

**IBN HALDUN UNIVERSITY
ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS INSTITUTE
DEPARTMENT OF CIVILIZATION STUDIES**

MASTER THESIS

**HUMAN, SOCIETY, AND STATE IN CONFUCIUS AND
AL-FARABI: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS**

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THESIS SUPERVISOR

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ISTANBUL, 2024

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by

ELİF CANALTAY

**A thesis submitted to the Alliance of Civilizations Institute in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in
Civilization Studies**

THESIS SUPERVISOR

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ISTANBUL, 2024

APPROVAL PAGE

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in Civilization Studies.

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ÖZ

KONFÜÇYÜS VE FARABİ'DE İNSAN, TOPLUM VE DEVLET: KARŞILAŞTIRMALI BİR ANALİZ

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Bu tez, Çin ve İslâm felsefelerinin klasik çağının iki önemli ismi Konfüçyüs ve Farabi'nin ideal insan, ideal toplum ve ideal devlet hakkındaki görüşlerini incelemektedir. Bu karşılaştırmalı analiz, her iki düşünürün insan, toplum ve devlet konularında sanılanın aksine pek çok noktada benzer görüşler sunduklarını göstermeye çalışmaktadır. Her iki düşünür de uyumlu sosyal ilişkilerin ve ahlaki davranışın önemini vurgulamakla birlikte, metafizik temelleri ve nihai hedefleri bakımından önemli ölçüde farklılaşmaktadırlar. Konfüçyüs günlük yaşamda temellenen ahlaki ilkelere odaklanır ve toplumsal düzeni korumak için bireylerde erdemlerin geliştirilmesini savunur. Metafizik kaygılardan ziyade pratik bilgelige öncelik verir ve iyi yönetilen bir toplumun ahlaki erdemi somutlaştıran, ideal insan olan ve halkına örnek olarak rehberlik eden liderlere dayandığına inanır. Buna karşılık Farabi'nin felsefesi, evrenin ilahi düzene göre yapılandırıldığı metafizik bir çerçeveye dayanır. Onun ideal toplumu, bireylerin hem entelektüel hem de ahlaki erdemlerin peşinde koştuğu, bu dünyada ve ahirette mutluluğa götüren bir toplumdur. Farabi'nin devletindeki hükümdar sadece ahlaki bir örnek değil, aynı zamanda toplumu son yetkinlik olan mutluluğa doğru yönlendiren bir filozoftur. Bu tez medeniyet araştırmalarına iki şekilde katkıda bulunmayı amaçlamaktadır. İlk olarak, ortak noktaları yakalayıp, kültürel, tarihi ve dini farklılıklarına rağmen insan

toplumlarının sosyal ve siyasi zorluklara benzer idealist vizyonlarla nasıl yanıt verdiklerini vurgulamaktadır. İkinci olarak, bu iki medeniyetin sorunları çözüme konusundaki farklılıklarını ortaya koyarak, insan medeniyetlerinin zenginliğini ve çeşitliliğini göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Farabi, İdeal Devlet, İdeal İnsan, Konfüçyüs, İdeal Toplum.



ABSTRACT

HUMAN, SOCIETY, AND STATE IN CONFUCIUS AND AL-FARABI: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

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This thesis analyzes the views of Confucius and al-Farabi, two prominent names of the classical era of Chinese and Islamic philosophy, on the ideal human, society, and state. Contrary to popular belief, this comparative analysis attempts to show that both thinkers offer similar views on human, society, and the state in many aspects. While both emphasize the importance of harmonious social relations and moral behavior, they also differ significantly in their metaphysical foundations and ultimate goals. Confucius focuses on ethical principles rooted in daily life, advocating for cultivating virtues within individuals to maintain social order. He prioritizes practical wisdom over metaphysical concerns, believing that a well-governed society relies on leaders who embody moral virtue, serve as ideal humans, and guide their people by example. In contrast, al-Farabi's philosophy is based on a metaphysical framework, where the universe is structured according to divine order. His ideal society is one in which individuals pursue both intellectual and moral virtues, leading to happiness in this life and the hereafter. The ruler in al-Farabi's state is not only a moral exemplar but also a philosopher, guiding society toward happiness, the ultimate perfection. This thesis aims to contribute to civilization studies in two ways. First, by capturing the commonalities, it highlights how human societies, despite their cultural, historical, and religious differences, often respond to social and political challenges through similar

idealistic visions. Second, by delineating the differences between these two civilizations regarding solving these problems, it demonstrates the richness and diversity of human civilizations.

Keywords: Al-Farabi, Confucius, Ideal Human, Ideal Society, Ideal State.



İTHAF

Bu çalışmamı, kendisini tanıma fırsatı bulamadığım Keşmir’de vefat eden hürmetli dedem Hamit Canaltay’a, çocukluğumu birlikte geçirdiğim merhum babaannem Fazıla Canaltay’a, küçüklüğümüzden beri biz torunlarına ata-baba (ecdat) ve yurt bilincini aşıl原因 kıymetli dedem Mansur Teyci’ye, bizlerin üzerinde büyük emeđi olan sevgili anneannem Gülay Teyci’ye ve biricik yeşil apam Bagila Teyci’ye ithaf ediyorum.



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Bu tez ile dört yıl süren yüksek lisans eğitimimi tamamlamamın heyecanını ve gururunu yaşıyorum. Bu süreçte bana destek olan ve beni teşvik eden herkese tüm samimiyetimle teşekkür etmek istiyorum.

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Son olarak tez çalışmam boyunca bana sabır ve anlayış gösteren sevgili aileme, özellikle kardeşlerim Ebubekir ve Hüsna'ya teşekkür etmek istiyorum. Eğitim hayatım boyunca bana hem maddi hem manevi tüm desteklerini veren, haklarını asla ödeyemeyeceğim canım anneme ve babama sonsuz teşekkürler.

Elif Canaltay

İSTANBUL, 2024



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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The controversy surrounding the question of whether there is a Chinese philosophy has persisted for decades. Many scholars and philosophers worldwide have debated the existence of a distinct Chinese philosophy. While some argue that there is indeed a unique philosophical perspective that can be traced back to ancient China, others maintain that there is no such thing as Chinese philosophy. As an example for the last argument, Kant once stated that:

Philosophy is not to be found in the whole Orient . . . Their teacher Confucius teaches in his writings nothing outside a moral doctrine designed for the princes . . . and offers examples of former Chinese princes . . . But a concept of virtue and morality never entered the heads of the Chinese . . . In order to arrive at an idea . . . of the good [certain] studies would be required, of which [the Chinese] know nothing.¹

The two approaches to Chinese philosophy can be reconciled if we prefer a broader definition of philosophy. The term philosophy can be understood in two different senses, a broader one versus a narrower one. The broader meaning of philosophy is that it is a worldview and a general theory about existence.² When we think about philosophical ideas and principles, we see that they form the basis for how people perceive and make sense of the world around them.³ And yet, there has been a strong trend in the West that philosophy, which is the product of the investigative, examining, and systematizing characteristic of the human mind, is of Greek origin.⁴ This is due to an overwhelming Eurocentrism, which has been conceiving philosophy in a narrower sense – as a specific historical intellectual tradition that originated in ancient Greece.

¹ Julia Ching, “Chinese Ethics and Kant,” *Philosophy East and West* 28, no. 2 (April 1978): 169, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1397740>.

² Mahmut Kaya, “Felsefe,” in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: TDV Yayınları, 1995).

³ This definition is based upon what I learned from Prof. Dr. Alparslan Açıkgenç in his Comparative History of Thought lectures. For details of what is meant by worldview, see Alparslan Açıkgenç, *Islamic Scientific Tradition in History* (Kuala Lumpur: Penerbit IKIM, 2014), Chapter 1.

⁴ Kaya, “Felsefe.”

It is this narrower Eurocentric definition of philosophy that denies the existence of philosophical practices in other parts of the world. But if we consider philosophy as more broadly a systematic attempt to understand and explain the existence and all that it entails, then we can see that each culture and civilization has its unique historical philosophical struggle. Even within a single civilization, there may be numerous types of philosophical schools, shaped by various factors such as geography, history, and social status. In this thesis, we will understand philosophy in this broader sense and compare two important philosophers from two different civilizations, namely the Chinese philosopher Confucius (d. 479 BC) and the Muslim philosopher al-Farabi (d. 950).

1.1. Background

1.1.1. Chinese Philosophy

Over a century ago, the term philosophy -within the Western understanding- entered the Chinese lexicon. During the latter half of the 19th century in the Qing Dynasty, which was the first to introduce Western philosophy to Japan, Nishi Amane (西周, 1829–1897) merged the characters 哲 (*zhe*) and 学 (*xue*) to create the word philosophy 哲学 (*zhe xue*) which literally means learning (学) of wisdom or sagacity (哲). It was the Chinese diplomat and scholar Huang Zunxian (黄遵宪, 1848–1905) who in the late Qing Dynasty, brought this concept from Japan to China.⁵ Then, before introducing the term “philosophy” into Chinese literature, was philosophy or philosophical practice absolutely absent from the intellectual discourse in China? If we consider philosophy as a set of beliefs and principles that shape our worldview and provide a general theory about existence, the Spring and Autumn (770–476 BC) and Warring States (475–221 BC) periods (春秋战国) are pivotal eras in the development of Chinese philosophy. In Chinese history, these periods are known as a time of intensive political fragmentation preceding the Chinese unification under the Qin Dynasty (221–206 BC). Probably because of intensive attempts to understand the

⁵ Sun Bin 孙彬, Nishi Amane de zhexue yici yu zhongguo chuantong zhexue fanchou 西周的哲学译词与中国传统哲学范畴 When the East Meets West: Nishi Amane’s Translation of Western Philosophical Terms and Connections with Chinese Classical Philosophy, Tsinghua University 2015, 17.

nature of this social and political turmoil, this period also proved to be a time characterized by schools that deeply explored fundamental questions about existence, morality, and governance. Scholar-officials played a crucial role in offering their perspectives on how to address societal issues.⁶ The political climate at the time influenced philosophical discourse, prompting discussions focused on morality, political organization, and effective governance.

During the late Spring and Autumn period and the Warring States period, various schools of thought emerged, and the number of schools was so great that scholars named this period 百家争鸣 (*bai jia zheng ming*) means the “Hundred Schools of Thought” to emphasize the rich diversity of ideas and intellectual debates that characterized ancient Chinese philosophy. The term 家 (*jia*) which literally translates to house but conveys the notion of group was used by early thinkers to identify with specific doctrinal groups. The term 争鸣 (*zheng ming*) can be translated as contention or debate. It refers to the lively exchange of ideas, debates, or discussions among scholars, thinkers, or intellectuals. Despite the term 百 (*bai*) “hundred”, there were not literally one hundred schools, rather, it is a figurative expression used to refer to the multitude of philosophical perspectives, theories, and doctrines that emerged during this period. Later historians attempted a classification of these hundred schools. The first one was Sima Tan (司马谈, d. 110 BCE) who was the father of Sima Qian⁷ (司马迁, 145–86 BCE). In the *Shiji* 《史记》 also known as the *Records of the Grand Historian*, Sima Qian quotes his father’s classification of six main schools as follows: the Yin-Yang School (阴阳家 *yin yang jia*), Confucianism (儒家 *ru jia*), Mohism (墨家 *mo jia*), the School of Names/Dialecticians (名家 *ming jia*), Legalism (法家 *fa jia*), and Daoism (道家 *dao jia*).⁸ These philosophical traditions provided a foundation for understanding the universe, human behavior, and the proper organization of society, profoundly shaping Chinese culture.

⁶ Karyn L Lai, “An Introduction to Chinese Philosophy,” n.d., 3.

⁷ Sima Qian, known as the “Grand Historian”, was a prominent Chinese historian during the Han Dynasty. He authored the monumental the *Records of the Grand Historian*. This comprehensive historical work covers the history of China from ancient times to the reign of Emperor Wu of Han. It gives detailed accounts of historical events and biographies of prominent figures.

⁸ Fung Yu-Lan and Fuat Aydın, “Çin Felsefesi Tarihi,” n.d., 39–40.

Among the six major schools, the Yin-Yang School explores cosmology, the balance of opposites (阴阳 *yin yang*), and the interplay of these opposite forces in the universe. It emphasizes the importance of harmony with the natural rhythms of the universe. Founded by Confucius, Confucianism emphasizes moral cultivation, social harmony, ethical behavior, and the importance of proper conduct and filial piety. It's still one of the most influential philosophical traditions in China and beyond. Founded by Mo Zi (墨子 460/480 BC–390/420 BC), Mohism promotes universal love, impartiality, and utilitarianism. It advocates for social welfare, pacifism, and the rejection of excessive luxury and extravagance. The School of Names, also known as the Logicians, focuses on language, logic, and semantics. It explores the nature of language and its relationship to reality, aiming to clarify concepts and resolve philosophical disputes through rigorous analysis and argumentation. Legalism, advocated by philosophers such as Han Fei Zi (韩非子 280 BC–233 BC), emphasizes strict laws, centralized power, and harsh punishment as means to maintain social order and stability. It prioritizes practical governance and is often associated with authoritarianism. Associated with Lao Zi (老子 571 BC–470 BC) and Zhuang Zi (庄子 369 BC–386 BC), Daoism focuses on living in harmony with the natural order (道 *dao*), spontaneity, simplicity, and the cultivation of inner peace. It emphasizes the concept of non-action (无为 *wu wei*) and the relativity of opposites (*yin yang*).⁹

After this general description of the six major schools, it should be highlighted that Confucianism holds significant importance because of its profound impact on the cultural, social, and political development of East Asia. Confucianism is a philosophical, ethical, and cultural system that is rooted in the teachings of Confucius. The term Confucianism was coined by Jesuit missionaries in the 16th century when they Latinized the name of Confucius from Chinese Kong Zi (孔子). In Chinese, Confucianism is commonly referred to as 儒家 (*ru jia*), which means the “School of the Scholars” or “Confucian School”. When we look for the definition of the term 儒 (*ru*), we see that the Han Dynasty classical texts give three different meanings of *ru*:

⁹ This summary of the six major schools is based upon my lecture notes from Dr. Elvida Ünal An's Chinese Philosophy lecture.

(a) classicist; (b) Confucian; and (c) government official.¹⁰ In early Han texts, a *ru* was simply a ‘classicist’ who had mastered ancient texts, proper conduct, and music. Later, some scholars reserved the term for ‘Confucians’. As classicists and scholars gained influence in government circles, the term *ru* took on a third meaning. By the late Former Han times, it came to mean a member of the pool of actual or potential ‘government officials’. As more classicists held key posts in the government, the state began to assess *ru* mastery through formal examinations and recommendations.¹¹ This process in the meaning of the term *ru* also highlights the intertwining of Confucianism with governance in ancient China.

Confucianism emphasizes the importance of personal and governmental morality, social harmony, and respect for elders and authority. It has had a profound impact on Chinese culture and society for over two thousand years and continues to be influential today. Not only in China but also the far-reaching impact of Confucianism on East Asian societies has had a considerable effect on their culture, ethics, and social structure. Over time, Confucianism has undergone significant changes and developments, as it has incorporated new ideas, responded to social changes, and interacted with other philosophical traditions. According to Xinzhong Yao, Confucianism has gone through five stages, or it has presented itself in five dimensions. (i) Confucianism in formation: During its formative years, Confucianism evolved into a classical doctrine, emerging during the Spring and Autumn period (770–476 BCE) under Confucius and his followers. This philosophy, aimed at fostering peace and harmony, saw further refinement in the Warring States period (475–221 BCE), notably through the contributions of scholars like Meng Zi (孟子 372–289 BCE) and Xun Zi (荀子 313–238 BCE). These developments elevated Confucianism into a major philosophical school, marked by diverse interpretations and presentations. (ii) Confucianism in adaptation: In the second phase, Confucianism underwent reform through interactions with other philosophical schools like Legalism, Yin-Yang, the Five Elements, Mohism, and Daoism. With the rise of the Han Dynasty after the fall of the Qin Dynasty, Confucianism gradually recovered from persecution and discrimination. Confucian scholars adapted their doctrines to the eclectic Han culture,

¹⁰ Xinzhong Yao, ed., *Routledge Curzon Encyclopedia of Confucianism.*, 1st paperback ed (London: Routledge, 2013), 507.

¹¹ Yao, 507.

leading to transformations and extensions of classical Confucianism. This period saw the emergence of two prominent schools, the New Text and the Old Text Schools¹², which engaged in debates and new interpretations of Confucian classics. Later, during the Wei-Jin Dynasties (220–266, 266–535), scholars integrated Daoist philosophy into Confucianism or adapted Confucian principles to Daoist worldviews, resulting in the convergence known as Dark Learning or Mysterious Learning. (iii) Confucianism in transformation: In response to challenges from Buddhism and Daoism, Confucianism of the Song-Ming Dynasties (960–1279, 1368–1644) evolved into Neo-Confucianism (新儒学 *xin ru xue*). This new form of Confucian Learning reasserted authority over social and religious life by reformulating views on the universe, society, and the self. Inspired by Buddhist and Daoist thought, scholars purified Confucianism by removing perceived superstitions, resulting in a comprehensive system known as Neo-Confucianism. (iv) Confucianism in variation: During the fourth period, Chinese Confucianism spread beyond China to other East Asian countries, blending with local cultures and evolving into diverse forms. While its origins lie in China, Confucianism has expanded globally, with early influences seen in Vietnam, Korea, and Japan during the Former Han Dynasty. Initially replicating the Chinese system, scholars in these countries eventually developed unique interpretations, incorporating their own experiences and insights. This led to the creation of new manifestations of Confucian Learning tailored to meet local social and political needs, resulting in distinct yet interconnected streams that persisted into the twentieth century. (v) Confucianism in renovation: In the modern era, Confucianism evolves through interactions with global philosophies, particularly European and Christian traditions. Twentieth-century scholars like Xiong Shili, Fung Yu-lan, and Mou Zongsan dedicate themselves to

¹² The New Text School, an early form of Scholastic Confucianism, derives its name from two key aspects: firstly, the Confucian classics that were rewritten in a new script during the Former Han Dynasty, and secondly, a sophisticated method of interpretation that delves into the deep and nuanced language of these texts. In contrast, the Old Text School advocates for a return to the original, unembellished meanings of the classics. They emphasize the exploration and explanation of texts written in the old script, dating back to before the Qin Dynasty. While the Old Text School also studies the Confucian classics, their approach avoids elements such as yin-yang, charts, or predictive techniques, focusing instead on straightforward interpretations. This positions them in opposition to what they perceive as the superstition and supernatural elements favored by the New Text School. For further details, see Hans Van Ess, *The Old Text/New Text Controversy: Has the 20th Century Got It Wrong?* *T'oung Pao*, Second Series, Vol. 80, Fasc. 1/3 (1994).

reviving Confucian values and reshaping its doctrines. Their work constitutes a significant part of modern new Confucianism.¹³

Given this general picture of Confucianism, in the following chapters of this thesis, we will delve deeper into Confucius' thoughts on the ideal human, society, and state.

1.1.1.1. Confucius: His Life, *Lunyu* 《论语》, and General Philosophy

Confucius is a Latinized version of the name Kong Zi (孔子), which means “Master Kong” in Chinese. He was born in 551 BCE in the Lu State (鲁国 *lu guo*), which is now located on the south side of Shandong Province in Eastern China.¹⁴ Confucius' ancestors belonged to the royal family of the state of Song and were in line for the throne. However, his descendants had to flee to the state of Lu due to infighting among the Song nobles. Since Song and Lu did not share the same surname, Confucius' ancestors could not become Lu nobles under the patriarchal system of that time. For four generations, they remained unknown in Lu. It was only in the fifth generation that Confucius' father, Shu Liang He (叔梁紇), was recorded - but he was only a warrior. According to the patriarchal system of the time, Confucius, being the son of a warrior, could not inherit his father's aristocratic rank and was relegated to the status of a commoner. This early social status and life experience of Confucius had a profound impact on the formation of his thoughts and the direction of his life. He desired to enter the circle of nobles but was insulted and coldly rejected, which played a significant role in shaping his worldview and guiding his life choices.¹⁵

The *Analects* 2.4 is like a mini autobiography of Confucius, it outlines a progression of stages in Confucius' life, detailing his intellectual and moral development during his lifetime. He says:

At fifteen I set my mind upon learning; at thirty I took my place in society; at forty I became free of doubts; at fifty I understood Heaven's Mandate; at sixty my ear

¹³ Xinzhong Yao, *An Introduction to Confucianism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 7–9.

¹⁴ Yu-Lan and Aydın, “Çin Felsefesi Tarihi,” 51.

¹⁵ Qian Mu 钱穆, *Kongzi Chuan* 孔子传 Biography of Confucius, Beijing: San lian shudian, 2020: 32.

was attuned; and at seventy I could follow my heart's desires without overstepping the bounds of propriety.¹⁶

This passage outlines a lifelong journey of intellectual and moral development of Confucius, including learning, social engagement, moral certainty, understanding cosmic principles, refined perception, and the harmonization of personal desires with ethical conduct. It reflects Confucius' view that a fulfilling life involves constant self-improvement and the integration of ethical values into personal and social actions.

During Confucius' lifetime in the Spring and Autumn period (770–476 BC), China was fragmented into numerous feudal states, each competing for power and resources as central authority weakened. This era was characterized by interstate conflicts and internal power struggles, leading to a breakdown of moral and cultural values. Confucius sought to address the widespread chaos and restore order by emphasizing ethical principles and moral leadership. Alongside him, other thinkers explored the root causes of societal disarray and proposed solutions. This period, known as the Hundred Schools of Thought (诸子百家) in Chinese history, witnessed a diverse range of intellectual inquiry and philosophical discourse aimed at addressing the challenges of the time.¹⁷

During his travels from 498 to 484 BCE, Confucius journeyed through various states and cities, imparting principles of effective governance to his students in hopes of alleviating the prevailing unrest and confusion. He meticulously studied the history, social structure, customs, and administration of each region he visited, gathering knowledge from diverse sources to inform his teachings. Despite his efforts, Confucius faced little recognition during his lifetime, with true appreciation coming only after his death. Following his death in 479 BCE, his disciples preserved and propagated his teachings, which gradually gained prominence amid the turbulent times. Confucian schools continued to endure, albeit most effectively during periods of peace. Through the dedicated efforts of his students, Confucianism spread across East Asia, influencing state ideologies and societal norms. Confucius' vision of an ideal society,

¹⁶ 子曰：“吾十有五而志于学，三十而立，四十而不惑，五十而知天命，六十而耳顺[2]，七十而从心所欲，不逾矩。” Kongzi 孔子, *Lunyu 论语 [Analects]*, vol. 1 (Jinan: Shandong donghua chubanshe, 2020), 53.

¹⁷ See pages 3-4 for detailed information about the Hundred Schools of Thought.

upheld by his students, served as a guiding principle for subsequent dynasties, shaping the course of history in the region.¹⁸

1.1.1.1.1. *Lunyu* 《论语》 / the *Analects*

The Chinese title 论语 (*lunyu*) meaning discussions, conversations, and sayings, translated as the *Analects*, is a compilation of the words of Confucius and his students, serving as the primary source for understanding Confucius and his teachings. Comprising 20 sections or books and approximately 500 chapters or paragraphs, it took around a century after Confucius' death to compile his disciples' records into a cohesive book. The version of the *Analects* we have today didn't emerge until the third century CE, sparking debates about its authenticity in faithfully representing Confucius' original teachings. It's widely acknowledged that different sections of the *Analects* originate from various dates and sources. For instance, Books 3–9 are considered the oldest, while Books 16–17 come from sources less closely associated with Confucius' earliest followers. Conversely, Books 18 and parts of Book 14, containing anti-Confucian stories akin to those found in Daoist works, are believed to be later additions.¹⁹ In general terms, it covers a wide range of topics, including ethics, morality, governance, education, family, and interpersonal relationships.

The *Analects* was once believed to record Confucius' teachings faithfully, but scholars began to question this notion during the Qing dynasty. Early references to *Lunyu* suggest its existence before the Han Dynasty, indicating its presence during the Warring States period. Modern scholars agree that the *Analects* likely comprises teachings from various periods, possibly compiled by later editors. Some scholars divide it into two sections, while others, divide it into four strata representing different viewpoints. Some also propose that each book represents a separate stratum, suggesting a longer composition period than previously thought. Despite potential differences in origin, the *Analects* exhibits enough consistency in language and ideas to be considered a unified text. Notably, later sections of it may have been added, but

¹⁸ Daniel K. Gardner, *Confucianism: A Very Short Introduction*, Very Short Introductions (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 1–15, <https://doi.org/10.1093/actrade/9780195398915.001.0001>.

