Political Culture and Political Leadership in Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*

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The relationship between political culture and political leadership – as one aspect of the structure-agency problem – is arguably one of the fundamental topics of political theory. Although it has become a commonplace (at least since the emergence of constructivist theories) that the relationship between them is interactional, the exact nature and process of this interaction remains a topic worth investigating. In this article, I try to contribute to this field by connecting an ancient text to some recent developments in political theory that grew out from the neoinstitutionalist theory. These latter share two general characteristics: their viewpoint can be considered constructivist, and they put greater emphasis on the role of political agency than earlier neoinstitutionalist theories. I review them briefly in the first part of the text (1), thereby defining my two key categories, culture and political leadership. Then, in the second, larger part (2), I try to elaborate some connections between them and the *History of the Peloponnesian War* by Thucydides. Within this larger part, I make some general remarks about the problems and possible uses of reading Thucydides (2.1.), then, I look at his description of Athens under the leadership of Pericles (2.2.) and under his successors (2.3.). At the end of the article, I try to summarize my findings and draw some conclusions (3.).

1. Institutions, change, and the role of agency

The main goal of the so-called „new institutionalisms", emerging in the eighties and early nineties was to explain the influence that institutions exert on social and political outcomes. Hall and Taylor distinguished three such new institutionalisms: historical, rational choice and sociological (Hall – Taylor, 1996). There are significant differences between these approaches. Rational choice institutionalism uses primarily explanations based on the „calculus approach" or „logic of calculus", which sees political agents as utility maximizers

acting strategically in their own interests. By contrast, sociological institutionalism relies mainly on the „logic of appropriateness" or the „cultural approach", where individual choices are bounded by the worldview of the actors. Historical institutionalists tend to be eclectical in this regard. A common point is that all of them define institutions in relatively broad terms. For our purposes, the broadest of the definitions, that of sociological institutionalism, is the most interesting. By institutions sociological institutionalists mean „not just formal rules, procedures or norms, but the symbol systems, cognitive scripts, and moral templates that provide the »frames of meaning« guiding human action. Such a definition breaks down the conceptual divide between »institutions« and »culture«" (Hall – Taylor, 1996: 14.). Understood that way, culture becomes part of the structure that constrains political agency.

Some scholars in the recent years objected to the three new institutionalisms because of the static view of the political domain of these latter and their lack of explanations for political change. Their critiques led many of them to the re-evaluation of political agency. As Daniel Béland and Robert Henry Cox put it in their introduction to a representative collection of such approaches, „This focus on change identifies ideational perspectives as agency-centered. [...] The unique claim of ideational scholars is that these choices are shaped by the ideas people hold and debate with others. These ideas, in turn, are based on interpretations people have of the world and those around them." (Béland – Cox, 2011: 12.). In the same volume, Colin Hay (2011) argues that both the abovementioned logic of calculus and logic of appropriateness assume predictable actors (the former on the grounds of exogenously given preferences; the latter by right of cultural determination); therefore cannot explain the change. Hay speaks of the „latent structuralism" of the new institutionalisms: they see institutions only as constraints on political dynamism, which lead to path-dependence. Hay argues that this view is only part of the whole picture: the relationship between institutions and political actors is more dynamic, the path-dependence logic is supplemented by path-shaping moments, and the latter is not necessarily a consequence of an exogenous shock. Furthermore, the functionality of institutions as means of reducing uncertainty cannot be taken for granted: they are subject to debate and political struggle. Hay labels his view as „constructivist institutionalism". Viviane Schmidt (2010), similarly to Hay, criticizes the conventional notion of institutions as mere constraints of action, and argues for a more dynamic view. On her account, institutions are rather „simultaneously constraining structures and enabling constructs of meaning, which are internal to »sentient« (thinking and speaking) agents [...] serving both as structures (of thinking and acting) that constrain action and as constructs (of

thinking and acting) created and changed by those actors." (Schmidt, 2010: 4., 14.) She introduces a distinction between „background ideational abilities" that are responsible for maintaining institutions, and „foreground discursive abilities", which enable actors to communicate critically about the institutions. Thereby she grants agency a more autonomous role, and makes the notion of change more dynamic, linking it to discursive interaction.

