

UDC 141.131:172:316.46

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THE ROLE OF GUARDIANS IN PLATO'S REPUBLIC: LESSONS FOR CONTEMPORARY LEADERSHIP

Problem Statement. Plato's 'Republic' provides insights into the role of guardians in an ideal society, offering valuable lessons for contemporary leadership. The guardians' dedication, rigorous training, and focus on the common good exemplify the importance of a ruling class committed to virtue and justice. However, the strict hierarchy between guardians and non-guardians raises concerns about its feasibility and desirability in modern societies.

The guardians' training in wisdom and virtue, along with their responsibility to maintain social order and prosperity, provides a framework for leadership that emphasizes duty, accountability, and the pursuit of the collective interest. However, the potential for power abuse and the challenges in identifying leaders with the requisite qualities necessitate careful evaluation.

Overall, 'The Republic' offers a thought-provoking starting point for contemporary discussions on leadership and governance. It highlights the need for ongoing reflection and adaptation to evolving societal contexts and values, ensuring that leadership systems align with the principles of virtue, justice, and the common good.

Analysis of recent research and publications provide valuable insights into the role of guardians in Plato's Republic and their implications for contemporary leadership. Scholars like John Uebersax, in his work "The 'Natural City' in the Republic: Is Plato Really a Libertarian?" [13] emphasize the significance of the Guardians as the epitome of just and righteous individuals, highlighting their sense of duty and dedication to the city. Uebersax delves into Plato's depiction of the Guardians as the ruling class, emphasizing their commitment to the common good and the virtues of honor and justice. Additionally, the analysis by the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy explores the selection process and characteristics of the rulers in the just city, shedding light on the qualities of wisdom, strength, and age required for effective leadership. Furthermore, discussions by various philosophers, such as Richard Kraut [5], offer systematic examinations of Plato's ethics and political philosophy in the Republic, providing nuanced perspectives on the ethical foundations of leadership and governance. These recent works

contribute to a deeper understanding of the lessons derived from Plato's portrayal of guardians and their relevance for shaping contemporary leadership practices.

The goal of the article is to explore the concept of guardians in Plato's Republic and argue for its relevance to contemporary leadership. The article will examine the role and characteristics of guardians, their training and education, and their relationship with the rest of society. It will also analyze the implications of the guardians' strict class separation and the impact of their rule on the overall justice and virtue of the society. The article will draw on the works of Plato, as well as interpretations and critiques by modern scholars, to provide a nuanced understanding of the guardians' role in Plato's ideal state and its potential lessons for contemporary leadership. The article will also consider the relevance of Plato's ideas in the context of modern political systems and the challenges they face. Ultimately, the article aims to contribute to the ongoing debate on the role of philosophy in shaping contemporary leadership practices and the pursuit of justice and virtue in society.

Main Part. Widely known Plato's "Republic" presents a profound exploration of governance, wherein the concept of guardians occupies a central position. In this seminal work, Plato envisions guardians as the custodians of justice and virtue within the ideal state. He asks whether there is no city which is under a tyrant rich and slavery, and no city which is under a king or under an aristocracy orderly and free? Plato emphasizes the crucial role of guardians in maintaining order and liberty within the state, highlighting their responsibility to govern with wisdom and benevolence. Furthermore, he elucidates, "And the only life which looks down upon the life of political ambition is that of true philosophy" [8, p. 379], underscoring the philosopher-king's commitment to truth and wisdom as prerequisites for effective governance.

Addressing the main question of this research within the contemporary landscape of leadership theory and practice, the exploration of Plato's concept of guardians assumes profound relevance. As modern societies grapple with complex ethical dilemmas and political turbulence, the need for

principled leadership imbued with wisdom and moral rectitude becomes increasingly pressing. Plato's Republic as stated by Strauss L. offers timeless lessons for contemporary leaders, emphasizing the cultivation of virtue and intellectual excellence as essential attributes of effective governance [12]. Thus, delving into Plato's conception of guardianship not only enriches our understanding of classical political philosophy but also provides valuable insights into the principles and virtues necessary for navigating the complexities of contemporary leadership challenges. Such insights are especially appealing to the modern philosophy of leadership which does not inherently entail a judgment about the moral quality of leadership. Contemporary effective leadership can be morally evil, raising questions about the ethical implications and considerations in leadership practices.

