

The role of Al-Farabi in the Transmission and Interpretation of Plato's Political Philosophy within the Medieval Muslim Intellectual Tradition and its subsequent Impact on Political Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the role of Al-Farabi in the preservation, interpretation, and transmission of Plato's political thought during the Muslim Enlightenment period. The Muslim Enlightenment, a vibrant era of intellectual and cultural achievements, witnessed the translation and dissemination of Greek philosophical works into Arabic, thus enriching the Islamic intellectual tradition. Al-Farabi, a prominent Muslim philosopher, played a pivotal role in this process, particularly in relation to Plato's political ideas. Plato's influence on Western political thought is widely recognized, but it was during the Muslim Enlightenment period that his works were introduced to the Islamic world through Arabic translations. Al-Farabi emerged as a key figure in the dissemination of Plato's political thought, contributing to its preservation and interpretation. By studying Al-Farabi's writings and analyzing his engagement with Plato's ideas, this research aims to uncover the ways in which Al-Farabi synthesized and expanded upon Plato's theories within the specific cultural and intellectual context of the Muslim Enlightenment. By exploring Al-Farabi's insights and contributions, this study seeks to shed light on the intricate relationship between Plato's ideas and the Islamic intellectual tradition, highlighting the enduring influence of Al-Farabi's interpretations of Plato's political thought on the broader discourse of political philosophy in the Muslim Enlightenment period.

Keywords: Interpretation, Preservation, Transmission, Muslim Enlightenment, , Islamic Intellectual Tradition, Exchange & Legacy.

Introduction:

The Muslim Enlightenment period, also known as the Islamic Golden Age, was a remarkable era in history that witnessed a flourishing of intellectual, scientific, and cultural achievements across the Islamic world. This period, spanning from the 8th to the 14th centuries, saw the translation and transmission of numerous Greek philosophical and scientific works into Arabic, thereby preserving and enriching the intellectual legacy of classical antiquity. One prominent figure who played a crucial role in the preservation, interpretation, and

transmission of Plato's political thought during the Muslim Enlightenment period was Al-Farabi. Al-Farabi, a renowned Muslim philosopher, political theorist, and jurist, made significant contributions to the understanding and development of political philosophy in the Islamic world.

Plato, the ancient Greek philosopher, had a profound influence on Western political thought, and his ideas continue to shape political discourse to this day. However, it was during the Muslim Enlightenment period that many of Plato's works were translated into Arabic, making them accessible to scholars and intellectuals of the time. Al-Farabi emerged as a pivotal figure in the transmission of Plato's political thought within the Islamic intellectual tradition. This research aims to delve into the role played by Al-Farabi in preserving, interpreting, and transmitting Plato's political thought during the Muslim Enlightenment period. By analyzing Al-Farabi's writings and examining his engagement with Plato's ideas, this study seeks to shed light on how Al-Farabi synthesized and expanded upon Plato's theories within the cultural and intellectual context of the Islamic world. Furthermore, it aims to explore the enduring impact of Al-Farabi's interpretations of Plato's political thought and their contribution to the broader development of political philosophy in the Muslim Enlightenment period.

Theoretical Framework:

- a. ***Intellectual Exchange and Translation:*** This framework recognizes the significance of intellectual exchange and the translation of Greek philosophical texts into Arabic during the Muslim Enlightenment period. It explores the impact of this translation movement on the availability and accessibility of Plato's political works in the Islamic world, paving the way for Al-Farabi's engagement with these texts.
- b. ***Islamic Intellectual Tradition:*** The framework acknowledges the unique cultural and intellectual context of the Muslim Enlightenment period. It examines the broader Islamic intellectual tradition and its distinctive philosophical, theological, and political perspectives, which shaped Al-Farabi's understanding and interpretation of Plato's political thought.
- c. ***Synthesis and Expansion:*** This framework focuses on Al-Farabi's role as a synthesizer and an interpreter of Plato's political ideas within the Islamic context. It investigates how Al-Farabi incorporated and expanded upon Plato's concepts, adapting them to align with Islamic principles and societal structures.
- d. ***Comparative Analysis:*** The framework involves a comparative analysis of Plato's original political thought and Al-Farabi's interpretations. It explores the similarities, divergences, and innovations introduced by Al-Farabi, providing insights into the creative transformation of Plato's ideas in the Muslim Enlightenment period.
- e. ***Influence and Legacy:*** This framework examines the lasting influence of Al-Farabi's interpretations of Plato's political thought. It investigates how Al-Farabi's works influenced subsequent Islamic political thinkers and contributed to the development of political philosophy in the Muslim world, as well as the potential impact on Western scholarship.

Literature Review:

Plato's political thought has had a profound influence on Western philosophy, but its transmission and interpretation during the Muslim Enlightenment period have received less attention. Scholars have recognized the significance of the Muslim Enlightenment in preserving and translating Greek philosophical works, and Al-Farabi emerges as a central figure in this process. Al-Farabi, a renowned Muslim philosopher, played a pivotal role in transmitting and interpreting Plato's political thought within the Islamic intellectual tradition.