¹⁹ Yao, *An Introduction to Confucianism*, 65–66.

they lack the complex ideas seen in Meng Zi and Xun Zi.²⁰ This suggests the *Analects* were likely written before the early fourth century BCE, offering insight into Confucian beliefs prior to the introduction of new philosophical ideas.²¹

1.1.2. Islamic Philosophy

The rise of Islamic philosophy began with the translation movement which involved the translation of works mainly from Greek, Persian, Indian, and Syriac languages into Arabic in 8th century Baghdad. These translated texts prompted a reevaluation of philosophical problems in line with Islamic civilization's needs and the period from the 8th to the 12th centuries, known as the classical period, saw the flourishing of Islamic philosophical thought, marked by foundational works and the crystallization of key concepts and solutions. Muslim philosophers, having absorbed earlier philosophical traditions and philosophers, particularly Plato and Aristotle, brought forth innovations by integrating new conceptual elements. Operating within a monotheistic framework, they addressed fundamental Islamic tenets like *tawhid*, prophethood, and the afterlife through the universal language of philosophy. Within this context, classical Muslim philosophers viewed philosophy as the pursuit of truth and reality, emblematic of humanity's quest for perfection.²²

Generally speaking, Muslim philosophers followed Greek philosophy, specifically Aristoteles, in the categorization of philosophy into theoretical and practical realms. Theoretical philosophy (*al-falsafah al-nazariyyah*), according to this classification, encompassed three main disciplines: physics, which deals with the natural world and its phenomena; mathematics, which addresses abstract quantitative relations and structures; and metaphysics, which explores the nature of existence, reality, and the divine. Practical philosophy (*al-falsafah al-'amaliyyah*), on the other hand, concentrated on the application of philosophical principles to everyday life and

²⁰ Meng Zi (孟子 Mencius) and Xun Zi (荀子) were two prominent Chinese philosophers who lived during the Warring States period, following Confucius. Both contributed significantly to the development of Confucian thought and Chinese philosophy, offering different perspectives on human nature, morality, and governance.

²¹ Edward Slingerland, "Classical Confucianism (I): Confucius and the Lun-Yü," in *History of Chinese Philosophy*, ed. Bo Mou, Routledge History of World Philosophies, Vol. 3 (London: Routledge, 2009), 108–9.

²² M. Cüneyt Kaya, "Klasik Dönemde Felsefe," accessed May 2, 2024, <https://islamusunceatlası.org/felsefenin-klasik-cagi>.

governance. It included ethics (*tadbīr al-nafs*), which examines moral values and the principles of right conduct; household management (*tadbīr al-manzil*), which involves the organization and ethical considerations of family and domestic life; and politics (*tadbīr al-mudun*), which addresses the governance of societies and the establishment of just and virtuous political systems.²³

With the entry of philosophy into the rich Islamic geography, as an inevitable consequence of this, various philosophical schools emerged in Muslim society most notably the Mashsha'i school, the Ishraqi school, and the Mu'tazili school. The Mashsha'i school, also known as the Aristotelian tradition, emphasized the use of reason and logic in philosophical inquiry. Prominent philosophers like al-Kindi (d. 866?), al-Farabi, and Ibn Sina (d. 1037) are associated with this tradition. They made significant contributions to Islamic philosophical thought by integrating Aristotelian metaphysics, logic, and natural philosophy with Islamic theology.²⁴ Ishraqi philosophers, such as Suhrawardi (d. 1191) and his followers, prioritized intuitive knowledge over reasoning, focusing on spiritual illumination. The core belief of this philosophy was "the doctrine of the light", which states that light is the essence of existence. In this school, symbolism was used to convey metaphysical truths, and the perfect human concept is explored as a spiritual ideal.²⁵ Regarding the Mu'tazilites, even though the Mu'tazili school did not originate from the Greek philosophical tradition, Mu'tazili scholars shared with the philosophical school an emphasis on rationality. They were a rationalist school of thought that emerged in the early Islamic period, primarily active during the 8th to 10th centuries. They stressed reason (*'aql*) in theology, emphasizing God's oneness, human free will, and the created nature of the Qur'an.²⁶ These schools of thought represent the diversity and richness of Islamic philosophy, each offering unique perspectives on fundamental philosophical questions and making significant contributions to Islamic philosophy.

²³ Hümeyra Özturan, "The Practical Philosophy of Al-Fārābī and Avicenna: A Comparison," *Nazariyat İslam Felsefe ve Bilim Tarihi Araştırmaları Dergisi (Journal for the History of Islamic Philosophy and Sciences)* 5, no. 1 (May 15, 2019): 4–5, <https://doi.org/10.12658/Nazariyat.5.1.M0071en>.

²⁴ Mahmut Kaya, "Meşşâiyye," in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (Ankara: TDV Yayınları, 2004).

²⁵ Mahmut Kaya, "İşrâkiyye," in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: TDV Yayınları, 2001).

²⁶ İlyas Çelebi, "Mu'tezile," in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (Ankara: TDV Yayınları, 2020).

Al-Kindi is accepted as the first Arab Muslim philosopher who systematically engaged in philosophical inquiry along the Greek tradition. Al-Farabi significantly advanced the philosophical legacy established by al-Kindi, reshaping concepts and problems within Islamic philosophy. By contextualizing and reinterpreting inherited philosophical knowledge, al-Farabi crafted a comprehensive system that spanned logic, metaphysics, epistemology, psychology, ethics, and politics. Central to his framework was the theory of *sudūr* or emanation, elucidating the relationship between God and the universe following prevailing cosmological understandings of the era. Al-Farabi's examination of the macrocosm through the lens of the First Cause left a lasting imprint on Islamic philosophical tradition, offering a highly explanatory system that extended to the individual and the city, viewed as microcosms within the broader cosmic order.²⁷

1.1.2.1. Al-Farabi: His Life, Works, and General Philosophy

After Aristotle, al-Farabi is known as *al-Mu'allim al-Thani* (The Second Teacher). His full name is Abū Naṣr Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ṭarkhān ibn Awzalagh (or Uzlugh) al-Farabi. He was referred to as “al-Farabi al-Turkī” and “al-Feylosofu'l-Turki”. In Latin medieval sources, he is known as Alfarabius and Abunaser. We have limited information about the life of al-Farabi. It is widely believed that he was born in Vesīç, near the city of Farab in Turkistan, around 871-72 (hijri 258). The city is now known as Otrar and is located in present-day Kazakhstan. Farab was a hub of education and culture for the Samanid State during that time, and it is believed that al-Farabi received a good education there. At an unknown date, he left his homeland to travel in search of knowledge. After visiting Bukhara, Samarkand, Merv, and Balkh, he eventually arrived in Baghdad when he was over forty years old. Al-Farabi spent around twenty years living in Baghdad, during which he wrote most of his works. However, due to the political unrest during that time, he decided to move to Damascus. Despite his advanced age, he took a short trip to Egypt in 948 (hijri 337) and then returned to Damascus. Al-Farabi passed away in 950.²⁸

²⁷ Majid Fakhry, *Al-Fārābi, Founder of Islamic Neoplatonism: His Life, Works and Influence*, Great Islamic Thinkers (Oxford: Oneworld, 2002).

²⁸ Mahmut Kaya, “Fārābi,” in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: TDV Yayınları, 1995).

1.1.2.1.1. Works

Al-Farabi wrote on various subjects including philosophy, logic, music, politics, and ethics. The most prominent works of him are as follows:

- a. *Al-Madinah al-Fadilah* (The Virtuous City)
- b. *Al-Siyasah al-Madaniyah* (The Civil Polity)
- c. *Kitab al-Millah* (The Book of Religion)
- d. *Ihsa' al-'Ulum* (Enumeration of the Sciences)
- e. *Tahsil al-Sa'adah* (Attainment of Happiness)
- f. *Kitab al-Tanbih* (The Book of Exhortation)
- g. *Kitab al-Huruf* (The Book of Letters)
- h. *Kitab al-Musiqa al-Kabir* (The Great Book of Music)

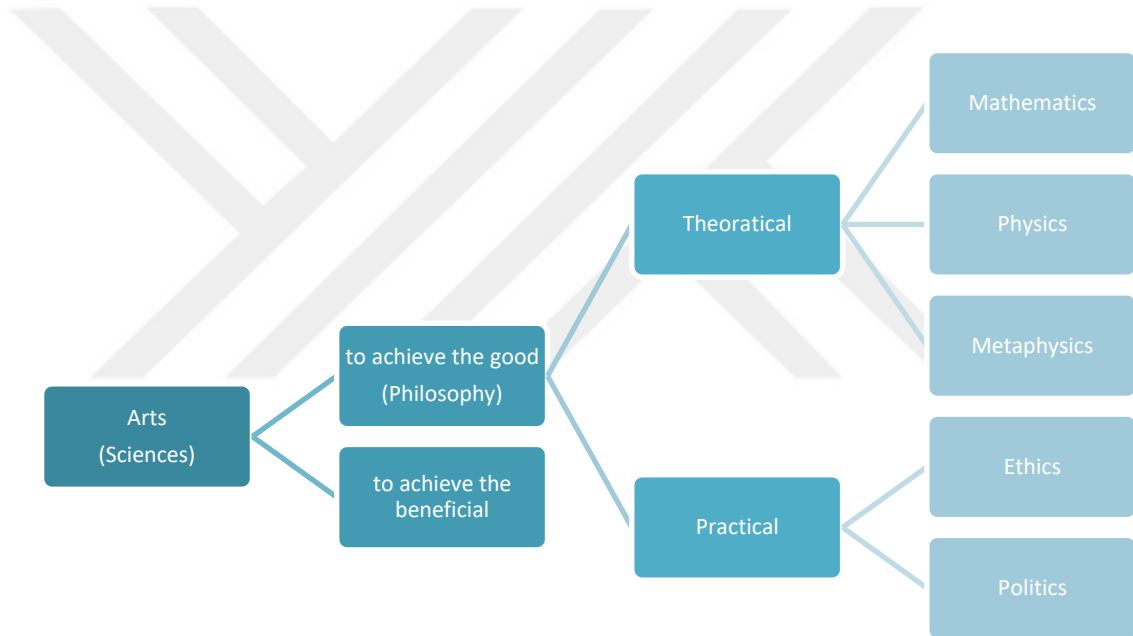
1.1.2.1.2. Al-Farabi's Classification of the Sciences

In his works, such as *Tahsil al-Sa'adah* and *Kitab al-Tanbih*, al-Farabi mentions the classification of sciences. However, *Ihsa' al-'Ulum* is his only work solely dedicated to this subject.²⁹ In these works, he presents two classifications of sciences. The first adheres to the Aristotelian tradition (Table 1), while the second exhibits his innovative perspective (Table 2). In his classification reflecting the Aristotelian tradition, sciences (arts) are classified by their focus and goals. Generally, the arts aim for the good or the beneficial, with philosophy seeking solely the good. The good can be purely knowledge-based or involve knowledge and action, leading to the division of philosophy into theoretical (*nazarī*) and practical (*'amali*) philosophy. Theoretical philosophy explores beings such as God, cosmic intelligences, celestial bodies, natural entities, objects, plants, animals, humans, and abstract entities like numbers and magnitudes, which are not subject to human will, such as mathematics,

²⁹ Mahmut Kaya, "İhsâü'l-Ulûm," in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: TDV Yayınları, 2000).

physics, and metaphysics. Practical philosophy, however, deals with beings that can be shaped by human will and action, such as ethics and politics.³⁰

As to the novelty in his second classification, we can rely on the model outlined in his renowned work *Ihsa' al-'Ulum*. Here al-Farabi categorized and evaluated eight sciences of his time into five main categories. The first chapter of the work is devoted to linguistics. The second chapter is on logic. The third chapter is about mathematics. The fourth chapter is devoted to physics and metaphysics. In the fifth chapter, he introduces politics, *fiqh* (jurisprudence), and *kalām* (theology) under one heading. Notably, what represents a novel approach for his time is his attempt to interconnect *fiqh* and *kalām* with philosophy, particularly within the realm of politics.³¹

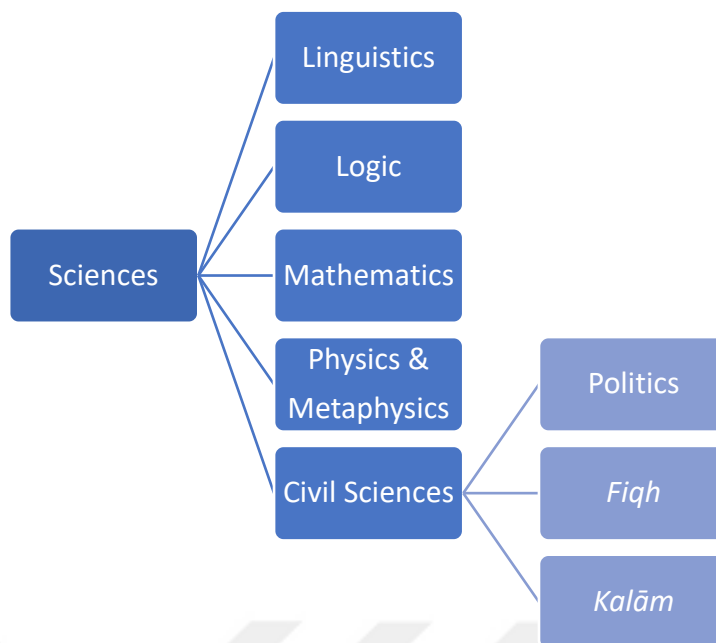


**Table 1. Al-Farabi's Classification of Sciences
Reflecting the Aristotelian Tradition³²**

³⁰ Yaşar Aydın, "Fârâbî ve Bağdat Meşşâî Okulu," in *İslâm Felsefesi: Tarih ve Problemler*, ed. M. Cüneyt Kaya (Ankara: İsam Yayınları, 2016), 155.

³¹ Kaya, "İhsâü'l-Ulûm."

³² Based on Aydın, "Fârâbî ve Bağdat Meşşâî Okulu," 155.



**Table 2. Al-Farabi’s Classification of Sciences
Reflecting His Innovative Perspective³³**

1.1.2.1.3. Metaphysics

After introducing al-Farabi’s distinct classification of theoretical and practical sciences, to better understand his social and political thought, we need to briefly discuss his metaphysical framework that informs the rest of his social and political understanding. Diverging from the Islamic theological tradition, which emphasized the concept of creation, al-Farabi’s metaphysics centers around the concept of emanation (*sudūr*), serving as the cornerstone of his approach to existence. Building upon this foundation, he integrates his cosmological, epistemological, and political theories, resulting in a unified system of thought. Consequently, his metaphysical, ethical, and political ideas harmoniously converge within this comprehensive framework.

Al-Farabi posited that the universe originates from God, whose existence profoundly shapes and organizes all that exists. In his view, every entity shares in a portion of God’s existence, establishing a hierarchical relationship with the Divine. Al-Farabi

³³ Based on Kaya, “İhsâü’l-Ulûm.”

employs the concept of emanation (*sudūr*) to elucidate this relationship, signifying that all existence emanates eternally and necessarily from God’s being. As the ultimate and most perfect being, God serves as the First Cause, with all beings arranged in a hierarchy from the Perfect Being (God) to the imperfect. Through the self-awareness of the First Cause arises the First Intellect. As the First Intellect contemplates the First Cause, the Second Intellect emerges, and upon the Second Intellect’s self-reflection, the farthest celestial sphere takes form. Subsequently, when the Second Intellect comprehends the First Cause, the Third Intellect comes into being, leading to the creation of the fixed stars upon its self-reflection. This progression unfolds up to the Tenth Intellect, associated with the planets known in al-Farabi's time (Table 3). Beneath these celestial spheres lies the sublunar world, including the Earth, where the Active Intellect, the final link in the chain of cosmic intellects, both grants existence and shapes the sublunar realm. Unlike the celestial domain, Earth’s progression moves from imperfection to perfection, simplicity to complexity. Its hierarchy comprises the primal matter influenced by celestial bodies, followed by the four elements (air, water, earth, fire), minerals, plants, and animals, culminating in humans—the most elevated beings on Earth (Table 4).³⁴

³⁴ Eşref Altaş, “Fârâbî,” accessed May 14, 2024, <https://islamdusunceatlasi.org/farabi/79>.



Table 3. The Hierarchy of the Intellects and the Corresponding Planets³⁵

³⁵ Based on Aydınli, “Fârâbî ve Bağdat Meşşâi Okulu,” 158.

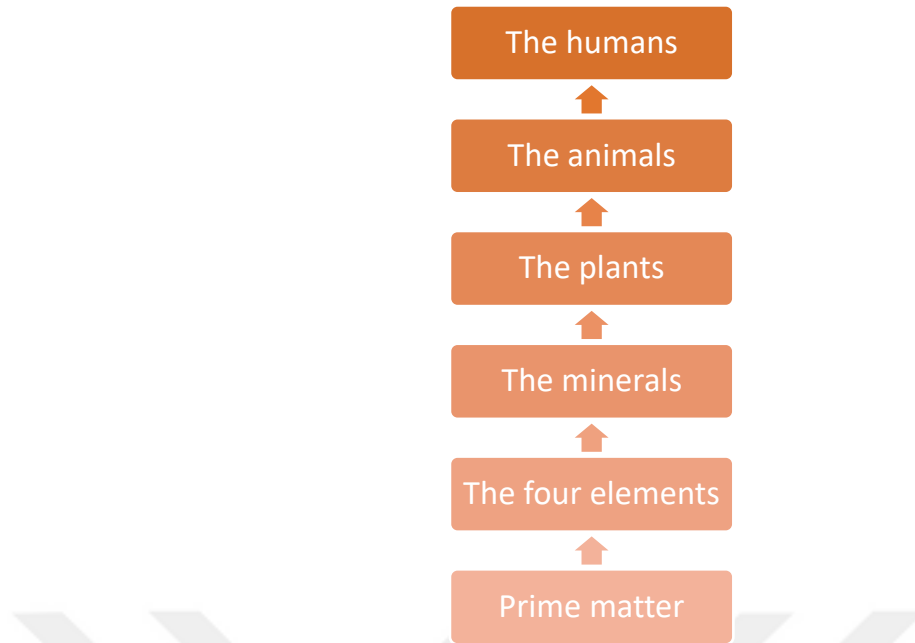


Table 4. The Stages of Perfection in the Sublunar World³⁶

To summarize al-Farabi’s philosophy of emanation (*sudūr*), God is the active creator, utilizing His knowledge and power to bring about creation without any external compulsion. The concept of emanation plays a significant role in elucidating the diversity within the universe. Through an understanding of emanation, one can grasp the nature of existence and the interrelations between beings. Consequently, al-Farabi tried to integrate the two notions of emanation and creation as complementary ideas rather than opposing ones.³⁷

In the following chapters, we will direct our attention towards understanding al-Farabi's vision of the virtuous man, the virtuous city, the ideal society, and the ideal state.

³⁶ Based on Aydınlı, 159–60; Kaya, “Fârâbî.”

³⁷ The tension/debate regarding the theory of emanation (*sudūr*) among Islamic philosophers and theologians is a very vivid and important one. For a brief summary, see Mahmut Kaya, “Sudūr,” in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: TDV Yayınları, 2009).

1.2. The Aim and Importance of the Research

1.2.1. Literature Review

Confucianism has been the subject of extensive research and study in the international academic community.³⁸ Although there is a significant body of Confucian studies in the West, comparative studies are usually limited to Ancient Greek or Western philosophy.³⁹ Moreover, works that compare Chinese and Islamic philosophies are rather rare.⁴⁰ While Confucius and al-Farabi are individually well-studied in their respective traditions (Confucius as a foundational figure in Chinese philosophy and al-Farabi as a key figure in Islamic philosophy) comparative analyses of their ideas on the human, society, and the state remain limited.⁴¹ Most studies tend to focus on each thinker within the context of their own cultural, religious, and historical backgrounds, overlooking the potential for cross-cultural dialogue between these two names. Yet, both Confucius and al-Farabi struggled with similar fundamental questions regarding the role of virtue, leadership, and the organization of society.

A deeper comparative analysis of their philosophies is needed to illuminate where these two thinkers, despite their different historical and geographical contexts, offer similar and contrasting approaches to social and political issues. By examining their views, we can uncover new viewpoints on universal concepts of the human, society, and the state, enriching our understanding of how different civilizations have tackled the timeless questions of how to create a harmonious society. Such a comparison also

³⁸ Among many the most well-known ones are Yao, *An Introduction to Confucianism*; Michael Schuman, *Confucius: And the World He Created* (New York: Basic Books, 2015).

³⁹ See for example Jiyuan Yu, *The Ethics of Confucius and Aristotle: Mirrors of Virtue* (New York: Routledge, 2007); Ming-Huei Lee, "Confucianism, Kant, and Virtue Ethics," in *Confucianism*, ed. David Jones, Its Roots and Global Significance (University of Hawai'i Press, 2017), 92–101, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv3zp043.12>.

⁴⁰ See for example İlknur Sertdemir, "Mevlana ile Konfüçyüs'ün Evren ve Ahlak Görüşleri Üzerine Bir Karşılaştırma" (Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Ankara, Ankara Üniversitesi, 2012); Elvida Ünal, "Ansali he Zhuxi jiaoyu sixiang bijiao yanjiu 安萨里和朱熹教育思想比较研究 [A Comparative Study of the Educational Thought of Al-Ghazali and Zhu Xi]" (Master's Thesis, Beijing 北京, Qinghua daxue 清华大学 [Tsinghua University], 2015).

⁴¹ I found three studies comparing Confucius and al-Farabi: Rostamiyan, Muhammad Ali. "Ethics and Sagacity in View of Farabi and Confucius." *Revelatory Ethics* 2, no. 1 (May 21, 2012): 123–60; Li Fulai 李福来, Kongzi yu Falabi xingfuguan de gongtongdian 孔子与法拉比幸福观的共同点 [The similarities between Confucius and Al-Farabi's views on happiness], *Shanxi qingnian* 山西青年, (06)2017: 118-119; Lin Wenkai 林文凯, Kongzi yu Falabi zhengzhi lunli lixiang zhi bijiao 孔子与法拉比政治伦理思想之比较 [A Comparative Study of the Political Ethics of Confucius and Al-Farabi], Master's Thesis, Zhongyang minzu daxue 中央民族大学 [Minzu University of China], 2019.

holds the potential to highlight shared human concerns and responses, as well as demonstrate the unique philosophical contributions that Chinese and Islamic traditions offer to global thought.

1.2.2. What makes them comparable?

According to the classification of sciences that the Islamic world inherited from Ancient Greece, philosophy is divided into theoretical and practical branches. Practical philosophy, which deals with ethics, household management, and politics, focuses on individual, familial, and societal matters. Like in ancient Greek and Islamic civilizations, Chinese civilization, particularly Confucianism, also distinguishes between practical and theoretical forms of wisdom, which enables us to compare Islamic practical philosophy with Chinese practical wisdom. Although there is no such systematic classification as in ancient Greek and Islamic thought, Confucian classics contain extensive passages on individual conduct, family dynamics, social relations, and governance. Central to Confucian practical wisdom is self-cultivation, embodying the concept of becoming an upright person. In other words, Confucian practical philosophy emphasizes the concept of 君子 (*junzi*), which means the ideal person. In the Confucian view, self-cultivation accelerates social cohesion by promoting social and political attitudes and practices. Therefore, Confucian practical wisdom embraces the concept of governing the state to bring harmony to all.

Al-Farabi similarly advocates for the cultivation of virtue and the pursuit of wisdom in guiding individual and societal affairs. Within the Islamic philosophical tradition, his works extensively address practical matters such as ethics, governance, and the organization of society. In *Al-Madinah al-Fadilah*, his fundamental work reflecting his philosophical system in all its aspects, al-Farabi emphasizes the role of the philosopher-king or the wise ruler in establishing a just and harmonious society. His practical philosophy encompasses not only personal virtue but also the structures and mechanisms necessary for the functioning of the ideal state. Because for him, a virtuous person creates a virtuous society. A virtuous society creates a virtuous political order. The virtuous political order, in turn, forms the virtuous city.

As we described, both Confucius and al-Farabi pondered very similar and persistent questions of social and political life systematically, making an analytical comparison possible. A close examination of the thoughts of these two thinkers on the persisting questions of social life will enable us to identify what common solutions they offered and where they differed.

1.2.3. Purpose of the Thesis

This thesis attempts to conduct a comparative analysis of Confucius and al-Farabi's views on the human, society, and the state, demonstrating that, contrary to popular belief, both thinkers offer similar perspectives in many respects. By capturing the commonalities between their ideas, this study highlights how human societies, despite their cultural, historical, and religious differences, often respond to social and political challenges through similar idealistic visions. Additionally, by exploring the differences between their approaches to these issues, this thesis aims to demonstrate the richness and diversity of human civilizations in addressing common societal problems.

While the geographical difference enables us to compare, there might be a concern regarding the time difference between the two philosophers. Regarding the time difference between the two philosophers, though we acknowledge that the different historical contexts influence philosophers' thoughts, this is minimal for our purposes because we are studying their philosophical ideas as such rather than the practical context that led to their specific ideas or how they were applied in their times or later on. We are studying them as subjects of philosophical thought of pre-modern (and agrarian) civilizations.