Martin B. Carstensen (2011) places an even greater emphasis on agency than Schmidt does. He criticizes the notion of internalized ideas as those would threaten actors with becoming hostages to ideas. Instead, he imagines culture as a toolkit, outside of actors' minds, from which they can select tools at will. This grants them an even greater autonomy than in the concept of Schmidt. Culture does not determine the course of action agents take, only guides them. Moreover, there are internal contradictions in it, which the actors can exploit. However, to reduce the complexity of events to the cognitive capacities of humans, actors have to rely on schemata, which unavoidably lead them to cognitive biases. As Carstensen emphasizes, it is important to distinguish between ideas on the grounds of their generality. More general, more fundamental ideas are rarely questioned, compared to more concrete ones. For example, we can distinguish between „policy ideas", „problem definitions" and „public philosophies" (Mehta, 2011; cf. Carstensen, 2010: 153.). The important aspect emphasized both by Carstensen and Mehta, is that agency can play a role – although to a different extent – in forming all three levels of ideas.

What guidance can we get from these theoretical considerations? First of all, they provide a useful notion of political culture: political culture is, on the one hand, part of the institutional setting that constrains agency; on the other hand, actors can criticize and change it by their critical discourse, thereby turning it into a resource for their purposes. Another gain is a conceptual web about the relation between political actors, ideas and change. This will be useful in assessing the text of Thucydides.

In the citations above, there were constant references to agency, but I still have to make clear what I mean by political leadership. For my purposes, a simple definition will suffice. By leadership I mean a kind of agency that succeeds at least partially in transforming political institutions (including political culture) from a structural constraint into the construct of the agent.

2. Thucydides' *History* on political leadership and political culture

2.1. Reading the History

Before beginning with the analysis of Thucydides' text, I shall make some short remarks about the nature of his work. This is important because the way we read it determines to a great extent what benefits we can expect from it. The work of Thucydides is a historical narrative with relatively rare explicit comments from the author himself. But the selectivity (which events are described in detail, which are merely referred to), the way the narrative unfolds (how richly described events succeed one another), and the richness of the speeches of political actors in it makes it possible to read his work as political theory. But the main questions are the following: what kind of political theory is it? What kind of „teaching" does the author try to convey to us? So-called „unitarian readings" – W. Robert Connor's term – assume that this teaching is a coherent whole: the attentive reader can resolve contradictions within the text, and elicit the message of Thucydides. However, since the influential book of the abovementioned W. Robert Connor (Connor, 1984), a bulk of literature emerged that puts greater emphasis on the interactive, educational nature of the work. The work, according to these readings, is marked by intellectual openness, the views of its author are not necessarily monolithic, and he simply does not want to say the last word about politics (Connor, 1984: 18., 242.). As Gerald Mara emphasizes, instead of providing a piece of deductive political thought, Thucydides rather wants the reader to engage into a conversation with his work. The question, however, remains: how can such a conversation be useful? Although Thucydides' work does not operate with the analytical tools of modern social sciences, it can complement or counterbalance their more precise but less comprehensive approaches (Mara, 2008: 14., 19.).

In the rest of the article, I shall try to engage in such a conversation with the text on the relationship between political leadership and political culture. Put differently, I will investigate how the work of Thucydides can contribute to the problems of agency raised by the constructivist institutionalist scholars mentioned above.

2.2. Athens under the leadership of Pericles

It is quite plausible to read the Thucydidean text – or one aspect of it – as a tragedy of Athens. In the tragedy, as Richard Ned Lebow puts it, „[s]uccess intoxicates the hero and

leads him to an inflated opinion of himself and his ability to impose his will on man or nature" (Lebow, 2003: 116.). This kind of seduction – continues Lebow – sets into motion a tragic circle: basing his choices on hope instead of reason, it leads to miscalculation (*hamartia*), and to the wrath of gods (*nemesis*). How does the tragedy show itself in the Athenian political culture? As Darien Shanske points out, mainly in the abandonment of traditional normative structures. While the Athenian envoys to Sparta at the beginning of the work (1.76.4.) refer to their polis as exercising *epieikeia* (forgiveness, moderation), to the time of the Melian Dialogue that ends with the extermination of the Melians, Athen becomes unable to exercise *epieikeia* (Shanske, 2007: 105–115.). Gregory Crane translates another Thucydidean term for the traditional normativity that has been lost during the war, *euethes*, as „ancient simplicity" (Crane, 1998). It is plausible to claim that the two terms are closely connected (Shanske, 2007: 229.). The political culture of the city undergoes a great transformation. The question is whether this is only an effect of the brutality of the war (an external shock), or partly a consequence of political agency?

