AL-FARABI: A SPLIT-IDENTITY?

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Abstract

The split-identity problem of religious modern man in politics can be traced back to the medieval age; and Al-Farabi, the founder of Islamic political philosophy was a salient example of this split. Different from modern man who experiences this split and disharmony because of the confrontation of religion and secularism, Al-Farabi experienced this because of the confrontation of religion, in this case, Islam and the classical philosophy. This paper tries to show this split through his most important political work, the Virtuous City. The paper mainly has three parts. After giving a general introductory discussion of religion and politics with specific reference to the split-identity problem in the introduction, in the first part, religion and philosophy in Al-Farabi are discussed to provide a ground for the following part. Through the second part, his split-identity between classical political philosophy and (politics in) Islam is elucidated and his preferences between classical political philosophy and politics in Islam including the experiences of earlier generations, the city of Prophet and the theories which can be drawn from them are handled under three titles: ruler of the virtues city, ranks in the virtuous city and imperfect cities. Under these titles, his common points with and differences from Islam and the classical political philosophy are demonstrated. While studying these three issues, Republic of Plato is the main point of reference on behalf of the classical political philosophy.

Keywords: Al-Farabi, Split-identity,Virtuous City.

FARABİ: BÖLÜNMÜŞ-KİMLİK?

Öz

Modern dindar insanın siyasette tecrübe ettiği bölünmüş kimlik probleminin kökleri Orta Çağ'a kadar götürülebilir ve İslami siyaset felsefesinin kurucusu da kabul edilen Farabi bu bölünmüşlüğün belirgin örneklerinden biridir. Ancak bu sorunu dinin ve sekülerizmin aporetik karşılaşmasından dolayı tecrübe eden modern dindar insandan farklı olarak, Farabi'nin bölünmüş kimliği klasik felsefe ve din –İslam- karşılaşmasının bir sonucu olarak ortaya çıkmaktadır. Bu metin bahsedilen bölünmüşlüğü onun en önemli siyasi metni olarak kabul edilen İdeal Devlet üzerinden göstermeye çalışmaktadır. Metin temel olarak üç bölümden oluşmaktadır. Girişte, din ve siyaset ilişkisi üzerine genel bir giriş yapılmış ve siyaset teorisi özelinde bölünmüş kimlik meselesi ele alınmıştır. Birinci bölümde Farabi'nin siyaset felsefinde, daha geniş anlamda siyaset üzerine olan eserlerinde dinin ve siyasetin yeri karşılaştırmalı olarak

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çalışılmıştır. Son bölümde ise, Farabi'nin klasik siyaset felsefesi ve İslam(İslam'da siyaset) arasındaki bölünmüş-kimliği tartışılmıştır. Farabi'nin Asr-ı Saadet örneği, daha önceki Müslümanların siyasal tecrübeleri ve bunlardan yola çıkılarak oluşturulabilecek siyasal teorileri de kapsayacak bir İslami siyaset ve klasik siyaset felsefesi arasındaki tercihleri üç başlık altında ele alınmıştır: erdemli şehrin yöneticisi, erdemli şehirde toplumsal sınıflar ve erdemli şehre zıt şehirler. Bu üç başlık altında, Farabi'nin hem İslam'la ve klasik siyaset felsefiyle ortak noktaları hem de onlardan ayrıldığı noktalar karşılaştırmalı olarak gösterilmiştir. Tüm bu okumalar boyunca, Plato'nun Devlet'i, klasik siyaset felsefesi adına temel referans noktası kabul edilmiştir.

Anahtar Kavramlar: *Farabi, Bölünmüş-kimlik, İdeal Devlet.*

INTRODUCTION

Religion has been an indispensable phenomenon when discussing politics throughout history. Sometimes they went hand in hand as good friends, sometimes they became rivals with changing balance of power in a "common" realm and sometimes they fought for the exclusion of the other from their "own" (?) realm. Whatever the nature of their relationship is, they have been like couples who cannot give up the other, wishfully or compulsorily, even if they would have divorced.