Research by scholars such as Lerner (1963) and McGinnis (2005) highlights Al-Farabi's engagement with Plato's ideas and his efforts to harmonize them with Islamic principles. Al-Farabi synthesized and expanded upon Plato's theories to address the unique cultural and intellectual context of the Muslim world. His works, such as "The Political Regime" and "The Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle," reveal his insightful interpretations of Plato's political thought.

While studies on Al-Farabi's broader contributions to philosophy exist, further investigation specifically focused on his role in the preservation, interpretation, and transmission of Plato's political thought is needed. This research seeks to fill this gap by examining Al-Farabi's writings and analyzing his interpretations of Plato's ideas, shedding light on the transformative impact of Al-Farabi's engagement with Plato during the Muslim Enlightenment period.

Al-Farabi: Biography and Intellectual Context:

Al-Farabi, also known as Abu Nasr Al-Farabi or Alfarabius, was a prominent philosopher, jurist, and political scientist who lived during the 9th and 10th centuries CE. He was born in Farab, a city located in present-day Kazakhstan, and later moved to Baghdad, which was a thriving center of learning during the Islamic Golden Age (Burhanuddin & Wasath, 2019). Al-Farabi's exact birth and death dates are uncertain, but he is believed to have lived between 872 and 950 CE.

Al-Farabi lived during a time of great intellectual and cultural flourishing in the Islamic world. This period, often referred to as the Muslim Enlightenment or the Islamic Golden Age, spanned from the 8th to the 14th centuries CE. It was characterized by the translation, assimilation, and synthesis of Greek, Persian, and Indian knowledge into Arabic. Scholars in the Islamic world actively engaged with the works of ancient Greek philosophers, including Plato, Aristotle, and others, and sought to integrate their ideas with Islamic theology, philosophy, and political thought. During that period, the increase in the number of Greek manuscripts in the Arab world can be attributed to their efforts to counter the Gnostic ideology of Ancient Persia. The Abbasid Caliphate, being conscious of the ideological assault it faced, safeguarded its realm by embracing Mu'tazila rationality, which emphasized reason as the utmost authoritative source of knowledge. To further bolster the significance of such rational thinking, Caliph Al-Makmûn took the initiative to translate Greek philosophical works (Al-Jabiri, 2009).

Al-Farabi's intellectual contributions were wide-ranging and covered diverse disciplines such as philosophy, political science, ethics, logic, sociology, and music theory . He authored numerous works, including commentaries on Aristotle, original treatises, and works on political philosophy. Al-Farabi's writings often sought to reconcile Greek philosophy, particularly that of Plato and Aristotle, with Islamic thought and traditions. Al-Fârâbî's Islamic civilization resembled the natural phase of Greek civilization in Aristotle's time, marked by a transformative shift from mythos to logos, mythical religion to the religion of reason, and tribal to urban and imperial communities (Burhanuddin & Wasath, 2019). By blending Greek ideas with Islamic principles, he created a utopian society that serves as a scientific model for other nations to emulate (Hussein, 2020).

Al-Farabi's works on political philosophy played a significant role in his intellectual legacy. His notable treatises include "The Political Regime" (*Al-Siyasah al-Madaniyyah*), "The Virtuous City" (*Al-Madina al-Fadilah*), and "The Book of Religion" (*Kitab al-Milla*). These works explored themes of political ethics, the ideal city-state, the role of the philosopher-king, and the nature of virtuous governance. According to Al-Fârâbî, the qualifications for leadership include descending from a virtuous lineage, having excellent physical abilities, profound understanding, intelligence, agility, good memory, eloquence, a love for knowledge, honesty, trustworthiness, commitment to justice, optimism, magnanimity, and abstaining from indulgence in sensual pleasures. The mentioned criteria imply that the head of the state should attain the level of "akalfa'al" (actual intellect), which serves as the source of revelation and inspiration (Burhanuddin & Wasath, 2019).

Al-Farabi's ideas were received, debated, and integrated into later Islamic philosophical thought, making it an invaluable resource for understanding the continuity and evolution of Islamic intellectual history (Black, 2005). Al-Farabi's interpretations and syntheses of Greek philosophy, including his engagement with Plato's political thought, served as a foundation for the development of Islamic political philosophy and influenced later scholars such as Ibn Sina (Avicenna) and Ibn Rushd (Averroes). Al-Farabi's influence extended beyond the Islamic world. His works were studied by Christian scholastic philosophers during the medieval period in Europe, contributing to the transmission and preservation of Greek philosophical ideas in Western intellectual traditions. Numerous Western thinkers and Orientalists have extensively discussed his profound knowledge in their works. For instance, the French Orientalist Massignon acclaimed al-Farabi as one of the most significant Muslim philosophers (Hussein, 2020).