1.2.4. Research Questions

The main research question of this thesis is:

- What are the similarities and differences between Confucius' and al-Farabi's conceptions of the ideal human, society, and state?

The sub-questions are as follows:

- How do Confucius and al-Farabi define what it means to be human, and what are the qualities of the ideal human in their perspectives?
- What is the role of family for Confucius and al-Farabi, and how do they perceive its significance in achieving social harmony?
- How do Confucius and al-Farabi conceptualize society, and what principles do they propose for creating the ideal society?
- What are Confucius' and al-Farabi's views on the state, and how can the ideal state be realized according to their philosophies?
- What are the similarities and differences between these views?

1.2.5. Methodology

This thesis employs a comparative analysis to examine the views of Confucius and al-Farabi on the human, society, and the state. The study primarily focuses on textual analysis, drawing from the major works of each thinker: The *Lunyu* 论语 (the *Analects*) by Confucius and *Al-Madinah al-Fadilah* (The Virtuous City) by al-Farabi. Through close reading in their original languages and thematic analysis, these texts were analyzed to extract key themes related to their conceptions of the ideal human, society, and the state. In addition to the primary texts, secondary sources such as commentaries, articles, and historical studies in English, Turkish, and Chinese were also utilized to provide deeper insight into their ideas.

Additionally, this thesis adheres to established academic standards for transliteration and representation of terms. For Chinese terms, the Pinyin (音拼) romanization system is used with simplified characters, reflecting the contemporary written form most commonly used in mainland China. For Arabic terms, the International Journal of Middle East Studies (IJMES) transliteration rules are applied.

1.2.6. Research Challenges

Due to the comparative nature of this study, which involves analyzing the ideas of Confucius and al-Farabi (two thinkers from different cultural, linguistic, religious, and historical contexts), several challenges arose during the research.

One of the main challenges was bridging these two names whose thoughts were shaped by different intellectual traditions and social conditions. To address this, Chapter 1.1 (Background) provides the necessary historical and philosophical backgrounds that influenced Confucius and al-Farabi, enabling a more nuanced and context-sensitive analysis.

Another significant difficulty was reading and interpreting the *Analects*, originally written in Classical Chinese. While there are many translations of the work in both English and Turkish, many subtle meanings and nuances in the original language are lost in translations. To minimize this problem, I consulted multiple translations and worked closely with my co-advisor, Dr. Elvida Ünal An, who is also my Chinese teacher, to ensure accuracy and depth in interpreting the Chinese text.

The other challenge in working with the *Analects* is that, unlike al-Farabi's *Al-Madinah al-Fadilah*, it is not a cohesive work authored by Confucius himself but rather a collection of fragmented sayings and teachings recorded by his disciples. As a result, the text lacks a systematic narrative structure with statements on a wide range of topics scattered throughout. While certain themes and ideas recur, they are not organized cohesively. To address this, Confucius' views on the human, society, and the state were identified through a comprehensive analysis of the entire text, carefully scanning for relevant passages. Then, these ideas were systematized and interpreted in a way that aligned with the core principles of Confucius' thoughts, ensuring a coherent framework for comparison with al-Farabi's philosophy.

1.2.7. Outline of Chapters

The overall structure of this thesis is composed of five chapters. Aside from the introduction and conclusion, there are three main chapters that each focus on a central theme namely human, society, and state.

In the first main chapter (Chapter II), following the introductory discussion of this thesis' aim, background, literature review, and methodological approach, we explore the philosophical foundations of human nature as understood by Confucius and al-Farabi. This chapter begins with an analysis of Confucius' concept of the *junzi*

(virtuous man) and his associated virtues. Then, we delve into al-Farabi's perspective on the human, particularly his vision of the virtuous man who aims *sa'ādah* (happiness). Throughout the chapter, we see how both thinkers link individual virtue to societal well-being, realizing Confucius' emphasis on relational ethics and social roles, in contrast to al-Farabi's focus on rationality and metaphysical alignment.

In the second main chapter (Chapter III), we analyze Confucius' and al-Farabi's views on society, exploring how their idealized social structures reflect their philosophical beliefs. We begin by discussing Confucius' vision of society as a network of ethically grounded relationships, where family serves as a microcosm for broader social harmony. Following this, we examine al-Farabi's concept of the virtuous city (*al-madīnah al-fāḍilah*), where individuals work collectively to achieve ultimate happiness through moral and intellectual development.

In the third main chapter (Chapter IV), we focus on the political theories of Confucius and al-Farabi, examining their views on governance and the state's role in cultivating a virtuous society. In the first section, we discuss Confucius' concept of moral leadership, where the moral character of the ruler establishes the state's legitimacy and fosters social harmony. Then, we analyze al-Farabi's portrayal of the philosopher-king whose authority is derived from both intellectual excellence and alignment with the divine order.

In the conclusion, we summarize Confucius' and al-Farabi's ideas on the human, society, and the state, synthesizing the findings by examining both the common themes and distinctive elements in their philosophies. This comparative analysis highlights the ways each thinker envisions the role of personal virtue, social order, and governance, offering insights into the similarities and differences in their approaches to achieving the ideal society.

CHAPTER II

HUMAN NATURE IN CONFUCIUS AND AL-FARABI

Human nature is a fundamental concept that underpins every philosophical system. Virtually every philosopher, whether directly or indirectly, addresses the nature of humanity as a basis for their ethical, social, and political theories. In the works of Confucius and al-Farabi, we find profound explorations of human nature, each offering unique insights that shape their respective philosophies. By examining their perspectives, we can gain a deeper understanding of how human nature informs their visions of a harmonious society and the cultivation of virtue. In this chapter, we will first look at Confucius' conception of the human, specifically 君子 *junzi* (virtuous/ideal man) (Ch 2.1). Then we will examine human nature in al-Farabi's philosophy, particularly his idea of the virtuous man (Ch 2.2). Finally, we will discuss the similarities (such as moral excellence, ethical virtues, and leadership) and differences (such as the importance they assigned to rationality) between the two views on human nature (Ch 2.3).

2.1. Confucius on Human Nature

Unlike his successors, 孟子 Meng Zi⁴² and 荀子 Xun Zi⁴³, Confucius did not explicitly engage in metaphysical discussions on human nature. However, as Confucius' philosophy was more practice-oriented, a close examination of those passages in the *Analects* that focus on ethical and social values and manners will disclose his

⁴² Meng Zi, also known as Mencius (circa 372-289 BCE), was a prominent Chinese philosopher and is considered the most important figure in Confucianism after Confucius himself. He elaborated on and expanded the teachings of Confucius. Meng Zi is well-known for his belief that human nature is inherently good. He argued that everyone is born with the potential for virtue and moral behavior.

⁴³ Xun Zi (circa 310-235 BCE) was a prominent Chinese philosopher during the Warring States period and a major figure in Confucianism. His philosophy is often seen as a counterpoint to that of Meng Zi, particularly regarding their differing views on human nature. Unlike Meng Zi, Xun Zi argued that human nature is inherently selfish and inclined towards evil. He believed that people are born with desires that lead to conflict and disorder if left uncontrolled.

understanding of human nature implicit in those passages. Through these passages, it becomes clear that Confucius' concept of 君子 *junzi* (virtuous/ideal man) who serves as a moral exemplar is deeply intertwined with his views on human nature.

Confucius placed great emphasis on the practical aspects of human behavior, advocating for a life guided by moral virtues. He believed that these virtues were essential for personal moral development and the establishment of a harmonious society. When his student Zi Gong (子贡) asked what constituted the *junzi*, Confucius said, “He acts before he speaks, and afterward speaks according to his actions.” (*Analects* 2.13).⁴⁴ In this context, Confucius emphasizes the importance of action before words. The *junzi* demonstrates his principles through his actions before speaking about them. This highlights the value of integrity and the idea that actions speak louder than words. Moreover, Confucius highlights that the *junzi* must not only cultivate personal virtues but also inspire others, contributing to a harmonious society. “The *junzi* on grounds of culture meets with his friends, and by friendship helps his virtue.” (*Analects* 12.24).⁴⁵ Thus, the journey of becoming a *junzi* is both a personal and communal endeavor. The *junzi* connects with others through shared intellectual and cultural pursuits, and these friendships help them to foster and support their own moral and ethical growth. We can conclude from this that for Confucius, the essence of being human is realized through one's actions and interactions with others. This chapter will explore Confucius' practical approach to understanding human nature, particularly through the cultivation and embodiment of the *junzi*. Thus, we hope to provide insights into the ethical basis of human existence in Confucius' thought.

2.1.1. 君子 *Junzi*: The Confucian Vision of the Virtuous Man

In Confucian philosophy, the concept of the *junzi*, often translated as the ideal man or virtuous man, is central to understanding the ethical and moral framework that Confucius advocated. The *junzi* embodies the highest ideals of moral character, personal development, and social responsibility, serving as a model for individuals striving to lead a virtuous life. This chapter explores the various dimensions of the

⁴⁴ 子贡问君子。子曰：“先行其言而后从之。” *Lunyu 论语 [Analects]*, 2020, 1:73.

⁴⁵ 曾子曰：“君子以文会友，以友辅仁。” Kongzi 孔子, *Lunyu 论语 [Analects]*, vol. 3 (Jinan: Shandong donghua chubanshe, 2020), 125.

junzi as depicted in the *Analects*, providing a detailed analysis of the qualities, behaviors, and principles that define this exemplary figure. By examining key passages from the *Analects*, we will gain insight into Confucius' vision of the *junzi* and how this concept contributes to both personal cultivation and broader social harmony.

Originally, 君子 (*junzi*) meant “son of a lord” and referred to the warrior aristocracy. In the *Book of Poetry* 《诗经》 (*Shijing*), *junzi* has multiple meanings, including commander, husband, and the Son of Heaven (天子 *tian zi*). These noble figures are portrayed as gallant, elegant, dignified, and generous. Wealthy and powerful, they are also humble and uphold social order. In the *Book of Documents* 《尚书》 (*Shangshu*), *junzi* refers to commanders and lords serving the king, contrasted with the petty/common person (小人 *xiao ren*). It is in the *Analects* where Confucius redefined *junzi* to mean the ideal man or virtuous man—a person of ritually correct behavior, moral courage, and noble sentiment. So, in its original use *junzi* used to mean a person of both high social rank and moral integrity developed through self-cultivation. Yet, Confucius shifted the focus of the term from external achievements to inner moral principles and self-reflection, emphasizing upholding these principles in daily conduct.⁴⁶

Confucius teaches that the *junzi* must guard against different vices at different stages of life. He says:

There are three things which the *junzi* guards against. In youth, when the physical powers are not yet settled, he guards against lust. When he is strong and the physical powers are full of vigor, he guards against quarrelsomeness. When he is old, and the animal powers are decayed, he guards against covetousness. (*Analects* 16.7)⁴⁷

This passage illustrates the dynamic and lifelong commitment to self-cultivation that defines the *junzi*. In youth, when physical energies are not yet settled, they should be vigilant against lust and sexual desire. In adulthood, when physical energies are at their

⁴⁶ Yao, *Routledge Curzon Encyclopedia of Confucianism*, 311–12.

⁴⁷ 孔子曰：“君子有三戒：少之时，血气未定，戒之在色；及其壮也，血气方刚，戒之在斗；及其老也，血气既衰，戒之在得。” Kongzi 孔子, *Lunyu 论语 [Analects]*, vol. 4 (Jinan: Shandong donghua chubanshe, 2020), 93.

peak, they should be cautious of quarrelsomeness and the propensity for conflict. In old age, as physical energies decline, they should be wary of greed and the desire for material accumulation. By recognizing and guarding against these temptations, the *junzi* can maintain his moral integrity and virtuous character throughout his life.

Another passage from the *Analects* also highlights the *junzi*'s focus on moral excellence over personal comfort and material gain. As Confucius states, "The *junzi* thinks of virtue; the *xiao ren* thinks of comfort. The *junzi* thinks of the sanctions of law; the *xiao ren* thinks of favors which he may receive." (*Analects* 4.11).⁴⁸ Confucius contrasts the values of the virtuous man (*junzi*) with those of the petty person (*xiao ren*). The *junzi* cherishes virtue and moral integrity, focusing on cultivating ethical behavior and principles. In contrast, the *xiao ren* is primarily concerned with material possessions and the acquisition of wealth and property. Additionally, the *junzi* is committed to justice and the proper application of laws, valuing what is right and fair. On the other hand, the *xiao ren* prioritizes personal gain and the benefits they can receive from others. This distinction underscores the fundamental differences in priorities and ethical standards between the *junzi* and the *xiao ren*.

Considering all these, we can say that the evolution of the term 君子 (*junzi*) from its original connotation of noble birth and social rank to Confucius' redefinition as a person of moral excellence and virtuous conduct illustrates a significant shift in focus from external status to inner character. Confucius' teachings emphasize that true nobility is not determined by wealth or power but by one's commitment to moral integrity, self-cultivation, and adherence to ethical principles. The *junzi*'s lifelong dedication to virtue, justice, and benevolence, regardless of age or circumstance, contrasts sharply with the self-serving and materialistic concerns of the *xiao ren*. For Confucius, becoming a *junzi* or a virtuous person, which is a central theme in Confucian philosophy, requires a lifelong commitment to learning, self-reflection, and the practice of virtue. According to the passages in the *Analects*, the process of self-cultivation involves practicing four key virtues: 仁 *ren* (humaneness), 义 *yi* (righteousness), 礼 *li* (proper conduct), and 孝 *xiao* (filial piety). Self-cultivation begins with *ren*, fostering empathy and compassion. *Yi* emphasizes moral integrity,

⁴⁸ 子曰：“君子怀德，小人怀土；君子怀刑，小人怀惠。” *Lunyu 论语* [*Analects*], 2020, 1:179.

guiding the *junzi* to make just decisions. *Li* involves performing rituals with sincerity to maintain social harmony, while *xiao* underscores respect and devotion to one's family. Through a lifelong commitment to these virtues, the *junzi* continuously improves his character and contributes to a harmonious society, demonstrating that personal virtue and social order are intertwined. Below we will examine these four fundamental virtues respectively.

2.1.2. The Four Fundamental Virtues

2.1.2.1. 仁 *Ren* (Humaneness/Benevolence)

According to Confucius, being human means fulfilling moral expectations toward others. In the *Analects*, being human 人 (*ren*) is linked to exhibiting humaneness 仁 (*ren*), which involves treating others as one would wish to be treated. This virtue originates from within the individual. Confucius' concept of "acting as a human" 為人 (*wei ren*) entails consistently adhering to moral values and caring for the greater good. Such individuals are considered "complete/accomplished" 成人 (*cheng ren*), while those driven by personal gain are labeled as "little/petty" 小人 (*xiao ren*).⁴⁹

Central to Confucius' philosophy is the concept of *ren*, often translated as humaneness or benevolence. *Ren* is the ultimate virtue, encompassing love, compassion, and empathy towards others. When Confucius' disciple Fan Chi (樊迟) asks about *ren*, he says: "It is to love all men." (*Analects* 12.22).⁵⁰ In this brief exchange, Confucius distills the essence of *ren*, into a simple yet profound principle: to love others. This encapsulates the idea that true benevolence involves a deep sense of compassion, care, and consideration for the well-being of others. For Confucius, *ren* is the foundation of ethical behavior and harmonious relationships, and it begins with sincere love and respect for others.

Confucius explains to his disciple Zi Zhang (子张) that the essence of benevolence (*ren*) can be distilled into five key virtues:

⁴⁹ Yao, *Routledge Curzon Encyclopedia of Confucianism*, 500–501.

⁵⁰ 樊迟问仁。子曰：“爱人。” *Lunyu 论语* [*Analects*], 2020, 3:118.

Respectfulness (恭 *gong*), generosity (宽 *kuan*), trustworthiness (信 *xin*), diligence (敏 *min*), and kindness (惠 *hui*). Being respectful, you will not be insulted. Being generous, you will win the hearts of the people. Being trustworthy, people will rely on you. Being diligent, you will achieve results. Being kind, you will be able to employ others. (*Analects* 17.6)⁵¹

Respectfulness means treating others well and avoiding insults. Generosity helps you gain people's affection and support. Trustworthiness ensures that others can rely on you. Diligence leads to successful results through hard work. Kindness allows you to lead and inspire others effectively. Together, these virtues form the foundation of *ren*, creating a framework for ethical behavior that promotes social harmony and personal integrity. By embodying these principles, one can cultivate true benevolence and positively influence the world.

The *junzi* is defined by his consistent adherence to *ren* (benevolence), even in challenging circumstances. As Confucius remarked, "If the *junzi* departs from *ren*, how can they be worthy of the name? The *junzi* does not abandon *ren* even for the duration of a meal. In moments of haste, they hold to it; in times of danger, they hold to it." (*Analects* 4.5).⁵² In this context, Confucius emphasizes the centrality of *ren* to the identity and conduct of the *junzi*. If the *junzi* departs from *ren*, he loses his defining quality and cannot truly be considered a *junzi*, as *ren* is fundamental to his character. The *junzi* always maintains his commitment to *ren*, even in the briefest and most mundane moments, such as during a meal. Whether in moments of urgency or in times of hardship and danger, the *junzi* must remain steadfast in his practice of *ren*. This underscores the unwavering and all-encompassing nature of *ren* in the life of *junzi*, highlighting its importance as the core virtue that guides the *junzi*'s actions and defines his character.

⁵¹ 子张问仁于孔子。孔子曰：“能行五者于天下，为仁矣。”“请问之。”曰：“恭，宽，信，敏，惠。恭则不侮，宽则得众，信则人任焉，敏则有功，惠则足以使人。” *Lunyu 论语 [Analects]*, 2020, 4:126.

⁵² 子曰：“。。。君子去仁，恶乎成名？君子无终食之间违仁，造次必于是，颠沛必于是。” *Lunyu 论语 [Analects]*, 2020, 1:165.

2.1.2.2. 义 Yi (Righteousness)

The term 义 (*yi*) is often translated as righteousness. It refers to the morally appropriate course of action or thought in a particular situation. To emphasize its ethical imperative, *yi* is sometimes translated as duty or morally proper conduct.⁵³ Confucius says: “In relation to the world, the *junzi* has no predetermined biases or blind spots; he chooses his course of action based on righteousness (*yi*).” (*Analects* 4.10).⁵⁴ Here, Confucius highlights the exemplary conduct of the *junzi* in relation to the world, underscoring his commitment to ethical principles rather than personal biases. According to Confucius, the *junzi* approaches every situation impartially and attentively, making sure his judgments and actions are not influenced by personal biases or missed details. The cornerstone of the *junzi*’s decision-making must be righteousness (*yi*), which guides his actions and choices. With this, Confucius emphasizes the importance of being fair and morally upright, highlighting the high standards he sets for a *junzi*.

Confucius compares 义 *yi* with 利 *li* (profit), noting that the virtuous person pursues rightness, while petty people chase personal gain: “The *junzi* is attuned to righteousness (*yi*), while the *xiao ren* is attuned to profit (*li*).” (*Analects* 4.16).⁵⁵ In this passage, Confucius highlights a fundamental distinction between the values guiding the *junzi* and the *xiao ren*. He explains that the *junzi* is primarily attuned to righteousness, focusing on what is morally right and just in their actions. This dedication to ethical principles stands in stark contrast to the *xiao ren*, who prioritizes personal advantage and benefits. The *xiao ren*’s decisions are often driven by the pursuit of immediate gain, potentially at the expense of moral integrity. This contrast emphasizes the ethical divide in Confucian thought, distinguishing those who act based on higher moral standards from those driven by self-interest.

In a discussion with his disciple Zi Lu (子路), he asks Confucius whether courage is valued by the *junzi*. Confucius replies: “For the *junzi*, righteousness (*yi*) is the highest

⁵³ Yao, *Routledge Curzon Encyclopedia of Confucianism*, 750.

⁵⁴ 子曰：“君子之于天下也，无适也，无莫也，义之与比。” *Lunyu 论语 [Analects]*, 2020, 1:177.

⁵⁵ 子曰：“君子喻于义，小人喻于利。” 1:188.

virtue. A *junzi* who has courage but lacks righteousness causes chaos; a *xiao ren* who has courage but lacks righteousness becomes a thief.” (*Analects* 17.23).⁵⁶ He clarifies that while courage is important, righteousness (*yi*) holds the highest value for a *junzi*. According to Confucius, courage must be guided by righteousness to prevent negative consequences. A *junzi* who possesses courage without righteousness may lead to societal chaos due to their actions being misdirected. Conversely, a petty person (*xiao ren*) who has courage but lacks moral guidance often turns to crime, like theft. Thus, Confucius emphasizes that moral integrity and ethical behavior are more important than just being brave, to ensure that one’s actions contribute positively to society.

2.1.2.3. 礼 *Li* (Proper conduct)

In Confucian studies, the popular translation of the term 礼 (*li*) is given as rites or rituals. However, considering the contexts in which the term appears, a more fitting translation might be “proper conduct” which allows for a broader understanding that can be compared with the Islamic concept of *ādāb mu‘āsharat* (etiquette of social conduct). In Chinese culture, *li* covers a wide range of actions that are expressed through clothing, facial expressions, body language, and words, all of which contribute to fostering respect, harmony, and social order.

The importance of *li* in pre-modern Chinese society cannot be overstated. *Li* aimed to strengthen bonds among people, connect the living with the dead, and honor the gods. *Li* included everything from simple greetings and polite exchanges to complex ceremonies, making sacrifices to ancestors, and exchanging formal courtesies. Even today, *li* plays a crucial role in Chinese communities, helping to maintain cultural identity and bring people together.⁵⁷

In early China, *li* functioned in two main ways. First, it trained the body through specific physical movements, helping people internalize moral values and cultivate discipline. For instance, bowing to elders or performing ceremonial gestures at ancestral rituals were actions that reinforced respect, humility, and social hierarchy.

⁵⁶ 子路曰：“君子尚勇乎？”子曰：“君子义以为上。君子有勇而无义为乱，小人有勇而无义为盗。” *Lunyu 论语 [Analects]*, 2020, 4:162.

⁵⁷ Yao, *Routledge Curzon Encyclopedia of Confucianism*, 356–57.

Second, *li* educated the mind through the study of important texts such as the *Book of Rites* 《礼记》 (*li ji*) and the *Book of Poetry* 《诗经》 (*shi jing*) which contain teachings on appropriate behavior, moral philosophy, and social obligations. By studying these texts, people learned not only the rules of proper conduct but also the ethical reasoning behind them. At that time, both physical practice and studying the theory behind *li* were seen as equally important and complementary, although some scholars focused more on one than the other.⁵⁸

It can also be argued that *li* served to keep society together or even to control people. The rules of *li* may have been used by leaders to reinforce societal structures, channeling the beliefs and behaviors of ordinary people in ways that supported the ruling class's power. For example, strict adherence to *li* dictated one's respect for authority figures, reinforcing the ruler's position and discouraging dissent. From this perspective, *li* was like a tool to keep people obedient.⁵⁹ Though the social and political functions of *li* are important, we will explore this aspect in more detail in Chapter 3.1.4.

Confucius emphasizes the crucial role of *li* (proper conduct) in moderating basic virtues to avoid adverse outcomes: “Being respectful without following *li* leads to exhaustion; being cautious without following *li* leads to timidity; being courageous without following *li* leads to disorder; being straightforward without following *li* leads to conflict.” (Analects 8.2).⁶⁰ He explains that being respectful without adhering to *li* can lead to exhaustion because excessive deference without a guiding framework becomes burdensome. Being cautious without *li* results in timidity, as caution can evolve into fearfulness when unguided by customary norms. Acting courageously without the constraints of *li* can cause disorder, as unchecked bravery may turn reckless. Lastly, being straightforward without *li* leads to conflict because directness can become offensive without the softening effect of rituals. This highlights how essential *li* is in shaping constructive and balanced behaviors, ensuring virtues are expressed in ways that contribute positively to social harmony.

⁵⁸ Yao, 356–57.

⁵⁹ Yao, 357.

⁶⁰ 子曰：“恭而无礼则劳，慎而无礼则蕙，勇而无礼则乱，直而无礼则绞。” Kongzi 孔子, *Lunyu 论语 [Analects]*, vol. 2 (Jinan: Shandong donghua chubanshe, 2020), 141.

Confucius' teachings on *li* provide a comprehensive framework for moral living that emphasizes restraint and mindfulness in personal actions: "Do not look at what is contrary to *li*; do not listen to what is contrary to *li*; do not speak what is contrary to *li*; do not make movements that are contrary to *li*." (*Analects* 12.1).⁶¹ Confucius emphasizes a disciplined approach to behavior, urging people to align their actions with moral standards. He advises against watching or engaging in unethical behavior, listening to harmful conversations, and speaking disrespectful or dishonest words. He also warns against any physical actions that break moral rules.