Their current relation in this "secular age" is not as friendly as it was in the medieval times. Discussions by the philosophers concerning religion in the public sphere are only one of the illustrations of this relationship. While religion demands more in public sphere and in politics, politics has some concerns about its place. These concerns result in political theories varying from its complete exclusion from public realm to acceptance of some limited role. Yet, they never accept an unrestricted and indefinite role similar to that in the medieval era. Although some models in political philosophy have some efforts to reconcile them as models of Rawls, Benhabib and Habermas, they also take the reality and essentiality of secularism at least in formal politics as granted. This presupposition leads to relentless objections to these models which demonstrate the aporetic relation of politics and religion in this secular age, indeed secularism and religion in general rather than politics itself.

One of the objections to these models of political philosophers is about the split identity. By taking the secularity of the state as a precondition, these models of public sphere or (formal) politics in general are claimed to split one's identity as a co-legislator and as a religious person (Yates, 2007:880-891). To make the split-identity discussion clear, Habermas' model as almost the most inclusive one can be provided here. Habermas accepts participation of religion in politics, mostly as a reality and in this sense he prefers the term post-secularism to secularism. However, he has some conditions for this contribution and participation. Firstly, religious arguments have to be translated in such a way that they must satisfy the cognitive aspect of liberal, post-secular society. This is a "publicly intelligible language" and for this language a post-metaphysical thinking is required. Thus, their contribution in their religious way is allowed only in the wild-informal public sphere rather than the formal public sphere such as the parliament. Moreover,

they must fulfill this "institutional translation proviso" to participate in the formal politics (Habermas, 2008:113-143). Then religious people have to split their identity as legislators, formal political actors and as religious individuals. This split is necessary at least at the level of discourse. In order to exist in politics as legislators, citizens have to have a secular discourse and secular mode of argumentation and thinking, which they do not use outside of the formal politics.

It could be argued that this split-identity problem of religious people in politics-whether practical or theoretical in this case- stems from the secular hegemony in the modern times. In other words, it can be stated with a much wider perspective that the modern life of a secular background coming from the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution created a disharmony, called split-identity in this paper, in the modern man who insists on keeping the religion as a worldview (Ceylan, 2010). However, this split identity of religious man in politics -especially in theory- is not a modern problem. More precisely, when we think of Islam, this split identity can be traced back to the very foundation of the Islamic political philosophy, Al-Farabi. The first significant encounter of Islam with the West was through Hellenistic culture during IX-XII centuries. This encounter gave birth to important intellectuals who revealed the exchanges and conflicts between these two traditions (Ceylan, 2000) and Al-Farabi was one of these important figures. Then this disharmony was also experienced by some medieval man who did not encounter the secular modern life.

This paper tries to show through the example of Al-Farabi that the split identity problem experienced by the religious people in the politics models of modern political philosophers is not a new problem. Al-Farabi is a very significant figure in this sense since he is accepted as the founder of Islamic political philosophy (Mahdi, 2001). Like the modern individual who splits her/his identity in politics, we witness that Al-Farabi experienced the same split and disharmony when we look at his political writings. However, his split and disharmony mostly and mainly derived from his in-between situation between the philosophy and religion. On this ground, it manifests itself in different parts of his political philosophy. Here, this split and disharmony are demonstrated through his prominent political work, the Virtuous City. After a general introduction on philosophy and religion in political writings of Al-Farabi, the split in them, particularly in the Virtues City are examined in three parts. His preferences between classical political philosophy and politics in Islam including the experiences of earlier generations, the city of Prophet and the theories which can be drawn from them are handled. Under this title, politics of Plato especially Republic are provided as reference points. Traits of the ruler of it and the Virtuous City, ranking systems in them and their classification of political regimes are also compared.

1. PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

In the writings about the works of Al-Farabi, the first striking thing is the emphasis in the introductions regarding his position and efforts between the religion and philosophy. Although "the relationship between religion and philosophy in

Farabi's political thought is a contested issue among scholars of Islamic philosophy" (Lahoud, 2005:92), this relation and his in-between position are the common ground for them. For example, some like Miriam Galston (2014:14) stress that Al-Farabi found out and gave importance to some common points between religion and philosophy for the cultivation of reason. Yet, some others such as Richard Walzer (1985:5) and Antony Black (2011:61-69) draw attention to his Shiites faith rather than classical philosophy as a determinative background in his works. Blending Greek notions and Islam such as philosopher king and prophet-imam (Rosenthal, 1958:128), harmonizing and reconciling them (Lahoud, 2005:92-94; Mahdi, 2001:125), or keeping a middle way between them (Walzer, 1962: 209) are only some of the readings of this relationship in Al-Farabi. Then although the nature of the relationship is very contested, there is a common agreement among scholars about its existence.

It is not very clear whether there is a hierarchical relationship between religion and philosophy or not. There are some interpretations of the Virtuous City arguing that Al-Farabi thought the philosophy and the revealed religion as different ways giving people the truth. Although they have the same content and goal, their methods are different (Alper, 2014:54). While religion makes the truth accessible through symbols and images, philosophy does this through demonstration (Al-Farabi, 1974:54). Crone resembles this to popular and professional division of the scientific disciplines today. However, this does not mean they are equal since philosophy subordinates religion, which is a popular version of philosophy: "Without religion there would be no polity and no salvation for the masses. But religion only offered a relative truth, and it was only by means of philosophy that one could escape from relativism" (2005:173-175). A stricter version of this interpretation claims that religion is not necessary if the philosophy is in charge since philosophy is prior and superior to religion (Lahoud, 2005:95; Black, 2011:64-66). Even, some argues that "he hoped a society with philosophy as the official religion" since he had a utilitarian perception of religion, for example, he did not regard pray as necessary for those who managed the perfection (Crone; 2005:185-187). I think these arguments can be supported by referring to philosopher-king in the Virtuous City. Especially, the discussions relating the prophet and philosopher which are provided later in the paper can shed light on these arguments. Another support for them can be found in the second paragraph of the 17th chapter, Philosophy and Religion, of the Virtuous City. Here, Al-Farabi deliberately states that philosophers know the truth through demonstrations (burhan) and the other people who are incapable of this either follow the philosophers by trusting them or learn it through symbols and imitations. This last way is called religion and it is for those who are incapable of perceiving the truth with their intellect. Then even if both attain the truth and knowledge, the truth and knowledge of philosophers are superior and more perfect (Al-Farabi, 1985, chap.17:2).

However, the problem remains, despite his declaration of superiority of philosophy. He also claims that philosophy enables people to understand the divine law (Rosenthal, 1958:131) besides that it is the superior way of the knowing the

divine law, the revelation (wahy) (Black, 2011:64). Yet, in this situation, the revealed religion seems superior to philosophy since the philosophy turns into an instrument to attain the truth, the divine law which is revealed through and in religion. To deal with this problem, some suggest a distinction between religion (as mille) and revelation (as only wahy) for Al-Farabi and regard the prophet as the greatest philosopher (Black, 2011:64). This suggestion seems compatible with his claim that anybody who has appropriate disposition and has completed his intellectual development can receive the revelation (Peker, 2008:167). However, in these conditions, what would happen to the revealed religion such as Islam in the case of Al-Farabi? If religion has already been founded on the divine law, indeed it is the revelation and the divine law itself, firstly, how can we separate it from the revelation/divine law and secondly, how can an instrument of its realization, philosophy be superior to it?

