

POLITICAL ETHICS ACCORDING TO AL-FARABI'S THOUGHT

Atika Yulanda^{1*}¹State Islamic University Imam Bonjol Padang, Indonesia, e-mail: atikayulanda24@gmail.com

*Corresponding Author



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Abstract

Politics as it is known to be a fear for some people if misused properly. However, in Al-Farabi's view this is not the case. If politics is used properly it will bring happiness to everyone. He believes that good politics can lead to happiness for everyone and not only certain people. Politics is one of the factors of happiness for humans. In this life, humans cannot escape from the political aspect. Politics is a very important part of human life. As contained in the thought of al-Farabi. Happiness in his thinking places politics at the most important place because his part of philosophy has a political goal but politics is not an end in itself but as a means to obtain the ultimate goal for humans. This research is a library research using primary sources from the works of Al-Farabi itself and secondary sources as a supporter of achieving the objectives of this research.

Keywords: Al-Farabi, Politic, Happiness.

Abstrak

Politik sebagaimana yang diketahui, menjadi ketakutan bagi sebagian orang apabila disalahgunakan. Namun, dalam pandangan al-Farabi tidaklah demikian. Jika politik digunakan dengan sebaik-baiknya, maka akan mendatangkan kebahagiaan bagi semua orang. Ia menilai bahwa politik yang baik dapat mengantarkan kepada kebahagiaan bagi semua orang dan bukan saja kepada orang-orang tertentu. Politik menjadi salah satu faktor kebahagiaan bagi manusia. Dalam kehidupan ini, manusia tidak dapat melepaskan diri dari aspek politik. Politik menjadi bagian yang sangat penting dalam kehidupan manusia. Sebagaimana yang terdapat dalam pemikiran al-Farabi, kebahagiaan dalam pemikirannya menempatkan politik sebagai tempat yang paling penting karena bagian filsafatnya mempunyai tujuan politik, namun politik bukanlah tujuan dalam dirinya tetapi sebagai sarana untuk memperoleh tujuan terakhir bagi manusia. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kepustakaan dengan menggunakan sumber primer dari karya-karya al-Farabi dan sumber sekunder sebagai pendukung dari tercapainya tujuan dalam penelitian ini.

Kata Kunci: Al-Farabi, Politik, Kebahagiaan.

Background

Social and political issues are closely related to human life. Humans have different potentials from one another as well as the problems they face. It depends on how they use the mind that has been given by Allah SWT. Everyone has different problems, social problems or political problems. The lack of clarity about the political problems that exist in a country becomes a complicated problem and greatly affects human life. The initial goal of politics is creating prosperity and happiness for citizens; however it is contrary with what happened. There are inequality and injustice from

government or leaders. A good leader is a fair leader and does not discriminate between one another. The missions of politics and government are every official and political elite will be honest, trustworthy, and sportive, serve welletc.

One of the Muslim philosophers who participated in contributing his thoughts in the social and political fields was al-Farabi. He offers about the life of the nation and state in his work, although political issues are not at the core of his thinking. His book, *al-Madinah al-Fadhilah*, is much influenced by the political

concepts of Plato and Aristotle. However, al-Farabi put more emphasis on the government of the Prophet Muhammad. Al-Farabi stated that if politics and government are good and right, it will lead to happiness for all citizens. He has high interest in political issues. It could be seen from his thoughts on politics which put politics as the most important position in his philosophy. His philosophy has a political goal; however, politics is not his goal. He used politics as a means to obtain the ultimate goal for humans, namely happiness.³ Thus, it can be seen how much he loves political issues. Happiness can be achieved through politics or in other words, politics in al-Farabi's thought becomes one of the tools or means to achieve that happiness.

Therefore, it will be studied more deeply related to al-Farabi's politics as a path to happiness. How al-Farabi's political concept that has an influence on the welfare of society is. The concept of a primary state; a perfect society and the requirements of a leader.

Biography of Al-Farabi

Al-Farabi's full name is Abu Nasr Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Tarkhan ibn Awzalagh al-Farabi. In Latin al-Farabi is known by the name of al-Farabius or Avennasar. Al-Farabi was born in Wasij City a village in Farab (Transoxania) in 259 A.D. / 870 A.D.,⁴ One year after the death of the first Muslim philosopher, al-Kindi. His father was an Iranian (Persi) who married a Turkish woman. Al-Farabi had been a judge. Al-Farabi had a lot of influence on later Islamic figures, especially related to the study of philosophy. Al-Farabi's fame is not only well known among Islamic scientists but also among Western scientists and became one of the leading philosophers in the world.⁵

Al-Farabi is better known as Abu Nashr who is one of the leading figures of the paripathic tradition after al-Kindi. The name Al-Farabius is better known among European

scientists. While the name Al-Farabi itself is taken from the name of his birthplace, namely Farabi.