2.1.2.4. 孝 *Xiao* (Filial Piety)

Filial piety 孝 (*xiao*), a key Chinese virtue highlighted in Confucian texts, refers to the respectful and dutiful behavior of children towards their parents. The term *xiao* originally focused on ritual services for deceased parents during the early Zhou dynasty. By the time of Confucius, the meaning had expanded to include caring for living parents as well.⁶² When his disciple Zi You (子游) asks about filial piety, Confucius replies: "The present-day understanding of *xiao* is merely to provide nourishment. Even dogs and horses are provided with care. Without respect, how does this differ from the treatment of animals?" (*Analects* 2.7).⁶³ In this response, Confucius critiques a superficial understanding of filial piety (*xiao*) that equates it solely with providing physical care or sustenance to one's parents. He points out that simply providing food and shelter is something that can be done for any creature, such as dogs and horses. For Confucius, the true *xiao* goes beyond mere physical care and must include a deeper element of respect and reverence towards one's parents. He emphasizes that without this profound respect, the care given to one's parents is not fundamentally different from the care given to animals.

In another passage, when Meng Yizi (孟懿子) asks what *xiao* (filial piety) is, Confucius replies, "It is not being disobedient." Soon after, Fan Chi (樊迟) asks,

⁶¹ 子曰：“非礼勿视，非礼勿听，非礼勿言，非礼勿动。” *Lunyu 论语 [Analects]*, 2020, 3:69.

⁶² Yao, *Routledge Curzon Encyclopedia of Confucianism*, 680.

⁶³ 子游问孝。子曰：“今之孝者，是谓能养。至于犬马，皆能有养；不敬，何以别乎？” *Lunyu 论语 [Analects]*, 2020, 1:61.

“What did you mean?” Confucius says, “Parents, when alive, should be served according to *li*; when dead, they should be buried according to *li*; and they should be offered sacrifices according to *li*.” (*Analects* 2.5).⁶⁴ In this dialogue, Confucius initially summarizes filial piety with the phrase “do not disobey”. This response summarizes the Confucian view that a key component of filial piety is obedience and respect towards one’s parents, reflecting a fundamental acceptance of their guidance and authority without resistance. When Fan Chi seeks clarification, Confucius elaborates that true filial piety involves meticulously fulfilling one’s duties to one’s parents throughout their life and even after their death. Serving parents “according to *li*” while they are alive involves not just obedience but honoring them with proper conduct and reverence as prescribed by traditional practices. After their passing, filial piety extends to performing funeral rites and annual rituals of remembrance with the same level of respect and adherence to established customs. Through this explanation, Confucius emphasizes that filial piety is a comprehensive commitment that spans both the life and the death of one’s parents, insisting that respectful and ritualistic care in both scenarios is essential to truly honor and fulfill one’s duties as a filial child. This approach intertwines moral conduct with ritual practice, highlighting the depth and continuity of respect required in the Confucian ethical framework.

2.2. Al-Farabi’s Philosophy of Human Nature

Unlike Confucius, al-Farabi presents a nuanced and comprehensive conception of human nature that integrates both philosophical and theological perspectives. His ideas are heavily influenced by Greek philosophy, particularly the works of Aristotle and Plato. In al-Farabi’s view, humans are unique beings positioned at the pinnacle of the natural hierarchy, embodying both material and spiritual dimensions. This dual nature allows humans to interact with both the physical and metaphysical realms, setting them apart from other creatures. Central to al-Farabi’s philosophy is the belief that humans are endowed with rationality, a faculty that enables them to pursue knowledge, achieve moral excellence, and ultimately strive for perfection (*kamāl*) and happiness (*sa’ādah*). This chapter explores al-Farabi’s conception of human nature, by

⁶⁴ 孟懿子问孝。子曰：“无违。”樊迟御，子告之曰：“孟孙问孝于我，我对曰，‘无违’。”樊迟曰：“何谓也？”子曰：“生，事之以礼；死，葬之以礼，祭之以礼。” 1:57.

examining the position, purpose, and perfection of the human in his philosophical system.

To understand the place and purpose of humans in al-Farabi's system, first, we need to look at the hierarchy of existence created by the concept of emanation (*sudūr*) that we saw in Chapter 1.1.2.1.3. As previously mentioned, in al-Farabi's philosophical system, the human being is considered the most complex and perfect natural entity, occupying the highest level in the hierarchy of existence in the sublunar world. This hierarchy begins with the four elements and progresses through stages of minerals, plants, and non-thinking animals. According to al-Farabi, the development of natural beings follows a divinely ordained order, culminating in the human being.

In this system, humans are beings composed of both matter and spirit/form. They connect with the physical world through their bodies and with the metaphysical realm through their souls, allowing them to transcend natural limitations and create laws and morals through their intellect. This view is influenced by both Plato and Aristotle. Plato believed that humans exist between two realms: the immaterial world above, where pure ideas and forms exist, and the material world below, which is the physical reality we experience. Aristotle also saw humans as beings in the middle.⁶⁵ Standing at the highest level of the material world and the lowest level of the intellectual world, humans occupy a special position. They bridge the gap between the physical and metaphysical realms. In the metaphysical realm, there is no generation and corruption (*kawn wa fasād*), while the material world is subject to these processes. So according to this philosophy, humans are entities that are subject to generation and corruption.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Mustafa Yıldız, "Farabi'nin Toplum ve Devlet Görüşü" (Doktora Tezi, Kayseri, Erciyes Üniversitesi, 2009), 112.

⁶⁶ For a detailed explanation, see Kasım Turhan, "Kevn ve Fesad," in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (Ankara: TDV Yayınları, 2002).

2.2.1. The Search for Perfection (*kamāl*) and Happiness (*sa'ādah*)

Al-Farabi is deeply influenced by Aristotelian teleology. According to this purposive conception of existence, each type of being seeks to realize its own form within a teleological functioning. In al-Farabi's view, the universe is structured with an inherent purpose and direction, where every entity, from inanimate objects to human beings, strives to achieve its fullest potential. This teleological approach suggests that all beings have an intrinsic goal (*telos*) that they are naturally inclined to fulfill. For inanimate objects, this might mean achieving their most stable state, such as a rock gravitating towards the center. For living organisms, it involves growth, reproduction, and the maintenance of life, just as an apple seed instinctively aims to become an apple tree. However, for human beings, this teleological drive takes on a higher dimension. Humans, endowed with reason and intellect, are not only aiming to perfect their physical and biological functions but also their intellectual and moral capacities.⁶⁷

As we saw in Chapter 1.1.2.1.3, al-Farabi describes a hierarchical system that extends from God (the absolute perfection), the First Cause of all beings, to the lowest forms of matter. In this hierarchy, all beings strive for perfection. So according to al-Farabi, the ultimate purpose of human beings is to move toward perfection (*kamāl*), which is to approach God, from whom they are distant in this cosmological system. Philosophy is the science that investigates this purpose. For him, there are two things that humans need to do to achieve this perfection: theoretical philosophy (*al-falsafah al-nazariyyah*) and practical philosophy (*al-falsafah al-'amaliyyah*). Together, they are called human wisdom (*al-hikmah al-insaniyah*) and they are the two parts of human perfection. In al-Farabi's philosophy, happiness (*sa'ādah*), which is the purpose of human existence, is the highest level of perfection. In *Al-Madinah al-Fadilah*, he says "Happiness is the good that is desirable for its own sake and is never, ever desirable as a means of obtaining something else, and beyond it there is nothing more sublime for man to obtain."⁶⁸ Here al-Farabi emphasizes that beyond happiness, there is nothing greater or more fulfilling to achieve.

⁶⁷ For more detailed information, refer to İlhan Kutluer, "Gāiyyet," in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: TDV Yayınları, 1996).

⁶⁸ Fârâbî, *El-Medînetü'l-Fâzıla*, trans. Yaşar Aydın (İstanbul: Litera Yayıncılık, 2022), 166.

Philosophy (*falsafah/hikmah*) informs humans of what real happiness is, and practical philosophy informs them of the actions that need to be taken to achieve happiness. So, attaining happiness necessitates both acquiring theoretical knowledge and implementing it in practical life. This entails actively cultivating virtuous behaviors conducive to happiness and safeguarding them once attained. Achieving happiness requires sustained and dedicated efforts committed to this pursuit. Also, this quote from al-Farabi's *Kitab al-Tanbih* highlights the crucial link between philosophy and happiness: “Since we reach happiness when beautiful things become established within us, and beautiful things can only become established within us through the art of philosophy, it necessarily follows that philosophy is the thing through which we attain happiness.”⁶⁹

2.3. From Human Nature to the Origin of Human Society

In conclusion, the comprehensive analyses of human nature as viewed by Confucius and al-Farabi reveal a rich tapestry of philosophical insights into the essence of humanity and the pursuit of a virtuous life. Both philosophers, despite the cultural and historical distances that separate them, converge on the significance of moral excellence and the cultivation of virtue as central to human life. While Confucius' ideal man focuses on ethical conduct and communal harmony, al-Farabi's ideal man focuses on achieving happiness and perfection through the integration of intellectual and moral development.

Al-Farabi's philosophy articulates a teleological view of human existence deeply rooted in both metaphysical and theological perspectives, positing that the ultimate purpose of life is not only personal fulfillment but also the divine alignment with the cosmos and God. He elaborates that human happiness, the central goal of life, is achieved through philosophy. In contrast, Confucius anchors his philosophy in an ethical framework that centers on human relationships and societal harmony, without metaphysical or theological assertions. He posits that the ultimate purpose of life

⁶⁹ Ahmet Kızılkurt, “Platon ve Farabi’de Bireysel ve Toplumsal Ahlâk Kavramı” (Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Iğdır, Iğdır Üniversitesi, 2021), 23.

revolves around the cultivation of virtue and the fulfillment of one's roles within a finely-tuned social order.

Confucius' ideal man *junzi* lives a life in accordance with the principles of *ren* (benevolence), *yi* (righteousness), *li* (proper conduct), and *xiao* (filial piety). Central to *junzi*'s character is the balance between inner virtue and outward action. They not only seek to align with moral principles but also uphold social harmony by fulfilling their roles in the family and society with respect and responsibility. So *junzi* embodies the Confucian vision of the ideal society, where individuals work toward personal virtue and communal harmony. The concept of *junzi* is a cornerstone of Confucius' philosophy of ethical leadership and societal order.

Just as Confucius' ideal leader must be *junzi*, the ruler of al-Farabi's ideal society must be the ideal man. Al-Farabi uses the term *ra'is* to describe this virtuous leader, as outlined in *Al-Madinah al-Fadilah*. This ideal leader not only exemplifies personal virtues but also possesses the intellectual and philosophical capabilities essential for leading and enlightening society. His role is pivotal in steering the community toward a higher metaphysical and communal order, facilitating both the personal development of its members and the collective pursuit of happiness and perfection. Through this leadership, the *ra'is* ensures that society operates in harmony with both ethical norms and the overarching divine cosmos. The details of al-Farabi's ideal man (the virtuous leader) will be discussed in Chapter 4.2.1.1.

CHAPTER III

THE CONCEPTION OF SOCIETY IN CONFUCIUS AND AL-FARABI

Philosophers often examine the concept of society to understand how individuals coexist and interact. Their explorations of society reflect their broader visions of order, harmony, and the ideal community. In the *Analects* and *Al-Madinah al-Fadilah*, Confucius and al-Farabi emphasize that society functions as both a foundation for individual growth and a means of achieving collective well-being. In this chapter, we will first analyze Confucius' understanding of society, particularly his emphasis on family, social roles, and proper conduct (Ch 3.1). Then, we will explore al-Farabi's vision of society, especially his concept of the virtuous city (Ch 3.2). Finally, we will discuss the parallels and distinctions between their views on society, focusing on their respective approaches to social harmony, hierarchy, and the role of the individual within the community (Ch 3.3).

3.1. Confucius on the Human Society

Through his teachings, Confucius has had a lasting impact on societal norms in Chinese culture and other East Asian cultures. As we mentioned in Chapter I, he was born during the turbulent times of the late Zhou Dynasty, and his teachings aimed to restore order and harmony in a divided society. The core of Confucian philosophy is the idea that a well-structured society starts with the individual and expands to the family and the state. By examining key concepts such as filial piety, proper conduct, and benevolent governance, this chapter aims to explore how these elements work together to promote a harmonious social order in the Confucian view and we will delve into Confucius' profound influence on societal structures, exploring how his thoughts on family, governance, and interpersonal relationships have shaped East Asian cultural and social paradigms over millennia.

3.1.1. The Role of Family in Society

In Confucian philosophy, the family is not only a basic social unit but also the foundation of societal health and harmony. Confucius considered the family as a small-scale version of society, where each interaction and relationship reflects broader societal norms. The values and behaviors taught at home, like respecting elders and fulfilling family duties, are considered the main ways individuals learn to function in their community. This foundational perspective posits that the stability and order of society are directly linked to the health of its family units.⁷⁰ Within the family, individuals not only learn about their roles and responsibilities but also develop the moral framework necessary for interacting with others in society. For example, a child learns that respect for their parents is expected to translate into respect for authority figures. In the *Analects* 1.2, Confucius gives a clear connection between filial piety within the family and loyalty in the political sphere. He emphasizes this issue that those who respect and obey authority within the family are unlikely to defy their leader and authority. He says:

They are few who, being filial and fraternal, are fond of offending against their superiors. There have been none, who, not liking to offend against their superiors, have been fond of stirring up confusion. The *junzi* bends his attention to the root; once the root is established, the Way (*dao*) arises. Filial piety and fraternal submission! - are they not the root of all benevolent actions?⁷¹

This passage underscores the Confucian belief that personal morality and societal harmony start from the smallest unit of society—the family. The virtues learned in the familial context such as respect and obedience, naturally extend to the broader societal and political realms. According to Confucius, the root of a stable society and moral individuals lies in proper conduct within the family. When these roots are deep and strong, the greater moral system (*dao*) naturally flourishes, and tendencies toward rebellion and disorder in the state are reduced. Thus, the family is not merely a component of societal structure but a vital institution where the foundational principles of social order are taught and reinforced.

⁷⁰ Mark Csikszentmihalyi, “Confucius,” The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2020, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2020/entries/confucius/>.

⁷¹ 有子曰：“其为人也孝弟，而好犯上者，鲜矣；不好犯上，而好作乱者，未之有也。君子务本，本立而道生。孝弟也者，其为仁之本与！” *Lunyu 论语 [Analects]*, 2020, 1:6.

3.1.2. The Five Key Relationships

The concept of the “Five Relationships” (五倫 *wu lun*), which includes ruler-subject, father-son, husband-wife, elder-younger sibling, and friend-friend, is considered the basic units of society in Confucian philosophy (Table 5).

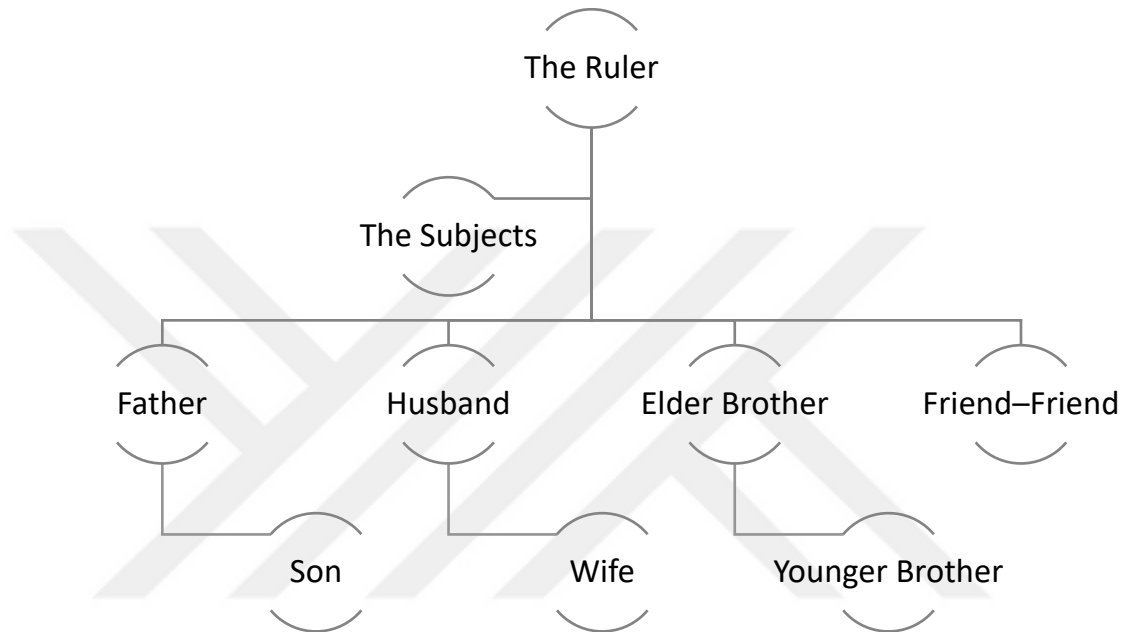


Table 5. The Confucian Five Relationships (五倫 *wu lun*)⁷²

These relationships represent the ideals of social harmony and moral duty that Confucius promoted for a well-ordered society. Originating from Confucius’ teachings, this framework was further detailed by Mencius and became central in Han dynasty interpretations of Confucian texts.⁷³ These five human relations can be found in the *Mengzi* (3A:4) as follows:

...love (亲 *qin*) between father and son (父子 *fu zi*), duty (义 *yi*) between ruler and subject (君臣 *jun chen*), distinction (别 *bie*) between husband and wife (夫妇 *fu fu*), precedence (序 *xu*) of the old over the young (长幼 *zhang you*), and faithfulness (信 *xin*) between friends (朋友 *peng you*).⁷⁴

⁷² Based on Yao, *Routledge Curzon Encyclopedia of Confucianism*, 664.

⁷³ Csikszentmihalyi, “Confucius.”

⁷⁴ Yao, *Routledge Curzon Encyclopedia of Confucianism*, 664.

The love between father and son implies that the father should show his love by educating and supporting his son and the son should respond by respecting and obeying his father. The duty between ruler and subject, in this relationship the ruler should treat their people fairly and responsibly so that their people show loyalty and obedience to their ruler. The distinction between husband and wife, this relationship recognizes that the husband and wife have different but complementary roles. While the husband protects and provides for the family, the wife is expected to support and manage the household. The precedence of the old over the young highlights that older people should be respected. For example, in the family, the elder siblings should be role models and advise the younger siblings and the younger siblings are expected to show respect and consult with them. Lastly, the faithfulness between friends implies a bond based on trust and loyalty. Unlike the four previous relationships based on hierarchy, this relationship is based on equality.

As is understood from the above, Confucianism implies a hierarchical order within families and society. In a family, men hold a dominant position over women, and elders are accorded a higher status than younger family members. This arrangement is not merely about power but is also seen as a way to ensure that wisdom and experience are respected and that the family unit operates within a harmonious and efficient structure. This hierarchical order is justified through one of the four fundamental virtues, filial piety (孝 *xiao*), which calls for respect and obedience to one's parents and ancestors. Similarly, in a society, men are regarded as superior to women, and elders are viewed as superior to younger members. This stratification is seen as a natural alignment with societal roles and responsibilities, emphasizing stability and respect for authority. In both family and societal contexts, this hierarchy ensures that experience and wisdom are valued, with elders leading and guiding the younger generations, and men often holding positions of leadership and decision-making. This structure aims to maintain harmony and order, reflecting Confucian values that prioritize social cohesion and respect for established norms.⁷⁵

⁷⁵ Robert L. Moore, "Confucianism and The Family," in *The Oxford Handbook of Confucianism*, ed. Jennifer Oldstone-Moore (New York, NY, United States of America: Oxford University Press, 2023), 366.

3.1.3. Rectification of Names

As discussed in the previous section, fulfilling the responsibilities associated with one's role in society is essential for achieving the Confucian ideal society. According to Confucius, if each person focuses on their duties and performs them to the best of their abilities, society will become harmonious and orderly. A social structure is considered "right/proper" when the name of each role aligns with how it is actually performed. Confucius refers to this concept as 正名 (*zheng ming*), meaning the "Rectification of Names". For Confucius, the important part of culture and society is the system of 'names' (*ming* 名), which defines and categorizes social roles, practices, and objects.⁷⁶

This naming system, established by the ancients, aims to bring clarity and order to society by embodying the virtues and responsibilities that each person's social role requires. However, by the time of Confucius, he observed that this system had become disordered, causing confusion and dysfunction in society. For him, if everyone acts according to the true meaning of their position—whether as a ruler, father, husband, or subject—then society will function harmoniously.⁷⁷ Therefore, when Confucius was asked about governance he replied: "Let the ruler act like a ruler, the minister like a minister, the father like a father, and the son like a son." (*Analects* 12.11)⁷⁸ According to this, if a ruler does not behave as a ruler should, or a subject does not fulfill the duties of a subject, confusion, and chaos arise because their titles and roles are not rectified. In the Confucian system, the ruler must be *junzi*, while subjects should be loyal and obedient. In short, each role in society has its own set of moral obligations that need to be strictly followed to maintain social order. The Rectification of Names is thus about more than just terminology; it is about the deep-seated integrity and appropriateness of actions within given roles. This concept extends beyond public roles into personal life, affecting every aspect of how individuals interact with each other in society.

⁷⁶ Yao, *Routledge Curzon Encyclopedia of Confucianism*, 813–14.

⁷⁷ Edward Slingerland, "Classical Confucianism (I): Confucius and the Lun-Yü," in *History of Chinese Philosophy*, ed. Bo Mou, Routledge History of World Philosophies, v. 3 (London ; New York: Routledge, 2009), 119.

⁷⁸ 齐景公问政于孔子。孔子对曰：“君君，臣臣，父父，子子。”公曰：“善哉！信如君不君，臣不臣，父不父，子不子，虽有粟，吾得而食诸？” *Lunyu 论语 [Analects]*, 2020, 3:95.

3.1.4. Music and Proper Conduct

Confucianism strongly emphasizes transforming society through the cultivation of moral and ethical values, and this transformation is primarily achieved through two cultural practices: proper conduct (礼 *li*) and music (乐 *yue*).⁷⁹ These two practices are considered essential tools for moral education and social harmony, deeply intertwined with the Confucian idea of a well-ordered society.

In Chapter 2.1.2.3, we saw that *li* (礼) encompasses more than ceremonial practices and it is deeply embedded in the daily interactions and behaviors that shape society. In formal ceremonies like weddings and funerals, *li* provides specific guidelines that dictate everything from the duration of the event to attire and the conduct of participants. Confucius even outlined distinct mourning periods depending on one's relationship with the deceased, reflecting the importance of social bonds and roles. In daily life, *li* governs how one addresses elders and behaves across various social contexts, helping individuals understand their place within the social hierarchy and act accordingly. This fosters a sense of mutual respect and responsibility within society.⁸⁰

The goal of *li* is for these social norms to become so deeply internalized that one instinctively acts appropriately in any situation. For Confucius, the value of *li* lies in its role in distinguishing human society from animal behavior. Without it, people would follow base instincts, leading to societal breakdown. By observing *li*, individuals show respect for others and the contexts of social interaction. Over time, adherence to *li* cultivates a community grounded in respect and order.⁸¹

In the *Analects* 16.13, one of Confucius' disciples Chen Kang (陈亢) asked Confucius' son Bo Yu (伯鱼):

“Did your father ever give you any special instruction?” Bo Yu replied, “One day when he was standing alone, and I quickly passed by him through the

⁷⁹ JeeLoo Liu, *An Introduction to Chinese Philosophy: From Ancient Philosophy to Chinese Buddhism* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2006), 18.

⁸⁰ Liu, 18.

⁸¹ Liu, 18.

courtyard, he asked me, 'Have you studied *li*?' I replied, 'Not yet.' He said, 'If you do not study *li*, you will have no foundation to stand on.' So I went and studied *li*."⁸²

This shows how *li* is important in providing a moral and social foundation. Confucius believes that without an understanding of *li*, individuals cannot properly navigate social roles and uphold the virtues necessary for a well-ordered society. When individuals consistently adhere to proper conduct, they internalize the values *li* represent. If this awareness spreads throughout the community, it gradually elevates the moral standards of society as a whole. In this way, *li* becomes not just a personal practice but a communal one, with the potential to transform the entire social fabric.

Similarly, music (乐 *yue*) was highly valued by Confucius. While *li* regulates external behavior, music influences the heart and mind, fostering an inner sense of harmony and balance.⁸³ In the *Analects* 7.14, the profound impact that music had on Confucius is described as “When Confucius was in *Qi*⁸⁴, he heard the music of *Shao*⁸⁵. For three months, he did not notice the taste of meat...”⁸⁶ The fact that Confucius was so absorbed in the music that he lost his sense of taste shows how deeply music affects people. For him, music has a profound influence on a person’s character and disposition.⁸⁷ But he knows that not all kinds of music have a positive influence. While well-composed music can evoke feelings of harmony and balance, certain types of music can have a negative effect on people. For example, in the *Analects* 17.18, Confucius criticizes *Zheng*⁸⁸ music: “...I dislike the music of *Zheng* for it corrupts the elegance of proper music...”⁸⁹ He believes that this kind of music can stir up

⁸² 陈亢问于伯鱼曰：“子亦有异闻乎？”对曰：“。。。他日，又独立，鲤趋而过庭。曰：‘学礼乎？’对曰：‘未也。’‘不学礼，无以立。’鲤退而学礼。”。。。 *Lunyu 论语 [Analects]*, 2020, 4:106.

