The Problem of Consensus in Plato's *Republic*

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ABSTRACT: In this paper I will analyse the problem of consensus in Plato's *Republic* by distinguishing two levels for it: on one hand Socrates' persuasion of the city's élite about the goodness of the *kallipolis*, on the other hand the education needed to shape the loyal citizen and ensure a lasting consensus among citizenship in its whole. In order to achieve justice, governors must be fair with the whole citizenship and justice cannot be grounded on violence and coercion alone. The reflection begins with the refutation of this point, which is Thrasymachus', and goes on to the persuasion of Glaucon and Adeimantus; in the end the features of a proper education for the children are discussed.

KEYWORDS: Republic – Consensus – Persuasion – Thrasymachus – Plato.

1. Introduction

The *Republic*[1] is easily the most important political book among Plato's massive production. Yet philosophers and scholars are still debating on some features of this masterpiece and not always agree[2], not even on the date of composition or its organicity[3]. Many scholars argued the book cannot be considered as a single work, as far as they claim that the first[4] of the ten books which make up the whole work was added later by some commentators; therefore, some of these academics proposed to name the first book *Thrasymachus*, as the discussion is mostly centred on this character.

The whole dialogue making up the work is focused on justice and the possibility of it being fulfilled in an ideal city, the *kallipolis*. The participants to this ground-breaking debate represent the whole political and economic spectrum of the IV century B.C. Athenian society: Thrasymachus, young aristocrat linked to the tyrannical side, Lysias and Polemarchus and their father Cephalus, non-citizens residing in the city and close to the democratic side as they fell victim to the tyranni-

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[1] To write this paper I used two versions of the Republic and one version of Gorgias: Plato, *The Republic*, edited by G. R. F. (John) Ferrari, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2000; Platone, *La Repubblica*, edited by M. Vegetti, BUR, Milano 2006; Plato, *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, Vol. 3, translated by W. R. M. Lamb, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1967.

[2] For a good reconstruction of the political uses of *The Republic* over the centuries I recommend M. Vegetti, *Un paradigma in cielo*, Carocci Editore, Roma 2009.

[3] For an overview of this issue I suggest checking M. Vegetti, *Introduzione* in Platone, *La Repubblica*, cit.

[4] A good exposition of some important scholars' opinions on the first book can be found in G. Giannantoni, *Il I libro della Repubblica di Platone*, «Rivista critica di storia della filosofia», XII, 1957, pp. 123-145.

cal anti-democratic repression in the year 404 B.C. and, finally, Glaucon and Adei-mantus, Plato's brothers, who heavily opposed both to tyranny and democracy.

The discussion touches many points and only in the fifth book the renewed city takes shape becoming a solid possibility to be enacted, once the theory has been built and shared within the city élite. Socrates needs his ideas to be accepted to make the next step in the construction of the *kallipolis*, therefore the participants must be persuaded of the goodness and usefulness of such project.

In this paper I would like to explore the problem of consensus proposing to make a distinction between two levels in it: on one hand the need for any political project to be supported by the city élite, and how this goal needs to involve persuasion skills; on the other hand the possibility of educating people in order to avoid any kind of dissent after spontaneous acceptance of the current political order has been achieved. Although social classes are very different from each other – which makes it necessary to distinguish between 'persuasion' of the élite and 'consensus' of the masses – the *sophrosyne*, self-discipline, "deferential and self-controlled behaviour"[5], is possessed by the whole of society: all the groups which make up the social texture[6] must direct the individual choices towards putting the common good first, before any kind of private interest. Whereas in democracy and tyranny either élite or people can be pleased by the government's policies, the new city promises to be a system capable of being welcomed by the whole citizenship[7].

2. Law and Justice in Thrasymachus' view

We may assume the relevance of the first book for the purposes of this paper, in this part the problem of *consensus* among citizens can be singled-out for the first time: to be fair the whole question cannot be reduced to the discussions born at the Piraeus between Socrates and all the characters as the contention keeps going in the following books.