Another approach towards the religion and philosophy in Al-Farabi sees religion as an instrument of philosophy rather than the philosophy as an instrument of divine law and revelation (religion?). For instance, Daiber claims that religion is an instrument for the attainment of the philosophical doctrine about the truth (1986). Since the truth is something philosophical, religion should be dependent on philosophy. Even it should be founded on philosophy. If this is not the case, and if a religion is not grounded in a true philosophy, this religion cannot be a true one (Al-Farabi, 2008: 60-71). In order to acquire the truth, people have to be capable of philosophical thinking. Yet, most of the people are lack of this capability. Then they need religion to attain this philosophical truth. Religion makes the way easier to attain it since it replaces the demonstration with imagination and representative symbols. However, in this interpretation, it is not clear if there is any difference between revelation, divine law and philosophy or what their relations are. Here, the same questions arise regarding their proper places. If religion is an instrument for philosophy, it is subordinated by philosophy. This is also stated by Al-Farabi that trueness of a religion depends on whether it is founded on a (true) philosophy or not. Yet, in this case, what would happen to the revealed religion? Revelation, divine law is the truth and the philosophy is a way, maybe the only one, to acquire it according to Al-Farabi. However, if it is an instrument for philosophy, the truth (revealed religion) turns into an instrument for the attainment of the instrument (philosophy) which is used for its own attainment. To be honest, it seems that this confusing conclusion is not only because of the interpretation but also because of Al-Farabi himself.

In conclusion, the proper places of religion and philosophy and their relationship in Al-Farabi are contested issues and open to very different kinds of interpretations that can be backed by his works. "There is an ongoing debate among scholars but at present no agreement" (Bonelli, 2009:101). Then there is no agreement on how philosophy and religion relate to each other in Al-Farabi, if they do. On the other hand, it is obvious that there is an agreement on the fact that he cannot renounce any of them and he wants to keep both without colliding them. However, as this is very difficult, even impossible as the revelation and religion require

dogma which does not get along well with philosophy, he is in a disharmony and split between the religion and philosophy. Multiplicity of the inferences actually displays this split and disharmony. Then the very elementary and vital concepts of religion and philosophy in Al-Farabi disclose his split-identity.

2. CLASSICAL POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY AND POLITICS IN ISLAM

Al-Farabi, like Aristotle, considers happiness as the highest good (Al-Farabi, 1985, chap. 13:6; Aristotle). Further, its attainment -but both in this world and after-life- through perfection is the goal of life. But in order to attain this goal, man need others as a social being and this reality brings us to politics, the highest science (Al-Farabi, 1985, chap. 15:1). Here, it is important to remember that Al-Farabi thinks that the divine law gives the truth, which is actually the attainment of happiness and as mentioned above this can be reached through philosophy and religion for the multitude. Then there is a very close affinity among politics, philosophy, religion and the divine law. Politics and divine are always together in Al-Farabi and that means philosophy and politics are also together (Strauss, 1990). While politics mostly stems from the socio-anthropological state of people as social beings who need each other, philosophy derives from process of perfection in order to attain happiness. Without one of them, the other cannot function properly.

When we look at how he constructs his political philosophy, again we see the shadow of the split and disharmony rooted in the philosophy-religion dichotomy. Virtuous city of Al-Farabi is claimed to appeal both Plato's city and prophet's ummah (Crone, 2005:177). For example, the idea of philosopher as a city-founder, legislator and king is mostly adapted from Plato. On the other hand, the division of the founder –as the prophet- and successor rulers like imams, and caliphes is derived from the idea of ummah. Community of the city also means ummah for Al-Farabi (Arnaldez, 1990:119). Before encountering with the split and disharmony, it would be better to begin with some resemblances between the good regimes of classical political philosophy and Islam as Al-Farabi does implicitly. Firstly, both start with god(s) and divine as the source of rules and justice. Secondly, the founder, legislator and later leaders play the central role in preserving and enforcing these divine laws. Besides, both concern the happiness of citizens as a crucial matter (Mahdi, 2001:126). Furthermore, the notion of wisdom (hikme) has a significant place both in the Quran and Plato. In relation to this, self-reflection and reform (islah) against corruption (ifsad) are crucial concerns for both of them (Arnaldez, 1990:120-121). Yet, it is important to highlight that this is only one of the interpretations of politics in Islam, by Al-Farabi.

When we come back to the disharmony, it is obvious that Al-Farabi is again in-between. Moreover, like in the case of the religion and philosophy, his in-between situation gives birth to very different inferences of the Virtuous City varying from Islamization of Plato (Black, 2011:70-74) to platonization of politics (Strauss, 1990) by a Muslim. The common point of his interpretations is the existence of the traces of both Islam and classical political philosophy, particularly of Plato. Here, these traces are examined under three titles: the ruler, ranks, and imperfect cities.

