

RECONSTRUCTION OF THE SOCIOPOLITICAL HIERARCHY IN FARABI'S UTOPIA

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ABSTRACT: Farabi's Virtuous City has a special sociopolitical hierarchy, which at first glance, appears to be original. Now, the following questions are raised: What was Farabi's main criteria for creating this sociopolitical hierarchy? And to what extent did he draw on historical facts to establish this hierarchy? Findings of the present research indicate that the two components of knowledge and function have been Farabi's most important criteria for establishing the sociopolitical hierarchy of his Virtuous City. Accordingly, he categorizes the classes of Virtuous City as follows: 1- the ruling class; 2- assistants to the ruler, including Al-Afazel (the nobles), Zuvei al-lasana (speakers), Al-Moqadderoun (specialists), Al-Mujahedun (the military), Al-Maliyun (economic forces); 3- the masses; and 4- the opponents and adversaries, including Navabet and Bahimiyun. It seems that there are similarities between the function of some of these classes and the function of historical classes in the ancient Iran's monarchy and the Islamic Caliphate system, yet Farabi's innovation is in integrating them into a whole based on the criteria of knowledge and function and believing that those groups that do not meet the main objectives of Virtuous City -public happiness - may be suppressed. On the whole, it appears that Farabi's Virtuous City has an organic class system in which not only the autonomy of classes and individuals is not recognized, but also any opposition is violently suppressed. Methodological approach of this article is methodological hermeneutics with an emphasis on Hirsch's hermeneutics.

KEYWORDS: Islamic Philosophy; Farabi's Virtuous City; Sociopolitical hierarchy; Knowledge; Function

INTRODUCTION

Political philosophy in Islam begins with Ya 'qūb al-Kindī in the ninth century¹, but many consider Farabi² to be the founder of Islamic political philosophy due to his sound rational principles and systematic thoughts (Davari, 1998: 47; Mahdi, 2010: XI). However, Farabi's political philosophy, especially his idea of utopia, is to a great extent inspired by Plato's political philosophy (in particular *Republic* and *Laws*), Aristotle's ethics and civic philosophy (especially *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics*)³, Plotinus's metaphysics (in particular his *Treatise on Theology*), Iranshahr political philosophy (especially the idea of the ideal king)⁴, and Islamic political theology (in particular the Shiite concepts of Imamate and Prophecy)⁵ (Al-Fakhoury, 2007: 400-402; bin Abdulali, 1986: 25; Tabatabaie, 2008: 153). Some scholars such as Wlazer and Davari believe that

¹ Political philosophy in Islam is, more than anything, the result of translation of Greek text into Arabic in the 8th century AD (Gutas, 1998: 2).

² Born in 873 AD in Farab, a city in Transoxiana (current day Kazakhstan) and died in 950 AD in Baghdad.

³ In the book entitled *Tahsil al-Sa'ada*, Farabi proudly refers to the influence of Plato and Aristotle on himself (Farabi, 1982: 129).

⁴ Political thought in pre-Islamic Iran is referred to as Iranshahri political thought. This thought revolves around the idea of the ideal king who has a divine status (divine grace) (Zoroaster, *The Yashts*, 1968: 314) and his duty is to maintain the divine order (*asha*) (Canford, 1980: 176). However, the idea of Iranshahr is to a great extent influenced by Zoroastrianism and based on it, in the battle between the good and evil, the king must help Ahura Mazda (symbol of goodness and light) against Ahriman (symbol of evil and darkness) (Rajaie, 1996: 77). Also, in the Iranshahr political thought, the ideal king is the link between the higher realm and the earth (Pouladi, 2008: 36; Eddie, 1968: 10). In Farabi's utopia, this role has been given to the prophet or philosopher. Some scholars like Stephen Panusi (2002), Fathullah Mojtabaie (1973) and Hatam Qaderi (2009) argue that ancient Greek thinkers, especially Plato, have been greatly influenced by the culture and ideology of ancient Iran and particularly, Plato's idea of the philosopher king has been influenced by the idea of the ideal king in Iran. In this regard, see: Panusi, Stephen (2002), *the effect of Iranian culture and ideology on Plato*, Tehran: Iranian Science and Philosophy Research Institute; Mojtabaie, Fathullah (1973), *the beautiful Platonic city and the ideal king*, Tehran: Ancient Iran Cultural Association; Qaderi, Hatam (2009), *Iran and Greece*, Tehran: Negah-e Moaser.

⁵ There is disagreement about Farabi's religion. Some scholars argue that he was Shiite (Bin Abdul-ali, 1986: 25). Most of the interpreters consider him to be Sunni but there is no doubt that he has been influenced by the Shiite ideology. Lambton believes that Farabi has been influenced by the idea of imamate in Zaidiyyah and Isma'ilism sects of Shiite religion (Lambton, 2006: 764); whereas, Davari believes that Farabi has been influenced by the idea of imamate in Athnā'ashariyyah Shiite religion (Davari, 2003: 241-242).

Farabi combines Greek political philosophy and Islamic teachings –including the idea of prophecy- in order to expand the scope of political philosophy (Wlazer, 1985: 441; Davari, 2003: 156). Also, it appears that Farabi’s depiction of non-utopias is to a great extent original.⁶ In addition, some thinkers, like Rosenthal, have referred to the inclusive nature of Farabi’s utopia compared to Plato’s Republic (Rosenthal, 1962: 132-133). However, a more accurate evaluation of Farabi’s political philosophy and its essence –utopia- requires further examination of details.

Numerous studies have been conducted on Farabi’s ideas, especially his idea of utopia. In “Farabi’s utopia: the principles of political philosophy in Islam” (2010), Mohsin Mahdi primarily discusses the intellectual foundation of utopia. The article entitled the ideal state/society in the ideas of Plato and Farabi (2000) by Mohammad Refiq al-Islam compares Farabi’s Utopia with Plato’s Republic. However, in this article little attention has been paid to the structure of the classes in these two societies. Also, in the article entitled “visualizing the perfect city” (2013) by Ahmed Tukur Mecarimbang, utopia in general and the role of the first chief in particular have been discussed.

Janne Mattila (2017) has examined the status of ethics in the philosophy of Farabi and Zakariya al-Razi. W. Craig Streetman (2008) has studied the ideas of Aristotle and Farabi on prophetic vision. Marwan Rashed (2009) aims to show that the treatise *On the Harmonization of the Opinions of the Two Sages the Divine Plato and Aristotle* cannot have been written by al-Fārābī. Deborah L. Black (2006) is concerned with *Al-Fārābī’s* epistemology but focuses only on knowledge (‘ilm) and certitude (YAQĪN) in his Epistemology. Stephen Menn (2008) is concerned with *Al-Fārābī’s* Ontology but mostly discusses the *KITĀB AL-ḤURŪF* and his *Analysis of the Senses of Being*. Marwan Rashed (2008) also focuses on ontological issues and discusses the *The Eternity of the World in Al-Fārābī’s* treatise. Michael J. Sweeney (2007) has studied the

⁶ Farabi divides dystopian cities into four categories: 1- Jahela (ignorant) cities: these cities are established based on wrong goals, including Zaruriya (necessity) city whose purpose is merely provision of the basic needs of the citizens; Nazala (villainy) city where the aim of citizens is accumulating wealth and gaining power; Khessat (avarice) city whose citizens merely seek pleasure; Keramiya (dignity) city where citizens only seek fame and honor; Taghlabiya (overpowering) city where citizens only try to surpass other communities; and Jamaiya (collective) city where citizens seek unlimited freedom. 2- Fasiqa (immoral) city where citizens know the truth but do not act upon it. 3- Zalla (astray) city where citizens have accepted untruth as truth; therefore, they will always remain ignorant. 4- Mobadila (modified) cities: whenever utopias deteriorate and turn into Jahila or Zalla cities, they are called Mobadila cities (Farabi, 1997: 87-102; 1991: 131-151).

relation between happiness and jihad in Farabi's philosophy and utopia. Ilai Alon (1989) studies the etymology of the word 'nawabat' and shows how Farabi uses the word 'nawabat' in a negative sense, while Ibn Bâjja (Avempace) has a positive attitude towards it.