In the first book Thrasymachus makes two strong statements about justice: he claims first that "justice is simply what is good for the stronger"[8], as a matter of fact laws are written by governors in order to preserve their power, those who hold power are the strongest regardless of what they are, be it a single man or a multitude of people, and laws exist to enforce their power for as long as it needs. Mario Vegetti saw here an attempt to make a tight association between *Rechtpositivismus*, the positive law that regulates human association, 'conventionalism' in Julia

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[5] J. Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1981, p. 115.
[6] As it is well known the new society will be divided into three groups: the philosopher-kings, whose quality is the *sophia phylakike*, both technical and political skills; the guardians, empowered by the *andreia*, along with the quality of the first group they form the *arete*, the virtue, they both share goods and relatives, there should not be any private interest or personal belonging among these groups; the working class, the only class allowed to have private properties, it shares with the higher groups the *sophrosyne*, the self-discipline.
[7] For further information on power and politics in ancient Greek society I recommend M. Vegetti, *Chi comanda nella città. I greci e il potere*, Carocci Editore, Roma 2017.
[8] Plato, *Resp.* I, 338c.

Annas' view, and *Machtpositivismus*, the law made by the strongest according to his ability to prevail, the so called 'immoralism' also in Annas' terms[9]. Thrasymachus puts on the same level *dikaios*, fair, and *nomimon*, legal, following a previous political tradition based on religious legitimation[10]. Furthermore, in his second statement, Thrasymachus switches from the political to the moral dimension by affirming that "justice and the just are actually what is good for someone else"[11] because laws are observed by citizens to accomplish the governors' will, this results in a vision where defining unfair is a prerogative of strong men, the power holders, who can overwhelm weak people thanks to their *pleonexia* and feel happy for that. In keeping with this view tyrants are happy because they are free to pursue injustice by governing through terror and violence, citizens must still observe laws to be fair[12].

Thrasymachus overturns Callicles' view on positive law as it is depicted in *Gorgias* dialogue; the sophist firmly believes that positive law, the *nomos*, is made by weak men in order to protect themselves from strong men. Indeed, the powerful claim mankind must follow the 'law of nature', the *physis*, which lets them prevail on the powerless. He affirms that "the makers of the laws are the weaker sort of man, and the more numerous"[13] and they use the *isonomia* to limit the power of stronger men, thus taking advantage from this situation. When in nature, however, things are completely different: "it is right for the better to have advantage of the worse, and the abler of the feebler"[14]. What is considered equal in civil society is not in nature.

Socrates operates to refute these positions in the passages of the first book that come next. His argument is quite clear and is based on the necessity of consensus among citizens and, more important, between citizens and governors. Socrates demands clarity to Thrasymachus since he has been arguing that the strongest can govern by overwhelming weak men, he asks him whether it would be possible for a band of thieves, as much as for a city or an army, to actually achieve something without any kind of cooperation whatsoever within the group. He fears the risk of a *stasis* in every group where there is no accordance on anything, this stands because of the perpetual conflict persisting between associated people which leads to chaos in which governing is impossible, no matter how solid the power held by the governors is. Enlightened men must govern if the *polis* wants to survive "not because they want to, but as avoiding 'the great punishment' that of being [ruled] by men worse than themselves"[15].

> Clearly, then, its power is such that whatever it appears in – whether
> city, nation, army, or something else – it first renders incapable of

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[9] See J. Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic*, cit., p. 36.

[10] See M. Vegetti, *Trasimaco* in Platone, *Repubblica. Commento al Libro I*, edited by M. Vegetti, Bibliopolis, Napoli 1998, I, pp. 240-241.

[11] Plato, *Resp.* I, 343c.

[12] See ivi, I, 344 a-c.

[13] Plato, *Gorg.* 483b.

[14] Ivi, 483d.

[15] J. Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic*, cit., p. 50.

concerted action, through faction and disagreements, and then makes an enemy to itself, to everything that opposes it, and to the just? Isn't that right?[16].

Furthermore, as Giovanni Giorgini[17] notices, the tyrant, as described in the eighth book, declares war continuously against other cities in order to reach the consensus required through scaring off the citizenship and blaming an outsourced enemy. All the citizens' efforts are spent in supporting the war and there is neither the clarity nor the funding to set up a strong opposition to the tyranny[18]. Socrates shows here the impossibility of a power based only on coercion, every kind of power needs to be accepted by the commoners in order to stay stable and reject *stasis*. This is a valid objection and Thrasymachus cannot do anything but approve this reply.

Given this we can state that the final refutation moved by Socrates opens the way for the search of a political system able to ensure both stability and justice and to avoid inner conflicts; the key to reach this goal is consensus. This might be interpreted as the first step toward the theorization of the ideal city, as it will be exposed in the fifth book[19].