First of all, we should look at how the text sees the relationship between political cultures and individuals. In the *History*, speakers are often unnamed; Thucydides just refers to them as e.g. „Athenians" or „Corinthians". However, Thucydides is in no way a cultural determinist: at certain points, the so-called „commander narrative" substitutes the former method, and speakers are mentioned by name, not just by their provenance (Connor, 1984: 54–55.). This method suggests both the importance of the force that political culture exerts on individuals, and the opportunity of actors to shape it. Gerald Mara calls this relationship „psychocultural", where „human beings are individuated within cultural practice and [...] the dynamics of cultural processes are carried forward by the fluctuating and conflictual activities of enculturated members" (Mara, 2008: 151.). These „enculturated members" can form their political culture through meaningful speech (*logos*), and the speakers of Thucydides try to use this opportunity throughout the book. To put it in the terms of Schmidt: Thucydides lays emphasis both on the „background ideational abilities" and the „foreground discursive abilities" of the actors.

Consequently, an influential political leader would be somebody who could to a great extent detach himself from a political culture of his polis, but still exerts great influence on it. It is plausible to argue that Pericles was such a leader. Thucydides characterizes him as the „principal man at that time of all Athens and most sufficient both for speech and action" (1.139.4.).

Martha Taylor argues throughout her book (Taylor, 2009) that Pericles radically redefined Athens in one of the most fundamental aspects of its political culture: the Athenians' image of their own city. This redefinition consisted in divorcing the citizens from their homeland in Attica. According to Taylor's reading, this redefinition began with his advice on war policy: all Athenians should move behind the city walls, and let the Peloponnesians ravage Attica, the countryside of the Athenian *polis*. He thereby urged them to reimagine Athens as an island („if we were islanders, who would be more invulnerable?", 1.143.5.). The rift between this policy and the Athenians' traditional bond is shown by the reluctance of the citizens to obey the Periclean commands (Taylor, 2009: 48–64.). The reimagination is continued in his famous Funeral Oration, where he presents an immaterial, idealistic city, detached from Attica. In this speech, he also urges the citizens to dismiss rational reflection, gaze at the power of Athens, and become passionate „lovers" (*erastai*, 2.43.1.) of the city (Taylor, 2009: 64–74.). The reimagination culminates in his third speech, where he characterizes the Athenians as „absolute masters" of half the world (i.e., the sea). Taylor argues that the Athenians, at the end, embraced this vision, and this was to great extent responsible for their further tragedy (Taylor, 2009: 2.). It is important to add another aspect which is emphasized by numerous commentators: Pericles also recasts the relationship between Athens and its allies with his warning that „your government is in the nature of a tyranny, which is both unjust for you to take up and unsafe to lay down" (2.63.2.), thereby beginning to divorce power and force from traditional normativity. The great part of these changes, in my view, touches upon the deepest ideational level of „public philosophies".

To further clarify the relationship between individuals and political culture in Thucydides' book, it is important to notice that Pericles' radical redefinition of Athens rests on existing images or recent experiences. His policy is in many ways the continuation of the Themistoclean naval supremacy doctrine; the Athenians are also characterized as daring innovators by the Corinthians before the Periclean speeches; imagining Athens as an island drawn on the experience of the Persian Wars, more concretely on the naval battle of Salamis, when Athenians had to abandon their city. Based on Taylor's description, the method of Periclean leadership to form the Athenian political culture seems to be an overemphasis put on certain aspects of that culture. He also uses old institutions for new purposes: the funeral orations were used to praise the ancestors; however, Pericles uses this occasion to look into the future and elaborate his vision of Athens (Connor 1984, 66–68.; Taylor 2009, 64–65.).

