



Farabi's Political Philosophy: Reconciling Platonic Ideals with Realist Perspectives on Justice and Interstate Relations



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Abstract

This study examines Farabi's perspective on international relations, focusing on the concept of the Virtuous City (al-Madīna al-Fāḍila) and the Non-Virtuous Cities. The research method is based on textual and comparative analysis of Farabi's works, particularly *The Principles of the Views of the People of the Virtuous City* (*Ārā' Ahl al-Madīna al-Fāḍila*), *Civil Policy* (*al-Siyāsa al-Madanīya*), and *Selected Aphorisms* (*Fuṣūl Muntaza'a*). This analysis emphasizes a comparison with the views of Plato in the *Republic* and *Laws*, and Thucydides' *Melian Dialogue* in the *History of the Peloponnesian War*. Influenced by Plato, Farabi defines the Virtuous City as a just society guided toward happiness (sa'āda) by a chief-philosopher. He categorizes the Non-Virtuous Cities into three types: Ignorant

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(Jāhila), Immoral (Fāsiqa), or Erring/Straying (Ḍālla), with the Vicious City (al-Madīna al-Taghallubīya) serving as their core, dominated by the motive of superiority/dominance (taghallub). The study indicates that the beliefs of the inhabitants of the Ignorant Cities, particularly regarding justice and dominance, reflect Thucydides' views (as articulated by the Athenians in the Melian Dialogue, that "the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must"). Farabi considers just war to involve defense, securing legitimate rights, or guiding others toward the good (khayr), while unjust war arises solely from dominance and a lust for superiority (taghallub). This study argues that, for Farabi, the survival of the Virtuous City amidst dominant cities necessitates a strong defense, and the expansion of the Virtuous City into a Virtuous Nation (al-Umma al-Fāḍila) and a Virtuous World (al-Ma'mūra al-Fāḍila) is a prerequisite for eliminating war and achieving true happiness.

Keywords

Farabi, Virtuous City, Domineering City, Plato, Thucydides, War, Interstate Relations.

Introduction

Farabi is known as the "Second Teacher" (al-Mu'allim al-Thānī) and the "Founder of Islamic Philosophy." The epithet "Second Teacher" likely indicates his profound influence from Aristotle—who is known as the "First Teacher"—and his pivotal role in the development and continuation of Aristotelian thought in the Islamic world. However, his title as the Founder of Islamic Philosophy primarily stems from his efforts to harmonize philosophy with religion (al-Milla/the religious community or creed).

Plato's ideas, especially those expressed in the *Republic* and the *Laws*, had a significant impact on Farabi, particularly in the conceptualization of the philosopher's social and political role. In his work, *The Principles of the Views of the People of the Virtuous City* (*Ārā' Ahl al-Madīna al-Fāḍila*), Farabi is profoundly inspired by the *Republic*, although he does not explicitly refer to it in this text. However, in treatises such as *The Philosophy of Plato* (*Falsafat Aflātūn*), which extensively focuses on the *Republic*, he frequently references this work (Farabi, 1997 a, pp. 153-154). In *Ārā'*, Farabi introduces the concept of the Virtuous City (al-Madīna al-Fāḍila), which is derived from Plato's idea of the "Ideal City" in the *Republic*. Plato describes a just society governed by Philosopher-Kings who establish social order through wisdom and justice. Similarly, Farabi proposes a Chief-Philosopher who leads the community toward happiness (sa'āda), guided by divine knowledge and intellect. Like Plato, he believes that justice and virtue form the foundation of an ideal society.

However, Plato does not extensively address the relations between states or cities. Similarly, Farabi offers almost no direct references to interactions or conflicts between states or cities. Specifically, although both thinkers classify various types of

antagonistic cities and societies, neither one deals with war or its causes in detail within their works. Farabi wrote a treatise titled *The Epitome of Plato's Laws* (*Talkhīṣ Nawāmīs Aflāṭūn*) which is solely dedicated to the *Laws* (Farabi, 1997 b, p. 197). Plato's *Laws*, written after the Peloponnesian Wars, includes several references to war as a social phenomenon, though it avoids explicit mention of the Peloponnesian Wars, only referring to general strife. Plato also alludes to the Trojan War, which Farabi explicitly references as the war over "Ilios," an alternative name Plato used for Troy. In the *Laws*, Plato focuses on the role of war in emphasizing the necessity of just laws within the community. Indications of Farabi's attention to Plato's classifications of the Non-Virtuous Cities and the beliefs of their inhabitants are evident in works such as *Ārāʾ*, *al-Siyāsa al-Madanīya*, and *Fuṣūl Muntazaʿa*. Nevertheless, as will be shown, Farabi's statements diverge somewhat from those of Plato.