3. The first level of consensus, convincing the élite

In the first book we can read: "we might persuade you that you should let us go", "and do you really think you could persuade us […] if we refused to listen?"[20]. Persuasion has just been introduced in the dialogue, this theme will be recurrent through the book: Socrates believes it will be necessary to persuade the participants to the meeting since they represent the Athenian élite who will be asked to cooperate in the building of the *kallipolis* and, mostly, since they will be covering leading roles in the future society[21].

Socrates is aware of the positions supported by the participants: some of them, like Cephalus and Polemarchus, are not citizens, therefore they cannot benefit from the advantages ensured by the democratic regime to the Athenian citizens. On the other side we have the Athenian élite: Thrasymachus, who just cannot agree with democratic policies because of the weakening of aristocratic power they entail; Glaucon and Adeimantus, sceptical about both regimes, democracy and tyranny, because of their social standing. What is to be done here is to convince everyone of the goodness of the *kallipolis* and that they will no longer be worried about their own status. No one will ever be downgraded or become victim to the policies of the new city. Once they agree on the features of justice, having

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[16] Plato, *Resp.* I, 351e-352a.

[17] See G. Giorgini, *La Città e il Tiranno*, Giuffrè Editore, Milano 1993, p. 321.

[18] See Plato, *Resp.* VIII, 566e-567a.

[19] See M. Vegetti, *Trasimaco*, cit., pp. 255-256.

[20] Plato, *Resp.* I, 327c.

[21] For an overview of Socratic persuasion, I recommend S. J. Clark, *An Apology for Lawyers: Socrates and the Ethics of Persuasion,* «Michigan Law Review» 117, 6, 2019, pp. 1001-1018.

fully analysed its nature, they can assume a position where every one of them will have a chance to reach the wellness they have been demanding. In order to pre-serve the happiness of the élite a society must be built where none of its members will be left behind, even though this implies some compromises.

At the beginning of the second book we can run into this debate between Glaucon and Socrates:

> Socrates, he said, do you really want to convince us that it is in every way better to be just than unjust, or is it enough merely to seem to have convinced us? […] I would prefer, I said, really to convince you, if I had a choice[22].

Socrates knows it will be such a hard work to convince them enough to expose the foundations of the *kallipolis*. Here begins a long discussion where he tries to show them the beauty of justice and just life using some mundane exam-ples to push the issue down on earth so to make it fully understandable. Here Glaucon gives three typologies of good things: the unpleasant things with good consequences, like the medical therapy; the desirable things with no consequen-ces, like the harmless pleasure; the things desirable as much as good, like thinking and seeing. Socrates is now looking to convince Glaucon that justice belongs to the third type, which is why it must be pursued, no matter what[23]. We can spot something of a change of mind in Glaucon in the fifth book where he offers his alliance, giving to Socrates "support, encouragement, and maybe answers which are more sympathetic than someone else would give you" to help him against "the large and ugly crowd" ready to attack him with "any weapon"[24] available. He is aware of the risk Socrates is taking with his ideas, but he still declares his loyalty to the cause: is the persuasion having an effect?

Not only Glaucon and Thrasymachus, Adeimantus is declaring his opposi-tion to the Socratic theorizing as well. The previous exposition of the communita-rian ideas about women and property, made in the fifth book, has created a sort of turmoil and Socrates had to defend his positions from various attacks. Adeimantus in the sixth book feels that Socrates is far from being convincing, especially when he faces Thrasymachus, he is now saying he thinks that the listeners now are "even more strongly opposed to you", and also that "they're not going to believe a word of it. Look at Thrasymachus, for a start"[25]. Socrates is now bothered by that state-ment and asks Adeimantus not to make "trouble between Thrasymachus and me, now that we've just become friends"[26]. We can sincerely question the authenticity of this friendship, but here the Socratic effort to persuade the listener must be noticed since he is now using a political 'enemy' to support his views against the

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[22] Plato, *Resp.* II, 357a-b.

[23] See ivi, II, 357b-358a.

[24] Ivi, V, 474a.

[25] Ivi, VI, 498c.