In the terminology of Hay, the Periclean *logoi* can clearly be seen as a „path-shaping moment", an occasion where a political leader „most sufficient both for speech and action" uses his discursive skills to reshape some fundamental parts of the Athenian political culture.[i] Pericles, as we have seen, bases his innovation on existing cultural resources. But at the same time, the view of institutions as merely constraining structures (a view criticized by discursive institutionalists) also breaks down: his creativity turns an existing institution (that of the funeral oration) into a powerful tool of communicating his vision and thereby shaping the Athenian political imaginary. Indeed, the functioning of the Athenian Assembly – to name a more formal institution – is a perfect counterexample of the structuralist view of institutions: a speaker with a powerful *logos* (that is, remarkable „foreground discursive abilities") can easily turn it into a vehicle of change, as Pericles did. It can be plausibly claimed, that he used the resources of the Athenian political culture as a toolkit, incorporating elements into his vision by reinterpretation (e.g. the experiences of the Persian Wars), while neglecting others (such as the population's traditional ties to Attica). However, as Carstensen argued, even such agents who can to a great extent detach themselves from the ideas of a community using it as a toolkit, have to rely on certain schemata to adapt the complexity of reality to the limited human cognitive capacities. In my view, the Periclean reliance on material factors in his prognoses can be seen as such a schema. Even if we accept his estimation of the Athenian resources as correct, it can be convincingly argued (as in Foster, 2010) that he underestimated the impact of non-material factors (e.g. the changes in Athenian political culture, or his own death) on the outcome of the war. This means that not even an outstanding political actor can be free of cognitive biases.

The Thucydidean attitude towards Pericles (especially his laudation of the statesman at 2.65.) is subject to extensive scholarly debate. Some researchers (e.g. Farrar, 1988; Ober, 1998) see Thucydides as essentially revering Pericles; others see in a critique of Pericles an important goal of the *History* (e.g. Taylor, 2009; Foster, 2010). Geoffrey Hawthorn (2009: 226–228.) even argues that Pericles „lost all political reason" when he urged the Athenians in his third speech to fix their eyes on future glory and continue the war instead of trying to make peace. But if we take into account the situation (Pericles saw the Athenians before the speech „vexed with their present calamity", and spoke „with intention to put them again into heart" (2.59.)), the counsel given by Pericles fits into the general pattern of his leadership: „whensoever he saw them [i.e. the Athenians – I.G.] out of season insolently bold, he would with his orations put them into a fear; and again, when they were afraid without reason, he

would likewise erect their spirits and embolden them" (2.65.). Put differently: the words cited by Hawthorn do not reflect the diagnosis of the situation Pericles had in mind, but the way he was trying to shape the feelings of the Athenians.

2.3. Athens under the successors of Pericles

However, the *punctum saliens* for us is not how critical Thucydides was with Pericles, but how he saw the *contrast* between Pericles and his successors (cf. Connor, 1984: 75–76.). The next important scene of the *History* that provides important clues to answer this question is the so-called Mytilene debate.

The debate is about the fate of a rebel allied polis, where the demos helped the Athenian forces to repress the revolt. First, the Athenian assembly decides to execute *all* men and enslave the woman and children – irrespectively of their belonging to the democratic or to the oligarchic faction. But the next day, the Athenians begin to regret their cruel decision, and call another assembly meeting. This second meeting, and the speeches of its two protagonists, the citizen Diodotus and the demagogue Cleon, concerns at least as much the fate of *logos* as the fate of the Mytilene democrats (Connor, 1984: 83.). Cleon argues against the Athenian valuing of *logos,* which he connects with rhetorical deception, and claims that „the more ignorant sort of men do, for the most part, better regulate a commonwealth than they that are wiser" (3.37.3.), praising immediate anger as the compass for policymaking (3.38.1.). This is in a sharp contrast to the Periclean position (cf. 2.40.2.). Cleon also argues that the Athenian relationship to the allied *poleis* is a tyranny, and the only firm ground of Athens' rule is being stronger than its allies. This seems to echo the earlier Periclean statement, but there is an important distinction: Pericles' assessment was not as definitive as that of Cleon (Connor, 1984: 89.).

I connected *logos* to the „foreground discoursive abilities" of Schmidt, which are the main guarantees against cultural determinism. Athens' ability to critically examine its political culture and cultural conceptions of justice is rooted in their valuing of *logos* (Mara, 2008: 168–169.). Cleon, by his doubtless characterization of the Athenian Empire, and his devaluation of *logos,* seems to undermine the possibility of self-reflection. By eradicating the „foreground discoursive abilities", he makes the „background ideational abilities" the only

source of policymaking, thereby pushing Athens into some kind of a cultural path-dependence.