But what else if not a historical context has the same impact on Plato's "Republic" which emerges from a tumultuous period in ancient Greek history, marked by political instability and philosophical inquiry? The backdrop of the Peloponnesian War and the decline of Athenian democracy provided fertile ground for Plato's exploration of governance and justice. According to Popper K.R Plato's Republic was written amidst the upheaval of the Peloponnesian War, prompting Plato to grapple with the shortcomings of Athenian democracy and envision alternative models of political organization [9]. Indeed, Plato's dialogues reflect a critical engagement with the socio-political realities of his time, seeking to elucidate the principles of justice and virtue in the face of societal turmoil.

Furthermore, Plato's ideas on guardianship were profoundly influenced by the prevailing societal norms and philosophical discourse of ancient Greece. The Athenian concept of "arete" or excellence, emphasized the cultivation of virtuous qualities such as wisdom, courage, and justice. This ethos permeates Plato's vision of guardians as the embodiment of moral and intellectual excellence within the ideal state. As an example, Annas J. elucidates that Plato's conception of guardianship draws on the Greek ideal of arete, envisioning leaders who exemplify the highest virtues and govern with wisdom and integrity [1]. Thus, within the historical context of ancient Greece, Plato's exploration of guardianship reflects a synthesis of philosophical ideals and societal aspirations, seeking to articulate a vision of governance grounded in moral rectitude and intellectual prowess.

If we look on Plato's broader philosophical conception, we can observe how firmly rooted the concept of guardians is in the Republic, which encompasses the themes of justice, virtue, and the nature of reality. Central to Plato's views is the theory of forms, according to which he argues that

the material world is only a shadowy reflection of the unchanging realm of ideas. This metaphysical foundation underlies Plato's concept of the guardians as the guardians of truth and wisdom in the ideal state. According to this idea, Plato's Republic is an attempt to establish a city based on eternal principles rather than transient opinions, where the guards serve as guardians of truth and guides of the soul. Here, Plato's guards appear not just as rulers, but as philosophers imbued with a deep understanding of the eternal truths that govern existence.

Moreover, Plato's guardians occupy a central role in the political structure of the ideal state, embodying the principle of specialization and hierarchy. Plato contends, "I hesitated to make the assertion which I now hazard, – that our guardians must be philosophers" [8, p. 68]. This assertion underscores Plato's belief in the intrinsic connection between philosophical wisdom and effective governance. According to Reeve C. D. Plato's guardians are not rulers by birthright or wealth, but by virtue of their intellectual and moral excellence, making them uniquely qualified to guide the city towards justice and harmony [10]. Thus, within Plato's philosophical framework, the concept of guardians serves as a linchpin of the ideal state, embodying the principles of truth, virtue, and enlightened leadership.

But what is a Guardian in essence? In Plato's Republic, the concept of guardians embodies individuals of exceptional virtue and wisdom dedicated to the well-being of the city. According to Philosophy Pages, Plato believed that guardians should possess superior natures, requiring no external rewards and owning no private property. They should govern solely from a concern for the welfare of the state, embodying virtues such as wisdom, courage, and commitment to the common good. In accordance with Plato's assertion the city will be best governed when the rulers are those who are most able to reason about the just and the unjust [8]. Furthermore, the Guardians are the epitome of just and righteous individuals, living solely for the good of the city and motivated by duty. Plato's insistence on the guardians' dedication to the state is reflected in his description of them as servers and rulers, sharing even their children among themselves and having no private property. The importance of the Guardians lies in their dutifulness, which allows for the prosperity of the ideal city built on human virtue and universal values. This dedication to duty and the common good is a central aspect of the Guardians' role, reflecting Plato's vision of ethical leadership and governance.

Considering the article's research goal, we need not only to understand how the concept was developed and what its actual meaning is, but also how it was working on practice. And the selection process, education, and responsibilities of guardians

are crucial components within the context of leadership. It's important to emphasize that the guardians' education is primarily moral, focusing on the blind acceptance of beliefs and behaviors rather than critical thinking. Plato's emphasis on achieving a proper balance of physical training and musical education for the guardians underscores the importance of holistic development. The guardians' role in the ideal city is to maintain harmony between the three classes, ensuring the prosperity and utilitarian happiness of the society. This harmonious functioning of the guardians, auxiliaries, and producers is essential for the just city to thrive, with each group fulfilling its designated role for the greater good. Plato's view on justice extends beyond the guardians to encompass all citizens practicing their assigned roles, contributing to the overall justice and ideal nature of the city. The tripartite division within the self, as outlined by Plato, reflects the necessity for individuals to align their internal components in harmony, mirroring the functioning of the ideal state.