[26] Ivi, VI, 498d.

attacks. As Vegetti noticed[27] Socrates is confident with the possibility to convince the strongest opposer to his political philosophy as well as to persuade the multitude of the goodness of his theorisation. Here we can see how Socrates tries to reassure Adeimantus about the prejudices on both philosophy and philosophers held by the multitude.

> That's all very well for you, but don't be so hard on "most people". If you can avoid being antagonistic towards them, if you encourage them, and remove the prejudice against philosophy, they will think very differently. You have to point out the character and way of life in the way we have just defined it, so that don't think you are talking about the people *they* regard as philosophers[28].

As we can see Socrates believes in the possibility to persuade everyone, both the élite and the people, of his ideas once they have understood the benefit resulting from the new policies introduced by the philosophers in the renewed city.

Moreover, in the seventh book, Adeimantus' doubt comes back when he asks whether it is correct to ask the philosophers to sacrifice their happiness to fit their role. Here goes Socrates:

> Now it is your turn to forget, my friend, that the law does not exist for the exclusive benefit of one class in the city. Its aim is to engineer the benefit of the city as a whole, using persuasion and compulsion to bring the citizens into harmony, and making each class share with the other classes the contribution it is able to bring to the community. The law is what outs people like this in the city, and it does so not with the intention of allowing each of them to go on his way, but so that it can make use of them for its own purposes, to bind the city together[29].

As Gregory Vlastos has put it: "Thus for them to "impart benefit to the community" (τὸ κοινὸν ὠφελεῖν) *is* to "impart benefit to one another"", nobody but the citizens are the beneficiary "the well-being of πόλις is theirs"[30]. Once the foundations of the *kallipolis* have been set up there will be no reason to worry about the course of events. The more the project is unveiled the harder it gets for Socrates to persuade the listeners, Socrates knows that the main goal to be achieved, once he has obtained the support of the élite, is to obtain the consensus of the masses. That is the reason why a new form of education, along with some drastic measures, must be enacted as soon and as well as possible.

All the participants agree on the existence of substantial differences among social classes and they all believe this distinction cannot be overcome in a political system expecting to be just. This might be seen as the core of the whole theoriza-

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[27] See M. Vegetti, *Introduzione*, cit.

[28] Plato, *Resp.* VI, 499e-500a.

[29] Ivi, VII, 519e-520a.

[30] G. Vlastos, *The Theory of Social Justice in the Polis in Plato's Republic* in H. F. North (edited by), *Interpretations of Plato. A Swarthmore Symposium*, E. J. Brill, Leiden 1977, p. 17.

tion presented in the Republic: once this point is clarified, it is easy to grasp why masses cannot just be persuaded, rather they have to be educated to follow the leaders whatever it takes. This process does not exclude the use of violence.

4. The second level of consensus, educating the people

We now turn back to the questions exposed by Glaucon in the first lines of the second book. He introduced the concept of *eudokimesis*, the reputation of being considered fair and loyal to the law and the community[31], claiming the necessity for everyone to be considered in such way, this introduces an important item in our discussion, the public opinion. There is not enough space to explore this concept here, but we can assume the importance of mutual control and mutual recognition in a society. For that reason, once more, we can argue that the *kallipolis* lays its foundation on a public consensus which involves both citizens and governors.

In the first chapter of this paper we saw the confrontation between Socrates and Thrasymachus about the nature of justice and the legitimation of political power. Thrasymachus here shows his lack of familiarity with the community since he is an aristocrat bent on the tyrannical side, power needs to mediate with the people in order to achieve the consensus required to govern a city[32]. What is to be done here is building a system capable of ensuring the loyalty of the whole citizenship.

Plato has experienced the democratic regime and the trial made to Socrates in 399 B.C., this made him change his mind completely about democracy and formulate a political philosophy which would overcome the democratic form of government to ensure the *polis* stability and prosperity. In the last books we can see the analysis of the kinds of governments with all their cycles of birth, decay and death; democracy is compared to any kind of government which could not work in a complex society because of its structural flaws and its systemic weaknesses. What he is trying to overcome with the theorisation of the *kallipolis* is the principle of absolute equality among citizens stated by Cleisthenes in the VI century B.C., the principle of *isonomia*. These foundations are defective because they cannot ensure a system of division of labour and roles fairly accorded to the natural disposition of each citizen; Plato, as an aristocrat, believed in differences among people, he was strongly convinced of the existence of an élite and a mob. The openness of democracy leaves too much space for the wannabe tyrant to overthrow the government and take over the power, that is due to the regulation of the social life entrusted to the masses which leads inevitably to a form of anarchy from where the tyranny would eventually rise. The *kallipolis* will recognise the difference inherent in society and the roles will be assigned according to the nature of the individuals, it looks like a meritocratic correction of the democratic form[33] where inequality is founded on anthropological basis.