Al-Farabi's Life, Education, and Intellectual influences:

Al-Farabi's education began in his hometown, where he studied under local scholars and received a strong foundation in Islamic jurisprudence, Arabic grammar, and Islamic theology. Seeking a deeper understanding of various disciplines, he later traveled to Baghdad, which was a major center of learning during the Abbasid Caliphate. In Baghdad, Al-Farabi continued his studies under renowned scholars and delved into a wide range of subjects, including philosophy, mathematics, logic, and natural sciences .

Throughout his life, Al-Farabi drew inspiration from various intellectual traditions, incorporating and synthesizing ideas from Greek philosophy, particularly the works of Aristotle and Plato (Rescher, 1968). He was greatly influenced by the works of Plato, whom he referred to as “The First Teacher.” Al-Farabi admired Plato’s emphasis on the ideal city-state and the role of philosophy in political governance. He also studied the works of Aristotle, especially his logical and metaphysical writings, and sought to reconcile Aristotelian ideas with Islamic thought. Al-Farabi’s inventive adaptations and novel concepts, underscoring his pivotal role as a link connecting the Greek philosophical legacy with the Islamic intellectual tradition (Black, 2005).

Additionally, Al-Farabi was familiar with the works of earlier Islamic philosophers, such as Al-Kindi and Al-Razi, as well as the Neoplatonic tradition, which had a significant impact on his philosophical development (Rescher, 1968). He integrated ideas from these various sources into his own philosophical framework, known as the “Theology of Aristotle” or “The Philosophy of Aristotle and Plato.” Al-Farabi’s intellectual influences extended beyond philosophy to encompass other disciplines. He studied and contributed to the fields of music theory and practice, ethics, sociology, and political science. His work on political philosophy explored topics such as “*the ideal ruler and the ideal state*”, aiming to establish a harmonious society based on justice and virtue. The presence of a political philosophy advocating that the ruler should possess philosophical qualities, encompassing a fusion of philosophy and governance, is unsurprising. The author of *Al-ara’a (Al Farabi)*, much like the author of the *Republic (Plato)*, seeks to create a paramount philosophical work that addresses divine matters within the domain of divine civil science, akin to the approach taken by the philosopher Plato in his earlier works (Hussein, 2020).

Intellectual Context of the Muslim Enlightenment Period during Al Farabi:

The Muslim Enlightenment period, also known as the Islamic Golden Age, was a remarkable era of cultural and intellectual flourishing that spanned from the 8th to the 14th centuries. During this time, scholars in the Muslim world made significant advancements in various fields such as science, philosophy, mathematics, medicine, and literature. The revival of philosophy in the Islamic world can be attributed to several factors, most notably the translation movement that facilitated the transfer of Greek philosophical texts into Arabic which paved the way for a significant interaction between Greek thought and the existing Islamic theological and philosophical traditions (Kraemer, 1986). This period laid the foundation for the Renaissance in Europe and left a profound impact on subsequent intellectual traditions.

At the time of Al-Farabi, the Abbasid Caliphate was at its peak, centered in Baghdad, which served as a major hub of intellectual activity. The Abbasid era gained recognition for its thriving economy and intellectual brilliance. During this time, Baghdad, the capital of the Abbasid dynasty, flourished as a global hub for both commerce and education (Ali & Qin, Distinguishing the virtuous city of Alfarabi from that of Plato in light of his unique historical context, 2019). The Abbasid rulers were known for their patronage of scholars, philosophers, and scientists, fostering an environment conducive to the pursuit of knowledge. By serving as

a library-cum-institute, the House of Wisdom (Bait ul Hikma) brought together distinguished Muslim and non-Muslim scholars who collaborated to translate and build upon works from various civilizations. By the time of Alfarabi (AD 870-950), they had successfully translated a significant portion of the works of Plato, Aristotle, and their later Greek commentators, contributing to the era's intellectual prosperity (Ali & Qin, 2019).

Al-Farabi's philosophical works were heavily influenced by the works of Aristotle and Plato, which had been translated into Arabic during this period. He sought to reconcile the teachings of Greek philosophy with Islamic thought, addressing the questions of political philosophy, ethics, and metaphysics. His writings explored themes such as the ideal state (Madinat al-Fadilah), the nature of knowledge, the role of reason, and the relationship between philosophy and religion. Al-Farabi's list of attributes for a ruler includes all those proposed by Plato in book VI of *The Republic*. Nevertheless, it introduces three distinctive qualifications: soundness of body, eloquence, and love of justice (Ali, *On the Transmission of Greek Philosophy to Medieval Muslim Philosophers*, 2022). These particular traits set Al-Farabi's ruler apart from Plato's philosopher king in *The Republic*.

The cultural and intellectual context of the Muslim Enlightenment was characterized by a spirit of intellectual curiosity, cross-cultural exchange, and tolerance. Scholars from different backgrounds, including Muslims, Christians, Jews, and Persians, collaborated in the translation and interpretation of texts, resulting in a rich synthesis of ideas from various traditions. This period also saw advancements in scientific disciplines, including astronomy, mathematics, and medicine, with scholars like Al-Khwarizmi, Ibn Sina (Avicenna), and Al-Biruni making significant contributions.