Of course, we cannot avoid significant criticism and challenges Plato's concept of guardians in "The Republic" faced even despite valuable insights into the nature of ethical leadership it has to offer. One of the primary concerns is the potential limitations on individual autonomy imposed by the strict class separation and job specialization advocated by Plato. As the Christos C. Evangeliou notes, Aristotle objected to Plato's proposal for radical political reform regarding the guardians' communal life, arguing that a well-ordered state should not have all things in common [4].

Let's also review works of Martha Nussbaum as a great example of contemporary philosopher who has criticized the concept of guardians in Plato's Republic is. In her book "The Fragility of Goodness" Nussbaum discusses Plato's treatment of the guardians and raises concerns about the authoritarian nature of their rule and the potential for abuse of power within Plato's ideal state. She notes that in the Republic, Plato's guardians are required to live a life of austerity and self-denial, lacking personal property and familial ties. While Plato intended this arrangement to foster unity and devotion to the state, it also raises questions about the suppression of individual freedoms and the potential for authoritarianism [6]. Nussbaum offers critical insights into Plato's ideas about guardianship and their implications for political philosophy and ethics.

Needless to say, that Plato's portrayal of the guardians' role as a burden rather than a privilege has also been subject to criticism. Plato believed that the guardians should own no private property, should live and eat together at government expense, and should earn no salary greater than necessary to

supply their most basic needs. This ascetic lifestyle, while intended to ensure the guardians' dedication to the common good, may be viewed as an unrealistic and even undesirable expectation for modern leaders.

In addition to all abovementioned, the implications of Plato's job specialization, where each individual is assigned to a specific role based on their innate qualities, have been questioned in light of contemporary concerns about social mobility, equality, and the recognition of individual talents. Kraut R. suggests that Plato's tripartite division of society into producers, auxiliaries, and guardians raises concerns about the potential for social stratification and the lack of opportunities for upward mobility [5].

All these challenges and criticisms mentioned in article serve the only purpose – to highlight the need to carefully consider the applicability and relevance of Plato's ideas on guardianship in the context of modern democratic societies and ethical frameworks. While Plato's insights on the importance of ethical leadership and the pursuit of the common good remain valuable, the practical implementation of his vision may require careful adaptation and reconciliation with contemporary values and social structures.

And now, when we've reviewed historical context and origins of Plato's concept, defined essential characteristics of Guardians and dived into criticism we may start picking profound insights for contemporary leadership practices drawing from Plato's Republic and the role of guardians.

The guardians in Plato's Republic serve as models of ethical leadership, embodying virtues such as wisdom, courage, and a commitment to the common good. The guardians, as protectors of the state, exemplify a form of leadership that prioritizes the welfare of the community over personal gain. This emphasis on selfless service and ethical conduct resonates with modern ideals of servant leadership and ethical governance.

In parallel it's also worth emphasizing that effective social life necessitates guardians of two distinct sorts: soldiers to defend the state and rulers to govern wisely. Plato's insistence that guardians should own no private property and live collectively at government expense reflects a vision of leadership devoid of personal ambition and material interests. This aligns with contemporary discussions on ethical leadership, emphasizing the importance of leaders who prioritize the common good over self-interest.

Also, as we already stated, evaluating the applicability of Plato's principles to modern leadership contexts requires a nuanced consideration of the balance between authority, ethics, and individual freedom. Significant to note the transformative potential of Plato's teachings

on leadership, emphasizing the need for leaders to govern with wisdom, courage, and a sense of justice. By reflecting on the lessons from Plato's Republic, contemporary leaders can aspire to cultivate virtues that transcend personal ambition and contribute to the greater good of society.

In essence, Plato's insights on guardianship offer timeless lessons for contemporary leadership, emphasizing the importance of ethical conduct, selfless service, and a commitment to the welfare of the community. By integrating these principles into modern leadership practices, individuals in positions of authority can strive to emulate the virtues embodied by the guardians in Plato's Republic, fostering a culture of ethical leadership and collective well-being.