⁸³ Liu, *An Introduction to Chinese Philosophy*, 18.

⁸⁴ *Qi* (齐) was one of the major states during the Zhou Dynasty, particularly prominent during the Spring and Autumn period (770–476 BCE).

⁸⁵ *Shao* (韶) refers to a type of ancient Chinese music that was traditionally associated with the legendary Emperor Shun (帝舜), one of the sage kings from Chinese mythology. The *Shao* music is often described in historical texts as representing the pinnacle of musical harmony and moral virtue.

⁸⁶ 子在齐闻《韶》，三月不知肉味。。。 *Lunyu 论语 [Analects]*, 2020, 2:88.

⁸⁷ Barry Dale Steben, “The Philosophy of Music and Ritual in Pre-Han Confucian Thought: Exalting the Power of Music in Human Life,” *Asian Cultural Studies* アジア文化研究, no. 38 (2012).

⁸⁸ *Zheng* music (郑声) refers to a type of music from the ancient state of Zheng during the Spring and Autumn period. In Confucian texts, it is often criticized for its perceived moral and cultural corruption. Confucius disapproved of *Zheng* music because it was associated with hedonistic and sensual activities, which he believed could negatively influence people’s emotions and behavior.

⁸⁹ 子曰：“。。。 ， 恶郑声之乱雅乐也，。。。 ” *Lunyu 论语 [Analects]*, 2020, 4:151.

emotions, leading to chaotic behavior and weakening the moral standards of society. In short, while Confucius acknowledges the powerful influence of music on a person, he also warns about the potential for certain musical forms that corrupt rather than cultivate virtue. For him, the right music is essential for maintaining personal and societal harmony, while the wrong kind can lead to moral decay and social unrest.

In summary, Confucius sees proper conduct (*li*) and music (*yue*) as deeply interconnected elements essential to a well-ordered society. He emphasizes that the essence of *li* and music extends far beyond their outward, material components. For him, *li* is not merely about the physical objects used in rituals, such as jade and silk, nor is music simply about musical instruments like bells and drums (*Analects* 17.11).⁹⁰

Li provides the structure for social interactions, while music offers the emotional and spiritual support needed to maintain that structure. This reflects Confucius' broader philosophy that the outward forms of proper conduct and cultural practices are not important for their own sake, but for the deeper moral and ethical purposes they serve. Together, *li* and music form a comprehensive approach that promotes individual virtue, social order, and harmony, reflecting the core values of Confucian philosophy.

3.2. Al-Farabi on the Origin of Society

Al-Farabi offers a comprehensive explanation for the origin of society, proposing several theories that reflect different aspects of humanity. First, he suggests an ontological theory that human societies are inspired by the observed order in the universe. In this way, they may have established a similar system among themselves. Second, he presents a bioorganic theory that the coordinated functioning of the human body serves as a model for societal organization. Just as the heart leads the brain, and the brain governs the body, society should be organized by a similar hierarchical order. Third, al-Farabi introduces the *fitrah* theory, which posits that humans are inherently social beings. Unable to meet all their needs alone, they are naturally inclined towards cooperation and creating a social organization. Lastly, he discusses the justice theory.⁹¹ We will examine al-Farabi's views on justice in detail below.

⁹⁰ 子曰：“礼云礼云，玉帛云乎哉？乐云乐云，钟鼓云乎哉？” 4:139.

⁹¹ Kaya, “Fârâbî.”

3.2.1. The Concept of Justice

In al-Farabi's philosophical framework, justice (*'adālah*) and happiness (*sa'ādah*) are deeply intertwined. In Chapter 2.2.1, we saw that happiness is the ultimate goal of life according to al-Farabi's philosophy. For him, a person cannot achieve happiness alone; it requires a well-ordered society where justice prevails. So happiness is the goal of life and to achieve this goal, the virtue of justice must be realized. Justice ensures that each person fulfills their role according to their abilities and virtues, contributing to the overall order and well-being of society. In such a society, individuals can realize their full potential which collectively leads to the happiness of the community.⁹²

Considering justice with the ontological theory, al-Farabi sees justice as a reflection of the divine order present in the universe. Just as the cosmos operates in a balanced and harmonious way, a just society mirrors this order, allowing every individual to fulfill their role in society and attain happiness. Here we see a connection between cosmic justice and societal justice illustrating al-Farabi's belief that happiness is achieved when society operates in harmony with the divine order.

As has been demonstrated thus far, we can say that for al-Farabi, society is deeply connected with his understanding of the universe, human nature, and the pursuit of the ultimate happiness. He posits that humans are naturally social beings, incapable of achieving their full potential in isolation. The ultimate purpose of society is to create an environment where individuals can achieve their highest potential, guided by wisdom, justice, and virtue. Thus, recognizing the necessity of justice to fulfill this aim, humans establish the state as a strong and organized institution to uphold justice.

⁹² Mehmet Kasım Özgen, "Farabi'nin Adalet Anlayışı (Hak, Liyakat Ve Pay Teorisi)," *Temaşa Erciyes Üniversitesi Felsefe Bölümü Dergisi*, no. 8 (January 2018): 50.

3.2.2. Classification of Human Communities and the Role of Family

In *Al-Madinah al-Fadilah*, al-Farabi suggests that every human is born with a natural disposition (*fitrah*) that requires many things to survive and reach its full potential. However, individuals cannot meet all their needs alone. People rely on each other to provide what they cannot achieve by themselves. This mutual dependence is true for everyone. Therefore, humans can only achieve their fullest potential by living in communities where each person or group contributes something others need. In this way, society as a whole provides individuals with what they need to survive and grow. This is why humans have gathered in large groups and settled in various parts of the earth. As a result, different types of communities have formed. Al-Farabi classifies these human communities into two groups: complete (*al-kāmilah*) and incomplete (*ghayr al-kāmilah*) (Table 6). The complete communities are divided into three groups: great, middle, and small. The great community is the gathering of all communities (*kullu al-jamā'āt*) in the inhabited world. The middle community is the gathering of a nation (*ummah*) in part of the inhabited world. Lastly, the small community is the gathering of a city (*madīnah*) in part of the dwelling place of a certain nation. The incomplete communities are divided into four groups: the gathering of the people of a village (*qaryah*), the gathering of the people of a neighborhood (*maḥallah*), the gathering in a street (*sikkah*), and the gathering in a house (*manzil*).⁹³

⁹³ *El-Medīnetü'l-Fâzıla*, 186–88.

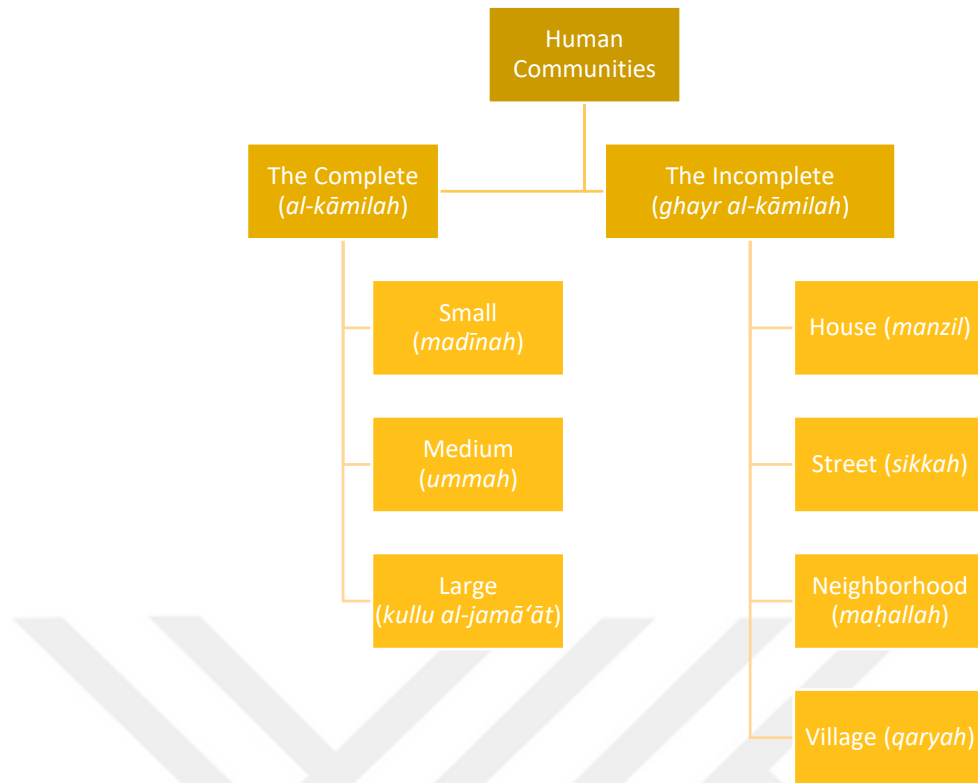


Table 6. Al-Farabi's Classification of Human Societies⁹⁴

In al-Farabi's view, the family is the smallest and most fundamental unit of human communities. The family serves as the foundational building block of society because individuals are first introduced to cooperation, responsibility, leadership, and ethical behavior in their families. Because individuals' first encounter with political life occurs within the home⁹⁵, the skills and dispositions nurtured within the family are foundational for the health and stability of the entire society. Thus, by starting politics from the home, al-Farabi underscores the importance of the family as the training ground for the virtues and practices crucial for a just and well-ordered state.

According to al-Farabi the household community consists of four primary elements: the partnership between man and woman, the relationship between master and slave, the bond between parents and children, and the connection between property and its owner. The head of the house or *rabb al-manzil* is the one who responsible for uniting

⁹⁴ Based on 188.

⁹⁵ Zübeyir Kars, "Fârâbî'de İnsan-Devlet İlişkisi," *Atatürk Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, no. 7 (1) (2006): 21.

and coordinating all these elements. The head of the house must govern with wisdom and care, ensuring that each part of the household fulfills its role in contributing to the overall well-being of the family.⁹⁶

The head of the family must also consider the maturity and development of each individual under their care. It is not enough to focus solely on one's own growth; the head of the family is responsible for fostering the moral and intellectual development of all family members. As the educator and teacher of the household, the head of the family must impart virtues, helping family members to understand and internalize fundamental ethical principles. Moreover, the head of the family must tailor their educational and training efforts to the unique characters and dispositions of each family member. Al-Farabi recognizes the importance of individual differences, suggesting that education and training should be adapted to suit the specific needs and abilities of each person. By considering these individual differences, the head of the family can more effectively nurture the virtues and skills that will enable each member to contribute meaningfully to the household and, by extension, to society.⁹⁷

3.2.3. The Hierarchical Structure of Society

In *Al-Madinah al-Fadilah*, al-Farabi presents a detailed and systematic view of the social and political order in which individuals within society are created with varying degrees of superiority and abilities, leading to natural distinctions in their roles. From these differences, he believes hierarchical structures will inevitably emerge, such as rulers and the ruled, or commanders and those who obey. According to al-Farabi, this hierarchical structure is not only a social necessity but also a reflection of the natural order, like how parts of the body or the universe are organized. He compares social life to the hierarchical structure of the universe and the human body. Just as there is a command-obedience relationship between God and the universe, or between the heart and other organs in the body, a similar dynamic exists in society.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ Ahmet Kamil Cihan, "Farabi'nin Eserlerinde Aile Reisiği," *Bilimname Dergisi*, no. XII (2007): 42.

⁹⁷ Cihan, 43–47.

⁹⁸ *El-Medinetü'l-Fâzıla*, 190–92.

Al-Farabi likens the ruler to the heart in the human body. As the dominant organ, the heart plays a foundational role in shaping and organizing the other organs according to their rank, giving them purpose and direction. In the same way, the ruler, as the superior element in society, is essential for the formation and organization of all the units that make up the community. This ruler provides order, guiding each part of society toward a common goal, ensuring that all components work together harmoniously and effectively.⁹⁹ We will examine al-Farabi's thoughts on the ruler more broadly in Chapter 4.2.

3.3. From the Concept of Society to the Political Organization

In conclusion, profound parallels and distinctions exist between Confucius' and al-Farabi's views on society. Both thinkers recognize that the family plays a key role in the order of society and for individuals to lead a virtuous life, but they approach this understanding in different contexts. Each sees the family as a moral foundation; the values acquired within the family spread throughout society and ensure the general order of society. Also, in both perspectives, harmony within family relationships contributes to social harmony and enables individuals to understand their place and role in society. The key difference is that al-Farabi views the family not only as a moral foundation but also as the first model of political order. For him, the family is where individuals first encounter political life, and thus he begins his political philosophy directly from the family. While Confucius likens respect for parents to respect for authority, al-Farabi more explicitly assigns responsibilities to *rabb al-manzil* (the head of the house), positioning them as akin to *al-ra'īs* (the leader of a state).

Another notable point is the types of relationships both thinkers highlight. Confucius identifies five essential relationships in society: ruler-subject, father-son, husband-wife, elder-younger sibling, and friend-friend. Al-Farabi, on the other hand, mentions four partnerships that constitute the family: husband-wife, master-slave, father-child, and property-owner. Here we see that Confucius' relationships emphasize ethical and social bonds that extend from family to society, while al-Farabi's partnerships incorporate elements of authority and ownership, viewing the household as a

⁹⁹ Hatice Umut, "İnsan Doğası Temelinde Fârâbî'nin Toplum Ya Da Devlet Görüşü," *Divan: Disiplinlerarası Çalışmalar Dergisi*, no. 27 (December 2009): 136.

foundational model for political organization. Except for the friend-friend relationship in Confucius, these relationships are hierarchical in both views. For both thinkers, these bonds are built on mutual respect and duty, extending beyond the family and representing the moral structure of society.

Both Confucius and al-Farabi emphasize hierarchical relations and the importance of individuals fulfilling their roles in society. In both perspectives, hierarchy is a fundamental component of their systems, with each person assigned a specific role that contributes to social harmony and order. Al-Farabi likens the hierarchical structure of society to the human body where the ruler is akin to the heart which is essential for the functioning of the entire system. Confucius, on the other hand, likens the ruler to the North Star, around which all other members of society revolve following him. Each thinker uses key concepts to support the idea that everyone in society has a role to fulfill. Confucius uses the concept of *zheng ming* (rectification of names), which holds that individuals should act according to the true essence of their position, while al-Farabi applies the concept of *'adālah* (justice), which he sees as the principle that enables each person to fulfill their role according to their abilities and virtues. Through these frameworks, both Confucius and al-Farabi illustrate how hierarchical order and the fulfillment of roles are essential to achieving a well-ordered society.

Another striking similarity is between the Chinese concept of 礼 *li* (proper conduct) and the Islamic concept of *ādāb mu'āsharat* (etiquette of social conduct). In the Muslim society in which al-Farabi lived, *ādāb mu'āsharat* refers to the rules of behavior and etiquette in shared public spaces, regulating social life within complex social networks.¹⁰⁰ Similarly, in Confucianism, *li* is a guiding principle that ensures individuals act with respect and propriety, promoting social harmony. In both concepts, there is an emphasis on individuals fulfilling their roles properly based on their positions within society. Thus, both *li* and *ādāb mu'āsharat* serve as comprehensive systems of conduct aimed at fostering ethical relationships, social harmony, and moral development. They represent parallel approaches in Chinese and Islamic traditions to guide individuals' behaviors and maintain societal order.

¹⁰⁰ For the details of *ādāb mu'āsharat*, see Fatma Tunç Yaşar, “Âdâb-ı Muâşeret,” in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (Ankara: TDV Yayınları, 2020).

One last note regarding their approaches to music. As discussed in Chapter 3.1.4, Confucius views music (乐 *yue*) as a tool for maintaining social order, closely tied to proper conduct (礼 *li*). For him, appropriate music can inspire harmony and morality, while inappropriate music can lead to moral decay. On the other hand, al-Farabi offers a more sophisticated analysis of music in his works, particularly in *Kitab al-Musiqa al-Kabir* (the Great Book of Music). He examines music from a philosophical perspective, delving into its mathematical foundations and exploring how different melodies and rhythms can evoke various emotions, from joy to sadness.¹⁰¹ Thus, while both thinkers recognize the transformative power of music, Confucius emphasizes its role in fostering moral and social harmony, whereas al-Farabi focuses on its scientific and philosophical dimensions.

To sum up, both Confucius and al-Farabi see society as an essential structure through which individuals can cultivate moral virtues and contribute to collective harmony. However, Confucius emphasizes a more relational approach, while al-Farabi takes a philosophical approach. The key to maintaining harmony within their social structure lies in the critical role of the ruler which is the subject of the next chapter.

¹⁰¹ For more details, see Alaeddin Jebrini, “Fârâbî (Mûsiki),” in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: TDV Yayınları, 1995).

CHAPTER IV

GOVERNANCE: IDEALS OF POLITICAL ORDER IN CONFUCIUS AND AL-FARABI

Social organization and management are the basis for the functioning of any society. Various thinkers have explored these issues across different civilizations and eras throughout history, with each offering unique ideas about the ideal form of governance. Confucius, the central figure in Chinese philosophy, emphasizes the importance of harmony, hierarchy, and moral leadership within a social organization. For him, the ruler must be *junzi* (virtuous man) to inspire ethical conduct in their subjects fostering a society governed by *li* (proper conduct). Al-Farabi, one of the important names in political philosophy, discusses these issues more systematically. In his works, al-Farabi presents the idea of the virtuous city (*al-madīnah al-fāḍilah*), where the organization of society mirrors the order of the cosmos, ruled by the philosopher-king, and everyone in society pursues happiness.

In this chapter, we will explore the perspectives of Confucius (Ch 4.1) and al-Farabi (Ch 4.2) on ideal governance and leadership. While both emphasize the importance of virtue in governance and the role of the leader, they differ in their views on the purpose of the state (Ch 4.3). For Confucius, the state's primary role is to ensure social harmony, whereas, for al-Farabi, the state exists to enable people to achieve ultimate happiness.

4.1. Confucius on Social Organization and Management

We saw in previous chapters that to maintain societal harmony, Confucius advocates moral virtue and ethical conduct. In governance, he prefers governance by virtue and proper conduct rather than by law and punishment. In the *Analects* 2.3, Confucius compares these two forms of governance: “If you lead the people with laws and regulate them with punishments, they may avoid wrongdoing, but they will have no

sense of shame. If you lead them with virtue and regulate them with *li*, they will develop a sense of shame and will rectify themselves.”¹⁰² Here, he argues that people may be obedient through laws and punishments, but this style of governance will not cultivate a true sense of morality or shame among the people. In contrast, governing through virtue and *li* (proper conduct) creates a deeper moral consciousness, encouraging individuals to regulate their behavior based on ethical principles. For Confucius, effective leadership is not just about enforcing rules but about fostering moral self-cultivation among the people by being a *junzi*, so they act virtuously.

He believes the moral character of the ruler is pivotal for good governance. In the *Analects* 2.1, Confucius draws an analogy between virtuous leadership and the North Star: “To govern by virtue is like the North Star. It stays in its place, while all the other stars revolve around it.”¹⁰³ He suggests that the ruler who governs by virtue will naturally inspire and guide the people, without any need for force. Just as the North Star remains fixed while other stars orbit around it, the virtuous ruler acts as a moral leader, creating a harmonious society where people follow him. Confucius highlights a leadership style where the ruler leads as a *junzi*, embodying the fundamental virtues, thus encouraging the people to live these values.

For Confucius, the state functions like a large family, with the values and dynamics within the household extending outward to shape the structure and function of government. Among the five key relationships (五倫 *wu lun*) discussed in Chapter 3.1.2, the ruler-subject and father-son relationships are particularly significant. Just as a son is expected to demonstrate loyalty and respect toward his father, a subject is similarly obligated to show loyalty and obedience to the ruler. Thus, in his system, the household serves as a learning environment where individuals internalize the values of respect, loyalty, and duty under the authority of the father, who acts as both a moral guide and a disciplinary figure. This familial hierarchy prepares individuals to fulfill

¹⁰² 子曰：“道之以政，齐之以刑，民免而无耻；道之以德，齐之以礼，有耻且格。” *Lunyu 论语* [Analects], 2020, 1:50.

¹⁰³ 子曰：“为政以德，譬如北辰，居其所而众星共之。” 1:45.

similar roles in the political realm, where the ruler acts as the ultimate father figure, ensuring harmony and order within the state.¹⁰⁴

As is understood from the above, Confucius' views on political life and state organization are deeply rooted in his concept of the ideal man *junzi* (君子). We saw in Chapter 2.1.2 that the *junzi* embodies the fundamental moral and ethical qualities, which are benevolence (仁 *ren*), righteousness (义 *yi*), proper conduct (礼 *li*), and filial piety (孝 *xiao*). However, Confucius does not expect all people to have these characteristics. He especially wants rulers to be ideal people, *junzi* who possess these principles. If rulers have these characteristics and apply them, people will follow them and follow the right path. For Confucius, political stability and social harmony depend on the moral leadership of individuals who embody these virtues.¹⁰⁵

4.1.1. The Importance of Moral Leadership

The ideal political state, according to Confucius, is one led by the sage king who has attained the highest level of moral cultivation. This ideal ruler should first and foremost be a *junzi*. For Confucius, the role of the ruler goes beyond simply providing material welfare or physical security for its citizens. Zigong (子贡), one of his disciples, asks about governance:

“Sufficient food, sufficient military force, and the trust of the people.” Zigong asked, “If you had to give up one of these, which would you let go of first?” Confucius replied, “Give up the military force.” Zigong then asked, “If you had to give up one of the remaining two, which would you let go of next?” Confucius replied, “Give up food. Since people have always faced death, but without trust, a state cannot stand.” (*Analects* 12.7)¹⁰⁶

For Confucius, trust in the ruler is the most important element for a stable society. Although material and military resources are necessary, without trust, society will

¹⁰⁴ Fatih Ulaşan, “The Influence of Confucianism for Public Administration in East Asia,” *Kamu Yönetimi ve Politikaları Dergisi* 3, no. 2 (2022): 32.

¹⁰⁵ Nurcan Kalkır, “Konfüçyüs’ün Yönetim Anlayışı Üzerine Bir Analiz,” *Current Research in Social Sciences* 4, no. 3 (September 30, 2018): 100, <https://doi.org/10.30613/uresosc.449190>.

¹⁰⁶ 子贡问政。子曰：“足食，足兵，民信之矣。”子贡曰：“必不得已而去，于斯三者何先？”曰：“去兵。”子贡曰：“必不得已而去，于斯二者何先？”曰：“去食。自古皆有死，民无信不立。” *Lunyu 论语 [Analects]*, 2020, 3:85.

collapse. Because trust creates a sense of loyalty and cooperation between the people and the ruler, and without it, the ruler cannot govern effectively.

In another passage, Confucius emphasizes the importance of the self-cultivation of the ruler as the foundation of effective governance. He says: “If one can rectify oneself, what difficulty will one have in governing others? If one cannot rectify oneself, how can one expect to rectify others?” (*Analects* 13.13)¹⁰⁷ For Confucius, correcting and improving one's own behavior and moral character is essential for leadership. If rulers can achieve moral integrity and discipline in their own lives, they will find it easier to lead and govern others. However, if a ruler cannot maintain their own moral integrity, they will be unable to guide others. A leader who lacks self-discipline and moral uprightness cannot expect to command respect or inspire virtuous behavior in others. Without self-cultivation, attempts to correct others won't be effective. As is apparent from this, the ruler must be an exemplar of virtue.

In the *Analects* 12.19, Ji Kangzi (季康子)¹⁰⁸ asks Confucius about governance:

“What about killing those who lack virtue to bring about virtue?”, Confucius replies: “When governing, why resort to killing? If you desire goodness, the people will become good. The virtue of *junzi* (virtuous man) is like the wind; the virtue of *xiaoren* (common person) is like the grass. When the wind blows over the grass, the grass bends.”¹⁰⁹

This dialogue reflects Confucius' views on moral governance and the power of virtuous leadership. First, Confucius opposes the idea of using violence and killing to enforce morality and good governance. Instead, he emphasizes leading by example and cultivating virtue. Second, he uses the metaphor of the wind and grass to illustrate that *junzi* serves as a moral guide for society. For Confucius, if a ruler is *junzi* leading with goodness and setting a virtuous example, just as grass bends naturally in the direction of the wind, the people will align themselves with the moral example set by their leader.

¹⁰⁷ 子曰：“苟正其身矣，于从政乎何有？不能正其身，如正人何？” 3:153.