Despite efforts made regarding different and diverse aspects of Farabi's thought, political aspects of his thoughts in terms of their relation to more profound theoretical aspects of his thought have not been considered thoroughly.

This article is concerned with a specific issue. First, it seeks to show the sociopolitical hierarchy in Farabi's utopia; then, reveals Farabi's criteria for constructing this hierarchy; and finally, it shows the effect of Iran's pre-Islamic class system and the Caliphate system on Farabi on the one hand and his innovations and original ideas on the other hand.

But what is the significance of this discussion? In this regard, two main reasons can be given: first, most of the commentators on Farabi's ideas have focused more on the chief of utopia and less on the role and status of the groups and classes in it; second, Farabi has sporadically and implicitly mentioned different groups in utopia but he has not provided a clear picture of their hierarchy. Perhaps this article can present a clearer, more accurate and integrated picture of the status and role of groups and classes in Farabi's utopia.

Methodological approach of this article is methodological hermeneutics with an emphasis on Hirsch's hermeneutics. Methodological hermeneutics, unlike interpretive hermeneutics, is based on perception and interpretation of the text and gives crucial importance to the author's intention and links verbal meaning to author's intention. Hirsch (1967), in the appendix to the book "Validity in Interpretation", introduced the "original intention of the author" as the main criterion for identifying the correct interpretation and considered the task of understanding or interpreting the text as the "missing link" that, if found, would clarify everything. From the viewpoint of Hirsch, the main task of the interpreter is to reproduce the logic of the attitudes, cultural data and, in a word, the world of the author.

FARABI'S INTELLECTUAL SYSTEM

Any theory, like a building that requires some materials to be constructed, is made up of set of beliefs, assumptions and axioms. Systematic theorists introduce the principles and assumptions of their theory and try to prove their strength. But not all of them are necessarily proved by the theorist and some are inevitably assumed to be self-evident. The collection of these assumptions, preconceptions and axioms are regarded as the "fundamental principles" of a theory. The set of fundamental principles of a theory,

when structured by the author, make up the intellectual system of a thinker. The overt and covert principles of a theory can be divided into several major categories: ontological principles reflect the theorist's view of the world and the universe. Anthropological principles reveal his attitude towards human nature and characteristics. Epistemological and methodological principles distinguish between the proper and improper knowledge and understanding, and teleological principles of a theory reflect the ultimate ideal of the theorist, which given the inconsistency of some of the ideals, the importance of this category of principles is realized more than ever. In this article, in order to understand Farabi's intellectual system and its relationship with his utopia, Farabi's ontological, epistemological and anthropological principles are studied.

A. Ontological principles

In *Oyun al-Masa'el* (1946 a: 9), *al-Siyasat al-Madina* (1964: 31), *al-Da'avi al-Qabila* (1970: 4) and *Ara Ahl al-Madinat al-Fazela* (1991: 62), Farabi divides the universe into the higher realm (*al-Alam al-Samaviya*) (supralunar)⁷ and the earthly realm (*Alam al-Arziya*) (sublunar)⁸. In his opinion, the higher realm is comprised of ten intellects at the top of which there is the first intellect (the first being)⁹ and at the bottom of which there is the active intellect¹⁰ (*al-Aql al-Fa'al*)¹¹. The earthly realm is also comprised of a number of intellects at the lowest level of which there is the potential intellect, then the active intellect, and at its highest level there is the acquired intellect (*al-Aql al-Mostafad*)¹². As Farabi puts it, the acquired intellect can be linked to the active intellect through the faculty of imagination¹³ and rational faculty¹⁴ (Farabi, 1966: 9;

⁷ - العالم السماويه (المافوق القمر) -

⁸ - العالم الارضييه (المادون القمر)

⁹ - العقل الاول (الوجود الاول)

¹⁰ - Farabi considers active intellect as an immaterial and self-conscious being that is the only medium for transferring divine grace to the material world (Farabi, 1995: 97). It seems that Farabi tries to identify active intellect with Archangel Gabriel and the Holy Spirit.

¹¹ (العقل الفعال) -

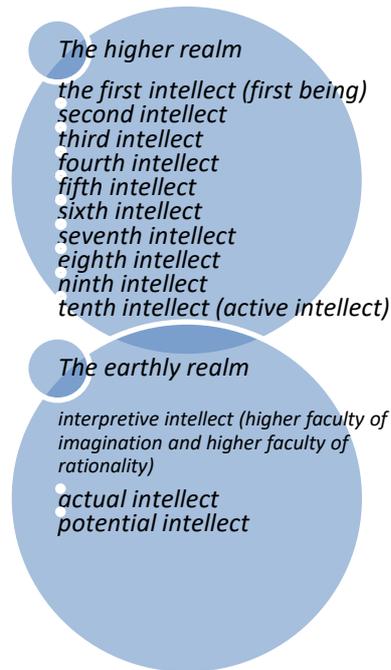
¹² (العقل المستفاد) -

¹³ - القوه المتخيله: Higher faculty of imagination is the ability to receive superhuman inspirations (in particular, revelation). Nevertheless, he who has this quality can also distinguish between good and bad (Farabi, 2000).

¹⁴ - القوه الناطقه: Higher rational faculty is man's cognitive ability to perceive abstract concepts and, at the same time, it is the ability to distinguish between the good and the evil (Farabi, 1997: 23-33).

1982: 268; 2000: 182-183; 1991: 108).

In an overview, Farabi's ontology can be demonstrated as follows:



B. Epistemological principles

Also, in works such as *Fosoul al-Montazaè* (1971: 38, 54-60), *al-Ta'liqat* (1992 a: 38), *Fosul al-Hekam* (1966: 152-159), *Ara Ahl al-Madinat al-Fazela* (1991: 108-113), *Ma'ani al-Aql* (1946b: 47-48), *Siyasat al-Maina* (2000: 179-187),..., Farabi distinguishes between three main kinds of knowledge: 1- sensory knowledge including: A- apparent sensory knowledge (five senses), B- inner sensory knowledge (including, respectively, common sense, power of visualization, power of illusion, power of memory, power of thought and imagination)¹⁵ 2- rational knowledge¹⁶ including: A- empirical or practical

¹⁵ Farabi considers apparent sensory knowledge as the beginning of rational and intuitive knowledge (Farabi, 1970: 9).

¹⁶ Rational knowledge originates from rational faculty which distinguishes humans from animals (Farabi, 1986: 8).

