

JYVÄSKYLÄN
YLIOPISTO
TALOUSTIETEEN
LAITOS

JULKAISUJA

N:o 99/1995



TUOMO TAKALA

Plato on Leadership

Jyväskylän yliopisto
Taloustieteen laitos

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PLATO ON LEADERSHIP

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Myynti:
Jyväskylän yliopisto
Taloustieteen laitos
Pl 35, 40351 Jyväskylä
Puh. 941-602942
Fax. 941-603331

ISBN 951-34-0582-6

ISSN 0357-0770

Jyväskylä 1995

e-book:

ISBN 978-951-39-7613-2

Jyväskylä 2018

Plato on Leadership¹

1. Introduction

According to an old Grecian legend, Socrates, a philosopher, saw one night a swan, the bird of Apollo, unable to fly, come close to him. But after he had touched it, the swan flew higher away singing beautifully. Next day Plato joined his scholars and Socrates solved the dilemma of that dream. This is a story, but let's go to the proper issue of this paper.

Leadership has been one of the main topics among management writers during the last thirty years. This is understandable, of course, because the area of leadership has traditionally been in central position on management's agendas and has been studied intensively. However, an evident defect can be found. One area of study has been neglected by the researchers almost totally. This category of leadership study can be called "*classicist studies*" in which some classical (managerial) thinker is analyzed and studied thoroughly. But, by which criteria can one choose this kind of influential thinker to study? Plato, the Greek philosopher, can without any doubt be defined as one of the most influential leadership-thinkers of all times in addition to his other contributions.

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The aim of this article is to consider, "write out" and comment the themes in Plato's leadership thinking presented in his books called dialogues. Also connections with modern leadership studies are discussed.

The consideration will also cover some areas of organizational ethics. Plato was a famous ethicist, who viewed the problem of ethical conduct from many angles, e.g. he noticed the dilemma of good organizational behavior.

The term leadership has many meanings: it means different things to different people. It is a word taken from the common vocabulary and incorporated into the technical vocabulary of a scientific discipline without being precisely defined. As a consequence, it still carries extraneous connotations which create ambiguity of meaning. Stodgill (1974) in his comprehensive review of leadership studies states that "there are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept"¹

The term "*leadership-thinking*" is also problematic, when the time-context is so far away in the past as the Era of Antiquity. However, it seems to me that it may be fruitful and fresh to look at such a phrase-like concept from quite an unordinary point of view. One might suspect the relevance of searching out and considering the ideas of some ancient philosopher. In spite of that, I think that it is possible to get clear intellectual benefit through this kind of consideration. Especially when developing the "area of leadership-thinking", Plato (427-347 BC), the great philosopher, can be seen as a very important source of ideas.

When one evaluates leadership-studies made by earlier researchers, one can notice that the status of classicist-studies is minor. However, one can polemically argue that the whole Western ad-

ministrative thinking bases on the principles presented in classical antique. The task of studying such remote objects, like old management thinkers or philosophers, gains more importance if this statement is accepted. But why to study Plato ?

The influence of Plato on Western thinking has been enormous. The recent philosophers and philosophy teachers often say that philosophy after Plato has been only remarks on Plato's work. So, the roots of Western administrative thinking reach to Plato's and Aristotle's work. Although part of their work has lost its relevance in the course of the years, these two philosophers will always be actual and very important as thinkers and sources of ideas.

2. Leadership - a concept with many meanings

Next, it may be useful to take a glance at the concepts of leadership and management. Everyone who studies administrative sciences knows that these two matters are usually differentiated. To be a leader, to get the things done, is the theme in common to both of them. Then, what differs these two concepts from each other ? *Manager* is said to be some kind of "instructor" who puts pieces together and manages the "things". Managers are concerned with making the organization function as an organization, that is, with evolving routines (the source efficiency), and making these routines relative to the purposes of the organization (effectiveness). To put it another way, their major job is to facilitate the recombination of elements separated by the division of labor. At the same time, they need to keep changing these routines, either as persisting internal problems make them

unworkable, or as new external problems or opportunities require accommodation.²

Management is seen especially as a typical activity especially of large corporations, but it is said that there is *leadership* in every organization, not only in business organizations. On the other hand, a leader must be a person who takes care of people and focuses his professional activity on the social psychology of an organization. This categorization of management vs. leadership, may be artificial, but it is commonly used in management literature. One must, however, notice that a person who runs a business or leads some big organization acts *situationally* in both roles; sometimes as a manager and sometimes as a leader.

The term *leadership* is a relatively recent addition to the English language. It has been in use only about two hundred years, although the term leader, from which it was derived, appeared as early as A.D. 1300 (Stodgill, 1974)³. Most conceptions of leadership imply that at various times one or more group members can be identified as a leader according to some perceived differences between the person(s) and other members, who are referred to as "followers" or "subordinates". The definitions of leadership usually have a common denominator, the assumption that leadership is a group phenomenon involving interaction between two or more persons (Janda, 1960)⁴. In addition, most definitions reflect the assumption that leadership involves an influence process whereby intentional influence is exerted by the leader on the followers. The definitions of leadership differ in many respects, including e.g. important differences in who exerts influence, the purpose of influence attempts, and the manner in which the influence is exerted.⁵

As it is stated above *the role of a leader does not necessarily belong only to business life, but it is an inevitable functional element in all social organizations.* Everyone of us could be a leader, e.g. a leader of some political, religious or societal organization or simply a head of the family. In this role a leader makes the norms of action, but he is also more than only a disciplinarian. He aids people to develop and grow up as persons, he is a human constructor. *So, as we can see, these principles describe well the idea of classical paideia: to help people complete themselves as good human beings in a good society (polis) and with the guidance of a good leader.*

Leadership has been a hot issue among writers and researchers who investigate and write about managerial and administrative issues. More than a hundred definitions had been formulated for this concept by 1987. It has also been claimed that as many as five thousand studies have been made about the leadership issues. This may be true, but one defect is clear; there are only few good studies which have the so called classicist perspective, as stated above.

The evolution of leadership theories began in the beginning of this century when the focus was on the leader's personality. The leader was defined as a Great man who had some uncommon features of behavior. He was seen to have some identifiable traits of character which made him a great leader (see e.g. Banner and Blasingame, 1988).

The early leadership theories attributed leader success to the possession of extraordinarily abilities such as tireless energy, penetrating intuition, uncanny foresight, and irresistible persuasive powers. This massive research effort failed to find any traits which would guarantee leadership success. Interest was shifted into the behavioral theories, including the studies of lea-

dership styles. The significance of the context, leadership situation, was noticed next. For example, Fiedler (1964) put forth his "contingency model of leadership". But now, in 1994, it seems to me that a new "*syntetism*" has emerged. This means that all old elements are included, but in a very "scattered" way. There does not exist any strong mainstream in management or leadership studies which have the power to drown out other rival study directions.

Further, also the following division can be done if one wants to classify leadership studies from another perspective.

The first category of leadership-studies is about the managers' personal features or about his professional role in work community; "Leadership is a personal ability to direct the activities of a group toward a shared goal", (see e.g. Hemphill & Koons, 1957).

The second category of studies consider the styles of leadership; which leadership style is effective or ineffective and so on. (see studies made by Kurt Lewin, Rensis Likert and applied by e.g. Hersey & Blanchardt).