Cleon's opponent, Diodotus, argues for preserving the role of *logos* in Athens. For him, the most important function of *logos* is to „examine alternative forms of political imagination" (Mara, 2008: 59.). He succeeds in arguing for mercy for the Mytilenean democrats, however, he can only do this by a clever deception: he seemingly endorses the clear-cut distinction between interests and normative considerations. Therefore, W. Robert Connor argues, the Diodotean position is both inferior to the Periclean strategy, and to the position of the Athenian envoys sent to Sparta. Inferior to Pericles, because he does not have a reputation, popularity to openly stand against the popular feeling; inferior to the envoys, because he has to endorse the separation of justice and interest (Connor, 1984: 87–90.). The political imagination created largely by Pericles seems to begin to take Athens hostage. A path-shaping moment, after the death of the path-shaping figure (Pericles dies in the great plague, two years after the beginning of the war) triggers a path-dependence that can be best characterized as a downward spiral. As Richard Ned Lebow points out (2003: 131.), one crucial ingredient of the Athenian tragedy is that none of Pericles' successors possessed all of his qualities. The Periclean model begins to disintegrate: Diodotus has the ability to criticize the political imagination of the *polis*, and the intellectual and rhetorical skills to form public opinion. However, he does not anymore have the influence Pericles had: Cleon is the new favourite of the *demos*. This problem will be even more clearly manifest in the events that follow.

The separation of justice and advantage is a central point in the perhaps most famous part of the History, the Melian dialogue. The Athenians, during a peaceful interlude of the war, sail to Melos, a former adversary, and demand their voluntary submission to Athens. The Melians stick to their independence, and a dialogue begins. Most remarkably, the Athenians refuse to ponder any arguments based on justice, insisting that the rule of the stronger is a „necessity of nature" (5.105.2.), which every *polis* must obey. Their position, as I mentioned before, is in contrast to the argument of the Athenian envoys at Sparta, by excluding *epieikeia* from the debate, and can be treated as following Cleon in this respect (Shanske, 2007: 105–115.).[ii] Their vision of Athens has striking similarities with the ideal of Pericles' third speech. Pericles depicted Athens as „absolute master" of half the world, meaning the sea, and the Athenians at Melos name themselves „masters of the sea" (*naukratores*) (Taylor, 2009: 118–119.). Holding this status, they argue, „islanders unsubdued" count as „apparent danger" to

Athens (5.99.). So, the political imaginary that marks the Athenians at Melos resembles both the Periclean vision and the political standpoint of Cleon in certain respects. But there is at least one crucial difference: there is neither a Pericles nor a Diodotus present to divert the Athenian policy. As Gerald Mara emphasizes, the necessity (*ananke*) the Athenians refer to is not any kind of natural necessity, but a cultural construct masked like that. It derives from the imperial imagination of the Athenians that completely displaces considerations of justice and where force is the only means of maintaining their empire. Therefore, to the time of the Melian Dialogue, the Athenians became stuck into „psychocultural obsessions" (Mara, 2008: 48–54.; 2009: 111–112.). And there is no political actor present to whom culture would be a toolkit, and not a web that holds him – like the rest of the Athenians – captive. In Melos, this strategy succeeds: the Athenians win. But their next adventure in the *History*, the Sicilian expedition of Athens – as Mara convincingly argues – is informed by the same imaginary, and leads to a catastrophe.

In the assembly, the expedition is subject to harsh debate between Alcibiades, who is in favor of the adventure, and Nicias, who opposes it. Alcibiades can be seen as a successor of both Cleon and of the Melian policy of Athens. He resembles Cleon in advocating the passions (*orge*) as the basis of policymaking (Ober, 1998: 111.), and the Melian envoys in sharing the same „psychocultural obsessions": „lest if others be not subject to us, we fall in danger of being subjected unto them" (6.18.3.). His vision of the Athenians as daring innovators, whose survival is bound to activity (6.18.4.), and his use of the *naukratores*-topos (Taylor, 2008: 144.), echoes the Periclean vision of Athens to certain extent. The problem is again that the qualities of Pericles are only separately present: Nicias values restraint and foresight, is public-spirited and incorruptible, but unable to influence the demos (Farrar, 1988: 173.), the whole metaphor of his second speech undermines his cause (Taylor, 2009: 140–144.), and his rhetorical strategy triggers just the opposite effect that he wanted (6.24.2.); while Alcibiades has the rhetorical skills, but – unlike Pericles (2.65.8., 2.13.1.) – he is very much concerned with his private wealth (6.15.2.) and lacks the individual dedication towards his polis (after put on trial by his fellow citizens, he joins the Spartan side, and gives them advice against Athens – 6.88–93.). Without the Periclean abilities together in one person, his successors had to „apply themselves to the people" (2.6.10.), thereby being prisoned in the political environment their predecessor created. Diodotus, who was only missing the authority among the people, but had rhetorical skills and individual dedication towards the *polis*, was the last to effectively correct the path-dependent Athenian policy. As Mara remarks, after