Al-Farabi has always been neatly dressed since childhood and he has signs of special intelligence. He began his education by studying the Quran, grammar, literature, religion and basic arithmetic. Some sources say that al-Farabi visited Baghdad when he was 40 years old, which was the center of science at that time. He was interested in studying various kinds of science such as the rules of Arabic taught by Abu Bakr al-Saraj and studied logic and philosophy to a Christian, Abu Bisyr-Mattius ibn Yunus in Baghdad. Al-Farabi is not only interested in Islamic science but also in science that comes from the West. It can be seen from the influence of his thought on the thought of Greek philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle. While there, he always spent his time discussing, teaching, composing and reviewing philosophy books.⁶

In 330 A.D. / 945 A.D., he moved to Damascus and became acquainted with Saif al-Daulah al-Hamdani, Sultan of the Hamdan Dynasty in Aleppo. The Sultan was very impressed with al-Farabi's cleverness. Al-Farabi was invited to move to Aleppo. Like the Greek philosopher, al-Farabi also mastered various disciplines. There are al-Farabi's works include Syarh Kitab al-Burhan (Commentary on Aristotle's Work), At-Tauthi'ah (Logic), Al-Wahid wa al-Wahdah (Philosophy), Kalam fi A'zha' al-Hayawan (Anatomy), Kitab fi al-Ijtima'at al-Madaniyah (Politics), Kitab Al-Madinah al-Fadhillah (Politics) and so on.⁸

Al-Farabi died in Damascus in Rajab 339 H / December 950 AD at the age of 80 years. He was buried outside the small gate of the southern city. Saif al-Daulah presided over al-Farabi's funeral.⁹ Al-Farabi is known as a simple figure, *zuhud* and tends to unity and emptiness.

The Definition of Politic and Happiness

Politics is essentially inseparable from human life. Human need the political field to regulate their lives insociety and state, therefore, they could run their life as expected. Politics was first introduced by one of the Greek philosophers, Plato, in his book entitled "Politeia" known as the "Republic". It developed under the name "Politica" initiated by Aristotle.¹⁰ Thus politics is not an unfamiliar word in human life.

Politics comes from the Greek, polis, which means city-state. In English, politics means wise or wisely and in Latin politicus. In terminology, politics is the skill of accumulating and increasing the quantity and quality of power, controlling power and using it to achieve certain goals.

The nature of politics shows human behavior. Whether it is in the form of activities or attitudes; which aims to influence or maintain the order of the community by using power. This means that power is not the essence of politics although it cannot be separated from politics itself.

Everyone wants happiness in his life. This happiness can be obtained not only through one way but also through many of ways. Happiness is part of human life, especially from a psychiatric aspect. However, there are some people who think that happiness can be seen from the achievement or material achievement in human life. In addition, there are also some people who judge happiness based on the achievement of the position or the highest position in their office or job.

The definition of happiness comes from the word sa'adah (Arabic) which means luck or happiness. While in English it is happiness. Happy means pleasure or peacefull (free from some trouble). In other words, a happy person is a person who has good luck and is far from sadness. Happiness means having pleasure, tranquility of life, luck, and efficacy in birth and mind.¹¹ Happy in Aristotle's view is intrinsic

goodness, and it is the goal of everyone's life. Happiness is what we seek for its own sake (eudaimonia¹²). Thus, according to Aristotle, happiness means achieving what is needed in this world.