Plato's Political Thought and its Reception in the Muslim World:

Before getting into broader discussion we have to understand the importance of two important dimensions which has said to be influenced the Muslims philosophy: *The Greek Ancestry* and *Religio-Political*. The first dimension stresses that for proper understanding of the medieval Muslim political thought one must focus its connection with Greek political thought (Ali, 2022). The first dimension is Plato's political thought, as expounded in his renowned work "The Republic," has had a profound and enduring impact on political philosophy across different cultures and time periods. While Plato lived in ancient Greece during the 4th century BCE, his ideas were transmitted to the Muslim world through the translation and interpretation of his works. Muslim scholars engaged with Plato's political philosophy during the Islamic Golden Age, leading to its reception and integration into the Islamic intellectual tradition.

Plato's political philosophy revolves around the concept of the ideal state, which he describes in "The Republic." In this dialogue, Plato constructs a blueprint for an ideal city-state governed by philosopher-kings. According to Plato, the state should be structured in a hierarchical manner, with philosophers as rulers who possess wisdom, knowledge, and a deep commitment to the common good. He argues that a just society can only be achieved through

the rule of individuals who possess a profound understanding of the Forms and are guided by reason rather than personal desires.

The second dimension according to Ali (2022) the blending of Greek philosophical ideas into Islamic tradition. Plato's ideas resonated with Muslim scholars, who recognized their philosophical and ethical significance. One of the most influential figures in the reception of Plato's political thought in the Muslim world is Al-Farabi. He is, often referred to as the "Second Teacher" (following Aristotle). He engaged extensively with Plato's ideas and integrated them into his own political theories. Al-Farabi drew inspiration from Plato's concept of the ideal state and the philosopher-king. He emphasized the necessity of a virtuous ruler, known as the "Perfect State" or "Virtuous City," who possesses intellectual and moral excellence. Al-Farabi argued that the ideal ruler should be well-versed in philosophy and possess a deep understanding of the principles of justice and the common good.

Another prominent Muslim philosopher who engaged with Plato's political thought was Ibn Sina (Avicenna, 980-1037). Ibn Sina's work "The Philosophy of Healing" incorporates Platonic themes into his discussion of the ideal state and its ruler. Ibn Sina emphasizes the role of reason and knowledge in governance, drawing upon Plato's notion of the philosopher as the ideal ruler. Additionally, Al-Kindi (801-873), a significant figure in the transmission of Greek philosophy to the Muslim world, played a crucial role in the reception of Plato's political thought. Al-Kindi translated various Greek works, including those of Plato, into Arabic, making them accessible to Muslim scholars. His efforts in preserving and disseminating Greek philosophical texts, including Plato's works, laid the foundation for future engagement with Platonic philosophy in the Muslim world.

There is a consensus among scholars that the Greek tradition has had profound impact on the Muslims and their understanding of Plato is largely based on the Republic (Ali, 2022, p. 2). Muslim scholars found resonance in Plato's political ideas, they also developed their own distinct theories and perspectives within the context of Islamic political thought. Islamic political philosophers integrated Islamic ethics, theology, and legal principles into their political theories, synthesizing Greek philosophy with Islamic teachings.

Muslim scholars engaged with and incorporated Plato's ideas, particularly those concerning the ideal state and the philosopher-king, into their own political philosophies. Figures such as Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, and Al-Kindi contributed to the reception and development of Plato's political thought in the Muslim world. Their engagement with Plato's ideas reflects the vibrant intellectual exchange between Greek philosophy and the Islamic intellectual tradition during that period .

Insights from Platonic Political Thought on Muslim's Philosophy:

In the Arabic-speaking world, there were at least four known Platonic dialogues. Arabic Platonism primarily focuses on several key themes, including the temporal creation of the world, Plato's theory of the state, the concept of love encompassing both its metaphysical and medical implications, the theories of the intellect and the tripartite soul, and the idea of Platonic Forms along with its ontological counterpart, the Two-World Theory (R.Arzen,

2011). The influence of Plato's political thought on Muslim political thought can be observed in various ways, although it should be noted that Islamic political philosophy is multifaceted and draws from a wide range of sources, including the Quran, Hadith (sayings and actions of the Prophet Muhammad), and the works of Muslim philosophers. Nevertheless, Plato's ideas have had an impact on the development of political thought within the Muslim world.

Idealism and the Search for a Just Society: Plato's idealism, particularly his notion of an ideal state, has resonated with Muslim political thinkers who have sought to create just societies based on Islamic principles. Plato's emphasis on justice, wisdom, and the pursuit of the common good aligns with Islamic values and the Islamic concept of an ideal society governed by divine guidance.

Philosopher-King and the Caliphate: Plato's concept of the philosopher-king ruling over the ideal state has parallels with the Islamic concept of the Caliphate. In Islamic political thought, the Caliph is seen as the leader of the Muslim community, ideally possessing qualities such as knowledge, piety, and wisdom. Just as Plato's philosopher-kings were supposed to govern with virtue and in accordance with the Forms, Muslim political thinkers have explored the idea of a virtuous and knowledgeable ruler leading the Islamic state.