In contrast to Plato, the Greek historian Thucydides stands out. In his work, *History of the Peloponnesian War* (c. 411 BCE), Thucydides analyzes the war between Athens and Sparta, showing that fear, power, and self-interest are the principal causes of conflict. In the "Melian Dialogue", he writes: "The strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must" (Thucydides, 1963, p. 89). This power-centric principle became a fundamental element in classical realism, which views international relations as an arena of relentless competition. Thucydides identifies the cause of the war between Athens and Sparta as Sparta's fear of the growing power of Athens—an idea later echoed in modern realism. In contrast, Plato in the *Republic* discusses justice, social order, and just war, which can be considered a prelude to liberal ideas about peace and cooperation. Thucydides' ideas concerning the relations between the Greek city-states, alongside the thoughts of Machiavelli and Hobbes, had a

significant impact on the formation of realism in 20th-century international relations.

Since Farabi does not directly address war, peace, or the concept of relations between nations and cities, examining his view on international relations is challenging. Nevertheless, he does explore the parties involved in such relations. When discussing the Virtuous City (*al-Madīna al-Fāḍila*), he also addresses the cities that oppose it and enumerates their characteristics. Since these characteristics are often defined in relation to other cities and societies, it is possible to extract and delineate Farabi's principles regarding the relations between cities and societies. In this study, we aim to examine the components of Farabi's thought on potential interstate relations by drawing upon the debates of Socrates with Glaucon and Thrasymachus in the *Republic*, Callicles in the *Gorgias*, and the lesser-known work of Thucydides in the Islamic world, namely the *History of the Peloponnesian War*, especially the Melian Dialogue. We will demonstrate that the core ideas of the inhabitants of the Ignorant Cities (*al-Madā'in al-Jāhila*) bear a striking resemblance to what Thucydides narrates in his *History*.

Farabi defines the Virtuous City (*al-Madīna al-Fāḍila*) as a society in which individuals achieve true happiness (*sa'āda*). In his view, happiness is the ultimate goal of human life, which is only attainable within a just, orderly, and harmonious society (Farabi, 1995, p. 122). He compares the Virtuous City to a healthy human body, where every organ performs its specific function to ensure the health of the entire body. Therefore, in the Virtuous City, individuals cooperate to achieve happiness. Farabi emphasizes that happiness is accessible only in a society guided by a just and wise leader (Farabi, 1996, p. 55).

The leader of the Virtuous City (*al-Madīna al-Fāḍila*) must be

someone who has attained Divine knowledge and possesses the ability to guide the community toward happiness (*sa'āda*). This leader must embody moral and intellectual virtues, including wisdom, courage, temperance (chastity/'iffa), and justice (Farabi, 1995, pp. 125-127). Through revelation or perfected intellect, the leader connects with the Active Intellect, which enables them to legislate and effectively govern the community. This leader is not merely a sage and a philosopher but also possesses the capacity for political management and legislation (Farabi, 1996, pp. 60-62).

Like Plato, Farabi also divides society into different classes, each having a specific role in maintaining order and achieving happiness (*sa'āda*). These classes include philosophers, guardians (or protectors), craftsmen, and other groups, which are organized hierarchically (Farabi, 1995, pp. 130-134). The main goal of the Virtuous City (*al-Madīna al-Fāḍila*) is to provide the conditions for individuals to achieve intellectual and moral perfection. This perfection is realized through education, legislation, and the cultivation of moral virtues (Farabi, 1995, p. 119).

The central focus of this study is to explore Farabi's perspective on international relations; specifically, how the Virtuous City (*al-Madīna al-Fāḍila*) can survive and achieve happiness in a world filled with Non-Virtuous Cities, particularly the Dominant Cities (cities driven by *taghallub*, or superiority/dominance). The aim of this research is to extract the principles governing relations between cities and societies in Farabi's political philosophy through a comparative analysis of his ideas with the Socratic dialogues in Plato's *Republic* and *Gorgias*, and Thucydides' *Melian Dialogue*. This research focuses on the question of how his Platonic ideals can be reconciled (or aligned) with realist views on justice and interstate relations.