Ibn Khaldun stated that happiness would be gained if someone submits and obediently follows the lines prescribed by God and humanity. Meanwhile, Imam al-Ghazali considered that happiness was hanging to three forces, namely the power of anger, the power of shahwat, and the power of knowledge.¹³

Happiness is subjective. As in Seligman's view, happiness is a subjective concept because every human being must have different views or levels in interpreting happiness itself. Everyone has different factors of achieving the happiness or different aspect that caused the happiness. Happiness is essentially the result of an assessment of self and life that contains positive emotions such as comfort and high joy.¹⁴

Politics as the Way of Happiness According to al-Farabi

Related to al-Farabi's thoughts on politics, which was studied deeply, politics is one of the very important components in human life. Thus, Al-Farabi considers politics will be one of the ways or tools for humans to achieve that happiness. Political position in his thinking gets the most important position. In all aspects or parts of his philosophy has a political purpose. However, politics is not an end in him but as a means of obtaining the last goal for man which is happiness by possessing the qualities of spirituality achieved.¹⁵ Political studies are thinking all aspects of life which ranging from actions, ways of life or human morals. A human happiness, it can be obtained because of his deeds or actions and the way of life.¹⁶

It is clear that politics is one of the important elements in human life. Everyone is able to carry out life as they should and can

achieve something desired with the rules that exist in the political aspect. All aspects of human life, whether it is related to the relationship between one person and another person or the relationship with the government or country, are all regulated in a political aspect. Therefore, humans do not cross out of the zone that is not in accordance with the teachings of Islam.

Al-Farabi expressed his thoughts on politics and the state which on the assumption that the achievement of human happiness can only be actualized in a society based on mutual aid and solidarity where human beings are not isolated. Humans according to al-Farabi are social beings who need the help of others.¹⁷ Human is incapable of living alone. They will not live happily if they still insist on living alone and do not need the help of others and are not related to others. Humans as a social being will deliver his needs to politics or government. Al-Farabi's thinking is inseparable from the influence or historical background of his teacher's thought.¹⁸

Al-Farabi's work entitled *Mabadi' al-Diyar* 'Madinatu 'Ifadilah contains how al-Farabi's thoughts or goals related to the form a country he wants. It contains the explanations of relation the state and citizen. Humans are an object that exists in the country. If there is no human, a country will not be created. Man as a social being will not be able to achieve the goals of life without the intervention of others. According to Al-Farabi, humans will not be able to solve a problem and achieve something they want without the intervention of others. Thus, the association or group of human themselves is capable of creating something new that could give benefits to everyone.

Like Aristotle,¹⁹ Al-Farabi believed that individuals of *zoon politicon* (social beings) would not have gained happiness without the support of society. Happiness is the goal of life or the ultimate goal of everything that is done. A person becomes honest, sincere, and not

arrogant and helps others because they want to be happy. There is not a single human who does not want happiness. They will do whatever it takes to achieve their ultimate goal of being happy.²⁰

Political science in al-Farabi's view is sublime and is placed as the master of knowledge about human behavior which includes the types of actions and all deeds, the goal to be achieved which is true happiness and everything that leads man to perfection. The leader or ruler must educate his people according to their intellectual capacity; with demonstrative arguments or rhetorical exclamations. The concept of a state for al-Farabi is associated with the human body. Both have different organs and have one ruler. The organ of the state (perhaps covering five categories based on the division of work) arises naturally through the division of work. However, their nature and habits are not natural but voluntary. The organs of the community are formed not naturally but through the habits pursued such as their various eras and passions.

Al-Farabi considered that politics must be based on the efforts of the joint conception of human beings to achieve happiness. Thus, there must be cooperation between one another to create a common goal, namely happiness. This happiness is considered the peak or the highest aspect in human happiness.²²

Related to politics, al-Farabi lists in his work entitled *al-Madinah al-Fadhilah*. The concept of his government exemplifies the form and nature of the leadership of the Prophet Muhammad SAW as an Apostle and Caliph. It was also influenced by the thought of Plato and Aristotle. In summary in the *Kitab al-Madinah al-Fadhilah*, al-Farabi states that the tendency of human to live in socializing with others then through a long process of forming a state. It was from that country that they wanted to achieve happiness together. Indications of happiness are the achievement of clothing, food, shelter and safety.

Main Countries (al-Madinah al-Fadhilah)

Human are social beings that need others and live in society, unable to meet their needs without the help of others. According to Al-Farabi the purpose of social life is not only to meet the basic needs of life but also to produce the completeness of life that will give happiness. It is not only material but also spiritual. The Idea of Al-Farabi on the Madinah al-Fadhilah is the representation of political philosophy that got special attention. because all lines of philosophical themes contained in the concept of al-Madinah al-Fadhilah namely the theological angle, system or methodology and behavior.