[31] Plato, *Resp.* II, 358a.

[32] See F. De Luise and G. Farinetti, *Infelicità degli archontes e felicità della polis* in Platone, *Repubblica. Commento al Libro IV*, edited by M. Vegetti, Bibliopolis, Napoli III, 1998, p. 110.

[33] See ivi, p. 118.

Plato is perfectly aware that a certain amount of force will be required in dealing with the masses, as they are accustomed to it, having been educated with force rather than persuasion[34]. He fears that people sometimes will run away from the law like those children "running away from their father, since their education will not have been a matter of conviction" but "something imposed on them by force"[35]. However, Plato still believes force alone will not be enough for the governors to keep their power stable. Force might be useful to change people's mind but will not help make them more virtuous. While force acts solely on the body, consensus goes straight to the mind of the people and put them in the position to follow the leaders at any rate, thus making it necessary in the first place.

Since consensus is required in a society where all roles are weighted off according to natural predisposition, it is necessary to make everyone accept his or her own role in society. What is asked to the whole community here is to share the same opinion, governors and citizens need to have the same political ideas, "principle that each single individual is to perform his own task"[36] without claiming for any other role they are not allowed to.

> What is more, if agreement is to be found among rulers and ruled in any city about which of them is to rule, it is to be found in this one, don't you think?' 'I couldn't agree more' 'Well then, when they agree in this way, in which of the two groups of citizens will you say the self-discipline is located? In the rulers? Or in the ruled?' 'In both, I suppose[37].

The easiest way to reach a perfect consensus among citizens is through education. In the *Laws* Plato strongly affirms the importance of education in producing good citizens giving a detailed exposure of the means, the places and the goals to be achieved[38]; the *paideia*, intended as a lifelong process of individual empowerment, is strictly tied to the question of consensus. Well educated citizens are loyal citizens, this theme comes back in the *Republic* and becomes even more pervasive for the purpose. It is imperative to notice that Plato idealises a society where only the two 'higher' groups, governors and guardians, must be properly educated by a state-funded system. The children coming from the third group, the only group allowed to have a private property, will be educated in the household by their parents.

Every single aspect of the citizens' lives must be controlled by the guardians

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[34] For a discussion on these issues, force and persuasion in Plato, I suggest M. Lane, *Persuasion et force dans la politique platonicienne* in A. Brancacci - D. El Murr - D. P. Taormina (edited by), *Aglaïa: autour de Platon. Mélanges offerts à Monique Dixsaut*, Vrin, Paris 2011, pp. 133-166 and C. Moore, *Persuasion and Force in Plato's Republic*, «The Society for Ancient Greek Philosophy Newsletter», 350, 2008, pp. 1-7.

[35] Plato, *Resp.* VIII, 548b.

[36] Ivi, IV, 433d.

[37] Ivi, IV, 431d-e.

[38] See S. Gastaldi, *Educazione e Consenso nelle Leggi di Platone*, in «Rivista di Storia della Filosofia», 39 (3), 1984, pp. 419-452.

so that the individual evolution can be directed and the loyalty to the cause might be ensured. Socrates uses a working metaphor to describe the impression of the foundations of the *kallipolis* in both mind and heart of the citizens: the metaphor of the dyer. Once the dyer impresses the colour deep in the wool, using the right tools and an effective method, the clothes just does not discolour. In the sense of Socrates this works for people as well.

> You must realise that all we were trying to do was organise things so that they would absorb our laws as completely as possible, like a dye. We wanted them to possess the right character and upbringing, so that their views on danger and other things would be colour-fast, incapable of being washed out by any of the detergents which are such good solvents. Nor by pleasure, which is a better solvent than any other soda or lye. Nor by pain, fear of desire, which are stronger than any other detergent[39].