Some studies have addressed this topic, including: Mahallati (2016) argues that, according to Farabi, justice is closely linked to internal economic equity and external defensive or compensatory actions, while he explicitly rejects the use of force to reform imperfect states and advocates for education as the preferred approach. Azarkasb, S. M., & Maftuni, N (2023) analyze how Farabi's works propose an educational strategy for achieving global peace. This strategy positions his positive concept of peace as "cooperation among virtuous nations to achieve happiness" in contrast to negative definitions (absence of war/violence). According to the authors, Farabi advocates for educating the elite through logical demonstration (*burhān*) and educating the populace through rhetoric, poetry, persuasion, and imagination. The goal is to minimize differences in the interpretation of truths among virtuous nations, reduce mental hostilities, and enable global peace within the framework of a virtuous civilization. Emami Koopaee (2021) examines the concept of "just war" within the broader framework of Farabi's political philosophy. This research investigates the conditions under which conflict might be justified in line with his view of the Virtuous City and its leadership. The study links his views on governance, happiness, and social order to the ethical considerations regarding war. Ahmadi Tabataba'i (2020), while covering broader philosophies of war (including Mosely), also includes perspectives from Islamic philosophers, especially Farabi. This research explores how elements such as rationality, cultural beliefs, and civilizational structures, which are central to Farabi's thought, influence the conceptualization of war and peace. Khosravi (2017) primarily focuses on the views of Imam Khomeini but engages with fundamental Islamic political philosophy, including Farabi's ideas on human nature, the state, security, and the relationship between war and peace. This study contextualizes later Islamic thought within the framework established by early philosophers like Farabi.

These prior studies mainly emphasize educational strategies for peace, the moral dimensions of just war, or integration with broader Islamic or Shiite thought. However, this article distinguishes itself by reconciling Platonic ideals with realist views within the framework of Farabi's thought, particularly through a comparative analysis of his concepts regarding the Virtuous City (*al-Madīna al-Fāḍila*) and the Dominant Cities with Thucydides' views on justice and dominance in interstate relations. This article argues that the survival of the Virtuous City in a world of dominant entities requires defensive power and global expansion to completely eradicate war.

In addition to these points, several works in English have examined similar topics in Farabi's political philosophy: Mahdi (2001), in *Farabi and the Foundation of Islamic Political Philosophy*, explores Farabi's synthesis of Platonic and Aristotelian ideas and introduces him as the founder of Islamic political thought. This work focuses on the Virtuous City (*al-Madīna al-Fāḍila*) as the model for achieving human perfection through rational governance. Galston (1990), in *Politics and Perfection: The Political Philosophy of Farabi*, analyzes Farabi's key treatises to present a coherent theory of political perfection. He emphasizes Farabi's adaptation of Plato's *Republic* while also considering practical governance and the role of the Chief-Philosopher. Parens (1995), in *Metaphysics as Rhetoric: Farabi's Interpretation of Plato's Laws*, examines Farabi's interpretation of Plato's *Laws*, highlighting the metaphysical and rhetorical elements in political legislation as well as the harmonization of philosophy with religion. Black (2011), in *A History of Islamic Political Thought: From the Prophet to the Present*, provides a historical overview that includes Farabi's contributions to political theory, including his views on justice, hierarchy, and inter-state dynamics influenced by Greek thought. Brown, Nardin, and Rengger (2002), in *International*

Relations in Political Thought: Texts from Ancient Greece to the First World War, include excerpts from Farabi alongside Thucydides and Plato, placing his ideas about the Virtuous and Non-Virtuous Cities within the broader evolution of International Relations theory.

The distinction and innovation of this study lie in its unique integration of Thucydides' realist insights—such as the Melian Dialogue's emphasis on power and domination—with Farabi's Platonic-inspired model, demonstrating that beliefs in ignorant cities mirror Thucydidean realism, while arguing that the virtuous city's expansion into a global virtuous order (*al-ma'mūra al-fāḍila*) is essential for transcending war, thus bridging idealistic and realistic paradigms in a way not fully explored in prior works.

1. Justice

Farabi emphasizes that justice is established when every individual occupies their proper place and correctly performs their duties (Farabi, 1995, p. 128). He also stresses the role of religion in the Virtuous City (*al-Madīna al-Fāḍila*), believing that religion serves as a tool to guide the masses and is in harmony with reason and philosophy (Farabi, 1995, p. 141). By equating the truth of reason with the truth of religion, Farabi states that the leader of the Virtuous City must be a philosopher; one who connects with the truth through reason and interprets Divine laws in a way that is comprehensible to the masses (Farabi, 1995, p. 126).