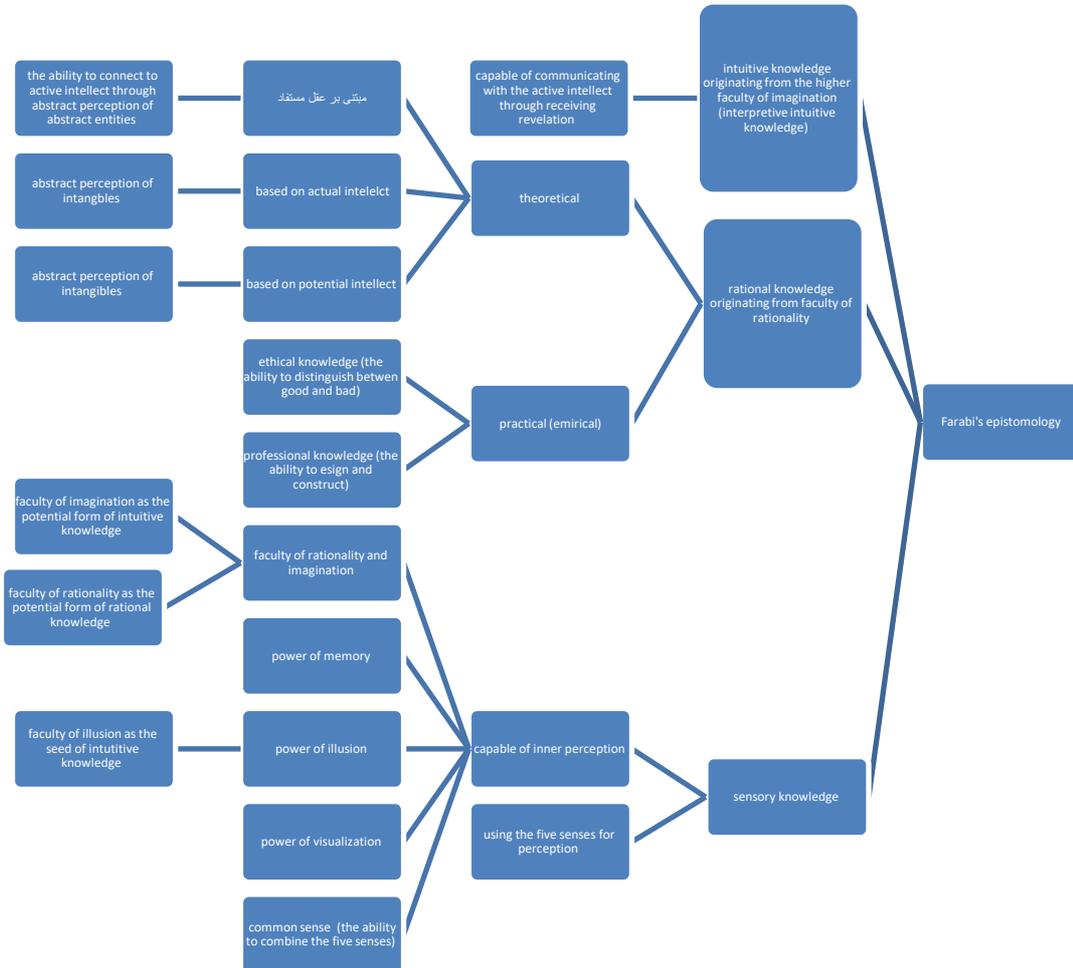
knowledge which itself includes professional knowledge¹⁷ (design and construction) and deliberate knowledge¹⁸ (the ability to distinguish between the good and bad deeds) (ethical knowledge), B- theoretical knowledge including: potential rational knowledge (the ability to abstract the appearance of sensible objects), actual rational knowledge (the ability to abstract the appearance of intelligible objects) and acquired rational knowledge (the ability to perceive abstract intelligible objects), 3- intuitive knowledge: this knowledge also has a hierarchy that at its lower levels it is caused by inner sensory knowledge –especially the sensory knowledge based on the faculty of imagination, and at its highest level, there is acquired intuitive knowledge (the ability to receive revelation).¹⁹ However, all these kinds of knowledge have their strengths and weaknesses and, in a sense, have a range. Nevertheless, there is overlapping among these kinds of knowledge.²⁰ Hierarchy of knowledge in Farabi's thought can be demonstrated as follows:

¹⁷ - المعرفة المهنية

¹⁸ - المعرفة المروية

¹⁹ Intuitive knowledge originates from the faculty of imagination.

²⁰ The most important overlapping can be found between the primary (weak) and secondary (medium) intuitive knowledge and inner knowledge based on the faculty of imagination on the one hand and potential rational knowledge and inner sensory knowledge based on the other hand.

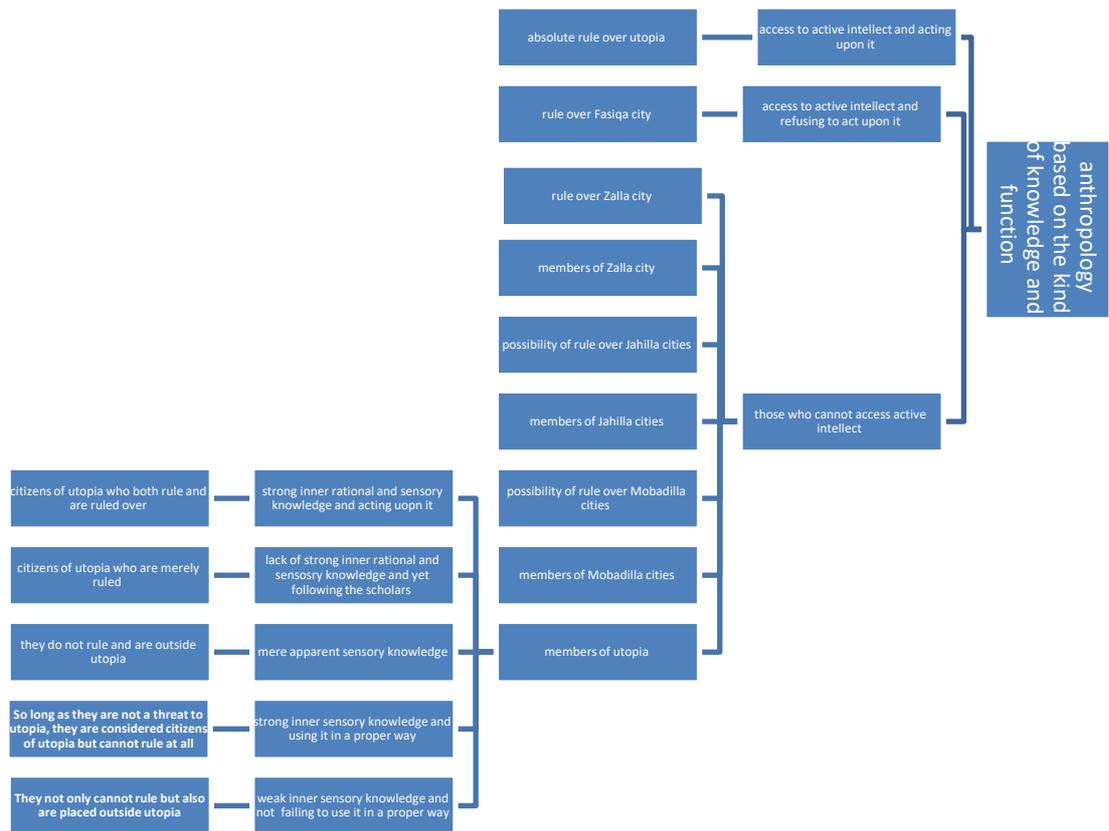


C. Anthropological principles

In Fosoul al-Montaze'a (1971: 125), Farabi divides human beings into three categories based on their access to active intellect: 1- those who have access to active intellect and use it for the good. Obviously, they are the heads of utopia; 2- those who have access to active intellect but do not use it.²¹ They are the heads of dystopia; and 3- those who do

²¹ It seems that unlike Plato and Aristotle who establish a correlation between knowledge and science (this correlation can be seen in Alcibiades dialogue (Plato, 1988: 662)), Farabi believes that using his willpower and consciously, man can act against his own knowledge.

not have access to active intellect. They include a wide range of individuals.²² Also, in *Siasat al-Madina* and the *Risala fi al-A'za al-Hayvan*, Farabi classifies the members of utopia into three general categories based on their sociopolitical power: 1- those who are supreme chiefs and no one rules over them; 2- those who are subordinates of the supreme chief and other chiefs, yet rule over others; 3- those who are not chiefs and are merely subordinates (Farabi 1964: 83-84); without date: 83). It seems that, to some extent, this categorization can show the status and role of the members of utopia; however, there are two issues: first, this categorization is very broad and does not show the details; and second, it appears that this categorization is itself based on individuals' knowledge and action. Perhaps by expanding this logic –that is, the type of knowledge and action- a more complete picture of Farabi's anthropology may be obtained; one that can more accurately show the status and role of the groups and classes in his utopia.



²² This group includes most of the members of Fazila city and Fasiqa city and all the members of Jahila cities.

SOCIOPOLITICAL HIERARCHIES IN FARABI'S UTOPIA

Now following a brief introduction to Farabi's intellectual system, by providing evidence from original sources, it is tried to reconstruct sociopolitical hierarchy in utopia from Farabi's perspective. Farabi's utopia is a society organized based on a strict sociopolitical hierarchy. This hierarchy is divided into four levels.