Hierarchy and Leadership: Plato's idea of a hierarchical social order and the division of labor has influenced Muslim political thought in terms of discussions on leadership and the role of different social classes. Islamic political theorists have debated the role of various social groups in society, including the ruler (Caliph), scholars (ulema), and the general population. Discussions on the division of labor and the responsibilities of different social classes bear similarities to Plato's hierarchical structure.

Communal Aspects and Social Welfare: Plato's advocacy for communal property and the welfare of the citizens has influenced Islamic discussions on economic and social justice. Islamic political thought emphasizes the importance of social welfare, redistribution of wealth, and the obligation of the state to provide for the needs of its citizens. Plato's ideas regarding communal ownership and the elimination of wealth disparity resonate with these principles.

Education and Moral Formation: Plato's emphasis on education and its role in shaping individuals and society has found resonance in Islamic educational philosophy. Islamic political thinkers have recognized the importance of moral and intellectual development through education, reflecting Plato's belief in the transformative power of education for the formation of virtuous citizens.

Challenges in Translating Platonic Political Ideal in Islamic Context:

Translating and interpreting Plato's political ideas in an Islamic context presents both challenges and opportunities. While there are points of convergence between the two traditions, such as a shared concern for justice and governance, there are also significant differences in terms of metaphysical foundations, theological frameworks, and cultural contexts. The introduction of Greek philosophical thought to the medieval Muslim world

owes mainly to the extensive program of the translation of Greek texts into Arabic that was carried out through the collaboration of Christian and Muslim scholars between the eighth and tenth centuries largely in Baghdad, the seat of the Abbasid caliphate (Gutas, 1998). The following are key challenges and opportunities encountered in translating and interpreting Plato's political ideas in an Islamic context:

Cultural and Linguistic Challenges: Translating Plato's works into Arabic or other Islamic languages involves navigating linguistic and cultural differences. Certain concepts and nuances may not have direct equivalents, making accurate translation challenging. Additionally, the Islamic intellectual tradition has its own philosophical and theological terminology, which may require adaptation when discussing Plato's ideas.

Theological Compatibility: Islamic political thought is deeply intertwined with Islamic theology and jurisprudence. Translating and interpreting Plato's ideas requires reconciling them with Islamic theological concepts and principles. Islamic thinkers often integrate Plato's ideas selectively, focusing on points of convergence while adjusting or omitting elements that conflict with Islamic beliefs.

Epistemological and Metaphysical Differences: Plato's political thought is rooted in his metaphysical framework, including the Theory of Forms and his idealism. Islamic philosophy, on the other hand, has its own metaphysical foundations, such as the concept of divine unity (tawhid). Interpreters face the challenge of reconciling these different metaphysical frameworks when discussing Plato's political ideas within an Islamic context.

Jurisprudential Considerations: Islamic political thought is deeply influenced by Islamic legal and ethical principles derived from the Quran and Hadith. Interpreters need to examine Plato's ideas in light of Islamic legal and ethical frameworks, including the principles of sharia (Islamic law) and the maqasid al-sharia (objectives of Islamic law). This involves evaluating the compatibility and ethical implications of Plato's political ideas within the Islamic legal framework.

Philosophical Adaptation: Islamic philosophers and political thinkers have historically engaged with Greek philosophy, including Plato, by adapting and synthesizing ideas to fit within the Islamic intellectual tradition. This process involves exploring areas of convergence and adapting Plato's ideas to Islamic thought, drawing on Islamic philosophical concepts and terminology.

Al-Farabi's Interpretation of Plato's Political Thought:

Philosophical Synthesis: Al-Farabi sought to integrate Platonic ideas into the broader framework of Islamic philosophy. He emphasized the compatibility of Plato's ideas with Islamic principles, highlighting areas of convergence between Plato's ideal state and the ideal Islamic state. Al-Farabi's goal was to develop a comprehensive political theory that incorporated both Greek philosophy and Islamic principles. The earliest thinkers of Islam initially viewed "Philosophy" as an external form of knowledge unrelated to Islam. However, over time, this perception underwent a transformation. By the 10th century, Islamic

philosophers came to dominate this particular branch of knowledge. Indeed, Al-Farabi played a crucial role in dispelling the confusion surrounding Philosophy and Islam. He believed that Islamic ideas were not in conflict with Greek philosophy; instead, they were interconnected. While Greek philosophy sought a philosopher king, Islam embraced the concept of a prophet, Caliph and Imam. In Greek thought, laws were the creations of humans, but in Islam, they were regarded as God's order, conveyed through the guidance of the prophet (Armanjani, 1981).