A proper education passes through music and gymnastic, a perfect physical shape is required as well as a refined intelligence. The study of literature is included in the education of both guardians and governors. The literature will be controlled by a board which will ban all the poets like Hesiod and Homer, the fathers of Greek poetry, because they "made up untrue stories, which they used to tell people – and still do tell them"[40]. The myths are put under accuse here because of their fictional feature and, most of all, because they represent the reality in a very distorted way depicting gods as entities with vices and the attitude to behave immorally[41].

Literature must be a moral and political guide for the new generation so that the children can fit perfectly with the austere and rational policies of the *kallipolis*. Good manners will be taught to the children to encourage respect to the other citizens, especially with the elder people; not even haircut and clothing are saved from a strict regulation[42], it is mandatory to instil a severe respect of discipline and sobriety which will be required in the new society: the control of the body is essential to the control of the mind. If someone cannot handle the situation he must be switched immediately to the 'inferior' group, only the excellence can pass the test that will scan the education of the children. The downgrading is necessary to ensure the perfection of the group, not even one bad apple will be allowed.

> Yes, I said. Almost as trivial as the requirements we mentioned earlier, for an inferior child of the guardians to be sent to join the other classes, and for an outstanding child from those classes to join the guardians. This was intended to show that among the rest of the citizen body they should assign each individual to the one task he is naturally fitted for, so that by applying himself to his own one task each may become rather than many people, and in this way the

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[39] Plato, *Resp.* IV, 430a – b.

[40] Ivi, II, 377d.

[41] See S. Gastaldi, *Paideia/mythologia"* in *Platone, Repubblica. Commento ai Libri II e III*, II, edited by M. Vegetti, Bibliopolis, Napoli 1998, p. 346.

[42] See Plato, *Resp.* IV, 425b.

entire city may grow to be a single city rather than many cities[43].

Hence the theory of both labour and social standing assigned according to the natural predisposition is confirmed once again: "a society will work best if people do different jobs, and if they do the jobs they are best suited"[44], this is presented as the only way possible to achieve justice. This idea leads Socrates, at the end of the seventh book, to propose the kidnapping of all the kids older than ten years to educate them in a proper way[45].

We do see here the strict regulation of the education as a tool for achieving consensus among citizens of the two 'highest' groups, the rest of the society will be inspired by the élite, when this does not work Plato grants a small use of coercion and the use of punishment to restore order among the third group, which is the least controllable. But this must be avoided when possible, the state monopoly of violence is better being considered as a deterrent rather than a methodical way to build and retain the consensus[46].

The differences between the two levels of consensus cannot be overcome as they reflect differences among men living together in the *polis*. Socrates strongly affirms the need for proper communication among men of different status as a part and parcel of living together. In Leo Strauss' words: "communication may be a means for living together; in its highest form, communication *is* living together"[47]. Socrates used to speak ironically in order to reach everyone in IV century B.C. Athens, irony was the tool that gave him the possibility to speak to the citizens and be listened by them. Therefore, if irony is "essentially related to the fact that there is a natural order among men", it follows that "irony consists in speaking differently to different kinds of people"[48]. The effort to educate the masses is mandatory in a political system where their consensus will be required in the building of the *kallipolis*.

5. Conclusion

In this paper I analysed a topic which has not been extensively considered by Plato's scholarship and commentators of the *Republic*: the consensus among citizens as a conceptual tool to achieve justice and make the political system work as it should. Reading the pages of the *Republic* one can grasp a sincere interest in finding a way to give stability to the political order through the public acceptance of the status quo. Plato surely did not agree with democratic policies but, as we have just seen here, he recognised the importance of not prevailing on citizens,

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[43] Ivi, IV, 423c-d.

[44] A. Kosman, *Justice and Virtue: The Republic's Inquiry into Proper Difference* in G. R. F. (John) Ferrari, edited by, *The Cambridge Companion to Plato's Republic*, Cambridge University Press, New York 2007, p. 123.

[45] See Plato, *Resp.* VII, 540e-541a.

[46] See M. Vegetti, *Introduzione*, cit., pp. 84-86.

[47] L. Strauss, *The City and the Man*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1964, p. 52.

[48] Ivi, p. 51.

regardless of their social standing, and of creating a situation where everyone can trust the governments in the first place. We can spot here the importance given to the public opinion and the need for every government, expected to be stable, to consider the will of the people. Nevertheless, Plato believed that consensus must be built with a lifelong process of education which includes the use of coercion and persuasion, but still we can assume he had understood the power of consensus in any political system.