First level: rulers

The highest sociopolitical level in utopia belongs to the first chief who is the ruler of utopia. After establishment of utopia, in the absence of the first chief (if no one qualifies to be the first chief in utopia), al-Rais al-Tabeat al-Momase²³ (successor of the first chief) will be appointed as the ruler (Farabi, 1982: 93; 1991: 125). If no one with the qualifications of al-Rais al-Tabeat al-Momase is found in utopia, al-Rais al-Sunna²⁴ will be appointed as the ruler. If no single person has the qualifications and characteristics of al-Rais al-Sunna, two individuals can be simultaneously appointed as the rulers of utopia; provided that one of them has the quality of wisdom and the other one has other qualities of the ruler –except for wisdom (Farabi, 1967: 50; 1997: 81). If even two individuals are not found who qualify to rule utopia, a ruling council can be established. This council comprises of a maximum of six members and each of the chiefs must have, at least, one of the primary qualities of the first chief of utopia. However, if a person has more than one of the primary qualities, then the number of the members of the ruling council can be reduced. The ruling council has to fulfill all the duties of al-Rais al-Sunna (Farabi, 1971: 67).

Second level: assistants of the ruler

In Farabi's utopia, after the ruler, there is a hierarchy of classes assisting the ruler in governing society known as assistants of the ruler (Farabi, 1971: 65). These assistants are divided into four groups. First are al-Afazel, who are the intellectual elites of utopia. The al-Afazel²⁵ class consists of philosophers, intellectuals and experts (Farabi, 1971: 65). Zuvel al-Alsina²⁶ (speakers) are the cultural forces of utopia. Zuvel al-Alsina can be divided into religious scholars (jurisprudents and theologians), artists (poets, authors,

²³ - الرئيس التابعه المماثل

²⁴ - الرئيس السنه

²⁵ - الافاضل

²⁶ - ذورا الالسنه

singers, musicians, etc.) and orators (Farabi, 1971: 65). Al-Moqadderoun²⁷ class consists of engineers, physicians, astronomers, mathematicians and other natural sciences scholars (Farabi, 1971: 65). Al-Mujahedun²⁸ (the military) class is next and ensures the security of utopia (Farabi, 1982: 73). The last group of the assistants of the ruler are Al-Maliyun²⁹ class who are, in fact, the financial forces of Farabi's utopia. Al-Maliyun class consists of manufacturers, merchants, farmers, ranchers and servants (Farabi, 1971: 65).

*Third level: the masses*³⁰

At the lowest level of the classes and groups complying with the idea of utopia are the masses. However, the masses do not comprise an independent class, but rather they mostly overlap with the lower class members of Al-Maliyun and Al-Mujahedun.

Fourth level: opponents and adversaries

After the masses, there are the critics, opponents and adversaries of utopia, who are divided into three main categories: correctable Navabet, uncorrectable Navabet and Bahimiyun (manlike beasts). Navabet grow among bushes and trees like weed (Farabi, 1994: 122). From Farabi's point of view, they are intellectually depraved. However, some of them, like Al-Mustashredun³¹ and Al-Marequn³², are correctable and some of them are uncorrectable. Bahimiyun are not only deprived of rational and inner sensory knowledge, but also human behavior. According to Farabi, they are fundamentally uncivilized (Farabi, 1971: 33).

²⁷ - المقدرّون

²⁸ - المجاهدون

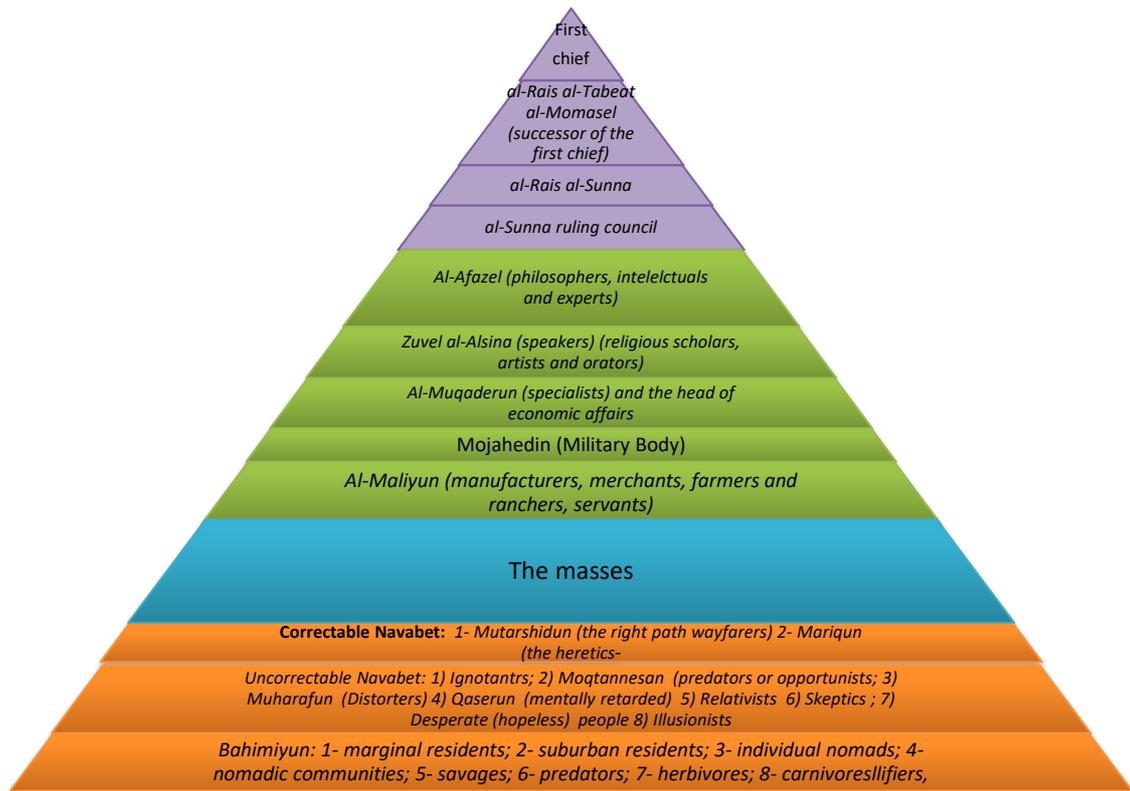
²⁹ - المالّيون

³⁰ - عوام

³¹ - المستثردون

³² - المارقون

SOCIOPOLITICAL HIERARCHY CAN BE SHOWN AS FOLLOWS:



Now, an important question is raised; based on which criteria did Farabi make these categorizations? In order to categorize the groups and classes in real sociopolitical systems, different criteria have been presented. For example, based on relations of production and in a sense, ownership of the means of production, Marx and Engels divide societies into the two classes, namely, the exploiters and the exploited, which are in constant struggle and this struggle becomes the driving engine of history (Marx and Engels, 1969); or Max Weber distinguishes between social classes based on class (economic position), dignity (social status) and party (political power) (Weber, 1968). The most important aim of this article is to find a criterion for Farabi's categorization. This article argues that by using the idea of correspondence of Farabi's ontological,

epistemological and anthropological systems, on the one hand, a correspondence can be established between social hierarchy and the perceptual and cognitive capacities of each of these levels and classes and in the second phase, ascribe it to the social function of each class. Thus, the two criteria of knowledge and function can be introduced as Farabi's measures.

THE CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN S SOCIOPOLITICAL HIERARCHY OF UTOPIA AND KNOWLEDGE AND FUNCTION

The ruler (the first chief and his successors)

Farabi does not refer to the method of establishment of utopia; what we know is that this utopia must be established by a prophet or a philosopher. Farabi believes that the prophet using his faculty of imagination and the philosopher using his rational faculty, can communicate with the active intellect and discover the rules of the higher realm and establish utopia (Farabi, 1982: 255-256). After establishing utopia, the prophet, or the philosopher, becomes the ruler of utopia and his title changes to the first chief.³³ The main duty of the first chief is to lead the public to welfare (Farabi, 1979: 53). For this purpose, he must use his faculty of imagination or his rational faculty to legislate civil laws. However, in legislation, the first chief must be committed to the Divine (Sharia) laws (Farabi, 1971: 75). Also, he must protect the entire utopia against possible threats (Farabi, 1971: 43). At the same time, must promote compassion and cooperation among the citizens³⁴ and finally, instill ethical and civic virtues in them (Farabi, 1971: 33-35).

³³ The first chief not only has higher faculty of imagination or rationality, but also has primary and secondary qualities. The main primary qualities of the first chief are the following: 1- wisdom; 2- power of speaking and persuasion; 3- military leadership (jihad); 4- perfect health (1991: 125). Some of the most important secondary qualities of the first chief are the following: being skillful in the art of war; good memory; intelligence; love of education; love of truth and justice and enmity against lying and oppression; piety; magnanimity; self-esteem; bravery; strong willpower and faith (Farabi, 1991: 221). It seems that secondary qualities are more objective manifestations of the primary qualities.