A. The Ruler

In Virtuous City, Al-Farabi divides the cities mainly into two as virtues ones and others. He makes an analogy between a healthy body and this regime. Like the organs in a healthy body, citizens of this regime perform their appropriate duties and help each other for the attainment of the happiness. There is a very strict hierarchy in the city and just as in *Republic* of Plato, there is a ranking among the people. Al-Farabi classifies people mainly into five ranks by referring to the five faculties of the soul. In the first rank we have philosophers, in the second "persons whose activities are confined to particular nations, languages, and religions", in the third mathematicians and who deal with calculations, in the fourth soldiers, and in the last rank there are "those people who are mainly concerned with material gain" (Al-Farabi, 1985:437). These ranks are so by nature. The ruler of the city corresponds to the heart in the body. According to Al-Farabi, hearth is the first organ coming into existence. It governs the other organs, classifies them in accordance with their functions, organizes the cooperation and labor division between them and takes necessary precautions for any malfunction. As the ruler corresponds to the heart in the body, he should carry out all these duties in the city. Then he has to have certain characteristics for this: (1) He should have limbs and organs which are free from deficiency and strong and which make him fit for the actions; (2) He should by nature be good at understanding and perceiving everything said to him and grasp the intention of the speaker; (3) He should be good at retaining what he comes to know and see and hear and apprehend in general, and forget almost nothing; (4) He should be well provided with ready intelligence and very bright; (5) He should have a fine diction; (6) He should be fond of learning and acquiring knowledge; (7) He should be by nature fond of truth and truthful men, and hate falsehood; (8) He should by nature not crave for food and drink and sexual intercourse; (9) He should be proud of spirit and fond of honor; (10) Money and the other worldly pursuits should be of little amount in his view; (11) He should by nature be fond of justice and just people, and hate oppression and injustice; (12) He should be strong in setting his mind firmly upon the thing which, in his view, ought to be done, and daringly and bravely carry it out without fear and weak-mindedness (Al-Farabi, 1985, chap. 15:12-14).

Here, virtuous city of Al-Farabi reminds Republic of Plato both in terms of ranking system and features of the ruler. The idea of philosopher as a ruler in Al-Farabi is derived from Plato. In addition to this, they have important number of common traits. For instance, just as Al-Farabi's ruler, the philosopher-king of Plato also should love the truth and hate falsehood (7). Besides, the philosopher-king should have passion for knowledge (6) and a vivid memory (3), fair mind (2) and intelligence enabling him to understand easily (4). He also should have courage (12) and should not love money (10) (Fakhry, 2002:104-105). On the other hand, three qualities of the ruler are missing in Plato and Fakhry claims that these additions to Plato are because of Islamic concerns of Al-Farabi:

"...eloquence (5), sound bodily constitution (1) and love of justice (11), which specifically formed part of the qualifications for the caliphal office. As given by al-Mawardi in

his Political Ordinances (al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyah), the seven conditions or prerequisites (shurut) the caliph should meet to qualify for the caliphal office are: justice, knowledge, soundness of the organs of sense (including hearing, sight and speech), soundness of body, soundness of judgment, courage and finally the Quraysh pedigree." (Fakhry, 2002:105)

Although sound bodily constitution is missed in Plato's philosopher-king, it has a general importance in Republic. Then, we do not need to exclusively associate it to Islam despite its central importance in Islamic leadership. However, eloquence and especially justice can be regarded as the most Islamic part of the ruler.

Importance of eloquence can be backed by the prophet Mohammad's time and his contemporary culture. Eloquence is seen as associated with knowledge in pre-Islamic and Islamic Arab culture and it is a good sign for leadership. For instance, in the pre-Islamic period, orator (khatib) and spokesman (za'im) are used to call the tribe leaders since their eloquence plays a significant role in their selection. Especially in Shiism, superiority of Ali's eloquence is specifically stressed (Krämer & Schmidtke, 2006: 63).