¹⁰⁸ He was the head of the *Ji* family (季氏 *ji shi*), one of the three major aristocratic families that effectively controlled the state of *Lu* (鲁国 *lu guo*), Confucius' home state.

¹⁰⁹ 季康子问政于孔子曰：“如杀无道，以就有道，何如？”孔子对曰：“子为政，焉用杀？子欲善而民善矣。君子之德风，小人之德草。草上之风，必偃。” *Lunyu 论语 [Analects]*, 2020, 3:110.

To sum up, in Confucius's view, the ideal ruler should first and foremost be a *junzi*. He believes that a society is best governed when its leaders act as moral exemplars, setting the standard for ethical behavior. Rather than ruling through laws and punishments, the *junzi* leads by example, allowing their virtuous behavior to influence and guide the people. In this way, Confucius' political philosophy is centered on the idea of moral leadership, where the state is organized following the ethical principles of its leaders, ensuring that governance is rooted in virtue. Thus, Confucius's teachings on political life are inseparable from his moral vision of human perfection through the cultivation of virtue.

Another important point is that not only the ruler must be virtuous but also the officials of the state must be chosen from virtuous people. In the *Analects* 2.19, Duke Ai (哀公), the ruler of the state of Lu, seeks Confucius' advice on how to ensure that his people follow him and maintain social order. He says: "If you promote the upright and place them above the crooked, the people will obey. If you promote the crooked and place them above the upright, the people will not obey."¹¹⁰ Here Confucius advises that to win the people's respect and obedience, a ruler should promote virtuous individuals to positions of power and authority. By elevating morally upright people, the leader sets an example for the rest of society, showing that virtue and integrity are valued and rewarded. This encourages others to emulate those qualities, leading to a well-ordered and harmonious society. When people see that those in positions of authority are morally upright, they will naturally respect and follow their leadership. On the other hand, if the ruler promotes corrupt or dishonest individuals, especially over those who are virtuous, the people will lose respect for the leadership. When immoral individuals are given power, it undermines the moral fabric of society and shows that dishonesty and corruption are acceptable. This will lead to widespread disobedience and dissatisfaction among the people. Without trust in their leaders, the people won't follow their directives.

¹¹⁰ 哀公问曰：“何为则民服？”孔子对曰：“举直错诸枉，则民服；举枉错诸直，则民不服。” *Lunyu 论语 [Analects]*, 2020, 1:84.

4.2. Al-Farabi's Political Philosophy

Although the Arabic word *madīnah* is commonly translated as a city, in the context of al-Farabi's political philosophy, it refers to the political organization and the state itself. In his works, the *madīnah* is the environment where individuals come together to fulfill their material needs and, more importantly, pursue intellectual and moral excellence, achieving the highest form of human happiness. In his idea of *al-madīnah al-fāḍilah* (the virtuous city), the ruler (a philosopher-king) leads with virtue and wisdom, and the citizens contribute to the common good according to their abilities and capacities. It is the model for how society should be organized, with the state's primary role being to facilitate the conditions for individuals to achieve intellectual and moral excellence. In this way, the *madīnah* in al-Farabi's thought is synonymous with the state, reflecting the intricate relationship between social order, political power, and human fulfillment.¹¹¹

4.2.1. Types of States

In *Al-Madinah al-Fadilah*, al-Farabi describes different forms of the state (*madīnah*) and divides it into two main categories: virtuous and non-virtuous (Table 7). While there is only one form of the virtuous state (*al-madīnah al-fāḍilah*), states opposed to the virtuous state (*al-mudun al-muḍādda lil-madīnah al-fāḍilah*)¹¹² consist of four categories: ignorant (*jāhiliyyah*), immoral (*fāsiqah*), changeable (*mubaddalah*), and deviant (*ḍāllah*). The ignorant state has six distinct forms: necessity (*ḍarūriyyah*), baseness (*nadhālah*), vulgarity and degradation (*khissah wa-s-suqūd*), honor (*karāmah*), supremacy (*taghallub*), and lastly communal (*jamā'iyyah*).¹¹³ Below, we will examine these state forms respectively.

¹¹¹ Yıldız, "Farabi'nin Toplum ve Devlet Görüşü," 155.

¹¹² This phrase refers to "the non-virtuous states".

¹¹³ *El-Medīnetü'l-Fāzıla*, 206–10.

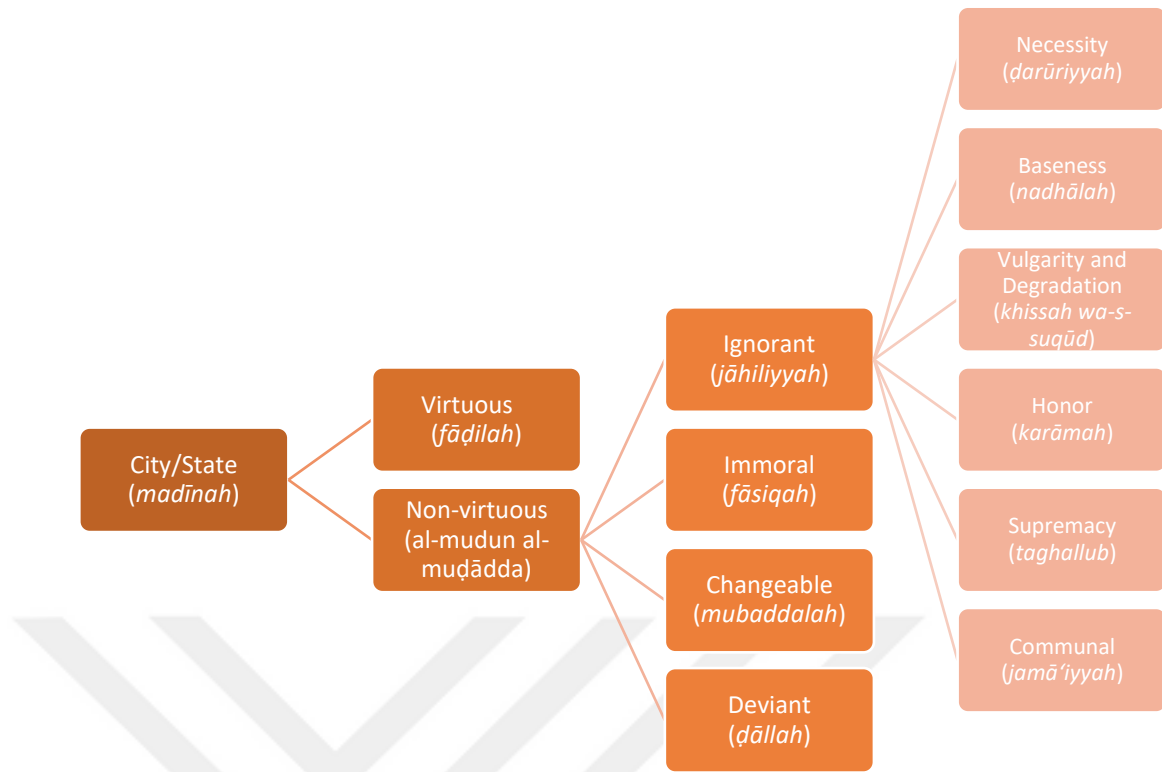


Table 7. Al-Farabi's Classification of City/State (*madīnah*)¹¹⁴

4.2.1.1. The Virtuous City (*al-madīnah al-fāḍilah*) and Its Leader (*al-ra'īs*)

According to al-Farabi, there is only one form of the virtuous state, and that is *al-madīnah al-fāḍilah* which represents the highest form of political organization and reflects the fulfillment of human potential both individually and collectively. His concept of the virtuous state is founded on moral virtues, social solidarity, and justice, with leadership provided by wise rulers. In al-Farabi's political philosophy, the head of state (*al-ra'īs*) has a central position, as the ruler's intellectual abilities and moral character are seen as the foundation of a well-governed state. He highlights that the qualities of its leader deeply shape the nature of the state.¹¹⁵ For this reason, he gives a detailed vision of the ideal ruler and lists the twelve qualities that the leader must embody to guide the state:

¹¹⁴ Based on 206–10.

¹¹⁵ Mahmut Kaya, "El-Medīnetü'l-Fāzıla," in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslām Ansiklopedisi* (Ankara: TDV Yayınları, 2003).

- (1) **Physical perfection:** The leader's body and physical structure must be complete and strong.
- (2) **The ability to understand and comprehend well:** The leader must be able to comprehend and evaluate effectively, meaning they should understand and visualize what is being said to them, and grasp the speaker's intentions.
- (3) **Strong memory:** The leader must retain well what they understand, see, hear, and grasp; they should have a strong memory and not forget easily.
- (4) **Superior intelligence and disposition:** The leader must be alert and intelligent, able to understand the full scope of something from its smallest detail.
- (5) **Eloquence and interpretation:** The leader must be able to construct beautiful sentences, fully explain everything conveyed by language, and possess clarity of expression and style.
- (6) **Love for learning and teaching:** The leader must love teaching and learning, and not become weary of these actions; they should not tire of learning or teaching.
- (7) **Not being inclined to physical pleasures:** The leader must not be greedy or overly attached to food, drink, or bodily pleasures.
- (8) **Love for truth:** The leader must love truth and honesty and stay away from lies and liars.
- (9) **Love for honor and dignity:** The leader must be broad-minded, love honor and dignity, and protect their own integrity.
- (10) **Asceticism:** The leader must be content, not placing excessive importance on material wealth such as gold, silver, or money.
- (11) **Love for justice:** The leader must love justice and just individuals and should dislike oppression, injustice, and tyranny.
- (12) **Strength of determination:** The leader must be resolute in doing what they believe needs to be done, courageous, bold, fearless, and fully committed.¹¹⁶

Since it may be difficult to find all these characteristics in one person, in such a case al-Farabi mentions the six qualities of the leader who will come after the first leader

¹¹⁶ *El-Medînetü'l-Fâzıla*, 202–4; Betül Vural, "Platon ve Farabi'nin Siyaset Felsefelerinde İdeal Yönetim" (Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Kırıkkale, Kırıkkale Üniversitesi, 2010), 58–59.

(who has the twelve qualities above). The six qualities that must be present in this new leader are:

- i. being a philosopher/wise (*hakīm*).
- ii. being someone who knows, remembers, and follows the laws, practices, and behaviors established by the first leader, and who completely adheres to these in all their actions.
- iii. having the ability to make new laws and to follow the path taken by the first leader in making these laws.
- iv. having superior intelligence regarding situations and events that have emerged in the present times, striving to do what is best for the welfare of the city.
- v. having the ability to guide and advise others well.
- vi. possessing a strong body capable of carrying out the actions related to warfare, which means being skilled in the art of war in both the servant and ruling capacities.¹¹⁷

In the absence of such a leader who possesses these six qualities, al-Farabi suggests that two people (one who is solely a philosopher/wise and the other who possesses the remaining qualities) should rule the virtuous state. If each of these six qualities is present in different individuals, the state should be ruled by six virtuous leaders. If five of the six qualities are present but wisdom is absent, then that virtuous state is without a leader and faces danger at any moment. If a wise leader cannot be found, the state will gradually collapse.¹¹⁸ This indicates the importance of wisdom in governance for al-Farabi. He thinks that it's impossible to have a state without wisdom.

4.2.1.2. The Non-Virtuous Cities (*al-mudun al-muḍādda lil-madīnah al-fāḍilah*)

The cities opposed to the virtuous city (*al-mudun al-muḍādda lil-madīnah al-fāḍilah*) refers to the non-virtuous cities that are opposed to the ideal of the virtuous city (*al-madīnah al-fāḍilah*). In al-Farabi's political philosophy, these forms of government don't aim to achieve human perfection and true happiness but instead focus on lesser goals like material wealth, power, and physical pleasure. These non-virtuous states

¹¹⁷ *El-Medīnetü 'l-Fāzıla*, 204–6.

¹¹⁸ 206.

include ignorant (*jāhiliyyah*), immoral (*fāsiqah*), changeable (*mubaddalah*), and deviant (*dāllah*), each embodying a fundamental opposition to the principles of justice, virtue, and wisdom that define the virtuous state. The rulers of these cities are the opposite of the rulers of the virtuous city, and their governance is contrary to that of the virtuous rulers. The same applies to the inhabitants of these cities as well.¹¹⁹

4.2.1.2.1. The Ignorant City (*al-madīnah al-jāhiliyyah*)

In al-Farabi's political philosophy, the ignorant city (*al-madīnah al-jāhiliyyah*) is one of the non-virtuous forms of government and the most diverse category with six distinct forms. It is characterized by a fundamental misunderstanding of happiness and the true purpose of human life, focusing on material or lower-order concerns and physical pleasures rather than the pursuit of moral virtue. Al-Farabi subdivides the ignorant state into six distinct forms, each representing various misunderstandings of what true happiness is. These include bodily health, wealth, the enjoyment of pleasure, living freely according to one's desires, and attaining superiority and respect. To the people of the ignorant city, each of these represents happiness, and the greatest and most perfect happiness is the combination of all of these. Their opposites (such as bodily harm, poverty, deprivation of pleasure, inability to live freely, and lack of respect) are seen as misfortune.¹²⁰

4.2.1.2.1.1. The City of Necessity (*al-madīnah aḍ-ḍarūriyyah*)

The city of necessity (*al-madīnah aḍ-ḍarūriyyah*) focuses only on the fulfillment of basic material needs like food, drink, clothing, shelter, and sexual relations. The citizens and rulers lack any higher aspirations for intellectual or moral development, and their society is organized around the simple goal of self-preservation, driven solely by physical needs.¹²¹

¹¹⁹ 206–10.

¹²⁰ 206–8.

¹²¹ 208.

4.2.1.2.1.2. The City of Baseness (*madīnat an-nadhālah*)

People of the city of baseness (*madīnat an-nadhālah*) aim to assist one another in accumulating wealth and riches, but not for any greater purpose. They seek wealth simply because it is seen as the goal of life.¹²²

4.2.1.2.1.3. The City of Vulgarly and Degradation (*madīnat al-khissah wa-s-suqūd*)

The people of the city of vulgarity and degradation (*madīnat al-khissah wa-s-suqūd*) enjoy the pleasures related to eating, drinking, sexual relations, and all things that provide sensory or imagined pleasure. They prioritize all kinds of amusement and play.¹²³

4.2.1.2.1.4. The City of Honor (*madīnat al-karāmah*)

In the city of honor (*madīnat al-karāmah*), citizens and rulers are primarily concerned with being respected, praised, well-known, and honored. The society is structured around a pursuit of reputation and prestige. They assist one another in acquiring glory.¹²⁴

4.2.1.2.1.5. The City of Supremacy (*madīnat at-taghallub*)

The city of supremacy (*madīnat at-taghallub*) is characterized by a desire for domination and control. People aim to dominate others, preventing them from being dominated in turn. Their goal is simply to enjoy the pleasure derived from this domination.¹²⁵

¹²² 208.

¹²³ 208.

¹²⁴ 208.

¹²⁵ 208.

4.2.1.2.1.6. The Communal City (*al-madīnah al-jamā'iyah*)

The goal of the people in the communal city (*al-madīnah al-jamā'iyah*) is for each individual to be free to do whatever they wish without their desires being restricted in any way.¹²⁶

4.2.1.2.2. The Immoral City (*al-madīnah al-fāsiqah*)

The immoral city (*al-madīnah al-fāsiqah*) is a city whose beliefs are the same as those of the virtuous city (*al-madīnah al-fāḍilah*), meaning that people know and believe in happiness, in the Almighty and Glorious God, the Seconds (the celestial intelligences), the Active Intellect, and everything that people of the virtuous city know and believe. However, the actions of its people resemble those of the inhabitants of the ignorant cities (*al-mudun al-jāhiliyyah*).¹²⁷

4.2.1.2.3. The Changeable City (*al-madīnah al-mubaddalah*)

The changeable city (*al-madīnah al-mubaddalah*) is a city that, in the past, had beliefs and actions that were the same as those of the virtuous city (*al-madīnah al-fāḍilah*). However, these beliefs and actions later changed, and the city adopted different views and behaviors.¹²⁸

4.2.1.2.4. The Deviant City (*al-madīnah aḍ-ḍāllah*)

The deviant city (*al-madīnah aḍ-ḍāllah*) is a city that claims to seek happiness after this life but does not aim for true happiness. It holds corrupt views about the Almighty and Glorious God, the Seconds, and the Active Intellect. The first leader of this city is falsely portrayed as receiving divine revelation, and to achieve this portrayal, they use deceitful, fraudulent, and misleading means.¹²⁹

¹²⁶ 210.

¹²⁷ 210.

¹²⁸ 210.

¹²⁹ 210.

4.3. Their Approach in Social Organization as Practical Philosophy

As we have seen in this chapter, Confucius' and al-Farabi's views on governance highlight their shared emphasis on virtue, moral leadership, and the central role of the ruler in establishing a well-ordered society. Both thinkers recognize that governance is not merely about maintaining order or material well-being but about cultivating a society where individuals can achieve their highest potential through moral harmony as in Confucian thought or intellectual and spiritual perfection as in al-Farabi's philosophy. For both, the ruler serves as the cornerstone of their ideal state vision, embodying the virtues necessary to inspire and guide the people.

Confucius envisions governance as an extension of familial relationships, with the ruler acting as a moral exemplar akin to a father figure. Through the cultivation of moral virtues, the ruler fosters trust and loyalty, ensuring harmony within the state. In this model, governance is achieved not through coercion but by setting the leader as a moral example that naturally encourages ethical behavior among the people. For Confucius, the success of governance depends on the ruler's ability to lead as *junzi* (君子), the virtuous ideal man. Al-Farabi, while similarly emphasizing the moral and intellectual character of the ruler, approaches governance from a more systematic and philosophical perspective. In his vision of the virtuous city (*al-madīnah al-fāḍilah*), the ruler (*al-ra'īs*) is not merely a moral example, as in Confucius' vision, but a philosopher-king who embodies wisdom and justice, guiding the community toward collective happiness and intellectual fulfillment. Unlike Confucius' focus on social harmony as the primary goal, al-Farabi places ultimate happiness (*sa'ādah*) at the center of governance.

In al-Farabi's political philosophy, we encounter a classification of societies and states that is absent in Confucius. Al-Farabi categorizes states based on their understanding of happiness. While there is only one form of a virtuous state (*al-madīnah al-fāḍilah*) that comprehends true happiness, non-virtuous states (*al-mudun al-muḍādda lil-madīnah al-fāḍilah*) are diverse due to their misunderstanding of happiness. This classification of non-virtuous states underscores the risks of governance that fail to prioritize justice and virtue. In contrast to al-Farabi's detailed categorization of states, Confucius provides examples of the ideal governance, where the ruler leads by

example as a *junzi*, inspiring their subjects to act virtuously, and misgovernance, where the ruler fails to cultivate virtue and harmony within society. For Confucius, misgovernance often relies on harsh punishments, fear, and rigid enforcement rather than moral guidance.

Al-Farabi's division of states also reflects the moral and intellectual qualities of their rulers, which are crucial in determining whether the state promotes virtue or fosters corruption. According to al-Farabi, the virtuous ruler who possesses wisdom and moral integrity can guide the citizens toward their highest potential and happiness, fostering a society based on justice, law, morality, and the common good. In contrast, rulers of non-virtuous cities who lack moral virtue lead their societies into corruption. Moreover, he provides a detailed description of the ideal ruler's qualities, emphasizing his belief that effective leadership requires a unique combination of intellectual, moral, and practical abilities. However, recognizing practical limitations, al-Farabi allows for flexibility and presents multiple scenarios in which leadership can be distributed among a group of leaders. Even in such cases, wisdom remains paramount; without it, the state faces imminent danger and eventual collapse. In light of this, we can conclude that the indispensable feature of Confucius' ideal ruler is being a *junzi*, while for al-Farabi, it is being a philosopher (*hakīm*).

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Despite their geographical and temporal differences, both Confucius and al-Farabi, two prominent names of the classical era of Chinese and Islamic philosophy, offer strikingly similar answers to the questions of what the ideal human, society, and state should be. However, their distinct historical, cultural, and philosophical backgrounds also lead to important differences.

Considering their general philosophies, Confucius developed a doctrine that outlines a way for humans to live in harmony through interrelated and intertwined concepts and principles. One of the key differences from al-Farabi is that Confucius primarily focuses on the ethical dimensions of everyday life. He had almost no interest in life after death and refused to go beyond daily life. In the *Analects* 11.11, when asked about death, Confucius responded: “If you do not understand life, how can you understand death?”¹³⁰ This reflects his practical and human-centered philosophy, emphasizing the importance of focusing on the present life before delving into metaphysical or spiritual concerns. Thus, Confucius concentrated on fostering harmony in social life, placing moral principles at the core of his teachings. Within this framework, he provides ideas about the ideal man, society, and state, aiming to address the social and political turmoil of his time.

Unlike Confucius, al-Farabi presents more philosophical and metaphysical ideas. According to al-Farabi, the universe exists in a divine order that emanates from God, and human beings should live in accordance with this structure. The ultimate goal of humans is to achieve happiness (*sa'ādah*) through philosophy. However, this happiness is not limited to the worldly life; al-Farabi emphasizes the significance of the afterlife and the eternal happiness of the soul. In his doctrine, the social and political order serves as a means to bring humans closer to God.

¹³⁰ 。 。 。 “敢问死。”曰：“未知生，焉知死？” *Lunyu 论语* [Analects], 2020, 3:25.

Both thinkers agree that the ideal human contributes to a harmonious society and the highest exemplar of the ideal human is the ruler, yet they diverge in their approaches and ultimate goals. For Confucius, the ideal human (君子 *junzi*) continuously works on self-cultivation to achieve moral excellence and social harmony. Al-Farabi, on the other hand, frames his vision within a systematic and philosophical framework, centering his virtuous city on intellectual and moral perfection, where the ruler (*al-ra'īs*) is a philosopher (*hakīm*) who leads the community toward true happiness. In Confucius, we don't see the concept of happiness as centered as al-Farabi.

For Confucius, the family serves as the foundation of societal harmony, with relationships extending outward to shape governance. His hierarchical structure is rooted in the ethical principles of 礼 *li* (proper conduct), 孝 *xiao* (filial piety), and 正名 *zheng ming* (rectification of names). Governance, in this framework, mirrors familial relationships, with the ruler embodying the virtues of a father figure. Misgovernance arises when leaders rely on fear, coercion, and rigid enforcement of laws rather than moral guidance. Similarly, al-Farabi views the family as a moral foundation and also as the first model of political order, where individuals learn roles and reflect broader societal structures. His categorization of states highlights the critical role of wisdom and virtue in governance, with only the virtuous state (*al-madīnah al-fāḍilah*) achieving true happiness, while non-virtuous states (*al-mudun al-muḍādda lil-madīnah al-fāḍilah*) fail due to their misunderstanding of happiness.

Both thinkers also underscore the importance of hierarchical relationships in maintaining social harmony. Confucius emphasizes the rectification of names (*zheng ming*), where individuals act according to the true essence of their roles, while al-Farabi prioritizes justice (*'adālah*), ensuring that every individual fulfills their role based on their abilities and virtues. Furthermore, the parallels between Confucius' *li* (proper conduct) and al-Farabi's *ādāb mu'āsharat* (etiquette of social conduct) demonstrate their shared commitment to fostering ethical relationships and societal order through proper conduct and etiquette.

A unique dimension in their thought is their views on music. For Confucius, music (乐 *yue*) complements *li* in cultivating moral and social harmony, whereas al-Farabi explores music's philosophical and emotional dimensions, emphasizing its scientific and psychological effects on the individual and community.

In summary, Confucius and al-Farabi share a vision of governance that transcends material well-being, aiming instead to cultivate a society where individuals achieve their highest potential. For Confucius, this is achieved through moral harmony and virtues, while for al-Farabi, it lies in the divine alignment with the cosmos and God through philosophy. The cornerstone of their philosophies is the ruler, whose character and abilities shape the society they lead. While for Confucius, the ruler's legitimacy is tied to their moral conduct, for al-Farabi, it's tied to their wisdom. Al-Farabi places greater emphasis on the philosophical qualities of the ruler. Unlike Confucius' sage-king, al-Farabi's philosopher-king governs not only through moral virtue but also through rational and philosophical understandings.

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GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

BÖLÜM I

GİRİŞ

Konfüçyüs

Tarihin en etkili düşünürlerinden biri olan Konfüçyüs'ün (孔子 *Kong Zi*, MÖ 551-479) öğretileri Çin kültürü başta olmak üzere diğer tüm Doğu Asya ülkelerini derinden etkilemiştir. Sözleri ve fikirleri kendisinden sonra öğrencileri tarafından kaydedilmiş ve 论语 *Lunyu* (Konuşmalar) adı altında günümüze aktarılmıştır. Konfüçyüs'ün düşüncelerini bu kitap sayesinde bilmekteyiz. Genel olarak düşünceleri ahlak, sosyal ilişkiler ve yönetim etrafında dönmektedir.