Conclusions. Leadership inherently involves the exercise of power and authority over others. Philosophical inquiries into leadership examine the nature of power, its sources, and the ethical implications of its use in various contexts. This is where Plato's concept of guardianship in "The Republic" becomes valuable for contemporary leadership practices. Of course, modern world made a huge leap forward and some aspects of strict selection process, rigorous education, and communal lifestyle of the guardians, as described by Plato, in modern democratic societies will not stand a chance at least to be tolerated not even mentioning their implementation due to the potential limitations on individual autonomy.

But Plato's vision of the guardians as individuals of exceptional virtue, wisdom, and dedication to the common good provides a compelling model for ethical leadership which must embody commitment to the common good and a selfless approach to governance, prioritizing the welfare of the community over personal gain. Cultivating leaders who are free from personal ambition and material interests resonates with modern discussions on servant leadership and the need for ethical conduct in positions of authority.

Importance of ethical leadership, the pursuit of the common good, and the virtues necessary for effective governance did prove to be holding relevance through the ages. And today in the contemporary context leaders must remember this historical lesson striving to emphasize education and continuous learning and lead society by their own example, demonstrating the behaviors and values, fostering a culture of accountability and excellence as Guardians did long time ago.

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Summary

Manuilo H. S. The role of guardians in Plato's Republic: lessons for contemporary leadership. – Article.

Plato's concept of guardians in "The Republic" offers valuable insights for contemporary leadership practices. This article examines the role of guardians in Plato's ideal state, exploring their characteristics, selection process, education, and responsibilities, and analyzing the potential lessons they hold for modern leadership.

The analysis highlights the guardians' expected virtues, such as wisdom, courage, and unwavering commitment to the common good. Plato's emphasis on the guardians' selfless service and lack of personal ambition underscores his belief in the importance of ethical leadership. The article also explores the rigorous selection and holistic education of the guardians, which prioritizes moral development over critical thinking.

While Plato's concept of guardianship has faced criticism, particularly regarding the potential limitations on individual autonomy, the article argues that his insights remain relevant. By drawing parallels between the guardians' virtues and modern ideals of ethical governance, servant leadership, and a commitment to the greater good, the article explores how the principles of guardianship can be adapted and integrated into contemporary leadership practices.

In conclusion, the article provides a comprehensive examination of the role of guardians in Plato's Republic and its implications for leadership. By delving into the

philosophical foundations, practical challenges, and potential applications of Plato's vision, the article aims to contribute to the ongoing dialogue on the intersection of political theory, ethics, and leadership studies, offering insights that can inform and inspire current and future leaders.

Key words: Plato, Republic, Guardians, Leadership, Ethics, Justice, Virtue.

Анотація

Мануйло Г. С. Роль стражів у Республіці Платона: уроки для сучасного лідерства. – Стаття.

Концепція стражів Платона в «Республіці» пропонує цінну інформацію для сучасних лідерських практик. У цій статті розглядається роль правителів в ідеальній державі Платона, досліджуються їхні характеристики, процес відбору, освіта та обов'язки, а також аналізуються потенційні уроки, які вони можуть винести для сучасного лідерства.

Аналіз висвітлює очікувані чесноти стражів, такі як мудрість, мужність і непохитна відданість спільному благу. Акцент Платона на безкорисливому служінні стражів і відсутності особистих амбіцій підкрес-

лює його віру у важливість етичного лідерства. У статті також досліджується суворий відбір і цілісна освіта стражів, яка надає пріоритет моральному розвитку над критичним мисленням.

Хоча концепція стражів Платона зазнала критики, особливо щодо потенційних обмежень індивідуальної автономії, в статті стверджується, що його ідеї залишаються актуальними. Проводячи паралелі між чеснотами стражів і сучасними ідеалами етичного управління, лідерства служіння і прагнення до більшого блага, автор досліджує, як принципи стражів можуть бути адаптовані та інтегровані в сучасні практики лідерства.

Насамкінець у статті всебічно розглядається роль стражів у Республіці Платона та її значення для лідерства. Заглиблюючись у філософські засади, практичні виклики та потенційні застосування бачення Платона, стаття має на меті зробити внесок у постійний діалог на перетині політичної теорії, етики та досліджень лідерства, пропонуючи ідеї, які можуть інформувати та надихати теперішніх і майбутніх лідерів.

Ключові слова: Платон, Республіка, стражі, лідерство, етика, справедливість, чеснота.