Justice is one of the most emphasized notions in Islam and the rulers are frequently addressed in this manner. For instance, in the Quran, Allah says to prophet David: "O David! Indeed We have made you a vicegerent on the earth. So judge between people with justice, and do not follow desire, or it will lead you astray from the way of Allah." (38:26, Ali Quli Qarai translation). This order of the Quran is repeated in the utterances (hadith) of prophet Mohammad: "Allah will give shade, to seven, on the Day when there will be no shade but His. (These seven persons are) a just ruler, ..." (Sahih Bukhari, 1, 11, 629). These extracts are only two from the many in the main sources of Islam.

Ruler's another relation to religion comes from the analogy to universe. Like the human body/community analogy, Al-Farabi mentions the universe/ community analogy. Before everything in the universe, the only thing exist was the First Cause. The second ones emanated from it/him. Then other lower beings came into existence after the secondary ones. This continued to the very lowest beings. Al-Farabi explains all these in the first chapters of the Virtuous City. When he comes to the ruler of the virtuous city, he benefits from this hierarchy in the universe to explain his position in the community. Like the First Cause in the universe, the ruler is the governor. There is no body in the community who has more power and authority than him. Both are the highest ones. Thus, the (first) ruler governs the community, city in a similar manner God governs the universe (Aydınlı, 1987:297-298).

In addition to this analogy, there is a revelation relation between God and the first-ruler of the virtuous city. Al-Farabi states that the first-ruler receives revelations from God and he governs the city in accordance with this revelation. His governance ability is God given. All laws he enacts are based on revelation (Al-Farabi, 2002:259). Then, the first-ruler is a prophet apart from being a philosopher. This situation also reminds the imam of Shiism which will be mentioned in the following part.

Hence we can state that traits of Al-Farabi's ruler is an instance through which we can observe his split-identity between religion and philosophy. Most of his traits are adapted from Plato's philosopher-king. Yet, he has also exclusively Islamic traits, especially the prophecy of the first-ruler. Whether we call it the Islamization of Plato or platonization of politics by a Muslim, it is obvious that he tries to reconcile classical political philosophy and politics in Islam.

B. Ranks

Adaptations from Plato are observed also in the ranking system of the Virtuous City. As mentioned above Al-Farabi classifies people mainly into five ranks by referring to the five faculties of the soul. In the first rank we have philosophers, in the second "persons whose activities are confined to particular nations, languages, and religions", in the third mathematicians and who deal with calculations, in the fourth soldiers, and in the last rank there are "those people who are mainly concerned with material gain" (Al-Farabi, 1985:437). These ranks are so by nature. As already known, in Republic, Plato classifies citizens into three ranks. The first rank is occupied by the ruler class who has power and authority to run the state and rule the people. The second rank consists of soldiers, auxiliaries who have the duty to save the city from both external and internal threats. They are also expected to guarantee the security. In the third rank, the lowest one, we have merchants, producers as common people who provide the needs of the state and farmers (Macarimbang, 2013). The first three ranks of the Virtues City would correspond to the first rank of Plato. The second rank in both Plato and Al-Farabi is already soldiers and the last ranks deal with money and production required by the city. Already, there are some readings of ranks in the Virtuous City dividing them broadly into three:

> "(1) the wise or the philosophers who know the nature of things by means of demonstrative proofs and by their own insights; (2) the followers of these who know the nature of things by means of the demonstrations presented by the philosophers, and who trust the insight and accept the judgment of the philosophers; (3) the rest of the citizens, the many, who know things by means of similitudes, some more and others less adequate, depending on their rank as citizens." (Mahdi, 2001:129-130)

Both for Plato and Al-Farabi, these interpretations of the ranks are founded mostly on the capacities rather than the functions they are expected to fulfill. Al-Farabi has belief in the nature as the determinative power of these five classes. He thinks that a man is naturally disposed to some conditions and actions such as virtue, vice and writing (Al-Farabi, 1961:31). Further, his inclination towards the imam doctrine of Shiism supports this idea. The necessity of the imam, discussed below, is backed by the presumption that multitude has not enough intelligence to attain and agree on the truth. They are inferior by nature while the imam is superior and infallible (Najjar, 1975:298). This belief carries us back to Plato since Plato thinks that classes are determined mostly inborn, too. The Myth of Metals in Republic can be regarded as a similar kind of background and legitimization for ranks.