Farabi classifies the cities that oppose the Virtuous City (*al-Madīna al-Fāḍila*) into three categories based on their relationship with virtuous beliefs and principles: 1- Ignorant City (*madīna jāhila*): A society where individuals pursue material and worldly pleasures and are ignorant of true happiness (*sa'āda*) (Farabi, 1996, p. 70). 2- Immoral/Wicked City (*madīna fāsiqa*): A society where individuals

are outwardly compliant with Divine laws but, in practice, act in pursuit of their personal interests (Farabi, 1996, p. 72). 3- Erring/Straying City (*madīna ḍālla*): A society where individuals adhere to false and deviated beliefs (Farabi, 1996, p. 74). He believes that just laws must be founded on reason and wisdom to guide individuals toward moral and intellectual virtues (Farabi, 1996, p. 65).

As stated, to examine Farabi's potential perspective on the relations between perfect societies, it is essential to explore his views on the Virtuous City (*al-Madīna al-Fāḍila*) and his views on the other cities that oppose it. The counterpart to the Virtuous City is either another Virtuous City—leading to a Virtuous Nation (*Umma Fāḍila*) or a Virtuous World Order (*Ma'mūra Fāḍila*), which is either a single government or non-hostile states that differ only in their imaginative representations of the same truth (and this is not particularly challenging, as justice governs the conduct of the leaders and people in all these cities, and conflict arises from unjust behavior)—or it is one of the other types of cities, all of which oppose the Virtuous City. Therefore, it can be concluded that the main challenge in international relations lies in the principles governing the interactions among the Non-Virtuous Cities and the relations between the Virtuous City/Nation and the other cities and nations. Accordingly, we will examine the types of Non-Virtuous Cities and the beliefs of their inhabitants to understand Farabi's potential view on their relations. Subsequently, we will address Plato's classifications of the Virtuous and Non-Virtuous Cities, and finally, we will compare Thucydides' views with those of Farabi.

2. Non-Virtuous Cities

Farabi categorizes non-virtuous cities, specifically the ignorant and erring cities, into seven types: the mean city (*madīna nadhāla*), the

necessary city (*madīna ḍarūriyya*), the vile city (*madīna khasīsa*), the honorable city (*madīna karāma*), the domineering city (*madīna taghallub*), the free city (*madīna ḥurriyya*), and the collective city or city of the free (*madīna jamā‘iyya* or *madīnat al-aḥrār*) (Farabi, 1995, pp. 128-129).

The Necessary City (*madīna ḍarūriyya*) is a society where people cooperate and coexist to secure the necessities of life, such as farming, hunting, or even theft. The leader of such a society is usually someone who is skilled in these tasks and is capable of leading the people in these endeavors (Farabi, 1996, pp. 100-101).

The Mean/Base City (*madīna nadhāla*) is a society where people, after securing the necessities of life, cooperate to amass greater wealth. The sole aim of individuals in this society is greed and materialism. Naturally, the leader of such a society is one who excels in accumulating wealth and can guide the people toward this goal (Farabi, 1996, pp. 101-102).

The Vile City (- *madīna khasīsa*) is a society where people seek material pleasures and cooperate to attain them. Consequently, the leader of this city is someone who is foremost in the pursuit of pleasure and can guide the people's efforts toward achieving these pleasures (Farabi, 1996, p. 102).

The honorable city, according to Farabi, is distinct from the aforementioned societies in an interesting way. The focus of this society is honor and recognition. In other words, people cooperate to achieve honor and greatness. These individuals seek to be respected and honored by other nations, sometimes expending significant resources to achieve this goal. Happiness is attaining honor and greatness from their perspective. Farabi notes that in these societies, achieving honor and greatness may not always be the primary goal;

sometimes, they seek to acquire wealth through this means. Farabi discusses this society in considerable detail (Farabi, 1996, pp. 102–107).

The collective city, according to Farabi, is a society where people are free to do as they wish and enjoy complete equality. The laws of such a society are formulated based on the principle that no human is superior to another. In this community, only those who contribute to the freedom of others hold value (Farabi, 1996, p. 114). Farabi emphasizes that a wide variety of individuals and groups come together in such a society, ranging from the best to the worst individuals. The rulers of such societies are under the influence of the populace and subject to their will. This does not mean that the leaders are not respected or honored; instead, people respect them as long as they strive to fulfill the people's desires and absolute freedom and protect it from internal and external enemies (Farabi, 1996, pp. 115-116).