Konfüçyüs, siyasi parçalanmaların ve sosyal çalkantıların yaşandığı İlkbahar ve Sonbahar döneminin (MÖ 770-476) sonlarında doğdu. Bu dönemde sürekli savaş ve sosyal düzensizlik vardı. Bu istikrarsızlık, dönemin entelektüellerini sosyal ve siyasi sorunlara çözüm aramaya yöneltti ve Konfüçyanizm, Taoizm ve Legalizm gibi düşünce ekollerinin ortaya çıkmasına neden oldu. Bu düşünce okullarının sayısı o kadar fazlaydı ki Çin felsefesi tarihinde bu dönem “Yüz Düşünce Okulu” dönemi (百家争鸣 *bai jia zheng ming*) olarak adlandırılır.

Bu kaos ortamına çözüm olarak Konfüçyüs, erken Zhou Hanedanlığı'nın (MÖ 1046) erdemlerine ve ritüellerine geri dönmeyi savunmuştur. Hiyerarşik ilişkiler ve etik davranışlar etrafında yapılandırılmış bir toplumu idealleştirmiştir. Ölümünden sonra Konfüçyüs'ün fikirleri çeşitli Çin devletleri tarafından kademeli olarak benimsenmiş, Han Hanedanlığı döneminde (MÖ 206-MS 220) Konfüçyanizm devlet ideolojisi olarak yerleşmiştir.

Farabi

Aristoteles'ten sonra “*muallim-i sâni*” (İkinci Öğretmen) olarak anılan Farabi, İslam felsefesinin kurucu ismi olarak kabul edilir. Hem İslam düşünce geleneğinde hem de dünya felsefe tarihinde önemli bir yer edinen Farabi, Aristoteles ve Platon'un öğretilerini derinlemesine incelemiş ve bu öğretileri İslam teolojisi ile sentezlemiştir. Özellikle sudur teorisi ile varlıkların yaratılışını ve düzenini açıklayan kapsamlı bir felsefi sistem ortaya koymuştur.

Farabi, ilimlerin sınıflandırılması konusunda yaptığı çalışmalarla, bilim ve felsefe tarihinde önemli bir yer edinmiştir. O, bilgiyi daha sistematik bir şekilde ele alabilmek için ilimleri çeşitli kategorilere ayırmış ve her birinin yöntemlerini ve amaçlarını belirlemiştir. Bu sınıflandırmada temel ilimler olarak dil, mantık, fizik, matematik, metafizik ve siyaseti öne çıkarmıştır.

Felsefe, mantık ve siyaset teorisi gibi pek çok alanda çok sayıda eser kaleme almıştır. En önemli eserlerinden biri olan *el-Medînetü'l-fâzıla* (Erdemli Şehir) ile ideal insan, ideal toplum ve ideal devlet hakkındaki tartışmalara ışık tutmuştur. Eser, siyaset felsefesinin temel taşlarından biri olarak hem İslam felsefesinde hem de genel felsefi düşünce tarihinde önemli bir yere sahiptir.

Fikirleri İbn Sina ve İbn Rüşd gibi daha sonraki İslam filozoflarını önemli ölçüde etkilemiştir. Düşünceleri çeviriler ve şerhler yoluyla Orta Çağ Avrupa'sına kadar ulaşmıştır.

Literatür Taraması ve Tezin Önemi

Konfüçyüsçülük, uluslararası akademik camiada kapsamlı araştırmalara ve incelemelere konu olmuştur. Batı'da Konfüçyüsçülük üzerine önemli sayıda çalışma olmasına rağmen, karşılaştırmalı çalışmalar genellikle Antik Yunan veya Batı felsefesiyle sınırlıdır. Çin ve İslam felsefelerini karşılaştıran çalışmalar oldukça nadirdir. Konfüçyüs Çin felsefesinde temel bir figür olarak ve Farabi de İslam felsefesinin kurucu ismi olarak kendi felsefe geleneklerinde iyi çalışılmış olsalar da

insan, toplum ve devlet hakkındaki fikirlerinin karşılaştırmalı analizleri sınırlıdır. Çoğu çalışma her bir düşünürü kendi kültürel, dini ve tarihi arka planları bağlamında odaklanma eğilimindedir. Oysa hem Konfüçyüs hem de Farabi erdem rolü, liderlik ve toplumun örgütlenmesine ilişkin benzer temel sorularla mücadele etmişlerdir.

Farklı tarihsel ve coğrafi arka planlarına rağmen bu iki düşünürün sosyal ve siyasi meselelere benzer ve farklı yaklaşımlar sunduğu noktaları aydınlatmak için felsefelerinin daha derin bir karşılaştırmalı analizine ihtiyaç vardır. Bu iki düşünürün görüşlerini inceleyerek insan, toplum ve devlet gibi evrensel kavramlara ilişkin yeni bakış açıları ortaya çıkarabilir ve farklı medeniyetlerin uyumlu bir toplumun nasıl yaratılacağına dair zamansız soruları nasıl ele aldıklarına dair anlayışımızı zenginleştirebiliriz. Böyle bir karşılaştırma ortak insani kaygıları ve tepkileri vurgulamanın yanı sıra Çin ve İslam geleneklerinin evrensel düşünceye sunduğu benzersiz felsefi katkıları gösterme potansiyeline de sahiptir.

Onları Karşılaştırılabilir Kılan Şey Nedir?

İslam dünyasının Antik Yunan'dan miras aldığı ilimler tasnifine göre felsefe, teorik ve pratik olarak ikiye ayrılır. Ahlak, ev yönetimi ve siyasetle ilgilenen pratik felsefe, bireysel, ailevi ve toplumsal meselelere odaklanır. Antik Yunan ve İslam medeniyetlerinde olduğu gibi Çin medeniyetinde de özellikle Konfüçyüsçülükte, bilgeliğin pratik ve teorik biçimleri arasında ayırım yapılır ve bu da İslam pratik felsefesini Çin pratik bilgeliği ile karşılaştırmamıza olanak tanır. Antik Yunan ve İslam düşüncesinde olduğu gibi sistematik bir sınıflandırma olmasa da Konfüçyüs klasikleri bireysel davranış, aile dinamikleri, sosyal ilişkiler ve yönetim üzerine kapsamlı bölümler içerir. Konfüçyüsçü pratik bilgeliğin merkezinde, insanın kendini terbiye etmesi yer alır. Başka bir deyişle, Konfüçyüsçü pratik felsefe ideal insan anlamına gelen 君子 (*junzi*) kavramını vurgular. Konfüçyüsçü görüşe göre kişilerin kendini terbiye etmesi, sosyal ve siyasi bütünlüğü teşvik eder. Bu nedenle, Konfüçyüsçü pratik bilgelik, toplumsal huzur için devlet kavramını benimser.

Farabi de benzer şekilde erdemini geliştirilmesini, bireysel ve toplumsal işlerin yönlendirilmesinde bilgelik arayışını savunur. Eserlerinde İslam felsefe geleneği içinde, ahlak, yönetim ve toplumun örgütlenmesi gibi pratik konuları kapsamlı bir

şekilde ele alır. Felsefi sistemini tüm yönleriyle yansıtan temel eseri *el-Medînetü'l-fâzıla*'da, filozof-kral yani bilge yöneticinin adil ve uyumlu bir toplum kurmadaki rolünü vurgular. Onun pratik felsefesi sadece kişisel erdemi değil, aynı zamanda ideal devletin işleyişi için gerekli yapı ve mekanizmaları da kapsar. Çünkü ona göre erdemli bir insan erdemli bir toplumu, erdemli bir toplum erdemli bir siyasi düzeni, erdemli siyasi düzen de erdemli kenti oluşturur.

Görüldüğü üzere hem Konfüçyüs hem de Farabi, sosyal ve siyasi yaşamın çok benzer ve kalıcı soruları üzerine düşünmüş ve analitik bir karşılaştırmayı mümkün kılmıştır. Bu iki düşünürün toplumsal yaşamın süregelen sorunları hakkındaki düşüncelerinin yakından incelenmesi, hangi ortak çözümleri sunduklarını ve nerede farklılaştıklarını belirlememizi sağlayacaktır.

Tezin Amacı

Bu tez, Konfüçyüs ve Farabi'nin insan, toplum ve devlet hakkındaki görüşlerinin karşılaştırmalı bir analizini yapmaya çalışmakta ve sanılanın aksine her iki düşünürün pek çok açıdan benzer bakış açıları sunduğunu göstermektedir. Fikirleri arasındaki ortak noktaları yakalayarak, kültürel, tarihi ve dini farklılıklarına rağmen insan toplumlarının sosyal ve siyasi zorluklara benzer idealist vizyonlarla nasıl yanıt verdiğini vurgulamaktadır. Ayrıca, bu konulara yaklaşımları arasındaki farklılıkları inceleyerek, ortak toplumsal sorunların ele alınmasında insan medeniyetlerinin zenginliğini ve çeşitliliğini göstermeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Araştırma Problemi

Ana Problem:

- Konfüçyüs ve Farabi'nin ideal birey, ideal toplum ve ideal devlet anlayışları arasındaki benzer ve farklı yönler neler?

Alt problemler:

- Konfüçyüs ve Farabi için insan nedir, nasıl ideal insan olunur?
- Konfüçyüs ve Farabi için aile nedir ve ailenin rolü nedir?

- Konfüçyüs ve Farabi için toplum nedir, ideal toplum nasıl sağlanır?
- Konfüçyüs ve Farabi için devlet nedir, ideal devlet nasıl sağlanır?
- Bu görüşler arasındaki benzerlikler ve farklılıklar neler?

Yöntem

Bu tez, Konfüçyüs ve Farabi'nin insan, toplum ve devlet hakkındaki görüşlerini incelemek için karşılaştırmalı bir analiz kullanmaktadır. Öncelikle her iki düşünürün başlıca eserleri olan Konfüçyüs'ün 论语 *Lunyu* (Konuşmalar) ve Farabi'nin *el-Medînetü'l-fâzıla* (Erdemli Şehir) kitaplarından yararlanılarak metin analizine odaklanmaktadır. Orijinal dillerinde yakın okuma ve tematik analiz yoluyla, bu metinler ideal insan, toplum ve devlet anlayışlarıyla ilgili temel temaları çıkarmak için analiz edilmiştir. Birincil metinlere ek olarak İngilizce, Türkçe ve Çince kitaplar, makaleler ve tarihsel çalışmalar gibi ikincil kaynaklar da fikirlerine daha derin bir bakış açısı sunabilmek için kullanılmıştır.

Araştırmanın Zorlukları

Farklı kültürel, dilsel, dinsel ve tarihsel bağlamlardan gelen iki düşünürün fikirlerini analiz etmeyi içeren bu çalışmanın karşılaştırmalı olmasından, araştırma sırasında çeşitli zorluklar ortaya çıkmıştır.

Bu zorlukların başında, düşünceleri farklı düşünce gelenekleri ve sosyal koşullar tarafından şekillendirilmiş bu iki isim arasında köprü kurmak geliyordu. Bunun için tezin Giriş bölümünde Konfüçyüs ve Farabi'yi etkileyen gerekli tarihsel ve felsefi arka planlar sunularak daha incelikli ve bağlama duyarlı bir analiz yapılmasına olanak sağlanmıştır.

Bir diğer önemli zorluk da orijinali Klasik Çince ile yazılmış olan *Lunyu*'yü okumak ve yorumlamaktı. Eserin hem İngilizce hem de Türkçe çok sayıda çevirisi olmasına rağmen, orijinal dildeki pek çok ince anlam ve nüans çevirilerde kayboluyor. Bu sorunu en aza indirmek için birden fazla çeviriye başvurdum ve Çince metni

yorumlarken doğruluk ve derinlik sağlamak için aynı zamanda Çince öğretmenim olan eş danışmanım Dr. Elvida Ünal An ile metin üzerine çalıştım.

Lunyu ile çalışmanın bir diğer zorluğu, Farabi'nin *el-Medînetü'l-fâzıla*'sından farklı olarak, Konfüçyüs'ün kendisi tarafından yazılmış bütünlüklü bir eser olmayışı, öğrencileri tarafından kaydedilmiş sözler ve öğretiler koleksiyonu olmasıdır. Sonuç olarak, metin sistematik bir anlatı yapısından yoksundur ve çok çeşitli konulara ilişkin ifadeler dağınık bir şekilde yer almaktadır. Belirli temalar ve fikirler tekrarlı olsa da bunlar uyumlu bir şekilde organize edilmemiştir. Bunu ele almak için Konfüçyüs'ün insan, toplum ve devlet hakkındaki görüşleri, ilgili pasajlar dikkatle taranarak tüm metnin kapsamlı bir analizi yoluyla belirlenmiştir. Daha sonra bu fikirler Konfüçyüs'ün düşüncelerinin temel ilkeleriyle uyumlu olacak şekilde sistematize edilmiş ve yorumlanmış, böylece Farabi'nin felsefesiyle karşılaştırma yapmak için tutarlı bir çerçeve sağlanmıştır.

BÖLÜM II

KONFÜÇYÜS VE FARABİ'DE İNSAN DOĞASI

İnsan doğası, her felsefi sistemin temelinde yatan bir kavramdır. Neredeyse her filozof doğrudan ya da dolaylı olarak etik, sosyal ve politik teorilerinin temeli olarak insan doğasını ele alır. Konfüçyüs ve Farabi'nin eserlerinde de insan doğasına dair derin düşünceler bulunur. Onların bakış açılarını inceleyerek, insan doğasının uyumlu bir toplum ve erdemin geliştirilmesi vizyonlarını nasıl bilgilendirdiğini daha derinlemesine anlayabiliriz. Bu bölümde, öncelikle Konfüçyüs'ün insan anlayışını, özellikle onun 君子 *junzi* (erdemli/ideal insan) kavramını ele alacağız. Ardından, Farabi'nin felsefesinde insan doğasını, özellikle onun erdemli insan fikrini inceleyeceğiz.

Konfüçyüs'ün İdeal İnsan Anlayışı

Konfüçyüs'ün halefleri olan 孟子 (*Meng Zi*) ve 荀子 (*Xun Zi*)'nin aksine, Konfüçyüs insan doğası üzerine açık bir şekilde metafizik tartışmalara girmemiştir. Ancak, daha çok uygulamaya yönelik bir felsefe benimsemiş olan Konfüçyüs'ün *Lunyu* eserinde etik ve sosyal değerler ile davranışlara odaklanan pasajlar incelendiğinde, insan doğasına dair görüşlerinin bu pasajlarda örtük bir şekilde bulunduğu anlaşılır. Bu pasajlardan hareketle, Konfüçyüs'ün ahlaki bir örnek olarak hizmet eden 君子 (*junzi*, erdemli/ideal insan) kavramının, insan doğasına ilişkin anlayışıyla derinden bağlantılı olduğu ortaya çıkar.

Konfüçyüsçü felsefede, genellikle "ideal insan" veya "erdemli insan" olarak çevrilen *junzi* kavramı, Konfüçyüs'ün savunduğu etik ve ahlaki çerçevenin anlaşılmasında merkezi bir rol oynar. *Junzi*, ahlaki karakter, kişisel gelişim ve toplumsal sorumluluk açısından en yüksek idealleri temsil eder ve erdemli bir yaşam sürmeye çalışan bireyler için bir model oluşturur.

君子 (*junzi*) teriminin ilk zamanlarda sosyal statü anlamında kullanımından Konfüçyüs tarafından ahlaki mükemmeliyet ve erdemli davranış sergileyen bir kişi olarak yeniden tanımlanması, dışsal statüden içsel karaktere önemli bir odak kaymasını ifade eder. Konfüçyüs'ün öğretileri, gerçek asaletin zenginlik veya güçle değil, ahlaki bütünlüğe, öz gelişime ve etik ilkelere bağlılıkla belirlendiğini vurgular. *Junzi*'nin, yaş veya koşul fark etmeksizin, erdeme ve iyilikseverliğe ömür boyu adanmışlığı, 小人 *xiaoren*'in (küçük insan) kişisel çıkar ve maddi kaygılarıyla keskin bir tezat oluşturur. Konfüçyüs için, bir *junzi* veya erdemli insan olma yolculuğu, Konfüçyüsçü felsefenin merkezinde yer alan bir temadır ve bu, öğrenmeye, öz eleştiriye ve erdemin uygulanmasına ömür boyu bağlılık gerektirir.

Lunyu'daki pasajlara göre, öz gelişim süreci dört temel erdemin uygulanmasını içerir: 仁 *ren* (insanlık), 义 *yi* (doğruluk), 礼 *li* (doğru davranış) ve 孝 *xiao* (ebeveyne saygı). Öz gelişim, empati ve şefkati teşvik eden *ren* ile başlar. *Yi*, ahlaki bütünlüğü vurgulayarak *junzi*'nin adil kararlar almasını sağlar. *Li*, hem bireysel hem de toplumsal uyum ve düzenin temelini oluşturur. *Xiao* ise aileye saygı ve bağlılığı ön plana çıkarır. Bu erdemlere ömür boyu bağlılık yoluyla, *junzi* karakterini sürekli geliştirir ve uyumlu bir topluma katkıda bulunur. Böylece, kişisel erdem ile toplumsal düzenin birbirine sıkı sıkıya bağlı olduğunu gösterir.

Farabi'nin İdeal İnsan Anlayışı

Konfüçyüs'ten farklı olarak, Farabi, insan doğasına dair hem felsefi hem de teolojik perspektifleri birleştiren ayrıntılı ve kapsamlı bir kavram ortaya koyar. Düşünceleri, özellikle Aristoteles ve Platon'un eserlerinden derin bir şekilde etkilenmiştir. Farabi'ye göre, insanlar hem maddi hem de manevi boyutları bünyesinde barındıran varlıklar olarak doğadaki hiyerarşinin zirvesinde yer alır. Bu çift yönlülük, insanları hem fiziksel hem de metafiziksel alemlerle etkileşim kurabilen benzersiz varlıklar haline getirir. Farabi'nin felsefesinin merkezinde, insanların bilgi arayışı, ahlaki mükemmeliyet ve nihayetinde mutluluğa ulaşma yetisi sağlayan akıl ile donatıldığı inancı yatar.

Farabi, Aristotelesçi teleoloji (ereksellik) kavramından derinlemesine etkilenmiştir. Bu ereksel varlık anlayışına göre, her varlık türü kendi biçimini gerçekleştirmeye yönelik bir amaç taşır. Farabi'ye göre evren, içsel bir amaç ve yönelimle yapılandırılmıştır ve cansız varlıklardan insanlara kadar her varlık, potansiyelini en üst düzeyde gerçekleştirmeye çalışır. Bu teleolojik yaklaşım, tüm varlıkların doğal olarak bir hedefe (*telos*) yöneldiğini öne sürer. Cansız varlıklar için bu, bir taşın merkeze doğru hareket ederek en stabil durumuna ulaşması gibi, en kararlı halini elde etmek anlamına gelir. Canlı varlıklar için bu süreç büyüme, üreme ve yaşamın korunmasını içerir, tıpkı bir elma çekirdeğinin doğal olarak bir elma ağacına dönüşmeyi amaçlaması gibi. Ancak insan söz konusu olduğunda bu ereksel eğilim, daha yüksek bir boyuta ulaşır. Akıl ve zekâ ile donatılmış olan insanlar, yalnızca fiziksel ve biyolojik işlevlerini değil, aynı zamanda entelektüel ve ahlaki yetilerini de mükemmelleştirmeye çalışırlar.

Farabi, tüm varlıkların mükemmelliğe yöneldiği, Tanrı'dan (mutlak mükemmellik ve tüm varlıkların ilk nedeni) en düşük madde formlarına kadar uzanan hiyerarşik bir sistem tasvir eder. Bu hiyerarşi içinde, insanların nihai amacı, bu kozmolojik sistemde Tanrı'ya yaklaşarak kemâle ermektir. Felsefe, bu amacı araştıran bir bilimdir. Farabi'ye göre, bu mükemmelliğe ulaşmak için insanların yapması gereken iki şey vardır: teorik felsefe ve pratik felsefe. Bunlar birlikte insan bilgeliği olarak adlandırılır ve insan mükemmelliğinin iki parçasını oluşturur. Farabi'nin felsefesinde, insan varoluşunun amacı olan mutluluk, mükemmelliğin en yüksek seviyesidir.

Felsefe (hikmet), insanlara gerçek mutluluğun ne olduğunu öğretir; pratik felsefe ise bu mutluluğa ulaşmak için yapılması gereken eylemleri açıklar. Dolayısıyla, mutluluğu elde etmek hem teorik bilgi edinmeyi hem de bu bilgiyi pratik hayatta uygulamayı gerektirir. Bu da mutluluğa katkıda bulunan erdemli davranışları aktif olarak geliştirmeyi ve bunları korumayı içerir. Mutluluğa ulaşmak, bu hedefe bağlılıkla sürdürülen sürekli ve özverili çabalar gerektirir.

BÖLÜM III

KONFÜÇYÜS VE FARABİ'DE TOPLUM KAVRAMI

Filozoflar, bireylerin bir arada nasıl yaşadıklarını ve birbirleriyle nasıl etkileşimde bulduklarını anlamak için genellikle toplum kavramını incelerler. Toplum üzerine yaptıkları bu incelemeler, onların düzen, uyum ve ideal topluluk vizyonlarını yansıtır. *Lunyu* ve *el-Medînetü'l-fâzıla* eserlerinde, Konfüçyüs ve Farabi, toplumun hem bireysel gelişimin temeli hem de kolektif refahın aracı olarak işlev gördüğünü vurgular. Bu bölümde, öncelikle Konfüçyüs'ün aile, toplumsal roller ve doğru davranış üzerine odaklanan toplum anlayışını ele alacağız. Daha sonra Farabi'nin erdemli şehir anlayışı başta olmak üzere toplum vizyonunu inceleyeceğiz.

Konfüçyüs'ün İdeal Toplum Anlayışı

Konfüçyüs'ün öğretileri, Çin kültüründe ve diğer Doğu Asya kültürlerinde toplumsal normlar üzerinde kalıcı bir etkiye sahip olmuştur. Konfüçyüs, Zhou Hanedanlığı'nın son dönemindeki çalkantılı bir zamanda doğmuş ve öğretileriyle bölünmüş bir topluma düzen ve uyum getirmeyi amaçlamıştır. Konfüçyüs felsefesinin temelinde, iyi yapılandırılmış bir toplumun bireyden başlayıp aileye ve devlete kadar genişlediği fikri yatar.

Konfüçyüs felsefesinde aile, yalnızca temel bir sosyal birim değil, aynı zamanda toplumsal sağlığın ve uyumun zeminini oluşturur. Konfüçyüs aileyi her bir etkileşimin ve ilişkinin daha geniş toplumsal normları yansıttığı, toplumun küçük ölçekli bir versiyonu olarak görmüştür. Evde öğretilen değerler ve davranışlar, örneğin yaşlılara saygı göstermek ve aile görevlerini yerine getirmek, bireylerin topluma uyum sağlaması için gerekli temel ahlaki çerçeveyi oluşturan unsurlar olarak kabul edilir. Bu bakış açısına göre, bir toplumun istikrarı ve düzeni, aile birimlerinin sağlığıyla doğrudan ilişkilidir. Aile içinde bireyler, yalnızca rollerini ve sorumluluklarını öğrenmekle kalmaz, aynı zamanda toplumdaki diğer insanlarla etkileşim kurmak için

gereken ahlaki çerçeveyi de geliştirirler. Örneğin, bir çocuk, ebeveynlerine duyduğu saygıyı, otorite figürlerine duyulması gereken saygıya dönüştürmeyi öğrenir.

Konfüçyüsçü felsefede “Beş İlişki” (五倫 *wu lun*), hükümdar-tebaa, baba-oğul, koca-karı, abi-kardeş ve arkadaş-arkadaş arasındaki ilişkileri kapsar. Bu ilişkiler, Konfüçyüs’ün iyi düzenlenmiş bir toplum için teşvik ettiği toplumsal uyum ve ahlaki görev ideallerini temsil eder. Konfüçyüsçülük, aile ve toplum içinde hiyerarşik bir düzeni ima eder. Aile içinde erkekler kadınlar üzerinde, yaşlılar ise gençler üzerinde baskın bir konuma sahiptir. Bu düzen, yalnızca bir güç ilişkisi değil, aynı zamanda bilgelik ve deneyimin saygı görmesini sağlamanın bir yolu olarak görülür. Bu hiyerarşik düzen, dört temel erdemden biri olan 孝 *xiao* (ebeveyne saygı) ile gerekçelendirilir, ebeveynlere ve atalara saygıyı ve itaatkarlığı teşvik eder. Benzer şekilde, toplumda da erkekler kadınlara, yaşlılar ise gençlere üstün görülür. Bu toplumsal tabakalaşma, toplumsal roller ve sorumluluklarla uyumlu doğal bir düzen olarak görülür; istikrarı ve otoriteye saygıyı vurgular. Hem ailede hem de toplumsal bağlamda bu hiyerarşi, deneyim ve bilginin değer görmesini sağlar; yaşlılar genç kuşaklara liderlik eder ve rehberlik ederken, erkekler genellikle liderlik ve karar alma pozisyonlarını üstlenir. Bu yapı, uyum ve düzeni korumayı amaçlar ve toplumsal uyumu ve yerleşik normlara saygıyı önceliklendiren Konfüçyüs değerlerini yansıtır.

