people have not only special knowledge about the human soul and how society rules well but also have moral superiority (Takala, 1998: 788). In that regard, educated rulers and craftsmanship analogy are very important to understand Plato's ideal state and his understanding of politics as episteme.

Conclusion

In this study, seeing politics as episteme requires leaders or rulers who have *episteme* in this field for Plato was examined. Although Plato does not approve of or praise democracy as a regime, his critiques on democracy show us the defects of democracy. Democracy is not only about individual rights and freedom; it is also about sharing the common good and solidarity among citizens. This kind of democracy is known as social democracy. In that respect, Plato's critique of democracy reminds us that without an idea of the common good and solidarity among citizens, self-interested persons are created. From this consideration, we could infer that democracy needs people who share solidarity and support the common good. For this reason, if these two problems mentioned above are taken seriously by people and politicians, there could be some improvements in democracies.

From these critiques, we could interpret Plato's critiques from a different perspective. By a different perspective, I mean that we should take into account the critiques of Plato on democracy to correct its weakness and make some improvements. To use these critiques for correcting democracy and improving citizen's self-respect, we should not read them

in an anachronic way. What I mean is that we should not read them by focusing our attention on Ancient Greek society in which Plato live and experience immature democracy. Plato depicts the general features of Athenian democracy which has not real equality among citizens. Today we have different kinds of democracy, such as liberal and representative democracies, we depend on the same principles, for example, equality and freedom. It is a clear fact that in our democracies also excessiveness of equality and freedom of persons creates tension between individual and state or individual and community. For this reason, we could read his critiques concerning principles that characterize democracy. In that respect, we of course defend the principles of democracy, and we do not agree with Plato about democracy being the worst political regime. What we want to show from Plato's critiques of democracy is that if we listen to his critiques of democracy, we can correct deficiencies and improve democracy.

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