The third group of studies deal with the charisma or hero myths in managerial action especially in the context of organizational culture. Leadership is often seen as representation of the some heroical activity. This class includes also studies of organizational symbolism.(see e.g. Deal & Kennedy 1982, Schein 1985, Hofstede 1980, Alvesson 1987, Gahmberg 1990).

Of course one can formulate several kinds of study-categories, but categorizations made above can help us to orient ourselves in the jungle of leadership -studies. However, I want to stress once again the kind classicist approach used in this paper is unusual, but yet relevant. Let's go back into the world of Plato. Although Plato himself speak almost always about the Republic,

in which leadership really exists, we can try to change the term republic to the term (work) community, firm, or corporation. By this means one can get heuristical device for redefining the tasks of modern leadership.

- Plato sketched out the idea of ideal community. *The point is that following Plato one can try to sketch out those features of leadership which belong to the modern ideal community. I.e, we can try to apply Platonic thinking to modern organizations.*

3. Plato, his philosophy and leadership

Background of the consideration

Ancient Greece (400 B.C.) has been regarded as the home of systematic administrative thinking; it has been seen as the place where the Western administrative thinking was born. The City State (polis) was the administrative unit where the pre-democratical experience was started and matured. It also ruled the whole societal life of the Greeks. Athens, Sparta, and Theba were this kind of city states. But what is important is the intimate relation between the state and the individual citizen. The relation was so close that it is not possible to think a citizen living outside of his

state. This close relation leaves its marks on the Grecian leadership thinking, too.

Plato, a Grecian philosopher, was the first thinker who put forth a systematic political and administrative model to arrange the life in an ideal state (polis). The purpose (telos) of this kind of state is to educate people to become "good". So, the state has mainly a moral function in people's life. According to Plato, the state is like a human body the parts of which complete each other and act in harmony. Stating this, Plato represents himself as an early pre-modern functionalist, interpreted in the terms of organizational theory. Plato neglects the organizational conflict; no conflict should exist between the parts in an ideal situation. This neglect of conflict happens in the ideal state too, where refined division of work, communism, equality etc. will prevail.

In *Polis* (Plato's dialogue: in English, the Republic) Plato states that politicians must act as the rulers of the new ideal state, because they have real knowledge (episteme) of what is "the Form of good", and which the purposes of the state must be. They have also the skill to rule according to these purposes. But, in later written *Politikos* (Plato's dialogue), he does not any more speak about the Forms according to which the ideal state can be ruled. Instead, he believes that *the art of ruling* (comp. leadership) can be found and based on scientific principles. This art is like the art of sailing which can be learnt.

Political science which is more than any individual art takes care of law-making "weaving these arts as one unity". But a just politician who knows the political science thoroughly and has moral strength, too, is rare. Because of that, it is better that the law stands above the ruler and the ruler must act according to the law. According to Karl Popper (1972), a very well-known

English social philosopher, Plato's utopia was much more institutional than personalistic by its nature. Plato wants to be able to prevent social change by controlling the election process of forthcoming rulers. To my mind, one can also find in this praising of institutional arrangements *the regret for static world view*; Plato resists change as abnormal state of affairs and sees status quo as normative and natural condition.

Plato's life and work - an overview

Plato and his "student" Aristotle (384 - 322 B.C) were those great figures in Grecian thinking whose influence has been enormous on Western thinking and philosophy. Both Platonism and on the Aristotelism, as philosophies, have been the main trends of thinking in the Western world. The significance of these philosophies lies on behind the fact that they include in a very well formulated form a representation of those questions which have bothered philosophers through decades.⁶

Plato was born in Athens about 427 B.C. He was the son of an aristocratic family which actively took part in the political life of Athens. It is evident that Plato planned to take part in politics, too, but due to violent and cruel social conditions (The Peloponnesian wars were going on) he chose a more contemplative way of life. This decision was dramatic, because never after that Plato managed to take part in day-to -day politics.

Democracy was the main form of government in Greece in those days. Athens, the forerunner of democracy, was the polis which was in leading position among other city states. But, Plato's view of democracy was disapproving. He saw that aristocracy

would offer a better alternative to rule, because the hegemony of *demos* would be a disaster to all parties of society. To Plato's mind Socrates' death could be the final step and which could release the bad and dysfunctional character of democracy in Plato's mind. After this unfortunate happening, Plato's literal career began. In his books, written in dialogical form, he set forth his political, ethical and epistemological ideas⁷. From the point of view of leadership theme, Plato presented remarkable considerations in the following: Polis (The Republic), Politikos (The Statesman), and Nomoi (Laws) which remained the last work of Plato.

Plato's *epistemological* considerations and his own life were intimately connected with each other. We know that Plato tried to influence the formulation process of the constitution of Syracuse state. In practice, his trials had lot of misfortune and Syracuse remained under non-platonist model of constitution⁸. Platon himself had no luck and had to escape from Syracuse. During the trip he got in trouble when in Aigina sea-robbers took him as a prisoner to sell him as a slave. Annikeris, a friend of Plato, bought him free. Plato continued his trip to Athens. Where he devoted himself to literal work and founded his school called Academy.⁹

Plato's dilemma - dialogues as the focus of critical study

The dilemma of Plato's work is that most of the more than thirty works said to be written by Plato, are suspected to really be written somebody else than Plato. Also the chronological order of the works is unclear. One reason for the confusion is the fact that the happenings mentioned in the dialogues are not histori-

cally known accurately enough. Often the timing is very difficult and can only be based on second hand sources. The dilemma has been tried to solve by using so called stylometric method in which the idea is to identify statistically the stylistic features typical for Plato's writings. Also many students of history or philosophy have tried to solve the Platonic dilemma. One of them is a Polish historian Lotowski, who got good results. His study "*Sur une nouvelle methode pour determiner la chronologie des dialogues de Platon*", (publ. in Paris 1896) presented a classification of Plato's works. The earliest works of Plato are named as Socratic dialogues. In these dialogues Plato is under Socratic influence and considers mostly the concept of ethics. The dialogues are: Euthyfron, Lakhes, Kharmides, Menon, Politikos, Sofist, Polis and Nomoi¹⁰. To this group belong also those writings which consider political and administrative themes. Also leadership themes are included in these.

Forms in Platonic ontology

Plato's view of the ultimate construction of reality can be characterized as idealistic. The ultimate nature of reality is ideal. His doctrine of Forms (shortened as DF) put out this point of view in an excellent way. DF has three different functions in Plato's philosophy.

First, in the epistemological level, the existence of eternal and isolated Forms gives us an answer to the question why the world made by our senses expresses in a structured form. All creatures which we e.g. recognize as *leaders* seem to know because we have a model *apriori*, the Form of a leader, with which we are comparing all empirical leaders. This model existing in our minds does not necessarily come only from our

sense world because we do not meet there the Forms of a leader, but the Form is given apriori, i.e. inherently. Another central concept is the concept of *soul*. Our soul comes from the world of Forms, and therefore it has knowledge apriori from Forms which the things in the sense world are copying or imitating. Those Forms come to our mind when we see "copies" of them in the sense world. And because of this process, the sense world represents itself as a conceptually structured order which can be held and "taken in hand".

Second, the semantic function of DF expresses that universal concepts (universalia) are significant and meaningful only if they can be understood as the names of some unalterable objects. When one speaks e.g. about *just* actions made by somebody, the "just" has unambiguous meaning only if we can agree that it refers to some ideal model of *justice*.