³⁴ In Farabi's view, compassion is the main factor that contributes to the solidarity of the members of utopia. He mentions three kinds of compassion: 1- compassion due to common virtues; 2- compassion due to interest; 3- compassion due to pleasure (Farabi, 1971: 70-71). Also, Farabi believes that compassion leads to further cooperation among the members of utopia (Farabi, 1991: 117-118; without date: 83; 1986b: 69).

In the absence of the first chief, al-Rais al-Tabeat al-Momasel³⁵, who lacks interpretive intellect but has active intellectual knowledge, takes over the governance of utopia. However, he possesses other qualities of the first chief.³⁶ He can use active intellect to legislate new laws and even complement the laws of the first chief. Al-Rais al-Tabeat al-Momasel can also modify the laws legislated by the first chief to adapt them to time and place circumstances (Farabi, 1976: 49; 1997: 80).

In the absence of al-Rais al-Tabeat al-Momasel, al-Rais al-Sunna³⁷ which has a lower level of active intellectual knowledge, takes over as the ruler of utopia. The primary duty of al-Rais al-Sunna is to maintain the laws and traditions established by the first chief and his successor. In other words, he cannot change these laws and traditions or legislate new laws. However, based on time and place circumstances and active intellect, he may interpret the laws established by the first chief and his successor.

Function	Type of knowledge	of	Ruling class
Establishment and leadership of utopia towards welfare, legislation of new laws, protecting utopia, promoting compassion and cooperation among citizens, instilling virtues among citizens, etc.	Using the faculty of imagination or rational faculty in order to access the active intellect (intuitive knowledge or rational knowledge based on interpretive intellect)		First chief (prophet or perfect philosopher)
Leadership of utopia towards welfare, legislation of new laws, protecting utopia, promoting compassion and cooperation among citizens,	Actual knowledge	rational	First chief's successor

³⁵ - الرئيس التابعه المماثل

³⁶ It seems that al-Rais al-Tabeat al-Momasel cannot establish utopia directly and establishment of utopia is exclusive to those who have access to active intellect and are committed to it.

³⁷ - الرئيس السنه

instilling virtues among citizens, etc.

Leadership of utopia, reinterpretation of previous laws, promoting compassion and cooperation among citizens, instilling virtues among citizens, etc.	Actual rational knowledge	Al-Rais al-Sunna
Leadership of utopia, protecting utopia, promoting compassion and cooperation among citizens, instilling virtues among citizens, etc.	At least one person with actual rational knowledge and other members with at least strong potential rational knowledge or ethical empirical faculty	Al-Sunna ruling council

ASSISTANTS OF THE RULER

Al-Afazel (the elites)

The al-afazel class have actual theoretical knowledge and empirical knowledge. In this sense, they can be considered intellectual elites of utopia. The al-Afazel class consists of philosophers, intellectuals and experts (Farabi, 1971: 65). Philosophers, who are called Hokama by Farabi, can perceive issues through argumentation and rational insight (actual theoretical knowledge). The ruler of utopia comes from this group and other rulers have to guide and lead people under his supervision (Farabi, 1991: 147). Intellectuals are at the next level. By intellectuals, Farabi means those who can use actual intellect and ethical empirical capacity³⁸ to manage general affairs (Farabi, 1971: 55-56). Intellectuals are, in turn, divided into three categories: superior intellectuals, civil intellectuals and domestic intellectuals. Superior intellectuals assist the ruler in political and military affairs and are themselves divided into three groups: those who

³⁸ - القوه المرويه

have general intellect and give consultation to the ruler about important political issues; those who have special intellect (enemy recognition ability) and give consultation to the ruler about the relationship with enemies; and those who have jihadi intellect and give consultation to the ruler about military strategies. Civil intellectuals are lower-level political and civil advisors of the ruler, and domestic intellectuals give special consultation to the ruler about familial issues³⁹ (Farabi, 1982: 70). At the lowest level of al-Afazel class, there are the experts. In Farabi's view, experts have ethical empirical intellect and due to their honesty and integrity, they are respected by people (Farabi, 1967: 89; 1971: 59). It seems that experts are not only ethical advisors to the ruler in everyday affairs, but also, due to their reputation among citizens, mediate between the ruler and the people. In general, different al-Afazel groups have political, civil, military and ethical functions and try to help the ruler govern society by using actual theoretical intellect and ethical empirical intellect (Farabi, 1982: 84).

Function	Type of knowledge	of Al-Afazel class
Leading and guiding citizens to attain the goal of utopia (public welfare)	High levels of theoretical knowledge based on actual intellect	Philosophers (scholars)
Giving consultation to the ruler about political issues	Theoretical knowledge based on actual intellect and ethical empirical intellect	Superior intellectuals (those who have general intellect)
Giving consultation to the ruler about relationship with the enemy	Theoretical knowledge based on actual intellect and ethical empirical intellect	Superior intellectuals (those who have special intellect for enemy recognition)

³⁹ It seems that regarding domestic intellectuals, Farabi has been influenced by Aristotle's discussions about household management. For further information, see:

Adapting military strategies and promoting ethical virtues in soldiers	Theoretical knowledge based on actual intellect and ethical empirical intellect	Superior intellectuals (those who have jihadi intellect)
Giving consultation to the ruler about civil issues	Theoretical knowledge based on actual intellect	Civil intellectuals
Giving consultation to the ruler about familial issues	Theoretical knowledge based on actual intellect	Domestic intellectuals
Giving ethical consultation to the ruler, his agents and the people	Ethical knowledge empirical	Experts (those who have empirical intellect)

The Zuvel al-Alsina (speakers) class

Zuvel al-Alsina (speakers) are cultural forces of utopia. To gain knowledge, they use inner sensory knowledge more than the rational faculty. Zuvel al-Alsina can be divided into religious scholars (jurisprudents and theologians), artists (poets, authors, singers, musicians, etc.) and orators (Farabi, 1971: 65). Al-Moqadderoun class consists of engineers, physicians, astronomers, mathematicians and other natural sciences scholars (Farabi, 1971: 65).

Religious scholars

Religious scholars usually use the faculty of rationality and imagination to strengthen citizens' faith. They can be divided into the two main categories of jurisprudents and theologians. Jurisprudents use their faculty of rationality and imagination to extract new religious rules (Farabi, 1967: 50). The main tool used by jurisprudents is persuading citizens through reference to religious sources. Jurisprudents are not only responsible for religious dynamism of utopia, but also strengthen religious unity (Farabi, 1967: 51).

In confronting religious opponents, theologians play the main role and in a sense, they adopt various solutions ranging from persuasion to suppression of the opponents.

But Farabi only agrees with their persuasive function and does not accept using any means to protect religion (Farabi, 1985: 77).

Orators

After jurists and theologians, there are orators⁴⁰. They usually use the faculty of memory and speech to excite the masses.⁴¹ By using rhetoric, orators played a significant role in convincing the masses to support the ruler (Farabi, 1967: 48).

Artists (poets, authors, singers, musicians, etc.)

After orators, there are artists. Artists use their faculty of visualization, fantasy and especially imagination in order to create works of art. Therefore, above all, they affect people's imagination. They can stimulate people's emotions in favor of the ruler and against his enemies. Among artists, Farabi has a special emphasis on poets. Unlike Plato who was against poets (Plato, 2009: 577) (Republic, 607b, 5-6), Farabi believes that the presence of poets is essential for utopia and argues that by using the power of visualization and imagination, poets teach people the proper way of thinking – especially intuitive thinking- (Farabi, 1971: 64). Farabi also considers a special status for musicians in utopia. He believes that by creating songs and melodies, musicians serve three major functions: 1- they entertain citizens; 2- they create imaginary forms in human soul that can be imitated; and 3- they simplify complicated issues (Farabi, 1996: 20-24). In general, by promoting aesthetic qualities in citizens, artists can cultivate ethical virtues, such as moderation, in the masses (Farabi, 1972: 1370; 1971: 64-65).