Konfüçyüs’e göre bir kişinin toplumdaki rolüyle bağlantılı sorumluluklarını yerine getirmesi, Konfüçyüsçü ideal toplumu gerçekleştirmek için esastır. Her birey, kendi görevlerine odaklanır ve bunları en iyi şekilde yerine getirirse, toplum uyumlu ve düzenli bir yapıya kavuşur. Bir toplumsal yapı, her bir rolün adının o rolün fiilen nasıl icra edildiğiyle uyumlu olması durumunda “doğru/yerinde” kabul edilir. Konfüçyüs bu kavramı 正名 (*zheng ming*) yani “İsimlerin Düzeltilmesi” olarak adlandırır. Konfüçyüs’e göre, kültür ve toplumun önemli bir yönü, sosyal roller, uygulamalar ve nesneleri tanımlayan ve kategorize eden ‘isimler’ (名 *ming*) sistemidir.

Bu isimlendirme sistemi, eski çağlarda toplumda netlik ve düzen sağlamak amacıyla oluşturulmuş ve her bireyin toplumsal rolüne ilişkin erdemleri ve sorumlulukları somutlaştırmayı amaçlamıştır. Ancak Konfüçyüs, kendi zamanında bu sistemin bozulduğunu, toplumsal karmaşa ve işlevsizliğe yol açtığını gözlemlemiştir. Ona göre,

herkes konumunun gerçek anlamına uygun hareket ederse—hükümdar, baba, koca veya tebaa olarak—toplum uyum içinde işlev gösterecektir.

Konfüçyüsçülük, ahlaki ve etik değerlerin geliştirilmesi yoluyla toplumu dönüştürmeyi güçlü bir şekilde vurgular ve bu dönüşüm esas olarak iki kültürel uygulama aracılığıyla sağlanır: 礼 (*li*), yani doğru davranış ve 乐 (*yue*), yani müzik. Bu iki uygulama, ahlaki eğitim ve toplumsal uyum için temel araçlar olarak kabul edilir ve Konfüçyüs'ün iyi düzenlenmiş toplum fikriyle derinden ilişkilidir.

Düğün ve cenaze gibi resmî törenlerde *li*, etkinliğin süresinden kıyafetlere ve katılımcıların davranışlarına kadar her şeyi belirleyen özel kurallar sağlar. Konfüçyüs, sosyal bağların ve rollerin önemini yansıtacak şekilde, kişinin ölen kişiyle olan ilişkisine bağlı olarak farklı yas süreleri bile öngörmüştür. Günlük yaşamda ise *li*, bireylerin yaşlılara nasıl hitap edeceği ve çeşitli toplumsal bağlamlarda nasıl davranacağını düzenler. Bu, bireylerin sosyal hiyerarşi içindeki yerlerini anlamalarına ve buna uygun davranmalarına yardımcı olur. Böylece toplumda karşılıklı saygı ve sorumluluk duygusu gelişir.

Li'nin amacı, bu toplumsal normların öyle derinden içselleştirilmesidir ki, birey herhangi bir durumda kendiliğinden doğru şekilde davranır. Konfüçyüs'e göre, *li*'nin değeri, insan toplumunu hayvan davranışlarından ayırmasında yatar. *Li* olmadan insanlar, temel içgüdülerine göre hareket eder ve bu da toplumsal çöküşe yol açar. *Li*'ye uyum gösteren bireyler, başkalarına ve toplumsal etkileşimlerin bağlamına saygı gösterir. Zamanla, *li*'ye bağlılık, saygı ve düzen temelli bir topluluk oluşturur.

Benzer şekilde, müzik (乐 *yue*) de Konfüçyüs tarafından son derece değerli görülmüştür. *Li* dış davranışları düzenlerken, müzik kalbi ve zihni etkileyerek içsel bir uyum ve denge duygusu geliştirir. Konfüçyüs müziğin birey üzerinde güçlü bir etkisi olduğunu kabul etmekle birlikte, erdemi geliştirmek yerine yozlaştıran belirli müzik türlerine karşı da uyarıda bulunur. Ona göre, doğru müzik, bireysel ve toplumsal uyumu sürdürmek için gereklidir, ancak yanlış türde müzik, ahlaki bozulmaya ve toplumsal kargaşaya yol açabilir.

Farabi'nin Toplum Anlayışı

Farabi, toplumun kökenine dair kapsamlı bir açıklama sunar ve insanlığın farklı yönlerini yansıtan birkaç teori öne sürer. İlk olarak, ontolojik bir teori önerir ve insan toplumlarının evrendeki gözlemlenen düzenden esinlendiğini savunur. Bu doğrultuda, insanlar kendi aralarında benzer bir sistem kurmuş olabilirler. İkinci olarak, biyo-organik bir teori ortaya koyar; burada insan bedeninin uyumlu işleyişinin toplumsal organizasyon için bir model sunduğunu ifade eder. Nasıl ki kalp beyni yönlendirir ve beyin bedeni yönetirse, toplum da benzer bir hiyerarşik düzenle organize edilmelidir. Üçüncü olarak, fitrat teorisini anlatır; bu teori, insanların doğuştan sosyal varlıklar olduğunu savunur. İnsanlar tüm ihtiyaçlarını tek başlarına karşılayamadıkları için iş birliğine ve toplumsal organizasyon oluşturmaya doğal olarak eğilimlidirler. Son olarak, adalet teorisini tartışır.

Farabi'nin felsefesinde adalet ve mutluluk derin bir şekilde iç içe geçmiştir. Mutluluk Farabi'nin felsefesine göre hayatın nihai amacıdır. Ona göre, bir kişi mutluluğa tek başına ulaşamaz; adaletin hüküm sürdüğü iyi düzenlenmiş bir toplumu gerektirir. Dolayısıyla mutluluk yaşamın amacıdır ve bu amacı gerçekleştirmek için adalet erdeminin hayata geçirilmesi şarttır. Adalet, her bireyin yeteneklerine ve erdemlerine uygun rolünü yerine getirmesini sağlar ve bu, toplumun genel düzenine ve refahına katkıda bulunur. Böyle bir toplumda bireyler, tam potansiyellerini gerçekleştirebilir ve bu da topluluğun mutluluğuna yol açar.

Adaletin ontolojik teoriyle ilişkilendirilmesi bağlamında, Farabi adaleti evrendeki ilahi düzenin bir yansıması olarak görür. Nasıl ki kozmik düzen dengeli ve uyumlu bir şekilde işlerse, adil bir toplum da bu düzeni yansıtarak her bireyin toplumdaki rolünü yerine getirmesine ve mutluluğa ulaşmasına olanak tanır. Burada, kozmik adalet ve toplumsal adalet arasındaki bağlantı, Farabi'nin mutluluğun, toplumun ilahi düzenle uyumlu bir şekilde işlediği zaman elde edildiği inancını ortaya koyar.

Bu noktaya kadar gösterildiği gibi, Farabi'ye göre toplum, onun evren anlayışı, insan doğası ve nihai mutluluk arayışıyla derinden bağlantılıdır. Ona göre insanlar, doğaları gereği sosyal varlıklardır ve izolasyon içinde tam potansiyellerine ulaşamazlar. Toplumun nihai amacı, bireylerin en yüksek potansiyellerine ulaşabileceği bir ortam

yaratmaktır ve bu süreç bilgelik, adalet ve erdemle yönlendirilir. Bu amacı gerçekleştirmek için adaletin gerekliliğini kabul eden insanlar, adaleti sağlamak üzere güçlü ve organize bir kurum olarak devleti kurarlar.

El-Medînetü'l-fâzıla'da Farabi, insan topluluklarını tam ve eksik topluluklar olmak üzere iki gruba ayırır. Tam topluluklar üç gruba ayrılır: büyük, orta ve küçük. Büyük topluluk, dünyadaki tüm toplulukların bir araya gelmesidir. Orta topluluk, dünyada bir ulusun (ümme) belirli bir bölgede toplanmasıdır. Son olarak, küçük topluluk, bir şehrin belirli bir ulusun yaşadığı yerde toplanmasıdır. Eksik topluluklar ise dört gruba ayrılır: bir köy halkının toplanması, bir mahalle halkının toplanması, bir sokak halkının toplanması ve bir ev halkının toplanması.

Farabi'ye göre aile, insan topluluklarının en küçük ve en temel birimidir. Aile, toplumun temel yapı taşıdır çünkü bireyler ilk kez ailelerinde iş birliği, sorumluluk, liderlik ve etik davranışla tanışır. Bireylerin politik hayata ilk adımı evde gerçekleştiğinden, aile içinde geliştirilen beceri ve eğilimler, toplumun sağlığı ve istikrarı için temeldir. Bu nedenle, siyaseti evden başlatan Farabi, ailenin adil ve iyi düzenlenmiş bir devlet için gerekli olan erdemlerin ve uygulamaların eğitim alanı olarak önemini vurgular.

Farabi'ye göre ev halkı topluluğu dört temel unsurdan oluşur: kadın ile erkek arasındaki ortaklık, efendi ile köle arasındaki ilişki, ebeveynler ile çocuklar arasındaki bağ ve mülk ile sahibinin bağlantısı. Evin reisi bu unsurların tümünü birleştirmek ve koordine etmekle sorumlu olan kişidir. Evin reisi, bilgelikle hareket ederek ailenin her bir parçasının kendi rolünü yerine getirip ailenin genel refahına katkıda bulunmasını sağlamalıdır.

BÖLÜM IV

KONFÜÇYÜS VE FARABI'DE İDEAL SİYASİ DÜZEN

Toplumsal organizasyon ve yönetim, herhangi bir toplumun işleyişinin temelini oluşturur. Tarih boyunca, farklı medeniyetler ve dönemlerde çeşitli düşünürler, ideal yönetim biçimi hakkında özgün fikirler öne sürerek bu konuları derinlemesine incelemişlerdir. Çin felsefesinin merkezindeki figür olan Konfüçyüs, toplumsal organizasyonda uyum, hiyerarşi ve ahlaki liderliğin önemini vurgular. Ona göre, bir hükümdar, erdemli bir insan (*junzi*) olmalı ve halkında etik davranışları teşvik ederek *li* (doğru davranış) ile yönetilen bir toplum inşa etmelidir. Siyaset felsefesinin önemli isimlerinden biri olan Farabi ise bu konuları daha sistematik bir şekilde ele alır. Farabi eserlerinde, toplumsal organizasyonun kozmosun düzenini yansıttığı, filozof-kralın yönettiği ve toplumdaki herkesin mutluluğu hedeflediği erdemli şehir (*el-medînetü'l-fâzıla*) fikrini sunar.

Bu bölümde, Konfüçyüs ve Farabi'nin ideal yönetim ve liderlik anlayışları incelenecektir. Her ikisi de yönetimde erdem ve liderin rolünün önemini vurgulasa da devletin amacı konusundaki görüşleri farklılık gösterir. Konfüçyüs için devletin birincil rolü toplumsal uyumu sağlamakken, Farabi için devlet, insanların nihai mutluluğa ulaşmalarını mümkün kılmak için vardır.

Konfüçyüs'ün İdeal Devlet Anlayışı

Önceki bölümlerde gördüğümüz gibi, Konfüçyüs toplumsal uyumu sağlamak için ahlaki erdem ve etik davranışı savunur. Yönetimde ise yasa ve cezalarla yönetim yerine, erdem ve doğru davranışla yönetimi tercih eder. Konfüçyüs'e göre etkili bir liderlik, yalnızca kuralları uygulamakla değil, *junzi* olarak halkta ahlaki öz-gelişimi teşvik etmekle ilgilidir; böylece insanlar erdemli davranışlar sergiler.

Konfüçyüs, iyi bir yönetim için hükümdarın ahlaki karakterinin belirleyici olduğuna inanır. Ona göre devlet, büyük bir aile gibi işler; aile içindeki değerler ve dinamikler, hükümetin yapısını ve işlevini şekillendirmek üzere dışa doğru genişler. Beş temel

ilişkiden (五倫 *wu lun*), hükümdar-tebaa ve baba-oğul ilişkileri özellikle önemlidir. Bir oğulun babasına karşı sadakat ve saygı göstermesi gerektiği gibi, bir tebaanın da hükümdarına sadakat ve itaat göstermesi beklenir. Bu nedenle, onun sisteminde aile, bireylerin baba otoritesi altında saygı, sadakat ve görev değerlerini içselleştirdiği bir öğrenme ortamı işlevi görür. Baba hem ahlaki bir rehber hem de disiplin sağlayan bir figür olarak hareket eder. Bu hiyerarşi, bireyleri politik alandaki benzer rolleri yerine getirmeye hazırlar; burada hükümdar, devlet içinde uyumu ve düzeni sağlayan nihai baba figürü olarak hareket eder.

Konfüçyüs'ün siyasi yaşam ve devlet organizasyonuna ilişkin görüşleri, ideal insan kavramı olan *junzi* ile derinden bağlantılıdır. *Junzi*, iyilikseverlik, doğruluk, doğru davranış ve ebeveyn sevgisi gibi temel ahlaki ve etik nitelikleri bünyesinde barındırır. Ancak Konfüçyüs, tüm insanların bu özelliklere sahip olmasını beklemez. Özellikle yöneticilerin, bu ilkeleri benimseyen ve uygulayan *junzi* olmalarını ister. Yöneticiler bu özelliklere sahip olduğunda ve bunları uyguladığında, halk onları takip eder ve doğru yoldan ayrılmaz. Konfüçyüs'e göre, siyasi istikrar ve toplumsal uyum, bu erdemleri somutlaştıran bireylerin ahlaki liderliğine bağlıdır.

Farabi'nin İdeal Devlet Anlayışı

Her ne kadar Arapça “medine” kelimesi genellikle şehir olarak çevrilse de, Farabi'nin siyaset felsefesi bağlamında bu kelime siyasi organizasyon ve devletin kendisini ifade etmektedir. Farabi'nin eserlerinde medine, bireylerin maddi ihtiyaçlarını karşılamak ve daha da önemlisi, entelektüel ve ahlaki mükemmeliyete ulaşarak insan mutluluğunun en yüksek formunu gerçekleştirmek için bir araya geldikleri bir ortamdır. Onun erdemli devlet fikrinde, erdem ve bilgelikle yöneten bir hükümdar (filozof-kral) vardır ve vatandaşlar, yetenekleri ve kapasiteleri doğrultusunda ortak iyiliğe katkıda bulunurlar. Bu, toplumun nasıl organize edilmesi gerektiğine dair bir modeldir; bu bağlamda, devletin birincil rolü, bireylerin entelektüel ve ahlaki mükemmeliyete ulaşmaları için gerekli koşulları sağlamaktır.

Farabi, *el-Medînetü'l-fâzıla* adlı eserinde, farklı devlet türlerini tanımlar ve bunları iki ana kategoriye ayırır: erdemli devlet ve erdemsiz devlet. Erdemli devletin yalnızca bir türü varken, erdemli devlete zıt olan devletler dört kategoriye ayrılır: cahil, fâsık,

değişebilen ve sapkın. Cahil devletin altı farklı biçimi vardır: zorunluluk, bayağılık, alçaklık, onur, üstünlük ve toplumcu. Erdemsiz devletler, erdemli şehrin idealine zıt olan devletlerdir. Farabi'nin siyaset felsefesinde, bu yönetim biçimleri insanın mükemmelliğine ve gerçek mutluluğuna ulaşmayı amaçlamaz; bunun yerine, maddi zenginlik, güç ve fiziksel haz gibi daha düşük hedeflere odaklanır. Her biri adalet, erdem ve bilgelik ilkelerine temelden karşıttır. Bu şehirlerin yöneticileri, erdemli şehirlerin yöneticilerinin tam tersidir ve yönetimleri erdemli yöneticilerin yönetimine aykırıdır. Aynı durum, bu şehirlerin sakinleri için de geçerlidir.

Farabi'ye göre, erdemli devletin sadece bir formu vardır ve bu hem bireysel hem de toplu olarak insan potansiyelinin gerçekleştirilmesini temsil eder. Onun erdemli devlet kavramı, ahlaki erdemler, toplumsal dayanışma ve adalet üzerine kuruludur; liderlik ise bilge yöneticiler tarafından sağlanır. Farabi'nin siyaset felsefesinde, devletin başındaki kişi (reis), iyi yönetilen bir devletin temeli olarak entelektüel yetenekler ve ahlaki karaktere sahip olmalıdır. O, liderin niteliklerinin devletin doğasını derinden şekillendirdiğini vurgular. Bu nedenle, ideal liderin ayrıntılı bir vizyonunu sunar ve liderin devleti yönlendirebilmesi için sahip olması gereken on iki özelliği sıralar. Ancak, tüm bu özelliklerin bir kişide bulunmasının zor olabileceğini belirtir ve bu durumda on iki özelliği taşıyan ilk liderden sonra gelecek liderde bulunması gereken altı özelliği açıklar. Eğer bu altı özelliğe sahip bir lider bulunamazsa, Farabi, erdemli devletin iki kişi (biri yalnızca filozof/bilge, diğeri ise kalan özelliklere sahip) tarafından yönetilmesi gerektiğini önerir. Bu altı özellik farklı bireylerde bulunuyorsa, devlet altı erdemli lider tarafından yönetilmelidir. Eğer bu altı özelliğin beşi mevcut fakat bilgelik eksikse, o zaman erdemli devlet bir lidere sahip değildir ve her an tehlike altında olabilir. Eğer bilge bir lider bulunamazsa, devlet yavaş yavaş çökmeye başlar. Bu durum, Farabi'nin yönetimde bilgelik konusundaki önemini açıkça ortaya koyar. Ona göre bilgelik olmadan bir devletin var olması imkânsızdır.

BÖLÜM V

SONUÇ

Coğrafi ve zamansal farklılıklarına rağmen, Çin ve İslam felsefesinin klasik dönemlerinin önde gelen isimlerinden olan Konfüçyüs ve Farabi, ideal insanın, ideal toplumun ve ideal devletin nasıl olması gerektiği sorularına oldukça benzer cevaplar sunmaktadır. Ancak, farklı tarihsel, kültürel ve felsefi arka planları, bu iki düşünür arasında önemli farklılıkların ortaya çıkmasına da neden olmuştur.

Genel felsefeleri göz önüne alındığında, Konfüçyüs, birbirine bağlı ve iç içe geçmiş kavramlar ve ilkeler aracılığıyla insanların uyum içinde yaşayabilmesi için bir öğreti geliştirmiştir. Farabi ile temel farklarından biri, Konfüçyüs'ün öncelikli olarak günlük hayatın etik boyutlarına odaklanmasıdır. Konfüçyüs, ölümden sonraki yaşama neredeyse hiç ilgi göstermemiş ve günlük yaşamın ötesine geçmeyi reddetmiştir. *Lunyu* (11.11)'de ölüm hakkında sorulduğunda, Konfüçyüs, "Hayatı anlamıyorsanız, ölümü nasıl anlayabilirsiniz?" şeklinde yanıt vermiştir. Bu, onun pratik ve insan merkezli felsefesini yansıtarak, metafizik veya manevi kaygılardan önce mevcut hayata odaklanmanın önemini vurgular. Böylece Konfüçyüs, sosyal yaşamda uyumu sağlamaya yoğunlaşmış ve ahlaki ilkeleri öğretilerinin merkezine yerleştirmiştir. Bu çerçevede, insan, toplum ve devletle ilgili fikirler sunmuş ve kendi dönemindeki sosyal ve politik kargaşalara çözüm aramıştır.

Konfüçyüs'ün aksine, Farabi daha felsefi ve metafiziksel fikirler sunar. Farabi'ye göre, evren Tanrı'dan kaynaklanan ilahi bir düzende var olur ve insanlar bu yapıya uygun şekilde yaşamalıdır. İnsanların nihai amacı, felsefe yoluyla mutluluğa ulaşmaktır. Ancak bu mutluluk yalnızca dünyevi hayatla sınırlı değildir; Farabi, ahiret hayatının ve ruhun ebedi mutluluğunun önemini vurgular. Onun öğretilerinde, sosyal ve politik düzen, insanları Tanrı'ya yaklaştırmaya hizmet eden bir araçtır.

Her iki düşünür de ideal insanın uyumlu bir topluma katkıda bulunduğuna ve bu ideal insanın en yüksek örneğinin yöneticide bulunması gerektiğine inanır; ancak yaklaşımları ve nihai hedefleri açısından farklılaşırlar. Konfüçyüs'e göre, ideal insan (君子 *junzi*), ahlaki mükemmelliğe ve toplumsal uyuma ulaşmak için sürekli olarak kendini geliştiren kişidir. Farabi ise vizyonunu sistematik ve felsefi bir çerçeveye oturtturarak, erdemli şehri entelektüel ve ahlaki mükemmeliyet üzerine kurar ve bu şehrin yöneticisi (reis), toplumu gerçek mutluluğa yönlendiren bir filozof olmalıdır. Konfüçyüs'te mutluluk kavramı, Farabi'de olduğu kadar merkezi bir yerde bulunmaz.

Konfüçyüs için aile, toplumsal uyumun temelini oluşturur ve ilişkiler, yönetime şekil verecek şekilde dışa doğru genişler. Onun hiyerarşik yapısı, 礼 *li* (doğru davranış), 孝 *xiao* (ebeveyne saygı) ve 正名 *zheng ming* (isimlerin düzeltilmesi) gibi etik ilkeler üzerine inşa edilmiştir. Bu çerçevede yönetim, aile ilişkilerini yansıtır ve hükümdar, bir baba figürünün erdemlerini somutlaştırır. Kötü yönetim, liderlerin ahlaki rehberlik yerine korkuya, zorlamaya ve katı yasa uygulamalarına bel bağladığında ortaya çıkar. Benzer şekilde, Farabi de aileyi hem ahlaki bir temel hem de siyasi düzenin ilk modeli olarak görür; bireyler burada rollerini öğrenir ve daha geniş toplumsal yapıları yansıtırlar. Farabi'nin devlet kategorileri, bilgelik ve erdemle yönetimdeki kritik rolünü vurgular; yalnızca erdemli devlet gerçek mutluluğa ulaşır, erdemsiz devletler ise mutluluğu yanlış anlamaları nedeniyle başarısız olurlar.

Her iki düşünür de sosyal uyumun sağlanmasında hiyerarşik ilişkilerin önemini vurgular. Konfüçyüs, bireylerin rollerinin gerçek özüne uygun hareket etmelerini ifade eden "isimlerin düzeltilmesi" (*zheng ming*) üzerinde dururken, Farabi, herkesin yetenek ve erdemlerine göre rolünü yerine getirmesini sağlayan adaleti önceler. Ayrıca, Konfüçyüs'ün *li* (doğru davranış) ilkesi ile Farabi'nin âdâb-ı muâşeret (toplumsal davranış kuralları) arasında paralellikler bulunur; her ikisi de etik ilişkileri ve toplumsal düzeni doğru davranış ve görgü kurallarıyla teşvik etmeye yönelik ortak bir bağlılığı yansıtır.

Düşüncelerindeki özgün bir boyut ise müzik konusundaki görüşleridir. Konfüçyüs için müzik (乐 *yue*), ahlaki ve toplumsal uyumu pekiştiren *li* ilkesini tamamlar. Farabi ise

müziğin felsefi ve duygusal boyutlarını ele alır, onun birey ve toplum üzerindeki bilimsel ve psikolojik etkilerini vurgular.

Sonuç olarak, Konfüçyüs ve Farabi, maddi refahın ötesine geçen bir yönetim vizyonu paylaşır; hedefleri, bireylerin en yüksek potansiyellerine ulaştığı bir toplumu şekillendirmektir. Konfüçyüs için bu, ahlaki uyum ve erdemlerle sağlanırken; Farabi'ye göre, ilahi düzen ve Tanrı ile uyum, felsefe aracılığıyla mutluluğa erişilerek gerçekleşir. Felsefelerinin temel taşı, toplumlarını şekillendiren liderin karakteri ve yetenekleridir. Konfüçyüs'e göre yöneticinin meşruiyeti, onun ahlaki davranışlarına dayanırken; Farabi'ye göre, bilgelik esas alınır. Farabi, yöneticinin felsefi niteliklerine daha fazla vurgu yapar. Konfüçyüs'ün bilge-krallığından farklı olarak, Farabi'nin filozof-kralı, yalnızca ahlaki erdemle değil, aynı zamanda rasyonel ve felsefi anlayışlarla da yönetir.