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PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS OF THE IDEA OF THE STATE IN PLATO'S DIALOGUE "THE REPUBLIC"

Bryukhanov Leonid, Assoc. Prof. **Toshkurovatova R.Sh.**

Samarkand State University named after Sharaf Rashidov

Abstract

This article presents an original analysis of Plato's philosophical ideas as expounded in the dialogue "The Republic." It examines the concept of the ideal state, justice, the role of the philosopher-ruler, and the system of civic education. Special attention is paid to the structure of society and the importance of philosophy in political governance. The article highlights the relevance of Plato's ideas for the modern understanding of a just society and governance.

Keywords

Plato, state, justice, philosophy, ideal state, philosopher-ruler, society

Plato's dialogue "The Republic" is a fundamental work dedicated to exploring the nature of justice, the structure of society, and the role of governance. The relevance of analyzing this book lies in the fact that Plato's ideas about a just state, the education of citizens, and the role of philosophy in politics retain their significance in modern society. The aim of this article is to elucidate the philosophical concept of the state in Plato's work and to identify its significance for contemporary political thought.

The research objectives include: analyzing the concept of justice, studying the structure of the ideal state, examining the roles of the philosopher-ruler and the citizens, and identifying the dialogue's influence on the development of political philosophy.

Plato wrote "The Republic" in the 4th century BC, during a period of political instability in Ancient Greece. Athenian democracy was facing internal crises, which influenced the philosopher's views. Plato critically assessed existing forms of government and sought to develop a model of an ideal state based on reason and justice. The dialogical form of the work allows for a deep analysis of philosophical concepts through discussions between Socrates and other characters. Plato believed there are two worlds. One is the world of things, which we see and can touch. The other is the world of ideas (forms), where ideal images reside. According to Plato, ideas truly exist in their own separate, immaterial world. Everything around us is merely a reflection of those ideas. In the book, the author illustrates this through the metaphor of the cave.

People dwell in an underground dwelling, with their backs to the exit, seeing only the opposite wall. They are chained and cannot turn around to see what lies outside. They can only imagine the external world through the shadows on the cave wall. This "theater of shadows" is the ordinary material world — everything that surrounds us in life. What lies beyond the cave walls is the world of ideas. A person does not see real things; only their projections are accessible. According to Plato, everything we see, hear, and feel in life is an illusion. Genuine reality exists only in the world of ideas. This thought can be understood through a real-life example. Imagine a table. Everyone might have their own association: an office table, a dining table, or a coffee table. All these images of different tables are encompassed by a single "idea of a table." The concept "table" expresses not a specific object, but the universal idea of "tableness." This idea exists by itself; it does not depend on the existence of any particular table or even the word "table." All tables in the world are reflections of this idea.

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Thus, Plato's reasoning became the foundation of idealism. This is a worldview according to which our life is determined by ideas and thoughts, rather than by the material things of the ordinary physical world. The main theme of the work is justice, examined by Plato as a principle of the harmonious functioning of society and the human soul. Justice manifests when each citizen performs their function without interfering in the affairs of others.

Such harmony in the state reflects the inner harmony of the individual, and any violation of this order leads to chaos. Structure of the ideal state: Plato distinguishes three main classes: philosopher-rulers, warriors (guardians), and producers. Philosophers possess knowledge and wisdom, so they should govern the state; warriors ensure protection and security; producers engage in economic activity, providing for the material needs of society. This structure ensures the harmonious and stable functioning of the state. The idea of the philosopher-ruler: Plato asserts that power in the state should belong to philosophers who possess knowledge of the nature of good and justice. The philosopher-ruler is guided by reason, not personal interests, which ensures just and effective governance. The idea of the philosopher-ruler is key to understanding Plato's political theory and his concept of the ideal state.

Plato places great importance on the education system, which shapes citizens capable of fulfilling their social functions. Special attention is given to the training of future rulers, who study philosophy, mathematics, and logic. Education is viewed as a key tool for forming a just and harmonious society.

Plato's work "The Republic" represents a fundamental philosophical treatise on the nature of justice, the role of the state, and the education of citizens. Plato created the concept of an ideal state, where reason, order, and justice are harmoniously combined. The philosopher's ideas remain relevant today, influencing the development of political thought and the philosophy of the state.

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