Function	Type of knowledge	The Zuvel al-Alsina (speakers) class
Extraction of new religious rules from religious sources, dynamism, strengthening religious and social unity	Inner sensory knowledge based on the faculties of rationality and imagination	Jurists

⁴⁰ - البلغاء

⁴¹ Farabi was familiar with Aristotle's book, Rhetoric, because in the second century AH, Rhetoric was translated from Syriac language into Arabic and Farabi tried to provide new examples in order to make Aristotle's rhetorical discussions more tangible for the Islamic world (Ziaie, 1989).

Rational defense of the religious boundaries as the unifying elements of utopia	Inner knowledge based on faculty of rationality	sensory based on	Theologians
Exciting the masses in line with the goals of utopia and the ruler	Inner knowledge based on the power of memory, illusion and visualization	sensory based on the	Orators
stimulating citizens' emotions, teaching intuitive thinking to citizens and cultivating ethical virtues in citizens, simplifying complicated concepts for citizens, maintaining the common culture	Inner knowledge based on the power of memory, illusion and visualization	sensory based on the	Artists (poets, authors, singers, musicians, etc.)

Al-Moqadderoun (specialists) class

Al-Moqadderoun class consists of engineers, physicians, astronomers, mathematicians and other natural sciences scholars (Farabi, 1971: 65). Al-Moqadderoun class is not only equipped with theoretical knowledge based on potential intellect, but also professional empirical intellect⁴² (Farabi, 1971: 67; 1985: 67). Due to the kind of their knowledge, they must be in charge of executive management of utopia. Perhaps, the most important function of Al-Moqadderoun class is administration of justice in utopia. Because this class is responsible for distribution of common goods (including health, property, dignity, position, status, etc.) among citizens and at the same time, protect their rights (Farabi, 1971: 71-72; 1967: 56). In this sense, it could be stated that in Farabi's utopia, all citizens enjoy basic rights which are inviolable. Yet, violating the rights of each citizen is considered not only an injustice against that citizen but also all the citizens, and thus such violations are severely punished (Farabi, 1971: 74-75). One of the other duties of Al-Moqadderoun class is preventing from monopoly of jobs by certain individuals (fighting social oligarchy). Al-Moqadderoun, as representatives of the ruler, must determine each citizen's job in accordance with his personal and social personality and prevent one individual from being appointed to several positions (Farabi, 1967: 53-56). Another function of Al-Moqadderoun class is to accurately assess

⁴² - العقل المهنيه

the social conditions and plan for the future (Farabi, 1967: 58). It seems that Al-Moqadderoun have another overt and covert function as well. Their overt function is transmission of knowledge and experience to the members of utopia. Unlike Plato, Farabi considers it necessary for all members of utopia to acquire knowledge (Farabi, 1995: 142-143; 1986a: 44-46). Their covert function has two aspects: on the one hand, they prevent sudden social change from occurring and, on the other hand, they create gradual changes in line with the goals of utopia. In this sense, Al-Moqadderoun maintain the coherence of utopia and try to drive it forward based on theoretical knowledge and experience (Frabi, 1971: 65).

Function	Type of knowledge	Al-Moqadderoun (specialists) class
Administrative and executive management: implementation of justice, protecting citizens' rights, fighting oligarchy, social planning, transmission of knowledge and experience to citizens, maintaining social coherence	professional empirical knowledge and theoretical knowledge based on actual intellect	engineers, physicians, astronomers, mathematicians and natural sciences scholars

Al-Mujahedun (the military) class

In Farabi's utopia, similar to Plato's Republic, the presence of the military and police forces is crucial; the only difference is that in Farabi's utopia, the main body of the military forces are located not below the ruler, but in the middle and lower levels of the sociopolitical pyramid of utopia. Because the bulk of the military (middle and low ranking officers and soldiers who comprise the majority of this class) mostly benefit from the inner senses based on the faculties of rationality and imagination as well as common sense to safeguard utopia. But at the top of the military class, there is the ruler and next to him, are those who have special intellect and those who have jihadi intellect who must be equipped both with theoretical intellect (actual intellect) and ethical virtues (ethical empirical intellect), because those who have special intellect give advice to the ruler regarding relationships with enemies; therefore, they not only must possess the power of speech, but also give advice to the ruler based on proper identification (ethical faculty). Also, those who have jihadi intellect must design proper military strategies against enemies (Farabi, 1982: 73). Next to those who have jihadi

intellect, based on a hierarchy, there are middle commanders who usually use the faculty of rationality and imagination to guide their subordinates. Then, there are low level commanders and soldiers who primarily use common sense to protect utopia. Obviously, the duty of the military is to maintain domestic security and protect the borders of utopia. The importance given by Farabi to those who have special intellect (enemy recognition ability) and jihadi intellect indicates that maintaining external security of utopia is more important to Farabi than domestic security. In other words, it seems that Farabi believes that dystopian communities are more dangerous for utopia than the threat of domestic unrest and uprising. Nevertheless, Farabi does not overlook the possibility of the uprising of the masses due to weakness of cognitive faculties. Therefore, he considers one of the duties of the military to be suppression of internal uprisings⁴³ (Farabi, 1982: 80). However, Farabi argues that, to successfully fulfill their duties, military forces must meet three main requirements: 1- obeying the leaders (Farabi, 1991: 127); 2- Adapting proper military strategies and tactics and using efficient military equipment; 3- having ethical virtues such as bravery (Farabi, 1971: 66). Yet, Farabi—unlike Ibn Khaldun who believes that suppression and war play a crucial role in maintaining the government (Ibn Khaldun, 2009: 2565-266) -emphasizes the role of cultural elements including education and argues that the use of physical force and coercion (mandatory discipline) is necessary only when persuasive and educational methods do not work (Farabi, 1403: 78).

Function	Type of knowledge	Military class
Leading the military in order to maintain domestic and foreign security	Interpretive rational knowledge or actual rational knowledge	Commander in chief (the ruler)
Giving consultation to the ruler about relationship with enemies	Actual rational knowledge and empirical knowledge	Those with special intellect (enemy recognition ability)
Adapting proper military strategies and tactics, promoting ethical virtues such as bravery among subordinates	Actual rational knowledge and empirical knowledge	Those with jihadi intellect

⁴³ However, Farabi does not consider the possibility of a coup by the military or uprising of other social classes.

Coordinating high-ranking and low-ranking commanders in order to protect utopia	Inner knowledge based on strong faculty of rationality and imagination	sensory based on	Middle-ranking commanders
Training and guiding soldiers	Inner knowledge based on weak faculty of rationality and imagination	sensory based on	Low-ranking commanders
Obeying commanders in order to maintain domestic and foreign order and security	Common knowledge (ranging from weak to strong)	sense	Soldiers

Al-Maliyun class (manufacturers, merchants, farmers, ranchers and servants)

Al-Maliyun class consists of manufacturers, merchants, farmers, ranchers and servants (Farabi, 1971: 65). In fact, Al-Maliyun are the economic forces of Farabi's utopia. However, there is a hierarchy within Al-Maliyun class. At the top of this class, there is the head of economic affairs who works under the supervision of the ruler and usually uses professional empirical faculty to develop macroeconomic plans. In fact, hierarchically, the head of economic affairs must be considered as part of Al-Moqadderoun class. Next, there are manufacturing sectors who use professional empirical faculty and common sense to produce goods. It seems that in terms of knowledge, they can be placed higher than the military class, but in terms of function, they are lower than the military. Because the main function of manufacturers is production of tools, clothing and housing of citizens. In addition, it seems that in utopia, maintaining securing (especially external security) is more important than creating wealth and providing economic needs.⁴⁴ Because Farabi believes that meeting these economic needs is merely a means of attaining the ultimate goal of utopia – welfare- whereas, protecting the territorial integrity of utopia is an intermediate goal which ensures public welfare (Farabi, 1971: 66). After manufacturers, there are merchants who usually use common sense and, to lesser extent, the professional knowledge. Merchants adjust the supply/demand (market) relation (Farabi, 1986c: 26). Next to them, there are farmers and ranchers who usually use common sense and their

⁴⁴ It seems that Farabi does not take seriously the role of production of wealth and meeting the economic requirements in maintaining domestic and foreign security.

main function is supplying healthy and nutritious food for the citizens. And at the lowest level, there are service sector employees who usually use common sense and the five senses to provide services- such as cleaning, transportation, etc. (Farabi, 1971: 67).