The Virtuous City: Al-Farabi's "The Virtuous City" is heavily influenced by Plato's "The Republic" and explores the concept of an ideal state. Al-Farabi adopts Plato's idea of the philosopher-king ruling over the ideal state, suggesting that the ruler should be a virtuous and knowledgeable individual who governs in accordance with divine guidance and the principles of Islamic ethics. In the political philosophies of both Plato and Farabi, knowledge and virtue are fundamental elements. They both analyze the existence of corrupt and ignorant rulers who stand in opposition to the principles and virtues upheld in their respective ideal states, "Plato's just city" and Farabi's "virtuous city" (Hafiz, 2012).

Al-Farabi and Plato examine the nature of four types of regimes that fall short of embodying the virtuous city. These regimes include timocracy, oligarchy, democracy, and tyranny. Each of these regimes is distinguished by its predominant love: timocratic cities prioritize honor, oligarchies favor wealth, democratic cities cherish freedom and equality, and tyrannies seek power. In his timocratic regime, al-Farabi skillfully combines elements of monarchy and oligarchy in a manner that distinguishes his approach from Plato's (Bloom & Kirsch, 2016). Al-Farabi adapts and refines Plato's regime types to better align them with an emerging political order centered around kings and prophets. As new regimes sought to incorporate religion and politics into their governance, a new moral order began to take shape (L'Arrivee, 2019).

The Pursuit of Happiness (Eudemonia) and the Ultimate Goal: Al-Farabi emphasizes the pursuit of happiness as the ultimate goal of both Plato's ideal state and the Islamic state. He argues that the purpose of political organization is to enable individuals to attain virtue, which leads to individual and societal happiness. The essence of "true happiness" lies in attaining an idealized personality through a form of self-philosophical enlightenment (BİRDİŞLİ, 2019). Al-Farabi incorporates the Islamic concept of the ultimate goal (maqasid) into his interpretation of Plato's ideas, aligning them with Islamic ethical principles. The worldwide dissemination of monotheism expanded the horizons of the soul, offering the promise of eternal happiness in the afterlife and motivating regimes to enact laws aimed at ensuring soul salvation (L'Arrivee, 2019, p. 10).

In this new paradigm, communities were required to engage in righteous actions, hold accurate beliefs in alignment with the true understanding of the cosmos, and support a government ruled according to the justice in order to attain salvation in the present world. Thus, individuals have two primary objectives when interacting and cooperating with others. The first goal arises from a sense of need, while the second is to attain perfection or

happiness. Hence, Al-Farabi posits that every person requires social engagement and cooperation with others (Al-Kafarneh, 2021).

Ethical and Spiritual Dimensions: Al-Farabi highlights the ethical and spiritual dimensions of Plato's political thought. He sees Plato's emphasis on moral education, the cultivation of virtues, and the pursuit of wisdom as essential components of the ideal state. Al-Farabi connects these ideas to Islamic concepts such as the purification of the soul (tazkiyat al-nafs) and the development of moral character in Islamic ethics. He incorporated Platonic principles into his cosmology, emphasizing that the ultimate objective of humanity should be to attain knowledge of God. According to his reasoning, as all worldly matter originates from God, enlightened individuals should seek to reconnect with the divine through the study of religious scriptures and the practice of moral deeds (Rescher N. , 1962). His writings have since had a profound impact on various areas of religious, philosophical, and sociological thought, influencing generations to come.

Social Harmony and Order: Al-Farabi, drawing on Plato, emphasizes the importance of social harmony and order in the ideal state. He discusses the hierarchical division of labor, the role of different social classes, and the need for cooperation and unity among citizens. Al-Farabi interprets these ideas in light of Islamic social and political principles, such as the idea of a just social order based on the principles of equity and compassion. To him, every human society consists of two forces: one for warfare and defense, and the other for establishing peaceful relations. In a departure from Plato's ideas, he assigns a balanced role to the army class rather than granting them immunity or superiority over the working classes. Unlike Plato, Al Farabi does not elevate the class of fighters above other classes in general (Khoshnaw, 2014).

The ultimate objective of human interaction is mental perfection, and Al-Farabi deems the most beneficial cooperation to be founded on two principles: Firstly, economic cooperation entails the distribution of diverse tasks among individuals. Secondly, cultural cooperation revolves around attaining mental perfection through the wisdom of philosophers and prophets (Al-Kafarneh, 2021). Al-Farabi's interpretation of Plato's political thought in an Islamic context illustrates his effort to harmonize Greek philosophy with Islamic principles. His work exemplifies the broader trend of integrating Greek philosophy, particularly Plato, into the Islamic intellectual tradition

Al-Farabi's engagement with Platonic Concepts:

Al-Farabi engaged extensively with the works of Plato, particularly in the realm of political thought. Al-Farabi's engagement with Plato's political philosophy can be seen in his works, such as "The Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle" (Kitāb al-Ḥurūf), "The Attainment of Happiness" (Mabādi' āra' ahl al-madīna al-fāḍila), and "The Political Regime" (al-Siyāsa al-Madaniya). In these works, Al-Farabi acknowledges Plato as one of the key philosophers who provided insights into the ideal political order and the nature of the just ruler.