As Al-Farabi's goals that said in his thinking related to the main state; First, he hopes that the creation of a state that can organize or regulate the international world with one institution that is comprehensive and can be a reference or guideline for other countries with the head of state who is fair and does not favor the wrong or who has high and strong power. Second, the state according to al-Farabi is a divine state that aims at mutual, material and spiritual happiness under the leadership of a President and or with his representatives. In addition, it is also supported by people who are mutually, collectively and cooperatively in the way of working and thinking.²³

The state is formed because of the human need to live together, so it can be concluded that the existence of the state is necessity in life man. Al-Farabi discuss with physical and spiritual happiness *Saadah Maddiyah Wa Ma*. this will not be obtained by humans unless they live in a community in the ideal state is Al-Madinah Al-Fadhila.

Al-Farabi's political theory of state leads to the regulation of the existence of god and devolution to him (Theocentric). this is different from political theories and Greek Statehood, Al-Farabi then stated that the purpose of state was obtain happiness and justice. Al-Saadah means happiness contains

the understanding of things that are good to us that what is obtained a person is a gift from Allah SWT Alone.

Every country must have goals to be achieved. Therefore, citizens are expected to have ideas that must be fought continuously and towards the last point of their country which is a common hope and goal. Al-Farabi's view stated that the peak goal to be achieved was happiness. The characters for the main country are:

The first one is Ideology of citizens. Citizens have a basis of thought and opinion that requires them to work and strive to achieve the last goal of the country, which is happiness. Thinking and aspiring of human who become a citizen of a main country, only be founded by the citizens of the main country also. They must have a strong will and desire so that he is driven to do something good.

Second one is Morals. Morals were of great importance in the establishment or formation of the main state. The people of the main country must have noble morals and abstain from despicable deeds and always train or get used to carrying out commendable deeds. If this is done by everyone, a main country will be created that in principle aims to achieve mutual happiness, not just happiness for one person.²⁶

Third one is diversity. People were created by God in various forms so that they were able to know each other. When the diversity done well, it will create welfare and the absence of mutual contempt and all societies will have tolerance. Al-Farabi championed the realization of the idea of equality and unity between people. The diversity will shape the diversity of the socio-political system of a particular society. As Indonesian society which consists of various tribes, languages and religions. The influence of the climate, geographical and food environment of the local community will form the thinking patterns of social relations of certain communities that will affect differ-

ences in dispositions, traditions and social relations.

A country will not be created if there is no human in it. Human as citizen will shape the country. A good country needs a leader who is able to bring people to a better one. Thus, a leader or head of state must meet several criteria in leading the country that goes as expected.

Every human being is a leader and that leadership will be asked for his responsibility. This implies that there is a human obligation to be responsible for himself and what he does. Al-Farabi there are 3 groups of people in terms of capacity to lead. First, human beings have the capacity to guide and advise. Second, humans who can act as humans who lead at the same time led. Third, humans who are fully controlled or without qualification.

There are some criteria for a leader or head of state include: Firstly, the leader should have complete limbs, do not have any defects in the limbs. Therefore, he is able to carry out his obligations as head of state properly.

Second, have a good memory or understanding. In order to manage the business or obligation within the state, he can be resolved properly as well. Third, have a high intellectual. It should also be noted that a head of state must also have a high intellectual so that he is not negligent and weak in dealing with government affairs.

Fourth, love peace and hate tyranny. This criterion is the most important for a leader or head of state. Fair here intends not to distinguish between his citizens. He must be able to do justice and put things in his place. It can also be interpreted as an attitude of being unbiased and prioritizing wealthy over the weak. A just leader will not distinguish between one another. All people who are in a country have the same position and rights as one another.

Fifth, it is not tied to materials or money. A virtuous leader does not have much self-

interest. He will not sacrifice everyone's interests to satisfy his personal interests. A good leader is only thinking about how to create the welfare of his citizens compared to himself.

Classification of Societies

Society is not made up of an individual, but a group of individuals who have the same goal and work hand in hand to achieve a goal or happiness not for one person but for everyone. Society itself comes from the word *societas* which comes from *Latin*, means friend. Society is often interpreted as a mutual relationship between one another that helps and cooperates with each other.²⁷

According to Al-Farabi, Humans are social creatures who cannot and cannot live alone, for that humans must live in society and help one another. The basic nature of human life in a society and a state encourage people to live socially and help each other for common interest in achieving life goals is happiness.

Al-Farabi gives a classification of society itself into two kinds of society: First, a perfect society. This society is divided into three, namely *a large perfect society*; a combination of many nations that agreed to join, help and cooperate. It is called the United Nations. *A medium society* is a society consisting of one nation that occupies a territorial (state) which in this case is called a national state. A small society is a perfect society that occupies within a country or city which is called a city-state society.