According to the myth, people are of three classes. First class of gold corresponds to the class of the rulers, auxiliaries as the second class have silver mixed with their soul and the last class is of iron and brass (Plato, book 8). Therefore, ranks in Plato and Al-Farabi resemble each other not only in terms of their functions but also being determined by inborn capacities.

A third similarity of them is the determinative role of the basic needs in the ranks. As introduced above, Al-Farabi considers individuals as social beings. Each human being needs many things to survive and to reach perfection. Yet, he cannot meet all these needs by oneself. Then he needs the help of others to fulfill them. This is the case for all. Therefore, they need to live together as a society/city in which everyone meets the special needs of the each other (Al-Farabi, 1985, chap. 15:1). This system of meeting the needs of each other runs through a division of labor which is determined by the inborn capacities of its inhabitants. Plato interprets the emergence of the State and the division of labor in relation to this in a similar way:

> "A State...arises...out of the needs of mankind; no one is self-sufficing, but all of us have many wants. ... Then, as we have many wants, and many persons are needed to supply them, one takes a helper for one and another for another; and when these partners and helpers are gathered together in one habitation the body of inhabitants is termed a State. ... And they exchange with one another, and one gives, and another receives, under the idea that the exchange will be for their good. ... The barest notion of a State must include four of five men. ... (T)here are diversities of natures among us which are adapted to different occupations." (Plato, book 2)

Therefore, similar to the case of the traits of the ruler, there seems an undeniable influence of Plato's classes on Al-Farabi. Functions of the ranks and the determinative role of inborn capacities and basic needs of human beings in the ranks can be claimed to be adapted from Plato.

When we come to "Islam" side of the topic, again we have some claims regarding the Islamization of Plato. It is argued that division of labor in the society of the Virtuous City represents the requirements of the religious law. Especially, for a Shiite, such kind of a hierarchy is very crucial when we think of the position of the imam, the religious and political leader. Imam is believed to have been endowed with some certain characteristics which entitle him to act and govern in the name of God. He is superior to others by nature and as the highest-ranking human being he has some supernatural powers similar to the prophet who receives revelation (Najjar, 1975:295). Therefore, Plato is Islamicised by this and in addition to this, by uniting and bounding people together by love (Black, 2011:74). However, these arguments do not seem grounded enough, at least as strong as the arguments about the influence of Plato on the ranks. It is not explained, or even implied, what "the religious law" is and how it classifies people like in the Virtuous City. This lack of explanation is the same for his Shiism since with the exception of the imam, nothing is provided regarding the division of labor in Shiism. Although, position of the imam can be compared to the ruler class, there is no mention of other classes.

C. Imperfect Cities

Another point of similarity between Plato and the Virtuous City relates to their classifications of non-virtuous cities. Al-Farabi initially divides them into four regimes: ignorant (jahiliya), vicious/wicked (fasika), transformed (mubaddala), and erring (dalla). Then he groups ignorant regimes under six titles: regime of necessity, the vile regime (oligarchy), the base regime, the regime of honor (timocracy), the regime of domination (tyranny) and the regime of democracy (Mahdi, 2001:130-131). In the Regime of Necessity (daruriya), citizens' only goal is the satisfaction of their basic needs such as nurturing, living in a place, security etc.. In the Vile Regime (nahdala), citizens only aim wealth and richness. In the Base Regime people focuses on worldly pleasures they acquire from games and senses. In addition to the Vile Regime, this regime can also be interpreted as a version of oligarchy in Plato. Then he mentions the Regime of Honor (madina karama) in which citizens pursue honor and fame and they help each other for attainment of these. What follows is the Regime of Domination (taghallub). In this regime, people want to dominate others by cooperating. Finally, he describes the Regime of Democracy (madina jama'iya). In this regime, peculiar characteristic of the citizens is their demand for freedom. The only thing they want is to do whatever they want freely. Moreover, equality is ensured in this city and that means there is no mastery by a philosopher, ruler.