Al-Farabi's engagement with Plato's political thought can be analyzed in the following aspects:

Political Idealism and The Just Ruler:: Al-Farabi shares Plato's belief in the possibility of an ideal political order. Plato's concept of the "Philosopher-King" and the "Republic" heavily influenced Al-Farabi's vision of a virtuous ruler and a harmonious society. Al-Farabi considers the ideal city as a necessary means for achieving the ultimate goal of human happiness and perfection. Al-Farabi borrows Plato's concept of the philosopher-ruler, who possesses wisdom and knowledge, to govern the state. He argues that the ruler should be an intellectual and virtuous individual capable of understanding the underlying principles of the cosmos and guiding the city towards its proper functioning. This idea resonates with Plato's assertion that the just ruler possesses knowledge of the Forms and can govern with wisdom and justice.

In Plato's Republic, there exists a distinct class of auxiliaries solely responsible for the city's defense, while the philosopher-king does not engage in physical warfare (Ali & Qin, City and Soul in Plato and Alfarabi: An Explanation for the Differences Between Plato's and Alfarabi's Theory of City in Terms of Their Distinct Psychology, 2020). In contrast, Al Farabi assigns a crucial duty of fighting the holy war to his ruler. The philosopher-king in Plato's theory gains superior knowledge through unaided reason, ascending to the world of ideas akin to the cave allegory, while Al Farabi's ruler derives knowledge from reason combined with divine revelations, linked not to the rational but to the imaginative faculty of the soul (Ali & Qin, 2020, p. 4).

Farabi categorized Rulership into two distinct types:

- a. The first type is known as virtuous rulership, which focuses on establishing voluntary actions, ways of life, and positive dispositions to attain true happiness. Under this virtuous rulership, cities and nations that willingly embrace and submit to its principles are considered virtuous themselves.
- b. The second type is referred to as ignorant rulership, whereby rulers in these cities prioritize actions and states of character that they presume will lead to happiness, even though they are mistaken. Al-Farabi denounces this type of rulership as the "vile rulership" since it predominantly seeks wealth without considering the path to genuine happiness.

Political Education: Both Plato and Al-Farabi emphasize the importance of education in shaping virtuous citizens and leaders. Plato envisions an ideal state where children consider the state as their parent and their peers as siblings. The proposal suggests that child-rearing should be the responsibility of the state, and education would be structured into several stages. It would begin with physical and musical training, gradually progressing to mathematics and astronomy. Those who do not meet the required standards would be redirected to form auxiliaries and artisans. By the age of fifty, with fifteen years of governance experience, these individuals would be deemed qualified to rule the state. Plato's system aims to produce knowledgeable and capable rulers through comprehensive education and training (Islam, 2013).

Al-Farabi extends Plato's concept of education to include not only intellectual development but also moral and spiritual training. He suggests that the ruler should undergo a rigorous education that encompasses philosophy, ethics, and politics, in order to acquire the necessary virtues to govern justly. The theory of the soul forms the fundamental basis upon which both Plato and Al Farabi construct their individual theories of ideal association (Ali & Qin, On the relation of city and soul in Plato and Alfarabi., 2019). Plato's educational program is exclusively designed for the guardians, marginalizing the common masses, whereas Al Farabi aims for the perfection of all city inhabitants (Ali & Qin, 2020, p. 4).

Political Regimes and Political Harmony: Al-Farabi classifies political regimes into several categories, similar to Plato's division of regimes in "The Republic." He recognizes the ideal regime as a virtuous city governed by a philosopher-ruler. He also discusses the degeneration of regimes into tyranny, drawing on Plato's notion of the decline from aristocracy to timocracy, oligarchy, democracy, and ultimately tyranny. According to him, people willingly come together to form a state and choose a chief to fulfill their common needs. The will of the chief represents the will of the state as a whole. If the chief is bad or immoral, the state reflects the same negativity, whereas a state led by philosophers is considered good. Farabi envisions an ideal ruler who possesses both philosophical wisdom and virtues of humanity. He describes this ruler as a holy Plato donning the Prophet's cardigan, referring to the "prophet theory." This theory indicates Farabi's attempt to harmonize the principles of Islam's "revelation" and "inspiration" with philosophy, as evident from his writings (Telsa, 2021).

Al-Farabi adopts Plato's notion of political harmony, which involves the harmonious relationship between the ruler and the ruled, as well as the balance between different social classes. He argues that a just society is one in which all members fulfill their assigned roles and contribute to the common good, much like Plato's concept of justice as each person performing their proper function. His engagement with Plato's political philosophy reflects the ongoing influence and reinterpretation of classical Greek philosophy in the Islamic world.

Al-Farabi's Influence on subsequent Muslim Political thinkers

Here are some key influences of Al-Farabi on subsequent Muslim political thinkers:

Ibn Sina (Avicenna):

Ibn Sina, a Persian philosopher and polymath, was deeply influenced by Al-Farabi's works. He built upon Al-Farabi's ideas and developed his own theories on politics and governance. Ibn Sina incorporated Aristotelian notions of the virtuous ruler and the ideal state into his political philosophy. He also explored the relationship between philosophy, theology, and politics, further expanding Al-Farabi's concept of political philosophy as a distinct science.