Thirdly, DF has a metafysical function. By referring to an eternal and unalterable world of Forms it is possible to explain why the sense world is the kind it is.¹¹

So, Plato makes a drastic difference between the material (sense) world and the eternal world of Forms. Material particulars, single "things", (nominalia) are in the endless process of arising, changing and dying. On the opposite, the Forms, i.e. the models of these changing things, are eternal, by constituting the immaterial or ideal reality. The Forms are more real compared with the particular things existing in the sense world for two reasons. First, a Form existed in the same form eternally, because it is unalterable by its nature. Instead, if some thing exists now, a time may come when it will vanish and thus it is not so real as the Form of it is. Secondly, the Forms as the original models of all alterable material things are more real than their copies.

But there exists a hierarchy of Forms, as Plato states it. The most elementary is the *Form of Good*. He seems to think that every one of the Forms is in a way part of the Form of Good. It is the most basic element in the cosmos; it is a principle that bears both existence and knowledge, as Plato puts it. He gives an analogy of seeing as an example. The Good (Demiurg) creates the ability to see and the ability to be invisible. But, in addition to these, e.g. in order to see a color, a third element is demanded - light. Light comes from the sun; although the sun does not see, it is a reason for seeing. We can apply this reasoning also to the process of realizing (knowing); our soul realizes the things when it has been directed to the Truth, i.e. when the Truth gives its light to the realizing process. This element which gives to a soul aiming to the Truth an ability to know can be named according to Plato as the *Form of Good*. It is also the cause of the knowledge and the Truth, because it can be reached by intelligence. This concept of good lies outside of our consciousness. Plato's good (to agathon) is both knowing and existing, but at the same time it is more than them.¹²

But let's make some comments which can make Plato's arguments clearer to us. We must remember the teleological nature of Greek philosophy and thinking. This means that all existing, both the actions and the intentions of human beings and the life of animals and plants, is directed to some purpose, *telos*. So, man's will is directed to the Form of Good always and necessarily. This ultimate purpose has been seen as aiming at happiness, because the Greeks thought that happiness was the natural and the main good for man. This puts forth the *teleological eudaimonism* prevailing in the Greek ethics. To aim at happiness is an in-built element in the Greek model of human action.

The classical ethical theories (Platonism, Aristotelism) were teleological and value-objectivistic. They were based on the assumption of conscious action as intentional activity in which acts are done for the reason of doing things as the ultimate purpose as such. To put it in other words, they have value as such, not only as means to something. *This reasoning includes the point that a person who knows that a purpose is good, necessarily wants that this purpose will be executed.* Man's will is (automatically) directed to good purposes, and moral action has the nature of technical rationality in relation to those purposes. All this implies that no one wants to behave in bad manner. If somebody misbehaves, it can be understood as some kind of dysfunction of the soul. Nobody wants intentionally act in a bad manner.¹³

Plato's world of Forms is also a world of purposiveness. The Form of Good cements the whole number of Forms as one unity, and this is a unity of purposes. The whole order in our world is based on purposiveness; all action and life in the world is directed to the good purpose. As I have stated earlier, the ultimate purpose of one's life is to aim at *happiness*, but *this happiness means the same as to reach the good.* And because of that every soul aims at good and does good (automatically).

According to Karl Popper¹⁴, an English social philosopher, Plato's doctrine of Forms has several functions in Plato's philosophy. First, it has a methodological task. It makes it possible to get pure scientific information about the Forms which can then be applied in the world of altering and varying things. This is important because we cannot directly get real knowledge, *episteme*, from that changing world, but only opinions and beliefs, *doxa*. So, this lays the basis to founding political science. Second, it gives us the keys to form a theory of change, a theory of birth

and death, and a way to understand our history better than before. Third, it opens a possibility to a kind of social technology. It gives a chance to develop resistance-mechanisms against societal change by offering the ideal of the best state. We must remember that from Plato's point of view change was a negative process in societal sphere.

Plato's ethics has strongly involved with his ontological and epistemological stance. The thoughts presented above confirm us that the ethics of Plato has a character of *ascetic transcendental eudaimonism*. In other words, to love the eternal Forms quarantees the soul a possibility to be with the Forms eternally, and this means that life is a device for reaching the purpose of Good in the realm of the dead. While believing that the Forms are moral by their nature, Plato in the same time accepts the concept of *universal moral*. This concept has an existence which is independent of people's opinions. Another matter important in Plato's ethics is the doctrine of the immortal soul. It seems to me that he believed that body and the soul are separable elements and soul will continue its life after the body's death.¹⁵

Like many other Greeks, also Plato conceives *autarkia*, self-sufficiency, and the completeness of soul as criteria for happiness. But he shows in his dialogues that either one is not enough alone. Reason is necessary, but life demands also pleasure, *hedone*. But there prevails a hierarchy of pleasures. The pleasure reached by knowing and realizing the Form of beauty is one of the highest pleasures.

Plato's view of man is twofold. Only the rational part of the soul, placed in man's head, is immortal. Passions and desires, which are placed in the chest and stomach, are irrational and belong to mortal part of the soul. The arguments for a tripartite

soul are independent of those for a tripartite state, but they are necessary for the doctrine of the state, the ideal Republic. For Plato, the state is not only a representation of justice, but also a macrocosmos which has a counterpart in man's soul¹⁶. Plato thinks that there are three elements in every soul which have to be tied together as one unity. The soul aims at harmony. Kenny (1983) has noted that there are some similarities between Freud's psychoanalysis and Plato's concept of soul. Both of them stress the importance of the sanity of the soul, which consists of the soul's harmony.¹⁷

Plato's social and political philosophy

At this point, it is useful to consider the main features of Plato's social and political philosophy because this realm also covers the leadership themes. Next, let's take a look at those characteristics which are in a ruling position in his political philosophy.

Until the Age of Alexander the Great the Greeks lived in small city-states, in which the life had to be very social because of the intimate relations between the citizens. It was impossible to think a life outside the city state. For the sake of this, the political and moral life were intertwined in an inseparable way in taking care of the common affairs. The area populated by Greek tribes consisted of hundreds of small city states, polis. But the nature of the polis were mere a pile of villages with the countryside and several islands. The size of a city state varied from a hundred to fifteen thousand square kilometers and the population was comprised of some thousands or even some

hundred of thousands of inhabitants. The number of inhabitants was essential, because if it was big enough, the political life became possible. So, the citizen was a political animal (*zoon politikon*) intended to live in a city state by his nature. The state guaranteed freedom to the hellenic people: a person living in the state was a citizen, not a subject, despite of what the form of government was. Freedom meant that the ruling of the state was managed according to norms of law, and not by some arbitrary prince. Tyranny was held as the worst form of government. This had relevance when a line between the "others" and the hellenic tribes was drawn. The aliens, called *barbaroi*, differed from the Hellenes in several ways; they had different race, language, and civilization than the Hellenes. All barbarians had in common that they did not have this state-form, polis. They lived as subjects without any rights, either in oriental despotic regimes, or in some other form of unjust government. Therefore the barbarians were slaves and Hellenes free citizens. Thus, the birth of democracy in the form of a state had eventually demanded this freedom in order to develop and be successful. ¹⁸

This means that only the Greek had a possibility to construct the ideal state sketched by Plato. The tribes around Hellas were not able to do this because they lacked the ability to build a society based on the principle of reason. This was the barbarian world around Greece like, all non-Greek nations in spite of their educational or intellectual level.¹⁹

The so called Seventh Letter²⁰ written by Plato gives us a hint that he was disappointed in all existing states in the ancient world. In them the power was based on the will to rule of some tyrant or ruling class. According to the Platonic ideal, the main task of the state was to educate citizens to become good human beings. A Good man is also happy and well-to-do. The founda-

tion for ruling the state must lie on the knowledge of good , not a need or passion to power, or greed. Plato is not interested in existing and functioning states, but an ideal state, or utopia. His dialogue *The Republic* represents his famous doctrine of the ideal state. In *the Laws*, the book he wrote when he was old, Plato makes some concessions to practice. In *Statesman*, he notices that good politician must also know, in addition to the Form of Good, the nature of the existing real states.