Diodotus, *logos* became increasingly instrumentalized to power or interest (Mara, 2008: 170.). Athens lacked proper political leadership to abandon the vicious circle of its political imagination, created largely by its last outstanding political leader.

3. Conclusion

I tried to argue throughout my article that Thucydides' *History* can be read as a text having strong similarities with present day constructivist approaches, which emphasize the role of agency in shaping political institutions and political culture. My argument relied most heavily on the interpretation of Gerald Mara, although departing from it in stressing the role of Periclean leadership. However, I was not arguing that the importance of Periclean leadership lay in its material foresight (*pace* Ober, 1998; 2001), but rather that his discursive abilities, his reputation and his dedication towards Athens played an important role. Here I want to sum up why the History can be interesting from a constructivist institutionalist perspective.

Firstly (1), it underscores that the question of how far a political actor can question the ideas of his environment, is primarily an empirical, not a theoretical one. In the Thucydidean narrative, there are actors (Pericles, Diodotus), who can – as Carstensen puts it – „answer multiple logics", or – to use the terms of Schmidt – are able to use their „foreground discursive abilities" to question and form the ideational context; and there actors who are unable to do that (most notably: Nicias and the Athenian envoys on Melos). Therefore, it seems highly recommended to use theoretical constructs as ideal-types or as two ends of a scale – as the article of Carstensen seems to imply.

Secondly (2), demonstrating the wider scope (but, consequently, a less focused character) of ancient political thought, Thucydides reminds us that whether an actor can cause political change is not only dependent on his political thought. Even the actors who are not trapped by the imperialist political imagination of Athens (most notably, Nicias) can lack the resources to induce political change.

Thirdly (3), the story Thucydides tells can serve as an expressive illustration of the dynamics of path-shaping logic and path-dependence: Pericles, as I tried to argue following Martha Taylor, induces sweeping changes in the Athenian political imagination, which after

his death hold the Athenians captive, resulting in a path-dependence with tragic consequences.

This process also casts light on a risk inherent in political cultural changes induced by agency (4). When a leader who is able to shape the political culture (more broadly: the institutional arrangement) steps off the stage, it is highly uncertain whether he will have an able successor. If Diodotus – who is the last man able to correct the Athenian decision-making, and who is, presumably, an invention of Thucydides – „is, as his name suggests, a gift of the gods (or Zeus), then his presence cannot be confidently assumed on the basis of an acquaintance with democratic culture and, indeed, with political culture generally" (Mara, 2008: 123.). Consequently, a leader-created institutional arrangement without a leader can easily result in path-dependence.

It is also important to stress the limits of my investigation: (1) from a constructivist institutionalist viewpoint not only leadership, but public deliberation too could serve to change the ideational environment. Although the reading developed here implies the problems of the latter method (the qualities that enable the critique of political culture are more effective if present in one man), the problem is more complex, and would need further treatment (cf. Mara, 2008: 97–101.). Secondly (2), to fit into the article, I had to omit possibly interesting episodes (e.g. the Pylos-narrative of the first book, or the description of the Athenian stasis in the eighth), and reduce the attention paid to important aspects (e.g. the question of private and public, or the role of passions and reason). Lastly (3), I did not consider to which extent the changes in Athenian political culture were results of the war (an external shock). I only claimed that they were *partly* a result of political agency.

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[i] Thucydides' view of political rationality, as Gerald Mara emphasizes, does not succumb to the shortcomings of rational choice theory: he does not present actors detached from their political culture (Mara 2008, 54., 85.).

[ii] Cleon names *epieikeia* one of the „three most disadvantageous things to empire” (3.40.2.).