Function	Type of knowledge	Al-Maliyun (economic forces)	class
Macro-economic planning	Professional empirical knowledge		The head of economic affairs
Manufacturing tools, clothing, housing and creating wealth	Inner sensory knowledge based on common sense and professional empirical knowledge		Manufacturers
Trade, adjusting the market and creating wealth	Inner sensory knowledge based on common sense and professional empirical knowledge		Merchants
Providing healthy and nutritious food	Inner sensory knowledge based on common sense		Farmers and ranchers
Meeting service requirements such as cleaning, transportation, etc.	Inner sensory knowledge based on common sense		Service sector employees

In general, based on the type of knowledge and function, the positions of assistants of the ruler can be presented as follows:

Function	Type of knowledge	Class
Giving consultation to the ruler	Actual theoretical and ethical knowledge	Al-Afazel (philosophers, intellectuals and experts)
Propaganda in favor of the rulers and educating the	Inner sensory knowledge based on	Zuvel al-Alsina (religious scholars, orators)

CRITICS, OPPONENTS AND ADVERSARIES OF UTOPIA

Farabi's utopia also includes critics, opponents and adversaries. They can be divided into three main categories: correctable Navabet, uncorrectable Navabet and Bahimiyun (manlike beasts).

*Al-navabet*⁴⁵ (*weeds*)

According to Farabi, Al-Navabet are like weeds and thorn bushes that grow among bushes and plants (Farabi, 1994: 122). In Farabi's view, they are intellectually deprived and primarily use their weak imagination to perceive the world (Farabi, 1991: 149). However, Al-Navabet are divided into two main categories: correctable and uncorrectable.

Correctable Navabet includes: 1) Mutarshidun⁴⁶ (the right path wayfarers): They seek the truth, but they should be guided to find it; 2) Mariqun⁴⁷ (the heretics): They cannot properly understand the rules of al-madina al-fadila and fall into the abyss of misguidance. Al-Farabi's solution for the mostarshedan and mareqan is reforming and training (multistage instruction). Of course, if the multistage instruction is found successful, they will probably be transferred to the zu-al-sena class (rhetoricians). The the mostarshedan and mareqans' position enhancement in al-madīna al-fāḍila social and political hierarchies is not only due to the enhancement they experience in their faculties of imagination and ration; rather, it is also a result of their ability to communicate with their addressees (Farabi, 1996: 121). In contrast, if the multistage instruction is found fruitless, Al-farabi prescribes solutions such as expulsion, punishment, imprisonment and peonage for them (Farabi, 2001: 281).

Uncorrectable Navabet includes: 1) Ignotantr⁴⁸: They refute whatever truth they find; 2) Moqtannesan⁴⁹ (predators or opportunists): They intend to achieve dignity, leadership, power or wealth to do scholarly activities, but their intention is not to achieve felicity; 3) Muharafun⁵⁰ (Distorters): They have a tendency for dystopian ignorant cities. 4) Qaserun⁵¹ (mentally retarded): They rely solely on the weak faculty

⁴⁵ - النوابت

⁴⁶ - المسترشدون

⁴⁷ - المارقون

⁴⁸ - الجاهلون

⁴⁹ - المقتصون

⁵⁰ - المحرفون

⁵¹ - القاصرون

of rationality and imagination and reject anything that is inconsistent with it; 5) Relativists: They believe that all points of view are equally valid, and that all truth is relative to the individuals ; 6) Skeptics⁵²: They believe that «truth» exists, but they can never find it themselves; 7) Desperate (hopeless)⁵³ people: In frustrated people's mind, the human mentality (imaginative and rational faculties) does not have the ability to understand the truth; 8) Illusionists⁵⁴: They have no idea what truth is, and anyone who tells the truth is known as a liar or a cheater (Farabi, 1996: 120-125). In general, Uncorrectable Navabet disturb the public opinion with their actions (Farabi, 1991: 127). Al-Farabi's solution for Uncorrectable Navabet is: deportation; punishment; forced exploitation (forced labor); imprisonment (Farabi, 1991: 277-281).

Navabet Class		Type of knowledge		Function
Correctable: Mostarshedan and (the heretics)	The Mareqan	Inner Knowledge based on the faculty of rationality, illusion and imagination (Slight deviation)	sensory	Slight disturbance of public opinion
Uncorrectable: Nullifiers, Moharafe, Qaseran, Skeptics, Desperate people, illusionists	The Moqtannesan, relativists, (hopeless)	Inner Knowledge based on the faculty of rationality, illusion and imagination is very weak and wrong (Deep deviation)	sensory	Destruction of public opinion

Bahimiyun (manlike beasts)

Farabi refers to another class, known as Bahimiyun (manlike beasts) or Al-Sabiyun⁵⁵ who are not only deprived of rational and inner sensory knowledge, but also human behavior. According to Farabi, they are fundamentally uncivilized (Farabi, 1971: 33). The main difference between this group and Al-Navabet is that they are deprived of not only the faculty of thought and imagination but also will power. Put simply, Al-

⁵² - المظنون

⁵³ - المتحIRON

⁵⁴ - المتخيلون (المتوهمون)

⁵⁵ - السبعيون

Navabet are mainly deprived of proper thought and imagination but have a strong will power (Farabi, 1992b: 62). Bahimiyun are divided into eight categories: 1- marginal residents: they live in the margins of utopia in an uncivilized condition; 2- suburban residents: they live in the suburbs of utopia in an uncivilized condition; 3- individual nomads: these individuals wander around deserts; 4- nomadic communities: they live together in the deserts, but they treat each other as wild beasts; 5- savages: they live individually like wild animals; 6- predators: their main characteristic is violence and brutality; 7- herbivores: like animals, they are herbivores; 8- carnivores: like wild animals, they are carnivores and kill and devour other animals (Farabi, 1997: 87).

Function	Type of knowledge	Bahimiyun class
Disturbing public order and promoting uncivilized behaviors	Apparent sensory knowledge	Those living in the city margins, those living in the suburban areas, individual nomads, nomadic communities, savages, predators, herbivores, carnivores

Bahimiyun with their uncivilized behavior, disturb public order and are not educable (Farabi, 1997: 8). Therefore, Farabi presents several ways to eliminate their threat: 1- expulsion: those Bahimiyun who live in the margins or suburbs of utopia must be expelled from the city so that their behavior may not affect others (Farabi, 1971: 33); 2- exploitation (forced labor): those Bahimiyun who are physically strong can be used as draft animals; 3- slaughter and annihilation: those Bahimiyun who are like harmful animals must be killed. Even their offspring must be treated in the same way (Farabi, 1997: 87).

HIERARCHY OF FARABI'S UTOPIA: A COMBINATION OF HISTORICAL REALITIES AND NEW IDEAS

Now after introduction to sociopolitical hierarchy in Farabi's political thought, the following question is raised: Is the sociopolitical hierarchy in Farabi's utopia an abstract, subjective and original idea originating from Farabi's mind? Or has he drew on objective historical facts to establish this hierarchy?

From the objective and historical perspective, it appears that in developing the sociopolitical hierarchy of utopia, Farabi has been influenced by the pre-Islamic Iran's

historical class system as well as the post-Islamic class system (up to the third century A.H.); but the final system presented by him is unique and exclusive.

To prove this claim, it suffices to review the sociopolitical hierarchy in Iran from the time of the Medes to the Abbasid Caliphate.⁵⁶

During the Medes period (728 BC- 549 BC), the following hierarchy was established: 1- the king; 2- nobles and royalty; 3- the clergy (Magis); the army; 5- artisans and craftsmen; 6- farmers; 7- mercenaries; 8- aliens (Bayani, 2008: 65-67). During the Achaemenid Empire (550- 330 BC), the hierarchy changed as follows: 1- the king; 2- nobles and royalty; 3- the army; 4- merchants, artisans and farmers; 5- slaves. The same hierarchy was maintained during the Seleucid Empire (312-63 BC) and Parthian Empire (247 BC- 224 AD) (Bayani, 2008: 204-207). During the Sassanid era (224-651 AD), the following hierarchy was established: 1- the king; 2- nobles; 3- the clergy; 4- the army; 5- Secretaries; 6- farmers, artisans and merchants (Tensar's letter to Gushnasp, 2013: 55; Christensen, 2014: 232).