There are some issues in the Republic which must be handled deeper, like the nature of social institutions and the division of the soul and the state.

The Republic, Book V, goes in considerable detail to social institutions which Plato thinks should exist in order to prevent the faction and the disorganization of the state. There is to be a community of property, women and children, and corporate life in general, with the aim that there shall not be disputes about anything. The state is to be an organic unity, which, Plato says, will be like a body so that when one member suffers the whole body grieves. Before he gets to that point, however, he completes the parallel between the state and the soul by arguing from the facts of mental conflict to the thesis that there must be three parts in the soul, parallel to the three classes in the state. Each class has its own virtue - the Guardians wisdom, the Auxiliaries courage, and the Craftsmen prudence. Justice is the virtue of the whole state working together. Analogously, it is claimed, there is a virtue attached to each part of the soul - wisdom to reason, courage to the spirited part, and prudence to the appetitive part in its relation to the others. Justice in the soul arises when all three parts work together under the guidance of reason. Such single-mindedness is represented as the health of the soul: conflict corresponds to illness. The obvious desirability of

health over sickness is taken to be enough to show that justice in the soul is the best state of affairs.²¹

Plato is not under the illusion that his ideal state could last for ever. He admits that it will inevitably deteriorate and its perfect constitution will be replaced by an imperfect pattern of social organization and government. The constitution of an ideal state is none the less designed to promote permanence and stability: potential sources of conflict are minimized. No state existing in Plato's day even approximated to the ideal state: he recognized that it might never be established in all its perfection. The Republic describes an ideal form of social organization: the description embodies both the design of an ideal system and the functions of an ideal model to which existing states can be compared and their deficiencies thereby identified.²²

The division of the soul in the Republic is not just between reason and appetite: there is also the "spirited" part which is concerned neither with the rational standards of behavior nor with bodily desires, but with the standards of honorable behavior, and with anger and indignation. Plato tells the story of Leontius who overcome with desire, stares at the corpses of executed criminals, cursing himself as he does so. The Platonic moral is that anger and appetite can conflict. The spirited part of the soul acts, when "it is not corrupted by bad upbringing", as an agent of reason, being indignant when reason is overborne. So a man who has been wrong cannot find it in his nature to be indignant if he is made to suffer in turn.

Men therefore fall into three classes depending on which part of the soul is dominant: this division is that required by the tripartite state. Into which class a man falls may in part be a matter of his early training, but cannot fundamentally be determined so. Plato believes that there are born shoemakers and born *rulers*.

Justice in a state is a matter of everyone knowing his place. Of the four traditional virtues, courage belongs to the class of auxiliary guardians, whose function is to defend, and wisdom to the ruling guardians. Temperance is a virtue not of a class, but of the society as a whole because "the desires of inferior multitude will be controlled by the desires and wisdom of the superior few". *Justice* belongs to none of the classes, nor to a particular relationship between classes, but to the society's functioning as a whole.²³

During the fourth century B.C. in Greece, the most influential men were more than often the pros of democratical ideas. Political rights were argued and defended by the principle of justice (*dike*) and the principle of honour (*aidos*). A man having these skills was full competent to care for all political and social affairs of the state. Protogoras, a sophist whom Plato put as a speaker to the dialogues of the same name, explains to his audience, i.e. to the people of Athens, that political virtues must be achieved by education. But, what is relevant is that it was admitted that every free white man had a right to be elected to all governmental offices. And this happened regardless of his professional skills to act in this office.²⁴

People working in the "offices" of Polis had to take part in job rotation, which ensured that every man had to bear the burden of political duties. The ability of a man to care his job was exposed only with time, because the election process guaranteed every one the same chances to get the job. Very remarkable were the elections of those navy commanders and strategists who were in charge of military operations. Their successes or failures had a dramatic influence on the city state's rise and fall. Plato was very well versed in the questions of democratic ruling in Athenian government. He also had a good knowledge of

Athenian history and geography. But, the fact is that Plato did not bother himself with the contemporary issues of ruling, administrating and day-to day-politics. He didn't see the Athenian political government through the eyes of an impartial observer, but an *opponent of democratical government*. He was very interested in the question of what kind the ideal community and ideal state must be and what kind of education may in the best way prepare citizens for the communal life.

Plato's political thinking has a character the aristocracy. The change of Athens from pre-national stage to an imperialistic nation has the mark of decay, Plato thought. Navigation, trade and other similar transactions were strange to the world-view of the aristocratic class. These processes breaking the status quo of Greek city state were not purely ideological but merely linked to economical and technical development of the city state. One can see that the whole work of Plato was a trial to set a criteria to measure the value of this development and thus try to lead, control and restrict it. Plato set the objectivistic values as the ultimate law of the state.²⁵

Plato's non-egalitarian point of view concerning the nature of justice, his aristocratism, is presented very well in his praisings of the Egyptian caste system. In it, moving from one caste to another and back was very difficult, and to Plato this was the feature of a good social system. Justice is not a matter of equality, but a matter of the proper functioning of the state. With regard to Plato, it is evident that every citizen must have his own place in the state-system, and that this is not a matter of justice in the egalitarian sense. This implies that every societal class has different rights of citizenship. Plato wants to protect the ideal-state by all means from intermixing of the classes. Every class has its own tasks, duties and functions; it is not

allowed for a class to do the tasks belonging to an other class. Plato features justice as the virtue not allowing this kind of inter-mixing. He seems to think that it may be very disastrous if an artisan, a tradesman or an enterpriser wants to be high and mighty and tries to be promoted to the class of auxiliary guardians, or, if some of the guardians want to become ruling guardians. It would also be condemnable if all these groups tried to act in the roles of each others'. Praiseworthy action is if each class "do his own" (*oikeopragia*), i.e. if each class acts in its own societal role.

Next, I will consider in detail some dialogues which express the themes of managing or leading in Plato's thinking.

GORGIAS - a critique of rhetoric and an early trial to consider the "management of meaning"

The Gorgias is a dialogue in which Plato treats the main ethical problems of philosophy, e.g. the justification of manipulative action, i.e. the real nature of *rhetoric*. The Gorgias falls in three sections in each of which Socrates has a different interlocutor and each of which establishes certain positions once and for all before passing on. The function of the first part is to dispose of the claims of rhetoric to be the doctrine in which virtue is taught, and also to establish a distinction between the two senses of *persuasion*. Gorgias, a rhetor, is the upholder of the view that rhetoric, as the art of persuasion, is the means to man's supreme good. The supreme good is freedom and by freedom is meant the freedom to have one's own way in everything.