Second, an imperfect society. This community consists of people who have a social livelihood at the village, hamlet, hallway, and family levels. Home is the most imperfect form of society. The family is part of the hallway community, the hallway community is part of the hamlet community and the hamlet community is part of the village community, the village community is a part of city-state community. It is called imperfect society because it is not complete enough to be self-sufficient and independent in meeting the

needs of its citizen's economic, social, cultural and spiritual needs.²⁸

Classification of Country

Al-Farabi stated that all aspects such as cities, nations and the world should have perfect elaboration. It aims to create or realize the common goal of happiness. If the people or society do not work together to create common interests the goals will not be realized. There must be good cooperation and not be divided between each other in order to create a common goal of being happy. The city that collaborates to obtain happiness is the main city as well as the nation and the world.

The division of cities according to al-Farabi: First, the main city (al-Medina al-Fadhilah). What is interesting about al-Farabi's political thinking is that there is a term or a description of it related to the city-state. He considered that the city-state can be equated with the parts of the human body which are intertwined each other. Organs work together to provide comfort or health for the human, if one organ is sick then the other also feels it. The human body consists of several organs which have different function; however, they work together each other.

According to al-Farabi, the city state has citizens whose talents and abilities are not the same, however they work together to achieve a goal. Therefore, we need someone who is good at expressing his opinion and easy to understand, loves education and likes to teach, who is not greedy in terms of food, drink or women, loves honesty and truth, who is virtuous, fair, and who has a strong stance and does not prioritize world life. However, according to al-Farabi, it is rare to find a leader who has criteria above.

Second, the stupid state (al-Madinah al-Jahiliyyah). Stupid countries are countries whose people do not know about happiness and have no idea what happiness is. When they are leading they will not follow and when they are told they will not believe it. He divides stu-

pid countries into 6 (six) namely primitive countries²⁹, hedonic countries³⁰, despicable and sick countries³¹, respecting countries³², tyrannical countries and anarchist or democratic countries³³.

Third, the state is broken (al-Madinah al-Fasiqah). A country whose people know of happiness, however they still behaves like a foolish country. In other words, they know about good things but they do despicable deeds.

Fourth, the declining state (al-Medina al-Mubaddilah). A state whose views and deeds are same as the views and deeds of the people of the main state at first, then switches because of the inclusion of other views so that it falls into a view that is not commendable.

Fifth, a heretical state (al-Medina adh-dalalah), country which has many misdeeds, misdirections and arrogance. The people do not believe in the existence of God. The head of state deceives his people by recognition that he received revelation from God, and the people must follow what he says and does as they should follow what the prophet says and does.

Sixth, weeds (nawabits). The weeds are people or elements that are inferior in ethics, people with a wild character and without culture that can disrupt the harmony of the life of the people in the main country. Nawabit resembles thorns that grow and suck on the sweat of others and do not give any benefit. They behave like animals. They are like a group of crimes such as tyranny, murder, robbery and theft.³⁵

Conclusion

Al-Farabi was the first philosopher who express his views on politics. Political science in al-Farabi's view is to examine various forms of action, ways of life, dispositions and morals. Human's happiness can be obtained because of his deeds or actions and the way of life he lives. Al-Farabi in his thinking places politics in the most important part because his part of philosophy has a political goal but politics is

not an end, however as a means of obtaining the last goal of people, it is happiness.

Al-Farabi states political concepts in his work *al-Madinah al-Fadhilah*. The political concept is based on the rule of the Messenger of Allah and there must be good cooperation between citizens. Al-Farabi divided the country into main countries, stupid countries, broken countries, degenerate countries, heretical countries and weeds. A whole society is divided into a perfect society and an imperfect society.

Al-Farabi likens the role of society to members of the human body. every member of the body has a function and ability. as well as with the state, each of its people has different tasks and skills. Leaders have an important role in organizing life together but still need help and good cooperation from others.

A good leader according to al-Farabi are those who are able to carry out Islamic law and do not apply dhazlim to anyone. a leader is able to act fairly and with a developed political system can bring happiness to everyone, not the other way around. the main country must be led by a perfect person who has good character and superior intelligence.

According to Al-Farabi, a good leader is one who is able to practice Islamic law and does not apply dhazlim to anyone. A leader is able to do justice and with a developed political system can bring happiness to everyone. The main country must be led by a perfect person who has good morals and superior intelligence.

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