Since the invasion of Iran by Muslim Arabs till the collapse of the Umayyad Caliphate (635-750 AD), the hierarchy was changed as follows: 1- the Caliph; 2- Muslim Arab royalty; 3- peasants (landowners); 4- the military; 5- local rulers; 6- secretaries; 7- merchants; 8- artisans and craftsmen; 9- farmers; 10- captives (Sasanpour and Moftakhari, 2011: 83-86). The Abbasid Caliphate (750-1258 AD) the hierarchy was changed as follows: 1- the Caliph; 2- the Caliph's household (royalty); 3- ministry (government department); 4- the military; 5- mawali (non-Arab military forces);⁵⁷ 6- government agents; 7- scholars (scientists, poets, physicians, artists and men of letters); 8- merchants; 9- farmers, artisans and craftsmen (Zeidan, 2014: volume 5: 882).

⁵⁶ However, as Farabi admitted, in developing utopia, he was inspired by Plato's *The Republic*. Perhaps the greatest inspiration of Farabi from Plato is establishment of society based on knowledge. Farabi's utopia, similar to Plato's *The Republic*, is based on wisdom, and the wisest individuals rule it. Yet, there are also differences between Farabi's utopia and Plato's *Republic*. For instance, it seems that Farabi's classification is more complicated than that of Plato. Because Plato divides the *Republic* into three classes of the ruler, guards and the masses (Plato, 2009: sections 414-415: 201-203). However, regarding division of labor in utopia, Farabi not only pays special attention to knowledge and function of individuals and groups, but also meeting mutual needs, in a way that utopia survives based on cooperation and solidarity; whereas, the basis of division of labor in Plato's *Republic* is aptitude of individuals (Sankari, 1970: 2).

⁵⁷For further information about mawali, read Abdhusein Zarrinkoub's article entitled "Arab invasion of Iran and its consequences" (2006, 1385) in the book, *History of Iran* (Cambridge), volume 4, compiled by R. N. Fry, translated by Hasan Anousheh, sixth edition: Amir Kabir publication, pp. 9-52.

As for the characteristics of each class, there are some similarities and differences between various classes. For instance, similarities can be found between the king in ancient Iran and the ruler of utopia; they are both the intermediary between the higher realm and earth. Therefore, both rulers must have special characteristics. In ancient Iran, the ruler had to have power, royal bloodline, physical, mental and behavioral superiority (including physical and mental health, chivalry, love of truth, keeping promises, justice, self-restraint and wisdom), faithful to the religion and divine grace (Rajaie, 1996: 79-89). And the ruler of utopia must have the primary characteristics of wisdom, excellent power of thinking and rationalizing, power of public speaking and persuading the audience, excellent imagination, ability to conduct jihad, and physical health (Farabi, 1971: 66) and secondary characteristics such as: being competent and able to perform the duties of a king, being understanding, having a good memory, intelligence and being able to understand causal relations, love of education, self-restraint, self-esteem, love of truth and abhorrence of lying, indifference to material wealth, love of justice and enmity against atrocity and oppression, bravery and strong willpower (Farabi, 1991: 126-127), being educated in accordance with honor and human nature, strong faith in religion, practical adherence to religion, being well-known for adherence to values and ethical virtues (Farabi, 1982: 95). Some of these characteristics such as wisdom, health, love of truth, self-restraint and living in accordance with religious laws are shared by both of them. However, one of the main differences between Iran's ancient kings and the ruler of utopia is that the kingdom in ancient Iran, except for the Medes Empire, was hereditary,⁵⁸ whereas, it seems that the ruler of utopia must be chosen from among philosophers and intellectuals, which is one of the innovations of Farabi (1971: 66-67; 1967: 50; 1991: 125-127).

The other point is that in the pre- and post-Islamic Iran's sociopolitical hierarchy, there is a class known as nobles or royalty which has been the closest class to the rulers. However, in practice, this class has been to a great extent a closed social class and individuals were included in it because they were members of the royal family or due to their race or wealth; whereas, the main criterion that distinguishes the nobles in Farabi's utopia is knowledge and function and anyone with theoretical intellect or practical experience can enter this class. In addition, Farabi speaks of a separate class called *Zuvel al-Alsina* (speakers) who are very similar to the secretaries in the ancient Iran's monarchical system and the Islamic Caliphate as well as the scholars in the Abbasid era. The other point is that, unlike the hierarchy of the Medes and Sassanid Empire, Farabi does not consider the clergy (religious scholars) as a separate class, but

⁵⁸ However, during the Medes period, kings were selected (Rajaie, 1996: 101).

rather includes them in Zuvel al-Alsina class. The other point is that in the pre- and post-Islamic Iran's historical hierarchies, the military (the armed forces) were regarded as part of the upper middle-class; whereas, in Farabi's utopia, except for high-ranking military commanders, who have high levels of theoretical and empirical intellect, the bulk of the military are regarded as part of the lower middle-class. Another point is that in none of these historical sociopolitical hierarchies, is a separate class called Al-Moqadderoun (experts) seen. Therefore, Al-Moqadderoun class can be considered one of Farabi's innovations. However, Al-Moqadderoun class may be considered as a combination of ministry (government department) and government agents in the Abbasid period. Furthermore, regarding merchants, farmers, artisans and craftsmen that Farabi deems them as part of the Al-Maliyun class, it should be stated that they were specifically regarded as separate classes during the Umayyad and Abbasid periods; whereas, Farabi places them under the same category due to their similar function. Yet, it seems that Navabet and Bahimiyun classes are the innovations of Farabi. However, it seems that while describing the role of Navabet in utopia, Farabi has had in mind the religious opposition in the history of Islam, such as Hashviya sect (Pines, 1970: 230). However, what Farabi means by Navabet is not religious opposition, but rather political opposition whose knowledge and function is different from the knowledge and function of other classes and groups in utopia.

CONCLUSION

Farabi's utopia is the outcome of a special kind of ontology, epistemology and anthropology. In Farabi's view, the universe consists of two separate spheres (higher and the earthly realms) each of which are perceived to consist of a hierarchy of beings and each of these beings have a certain level of intellect. However, human beings also have different levels of knowledge (intuitive knowledge, theoretical and empirical rational knowledge, and apparent and inner sensory knowledge) and they can be categorized based on their understanding of the rational laws of the universe. Some humans have higher intuitive intellectual faculty (faculty of imagination) and rational faculty than other human beings. These individuals are either prophets or philosophers and must establish a sociopolitical system controlled based on rational laws of the universe. Now, the individuals and classes in this sociopolitical system must also be organized based on a hierarchy. The main question in the present article was "What is the basis and criterion for categorization of individuals and classes in Farabi's utopia? Do the people and classes in this community categorized based on wealth, power, prestige, race, religion, ownership, aptitude, etc. or is there a different criterion? The present article showed that in accordance with Farabi's ontology, epistemology and anthropology, individuals and classes in utopia are categorized based on their

knowledge and function. Therefore, apart from the type of knowledge, the function and actions of these individuals and groups is also a determining factor. These individuals' and groups' type of knowledge, the extent to which they act upon their knowledge, and finally, the contribution that they make to the main goal of utopia – public welfare- determines their status in utopia. However, the result of such a hierarchical society is an integrated class system in which classes have an organic interrelationship. Therefore, it is obvious that in such a society, the autonomy of individuals and groups does not make any sense and all must serve the ruling class. On the other hand, in such a society, any kind of opposition and dissention is severely oppressed. Because in this society, the type of knowledge and function of individuals and classes have been predetermined and any different or opposing type of knowledge or function is rejected as deviation, illusion, ignorance, skepticism, opportunism, rebellion, etc.

The final point is that although the hierarchy of Farabi's utopia is not completely original and new and in developing this class system, Farabi has had historical realities in mind, yet the entirety of this hierarchy has been reorganized in a new way and Farabi has tried to organize the classes and determine their status in his utopia based on his ontology, epistemology and anthropology.

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