Gorgias himself does not seem to have claimed to be a teacher of virtue: he taught the skills of rhetoric, developing in his students the ability to persuade and convince an audience, and encouraging them to acquire the capacity to respond to audiences questions with confidence and self-possession. ²⁶The rhetor, the sophist, and the tyrant emerge in the *Gorgias* as the three icons of an anti-philosopher.

Socrates inquires whether an orator needs the knowledge of right and wrong any more than he needs the acknowledge of engineering. Gorgias is not entirely consistent on this point; he appears to suggest that an orator will on occasion need to be a just man, but is vague on how he can become just. Rhetoric itself he presents as a morally neutral technique which can be used for either right or wrong purposes: to blame a teacher of rhetoric for its misuse by his pupils would be as silly as to blame a teacher of boxing for the uses to which his pupils may put their craft afterwards.

The idea that the techniques of persuasion are morally neutral is a recurrent one in the human society. But in order to it to hold true that such techniques are neutral, it is necessary also to hold that it is morally irrelevant whether a man comes to a given belief by reasoning or in some nonrational way.

The real sphere of rhetoric is the just and the unjust, the fine and the shameful, the good and the bad; its aim is not just to produce conviction in an audience, but to instruct them that such and such is the case where the question is about right and wrong; or which policy will prove beneficial. The orator will be ignorant on these subjects, for it is part of a Gorgias' case for his profession that it makes a man capable of being more convincing in any sphere, even without knowledge, than a man with the knowledge. Existing orators, then, are concerned only with

appearances, not with reality; they deal with what appears to be good to their audience, because it is immediately attractive and pleasant, not with what really is good. The education of rhetoric leads by an easy road to vice. If so, it is the very reverse what education should be.²⁷

To conclude, we can state that Plato gives in this dialogue his conviction of the persuading nature of rhetoric as an antithesis of real truth-seeking philosophy. A rhetoric action directed at manipulative goals is doomed. This kind of action is not real true-loving but only a *techne*, a means, for becoming more famous and rich.

REPUBLIC; Ideal state and its ruling versus reality - leadership as an educational catalysator in the ideal state

What is the main issue in the Republic -dialogue ? There are several issues which Plato wants to consider. In this paper it is not possible to handle all his topics, but one must make some choices. Perhaps the most important issues from my point of view are the following:

- What the term justice really means
- *What is the role of education in the ideal-state*
- What kind of theory of social institutions it is possible to construct
- The nature of leadership in the ideal state*

The Republic opens with a request for a definition of "justice". After long discussion Plato comes to the conclusion that it is not a matter of justice to the stronger to abuse his power over the weaker. Plato presents the Republic as a dialogue on the nature of justice: the ideal state is presented as the social embodiment of justice. The division of functions in the state is the principle which expresses the nature of justice. A just social order is one where order and harmony are maintained by each class of citizens carrying out the tasks for which they are suited and not interfering with the work of others²⁸. In this context it is not relevant to handle this matter more deeply, but we must go forward.

What was *the educational system of ancient Greece like and on what level was the education of people in general*? Higher education was naturally directed to the narrow elite of citizens, only elementary education was given to ordinary citizens. It is also clear that ordinary people (demos) were not capable of entering into debates like the dialogues are. This was an area for the educated elite. However, it may be that ordinary citizens were more civilized than it is usually assumed by the historians. The tight form of living, created by the village like city states, was fruitful soil for interactive communication and made a kind of "public wisdom" possible. Also learning of political activities was more effective than in large and scattered communities.²⁹

According to Popper³⁰, behind the sociological points presented by Plato, there is a view that a state must be stable and in equilibrium. As long as these terms are put into practice, the power and the unity of ruling class is guaranteed. To educate this class must be the first and foremost task of the leader of the state.

The middle of Republic -books (V-VI)- contain the *epistemological and metaphysical foundations for a theory of education* which is supposed to have moral and political importance. The beginning is at the end of Book V with a distinction between knowledge and belief, which we have discussed earlier. This is followed by *three similes: those of the Sun, the Line and the Cave* which are meant to illustrate a scheme for the education of the (ruling) Guardians of an ideal state, which is in turn spelled out in some detail. It is worth noting that the distinction between knowledge and belief seems to reserve knowledge for the Forms, so that we have only beliefs of sensible things. This means in turn that there is no possibility turning belief into knowledge, but one must simply replace belief by knowledge, and the scheme of education reflects that fact. As one can see, the simile of the Cave illustrates that education is construed as a process of getting progressively new insights, a recognition of a reality which the ordinary man has no knowledge of.³¹

But, let's take a look into the theoretical background of the education. In one of the discussions Plato states that philosophers must become kings. That idea leads him into the discussion about the epistemological and metaphysical basis of the education of the Guardians, philosophers being distinguished from ordinary men by their acquaintance with the Forms, and thus by their possession of knowledge as opposed to mere belief. There are no laws as such. In later dialogues, the Statesman and the Laws, the recognition of the place of the law returns, but only as a second-best. The simile of the Cave describes in allegorical terms the progressive illumination of people who are originally confined in their experience to shadows only (although they would not recognize that description of the situation). They have to be released from the chains which bind them, and recognize the objects which, through the light of a fire

behind them, cast shadows on the end wall of the cave. They are then to be led out of the cave into the daylight, to the recognition of objects in the daylight world and, finally, to an ability to look at the sun itself. That is what education was to Plato - a process of enlightenment. Only then, after reaching what Plato calls the *Form of Good*, they can be allowed to go back into the Cave, to return to the state to govern it.³²

The Good can be achieved only through an education of particular kind, and if this education is to be available to more than a random selection of mankind, it will have to be institutionalized. What is more, the institutions of educational system will have to be directed and controlled by those who have already fulfilled the prerequisite, moved from the vision of particulars to the vision of Forms. Thus, from the *Symposium* with its entirely non-political argument - the dialogue ends at dawn with everyone else drunk and asleep but Socrates who explains at dawn to a barely awake Agathon and Aristophanes that a man with a genius for tragedy must also have a genius for comedy and vice versa - we can infer a picture of a society with educational system directed from the top.

Everything, of course, depends upon the connection between good and the Forms. Plato's first correct insight is that we use the concept of good in order to evaluate and grade the possible objects of desire and aspiration. Hence the also correct conclusion that good cannot simply mean "what men desire". His second correct insight is that good must therefore be that what is worth pursuing and desiring; it must be an outstanding object of desire. But, according to Mac Intyre (1983) Plato's false conclusion is that good must therefore be found among transcendental, out-of-this-world objects, The Forms, and, hence that good is not something which ordinary people can seek out themselves in the daily transactions of their life. Either the

knowledge of the good is communicated by a special religious revelation or reached by a long intellectual discipline in the hands of authoritative teachers (as in the Republic).³³

After a further discussion of arts and another argument for the soul's indestructibility, the Republic ends with another *myth* in which rebirth occurs after purification from previous sins. But each soul has to choose its new life, and many choose badly. It is only philosophy which can produce the wisdom necessary to make the right choice.³⁴

The method of education outlined in the Republic is based upon Plato's understanding of human psychology, his analysis of the structure of human personality. The content of the system of education is derived from his theoretical understanding of the ultimate nature of reality and of a cognitive ladder by which it is possible to ascend from the world of illusory images to the intuition of the Good itself. The education of those who are to govern and guard the state is too important to be left, as in Plato's Athens, to private initiative and personal decision: a state system is to be established. A state system existed in Sparta and some details of that system find echoes in the system Socrates is made to propose: the system of education in the ideal state is, however, utterly different in spirit from the Spartan system.³⁵