Ibn Rushd (Averroes):

Ibn Rushd, an Andalusian philosopher, jurist, and commentator, engaged with Al-Farabi's political ideas in his own works. Ibn Rushd synthesized Greek philosophy, particularly

Aristotelian thought, with Islamic jurisprudence. He drew upon Al-Farabi's concepts of just governance and the rule of law, developing a theory of constitutional government and advocating for the separation of powers. Ibn Rushd's ideas on reason, law, and governance had a lasting impact on Islamic political thought.

Al-Ghazali:

Al-Ghazali, an influential Islamic theologian and philosopher, engaged with Al-Farabi's political ideas while offering his own perspectives. Al-Ghazali grappled with the tension between reason and revelation, seeking to reconcile philosophical inquiry with religious doctrine. While he criticized certain aspects of Al-Farabi's thought, Al-Ghazali recognized the importance of reason in political governance and the need for a virtuous ruler. His works influenced subsequent Muslim political thinkers, who navigated the relationship between reason and religion in matters of governance.

Shahrastani:

Shahrastani, a Persian scholar and historian of religions, studied and commented on Al-Farabi's works, particularly his political philosophy. Shahrastani played a significant role in disseminating Al-Farabi's ideas to subsequent generations of Muslim scholars. His comprehensive work, "Kitab al-Milal wa al-Nihal" (The Book of Sects and Creeds), included discussions on Al-Farabi's political thought, further influencing Islamic political thinkers.

Al-Farabi's Influence on subsequent Western political Philosophy:

Al-Farabi's interpretations and ideas have had a lasting influence on subsequent Western political thought. Here are some key aspects of his influence on Western political thinking:

Neo-Platonism Influence: Al-Farabi's work incorporated elements of Neoplatonic philosophy, which subsequently influenced Western thinkers. His concept of the philosopher-king, who possesses both philosophical and political virtues, resonated with later Western political thought, including figures like Thomas Aquinas and John Locke.

Virtue Ethics and Moral Foundations: Al-Farabi emphasized the importance of virtue ethics and moral foundations in political governance. His ideas on the cultivation of virtues, such as wisdom, justice, and moderation, as prerequisites for a just society, influenced subsequent Western thinkers. These ideas found echoes in the works of philosophers like Thomas Aquinas, who incorporated virtue ethics into his political and ethical theories.

The Common Good: Al-Farabi's political thought centered around the notion of the common good as the ultimate aim of political governance. This idea of promoting the well-being and harmony of the entire society, rather than just the interests of a few, influenced Western political thought. It resonates with later theories of the common good, particularly in the works of Thomas Aquinas and the natural law tradition.

Reconciliation of Religion and Politics: Al-Farabi's attempts to reconcile religion and politics, emphasizing the role of religion in guiding moral conduct and political order, had an

impact on Western political thought. His ideas influenced later thinkers, such as Dante Alighieri, who drew on Al-Farabi's notion of a harmonious relationship between religious and political authority in his work "De Monarchia."

Influence on Renaissance and Enlightenment Thinkers: Al-Farabi's works were rediscovered during the Renaissance and influenced Renaissance humanist thought. His ideas on the ideal state, the role of the ruler, and the pursuit of a well-ordered society resonated with later thinkers like Thomas More, who wrote "Utopia," and John Locke, who advocated for limited government and individual rights.

Conclusion:

In the context of Muslim political philosophy, Al-Farabi's engagement with Plato's political thought helped establish a foundation for political theory within an Islamic framework. He sought to reconcile Greek philosophy with Islamic theology and ethics, emphasizing the moral and spiritual dimensions of governance. Al-Farabi's works, such as "The Political Regime" and "The Virtuous City," provided a theoretical framework for Muslim political thinkers to explore the nature of the ideal state, the role of the ruler, and the pursuit of justice and the common good.

In the Western tradition, Al-Farabi's interpretations of Plato's political philosophy were instrumental in reintroducing and reinvigorating classical political ideas during the medieval and Renaissance periods. His works served as a bridge between the ancient Greek world and Western scholars, particularly through their translations into Latin. Western thinkers, including Aquinas, Dante, and Renaissance humanists, drew inspiration from Al-Farabi's synthesis of Greek philosophy and Islamic thought. His ideas on the ideal state, virtue ethics, and the reconciliation of religion and politics influenced subsequent Western political thinkers, shaping notions of good governance, the common good, and the relationship between faith and reason.

Al-Farabi's role in preserving, interpreting, and transmitting Plato's political philosophy had a profound impact on subsequent Muslim political philosophy and Western thought. His engagement with Plato's ideas provided a fertile ground for the development of political theory within the Islamic tradition, while also influencing Western thinkers and contributing to the revival of classical political thought. Al-Farabi's intellectual contributions continue to shape our understanding of governance, ethics, and the interplay between philosophy and religion in both Muslim and Western contexts.

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