When we think of Plato, he mentions five states: aristocracy as the ideal one and timocracy, oligarchy, democracy and tyranny as bad models of regimes. In timocracy, the ruler values power, fame and tries to gain it through military means and honor. Oligarchy is marked with the wrong distribution of the money and wealth. It is divided between the poor and the rich. In an oligarchy, love of honor and fame is replaced with the love of money. Then, we have democracy which is marked with love of freedom. Finally, tyranny appears. Here, maintenance of the order, then domination plays the central role. No matter what the way they or the ruler prefer, public order in the city against chaos should be ensured (Plato, book 8). These non-ideal regimes of Plato are mentioned by Al-Farabi in the Virtuous City under the title of ignorant regime. Indeed, Al-Farabi's ignorant regimes can be accepted as a counterpart of the non-ideal regimes of Plato. Yet, as his novelty, Al-Farabi adds vicious/wicked (fasika), transformed (mubaddala), and erring (dalla) regimes to the ignorant ones. In the Vicious Regime, despite their correct believes and right convictions, people do not act in accordance with them and there is no difference between them and the citizens of the Ignorant Regime in practice. The Transformed Regime was an ideal one before but because of the changing ideas and beliefs, actions of the citizens have also transformed and it has turned into an imperfect regime. Finally, we have the Erring regime, in which citizens have wrong beliefs and convictions about God. On the other hand, they believe that they have right ones. This illusion stems from their ruler who claims to be a prophet but in reality he is not, for he does not receive revelation.

As Plato does, Al-Farabi uses the "ignorant" as the opposite of the knowledge and truth. However, the term "jahiliya" is also interpreted with an Islamic perspec-

tive because of its historical legacy as a term used for the pre-Islamic society. In addition, three regimes added by Al-Farabi to Plato's can be interpreted in the light of his Muslim identity. The terms he uses, fasika, and dalla have specific meanings in Islamic terminology, and they are not simple Arabic words with their ordinary dictionary meanings. All of them are used in the Islamic tradition with specific implications. Fasik(a) refers to who disobey God. It does not merely indicate unbelievers but also believers (mumin) who disobey some commands of God. In pre-Islamic period, it is not a religious concept. Yet, with Islam, it has gained this specific meaning. In the Quran, it is repeated 54 times in different forms. Although, it implies a variety of things in the Quran under the general meaning of disobeying God, most of the scholars have agreed on that it encompasses every kind of sin except polytheism (Yavuz, 1995: 202-205). Thus, the term fasik with its specific reference to believers who commit sins corresponds the Vicious Regime of Al-Farabi. The term dalla, dalale literally means getting lost, perishing, and erring. In the Quran it is repeated 218 times in different forms and generally used as the opposite of the truth. Although, it also contains the disobey as a meaning, its distinctiveness relates to the belief in the truth or wrong (Tunç, 1993:428-429). Then the Erring Regime of Al-Farabi can be called with this term. Thus, it can be claimed that Al-Farabi tried to assimilate Plato into Islam (Rosenthal, 1958:135-138). Again, we experience Islamization of Plato. He tries to keep both, Islam and classical political philosophy without renouncing and colliding them. He wants to keep two different identities together in his political philosophy, which actually implies a split for his identity between the philosophy and religion in his political works.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the split-identity problem of religious modern man in politics can be traced back to the medieval age; and Al-Farabi, the founder of Islamic political philosophy was an example of this split. This paper has showed this split between Islam and classical philosophy through his most important political work, the Virtuous City. Although, Al-Farabi's in-between position between classical philosophy and Islam is a highly discussed issue, these discussions almost have no reference to today. Yet, without being anachronistic, Al-Farabi's in-between situation can be studied as a starting point for modern split-identity problem. Approaching this problem from a historical perspective can shed light on the current problem and its solution and as the the founder of Islamic political philosophy, Al-Farabi provides ample tools for further studies in this topic.

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