Next, let's examine *the tasks of the leader in an ideal state more closer*. At least two tasks can be assumed to rest with the leader. First, controlling the implementation of education. Second, controlling the propagation. The function of the controllers in the state is held important and therefore the controllers must be philosophers. The Popperian view is that Plato had to have political ambitions to think in that way. The main object should be to raise up the power of the Guardians as much as possible

and in that way make it possible to get more and more Defenders in the state. But excellent military abilities are not enough to execute a persistent power in the state. To lay basis for the firm power in the state demands supernatural or transcendental abilities from a leader, and mystic skills must be developed, which the leader can then use when ruling the state. Plato's leaders are not like human beings, they belong to the world of gods. In this way the *philosopher-king* can be seen as descending from the ancient priest-kings of the most earliest tribes. So, platonic education may has a political basis. It gives a mark on leaders and on the other hand puts up a borderline between the rulers and ruled subjects. By this means Platonic wisdom gives mystical skills to leaders; they are like ancient magicians.

Education must not be teaching people the nature of virtual behavior, but merely to school people to be good citizens of the state. And further, it is not allowed to give schooling to all citizens, but only to two upper classes, to the Rulers and the Defenders. Plato wants to school Defenders like dogs: like a good dog which is tender to his master and angry to strangers, must the fury of the defenders focus in the right way. The Defenders are citizens who have a potentiality to grow and develop in the social hierarchy. Some of them can raise in the hierarchy and get as philosophers to ruling positions, but education is not enough because people are weak creatures tempted by many passions. What is needed is an ascetic way of life defined by the ruler-philosophers.

Also the children ought to be educated as proper citizens of the state.³⁶ The children of the Guardian class follow a curriculum with three elements, *mousike*, *gymnastike*, and mathematics. The

successful development of a child's character depends on a balance maintained amongst these three curricular element.

Homer, a Greek poet, has taught that the gods are a badly behaving bunch of creatures, but Plato wants to neglect this. He states that the gods are totally good and unchanging by their nature and they must be obeyed. They are the *symbols of law*. So, *stories* are important means of education. In Plato's days, Athenian children were brought up on a heavy diet of myths and legends, especially on the stories embedded in the poems of Homer and Hesiod. The education system proposed for the Guardians involves the rejection virtually the entire number of tales created by Homer and Hesiod: lies about the gods are unsuitable for educational materials. Plato insists that stories about the gods and heroes must be truthful; a god is perfect, immutable, utterly truthful. The stories of divine immorality, of the gods who are shape-changing deceivers, thieves, liars, and adulterers have no place in education. In arguing thus, Plato is following the footsteps of Xenophanes and Heraclitus, both of whom were harshly critical of the foolish stories told about the gods. The interpreters of the myths had attempted to meet such criticism by producing elaborate allegorical interpretations of the myths which gave them an acceptable meaning. Plato refuses to accept that the existence of such interpretations would justify the use of the myths and legends he condemns. A story itself has the power to influence a child apart from the interpretations placed on it. The stories used in the education of young children must have a suitable moral content. However, what is important, Plato states that telling lies is allowed to the Rulers for the sake of the state's best. On the contrary, Rulers can serve the amount of lying like a doctor doses a medicine for the sick. The benefit of the state comes first. Lying is not allowed to an individual citizen, but only to the Rulers³⁷

Philosopher -king. Leadership as the duty of a philosopher.

Plato is sure that there exists one and only one model of the ideal state. The most evident reason for the uselessness of existing states is the lack of competent leaders. Those men who know what is best for the state and have also the strength to act according to that knowledge are philosophers. So, the philosophers have to be rulers, philosopher-kings. Plato defines a philosopher by setting out an account of knowledge and belief and then contrasting the philosopher who knows with the non philosophical man, who at best has only a true belief or opinion.

Plato is disappointed in himself on the existing states because the leaders of the states do not have any knowledge about the ultimate purposes of the state, neither do they have moral strength to act according to common good. Their objects lie merely on individual gains and losses, and on their will to rule. A good leader is beneficial to his subjects in the same way as good medician to his patients. People cause only harm to themselves if they are so stupid that they don't want to be ruled by a philosopher-king.³⁸ One of the most important tasks on the leader's agenda is to take care of the education of classes.

The means used in ruling the state can be rude and, from our perspective, also quite questionable. Plato accepts the method, which I shall call as "*management by lying*". He states: "The Rulers of the state, if anybody, must be able to tell lies, if necessary, betraying both enemies and their own citizens. But no one else should not do this."

The ideal state, according to Plato, shall have four main virtues. They are 1) prudence 2) courage 3) temperance and 4) justice.

Prudence can be understood as the highest and best ability to give advices concerning the issues of governing the state as one unity. It is not a technical ability or skill, but a virtue of ultimate purpose. This kind of knowledge is conserving. It helps to retain the stability in the state and the Rulers having this knowledge are the most competent. Prudence is a gift typical to very rare people - philosophers, but is more an understanding of the ultimate nature of the Forms.

As Plato notices, the state can avoid the disaster by choosing the philosophers as rulers. This can happen by two means: either existing rulers become philosophers or philosophers become rulers. And rulers must be true philosophers who want to look at the proper truth instead of being egoists and motivated only by the gains of power.

But connecting prudence and political power is very difficult for two reasons. First, although a true philosopher is available, people are blind and not ready to use their talents. Plato knows that politicians get their power by mutual fights and by courting voters' favor. Therefore, an ideal leader needs an ideal public who is able to choose the right leader. Second, connecting prudence and power is difficult because only a few people are true philosophers, and the most are only artificial philosophers. A true philosopher wants to rise into the spheres of esoteric meditations and must be forced to become a ruler against his will.

It is clear from the Republic that Plato's political idea was that the state should be governed by philosophers who would know with certainty the moral principles which should inform the social order. Sadly, the one serious opportunity Plato had to turn a ruler into a philosopher failed utterly. The ideal remained, and Plato's Academy continued to furnish the sort of education a

philosopher-ruler would need, but Plato came to accept that the philosopher-ruler might prove to be an unattainable ideal.³⁹

STATESMAN - governing as a special skill

In his later dialogue, the Statesman, Plato does not anymore consider ideas according to which the ideal state has to be organized. Instead, he believes that ruling is a special skill like the art of sailing or art of carrying on one's trade.

Plato's *method* to analyze things in the Statesman is a definitional technique. It is based on the dialectical process of separating out. In the Statesman the Eleatic stranger uses this technique to demonstrate that the art of governing is indeed a form of knowledge. A ruler who possesses that knowledge will be able to decide political questions with wisdom and understanding. In the absence of such a ruler, the state should be governed by law.⁴⁰

As we can see above, Plato makes a distinction between the rule by someone who possesses the "art of ruling", and the rule by law. The rule by law will only be the second best: laws are necessarily imperfect, because they always make the same description, even if the circumstances are different. On the other hand laws have positive value: they are based much on experience, and will have had right kind of advocates for them: like general descriptions. Provided, then, that they are based on establishing law, the existing forms of institution will offer some kind of framework for living in the absence of the true statesman. While Plato evidently thinks it possible that true statesmen

will arise, he now asks if it is likely that they will. In the Republic he was preoccupied with urging the need for philosophical rule; in the Statesman, he views that ideal from the perspective of the conditions of ordinary life, and recognizes just how difficult it will be to achieve.⁴¹

The Statesman, offers a solution to the problem of the world's origin. It contains a lengthy mythical account of the divine government of the world. The cyclical motion of the heavens is due to the God's periodic action, infusing new vitality into them. The myth's emphasis on the world's need for the God's vitalizing influence is significant: the world is more than mere matter.⁴²

Best of all will be the rule of an expert individual, the true king, who is able to govern on the basis of knowledge of eternal verities as well as practical skill, though it is the latter which receives greater stress in this context. But men with prerequisite intellectual, and moral qualities do not arise naturally in the way queen bee does in a hive. So it is that men have to come together and write codes of law, pursuing the traces of truest constitution; and the inferior types of rule result. They are all difficult to live under, but they can be put in an order of preference.⁴³

To conclude, one can say that in this work Plato wants to put stress on the leader's personal abilities to manage the business of Polis. He can have an inherent talent for this, but he can also learn the skill to rule by his own personal vision, in spite of the rules and laws binding the common man. A True Leader must have this charismatic feature, and be also able to apply it in practice, on his own agenda.

LAWS - Laws as the paradigmatic basis for ruling the state

In old age Plato remained intellectually active. His later dialogues show a mind still flexible and fertile. No doubt his contact with the younger thinkers in the Academy helped him to retain his own intellectual vitality. The later dialogues may lack the sparkling humor and the vivid portrayal which make the earlier dialogues so readable, but they present new ideas, new forms of argument, and new techniques of dialectical reasoning; they address new questions, and approach familiar questions in new ways. The *Laws* is Plato's last work. It is a substantial work, as long as the *Republic*. It suffers from flaws of style and certain dryness: it is the work of an old man determined to write down and publish the ideas he believes important. Plato is racing the calendar as he writes the *Laws*, the style is little concerned to him. And what he has to say is new.⁴⁴

The *Laws* is a work which reminds us also that Plato has an independent interest in political philosophy. The *Laws* concern the nature of a society in which virtue is universally inculcated. In the first parts of this very long work the emphasis is upon the nature of inculcation; in the later parts, practical proposals for legislation to be enacted in the imaginary about-to-be founded Cretan city of Magnesia are discussed. As with the society of the *Republic*, there is to be a hierarchical order of the rulers and the ruled in the city. As with the society of the *Republic*, true virtue is only possible for those who belong to the restricted class of the rulers. But in the *Republic* the whole emphasis lies upon the

education of the rulers. In the Laws there is nothing like this. The education of the rulers is represented as going further and being more exact than that of the mass of the citizens. In the Laws the positive development of desirable habits and traits takes the place of a restraint. The common people are encouraged to live in accordance with virtue, and both education and laws are to nurture them in this way of life. But when they in live this way, it is because they have been conditioned and habituated to such a way of life, and not because they understand the point of it.⁴⁵ That understanding is still restricted to the rulers. This opinion emerges best in the discussion about the gods.

In the Laws the existence of divine has become the cornerstone of morals and politics. "The greatest question ... is whether we do or do not think rightly about the gods and so live well". The divine is important in the Laws because it is identified with the law: to be obedient before the law is to be obedient before the gods. The divine also seems to represent the general primacy of spirit over matter, the soul over body. The ordinary people are induced to believe in the gods, because it is important that all men who attend to human affairs and who are not subject to human weakness in that attention should believe in the gods. But the rulers are to be men who have toiled to acquire the complete confidence in the existence of the gods by intellectual effort. What others hold as the result of conditioning and tradition they have grasped by the use of rational proof. Plato's determination to uphold a paternalistic and totalitarian politics is clearly independent of any particular version of the theory of the Forms.

The Laws, like the Republic, pays a great deal of attention to education. Education is regarded as the cornerstone of the state -

that is education in virtue which is understood essentially in terms of educating our desires. Full virtue, no doubt, would still include wisdom, but the basic requirement is that we should desire the right things. Once again, it is asserted that the virtuous life is the happiest; it is the best and pleasant for us: if it were not, the task of persuading people to choose it would be difficult. ⁴⁶

The conclusion may be drawn that the Laws put forth such a concept of leadership which stresses the meaning of laws and common rules by the side of the leader's personal power. He must obey and act according to the laws made by some common governmental organ. This practice will prevent the abuse of the leader's personal power.

4. Implications on the modern leadership-thinking

We can find several areas in Plato's discourse which come close to modern leadership debate. These issues are, for example,;

- debates on charisma in leadership
- theories of personnel education and human resource management
- symbols and leadership; leadership as heroic action
- debate on the nature of managerial work, and especially, the possibility to be a statesman-leader in business, said by the words of Richard Norman⁴⁷

- justice in managerial work: under many managerial routines is it possible to be a just leader of organization
- in the field of organizational theory: the organizational equilibrium versus conflict
- management of meaning
- Plato as women oppressing anti-feminist; gender studies of organization

Of course, several other issues can be identified, but in my mind these are the most important topics. Next I will take some of them under more thorough consideration.

Discussion of the statesman leadership

Richard Norman in his book "Creative leadership" (orig. publ. 1975) put forth the concept of statesman leadership. He states that the function of *statesman leader (STL)* is to balance the totality formed by several business branches. The main task of STL is to take care that the political system of many businesses is well functioning. To handle and relax tensions existing between the parts of an organization is one of the main tasks of STL. But, opposite to Plato, Norman sees those tensions as creative and fruitful tools for making a better organization. STL must be a person who is able to relax these tensions, but he must also create new ones in order to renew the organization.

Discussion about charisma

Charisma, in terms used by Max Weber, means literally "the gift of grace". It is used by Weber to characterize self-appointed leaders followed by people who are in distress and who need to

follow the leader because they believe him to be extraordinarily qualified. Charismatic leaders' movements are enthusiastic, and in such extraordinary enthusiasms, class and status barriers sometimes give way to fraternization and exuberant community sentiments. Charismatic heroes and prophets are thus viewed as truly revolutionary forces in history.⁴⁸ Weber emphasizes that the charismatic leader is self-ordained and self-styled. The background for this self-styling is the charismatic leader's "mission". This causes that her/his action is her/his destiny. The role of a follower is to acknowledge this destiny, and the authority of genuine charisma is derived from the duty of the followers to recognize the leader.⁴⁹ The very nature of charismatic authority is unstable; this is because the source of charisma is continuously "moving on". It will never be stable and unchanging.

Charismatic leadership usually arises in times of crisis in which the basic values, the institutions, and the legitimacy of the organization are in question. Genuine charisma is the problem of something "new". And in extraordinary situations this "new" calls forth a charismatic authority structure so that charisma, at least temporarily, leads to actions, movements, and events which are extraordinary, not routine, and outside the sphere of everyday life. The evocation of pure charisma and charismatic leadership always leads, at least temporarily, away from the world of everyday life; it rejects or transcends routine life. Just because pure charisma and charismatic leadership conflict with the existing, the self-evident, the established order, they work like catalyst in an organization. But charisma is the specifically creative force in an organization only briefly before being unavoidably transformed in or routinized into some more stable form.⁵⁰

The legitimacy of charisma and charismatic leadership is sociologically and psychologically an attribute of the belief of the followers and not so much the quality of the leader. The leader is in this respect important because he can "charismatically" evoke this sense of belief and can thereby demand obedience. Weber thought that the unavoidable fate of charisma is routinization and institutionalization. Pure charisma is personal, direct, radical, extraordinary, and the authority of charisma is based on belief, after which the charismatic leadership as movement is successful, charisma becomes ordinary; charismatic leadership becomes routinized, depersonalized, and deradicalized. Therefore, the nature of belief may also be transformed. Considering the features of the Weberian pure charisma it seems that this type of authority structure describes more a pre-modern (like ancient Greece) society and form of organization. Especially pure charisma and charismatic leadership as an anti-economic force, that it is characterized by great pathos; that the followers constitute a genuine discipleship; and that charismatic leadership points in a revolutionary and anti-routine way to something transcendent, hint rather to the pre-modern.⁵¹

Charisma is foreign to economic and efficiency considerations. Hence, in modern business organizations charisma needs to be kept on a tight reign. Too much reliance on charisma, and the economic survival of the firm may be threatened. More appropriate for the fuzzy organization is the notion that charisma can move from one person to another with different decisions. Charisma can provide a vital driving force to decision making as viewed through the eyes of e.g. the garbage can model of organizational action. In it the participants are leaving and entering the can, carrying their solutions; the impetus for participants, problems, and solutions to come together to make a choice could be the use. But different decisions will bring different individu-

als together. When end and means relationship are unclear and there are uncertainties over the ends to be reached, inspirational decision-making seems to be the only way in which decision makers can get action. Charisma would offer a resolution to this problem but there is no reason why charisma should continuously reside in the same person.⁵²

Plato's view of leadership, as a normative standpoint, was that a leader must be a man of power with the truly truth-seeking glance. This point of view comes close to the Weberian concept of charisma discussed above. Plato sees that a leader must have charisma, the gift of grace, to be successful in his actions. Without it the leader is not able to do his job, be the head of some organization. And this charisma is something mystical which cannot be obtained by force or by training. It is of divine origin.

Discussion about the management of meaning

Discussions about management's "new " imperatives, like management by objectives, management by results etc., have been evolving. One of them is the discussion called the management of meaning. It has many roots, e.g. Bennis (1984) would suggest a view of strategic management as "the management of meaning". This concept is later elaborated, with more conceptual depth, by Smircich and Morgan (1982) and Smircich and Stubbart(1985).

In the background is the idea that organizations are socially constructed systems of shared meanings. So, the task of management, especially strategic management, is to create symbolic reality and to facilitate action. Smircich and Stubbart refer to recent studies, where " the management of meaning" has been shown to be accomplished through values and their symbolic

expressions, dramas and language. Broms and Gahmberg have found some examples of classical myths used in situational applications. Such are, for instance, the myth of rebirth, or the story of the Phoenix bird, in occasions of crisis and turnaround operations, or the myth of the Argonauts in biographies of famous leaders.⁵³

The key challenge for a leader is to manage meaning in such a way that individuals orient themselves to the achievement of desirable end. In this endeavor the use of language, ritual, drama, stories, myths, and symbolic construction of all kinds play an important role. They constitute important tools for the management of meaning. Through words and images, symbolic actions, and gestures, leaders can structure attention and evoke patterns of meaning which give them considerable control over the situation being managed. Leadership rests as much in these symbolic modes of action as in those instrumental modes of management, direction, and control which define the substance of the leader's formal organizational role.⁵⁴

So, it is said in the modern leadership studies that the task of strategic management is to rule the new and continuously changing situation by creating and using myths, symbols, metaphors etc. As we have seen previously, Plato sees the myths, metaphors and "stories" as inevitable forces in societal life. In the same way, he considers that it belongs to a leader's normative agenda to develop such means of symbolical leading.

The connections to the charisma-debate are also clear; if a leader wants to be charismatic, he must develop his skill of using symbols, metaphors etc. in his managerial work. So, the management of meaning discussion and the charisma discussion are heavily interwoven.

5. Final Comments

An excursion has been made in Plato's world of ideas. This consideration consists of many different areas. We have seen that Plato has been one of the most influential organizational thinkers through the ages. He has presented long time ago many themes which have been thought to be "modern", and developed during the 20th century by the leadership theorists of our time. First, Plato has put forth the theory of an organization as harmony seeking entity, and in this way showed a benchmark for modern organization theorists stressing the unitary and equilibrium nature of modern complex organizations. Second, the concept of management of meaning, or *leadership* as the management of meaning, has been evolved. The focus on the way meaning is created, sustained, and changed in organizational settings provides a powerful means for understanding the fundamental nature of leadership as a social process. This social process includes all those means by which management creates new meanings by rituals, symbolization and "naming". As we have seen all these elements are included in Plato's leadership philosophy. Third, the debate on the attributes of a powerful leader is also in the focus of Plato's thinking. This notion leads us to the modern debate on *charisma*, and to its role in modern management practices. A leader must have charisma, the gift of grace, to be successful in his actions. Without it the leader is not able to do his job, be the head of some complex organization. Max Weber, the forefather of modern charisma debate, may agree with us: Plato is an ancient, but still fresh and actual developer of leadership theory. And this theory is always needed.

Notes

1. see Yukl, p. 2
2. see Sayles, p.29
3. op. cit. Yukl, s.3
4. op.cit. Yukl, p. 3.
5. see Yukl, pp. 3-4

6. Knuutila, p. 34

7. see Kanerva, s. 18
8. see Kanerva, s. 19
9. see Asmus, s. 27
10. see Asmus, s. 24
11. Knuutila, s.35

12. see Asmus, s. 63
13. see Knuutila, s.13
14. Popper, s. 14
15. see Tenkku, s. 58
16. see Asmus, s.117
17. Op. cit. Norman, s. 22
18. Tarkiainen, ss. 48 - 50
19. see Asmus, s.117
20. see Rowe, s.37
21. see Hamlyn, s. 53
22. see Melling, s. 84
23. see MacIntyre, s. 39

24. see Asmus, s. 101
25. see Kanerva, s. 19
26. see Melling, ss. 46, 51
27. see Rowe, s.153
28. e. g. see Melling, s. 84

29. Finley, s. 34
30. see Popper, s. 210
31. see Hamlyn, s. 51
32. see Hamlyn, s. 54
33. see MaC Intyre, s. 53
34. see Hamlyn, s. 55
35. see Melling, s. 85
36. see Melling, s. 86
37. see Melling, s. 86. Kanerva, s. 23
38. see Tenkku, s. 78
39. see Melling, s. 158
40. Melling, s. 158
41. Rowe, s.157
42. see Melling, s. 151
43. see Rowe, s.138
44. see Melling, s. 158
45. see Hamlyn, s. 54
46. see Rowe, s. 141
47. see Norman, p. 150-
48. see Gerth and Mills, p. 52 (op. cit. Pekonen)

49. see Pekonen, p. 13
50. see Pekonen, p. 14
51. see Pekonen, p. 15
52. see Butler, p. 244
53. see Gahmberg, s.152
54. see Smircich & Morgan

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JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTON TALOUSTIETEEN LAITOKSEN JULKAISUJA, ISSN 0357-0770
 Tilausosoite: Jyväskylän yliopisto, Taloustieteen laitos, PI 35, 40351 Jyväskylä, puh. 941-602940 ja 941-602942, telefax 941-603331.

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ISBN 951-34-0582-6
ISSN 0357-0770
Jyväskylä 1995