In such cities, Farabi states that all the goals of the other Ignorant Cities are fully manifested. Due to the diversity, variety, and boundless freedom in the Collective City (City of the Free - *madīna jamā'iyya* or *madīnat al-aḥrār*), this city is popular with everyone, and many prefer to settle in it. These societies expand rapidly due to their popularity. Farabi believes that virtuous individuals who can form a Virtuous City may be nurtured in such a society. However, the worst and most base individuals also have the opportunity to thrive in these communities. At the same time, Farabi points out that even though virtuous individuals may have a chance to grow and spread in such a society, they never attain leadership. This is because leadership is only granted to those who obey the citizens and fulfill their desires. Therefore, whenever a virtuous individual takes the lead, they are quickly deposed or killed, or conflict and strife erupt in the society (Farabi, 1996, pp. 116-117).

3. The Dominant City

The Dominant/Tyrannical City (*madīna taghallub*) is one of the most important types of Ignorant Societies that Farabi addresses in the context of inter-society relations. Farabi dedicates more attention to this type than to other forms of Ignorant Cities, likely due to its prevalence and because he considers it the worst type of Ignorant Society (Farabi, 1996, pp. 107-108).

According to Farabi, the people of the Dominant City cooperate to achieve dominance and superiority over other cities and societies. They are obsessed with dominating others. The basis of this superiority-seeking differs and may include control over the lives or wealth of others. This desire for dominance is sometimes so intense that it is unacceptable to them if other nations surrender their lives or wealth willingly, without coercion or violence, and they may even ignore such offerings. Farabi does not always consider the means of dominance in such societies to be military; sometimes, this goal is achieved through reason (deception and strategy), physical force, or tools and technologies (Farabi, 1996, p. 108). The desire for dominance among the citizens of such societies is absolute. They even wish to dominate their fellow citizens. However, since they need each other for their survival, cooperate to dominate others, and require mutual support to prevent others from dominating them, they refrain from dominating one another (Farabi, 1996, p. 108).

Farabi believes that the leader of such societies naturally possesses greater ability and strategy to achieve dominance over others and to prevent other societies from dominating their own. This leader strives to make dominance (*taghallub*) a part of the society's culture, customs, and social traditions (Farabi, 1996, pp. 108-109). The people of such societies are generally hard-hearted, oppressive, and violent, indulging excessively in material pleasures such as food and

marital relations. In short, their goal is to dominate all worldly goods by subjugating and humiliating their owners (Farabi, 1996, p. 109). Farabi notes that sometimes the people of domineering societies pretend that their dominance over other societies is due to the latter's need for civilization and urban life (Farabi, 1996, p. 110).

Farabi divides the Dominant/Tyrannical Societies (*taghallub*) in several ways, which is highly significant because it will be shown that, based on one classification, every Non-Virtuous City is potentially a Dominant City. Farabi classifies the Dominant Societies based on the distribution of those who seek dominance. Some have only a single dominant figure, whose citizens are merely instruments of his will. The efforts of individuals in this society are directed toward empowering the ruler to achieve power and dominance, and in return, their needs are met. Farabi compares the relationship between the ruler and such citizens to that of a hunter with a falcon or a hunting dog. Such a society is considered dominant, but its general populace is not inherently driven by the desire for dominance. Farabi deems the title "Semi-Dominant" to be more appropriate for such a society (Farabi, 1996, p. 111).

Farabi offers another classification of Dominant Societies based on the priority of dominance (*taghallub*) in the hierarchy of the citizens' goals. He believes that sometimes the citizens of a dominant society view dominance merely as a tool to achieve other goals, such as securing necessities, accumulating considerable wealth, indulging in material pleasures, or attaining greatness and honor, and they resort to force and dominance to reach these ends. He states that while these societies are also dominant, the most appropriate type for the title "Dominant City (*madīna taghallub*)" is one where the people strive to obtain all these pleasures solely through force and dominance (Farabi, 1996, pp. 111-112).

Farabi sometimes combines these two criteria, stating that Dominant Cities (*madā'in taghallub*) are either those whose entire populace seeks dominance or those in which dominance is not the intrinsic goal but rather a means to achieve another end. In other words, a city whose people do not all seek dominance uses dominance as a means to reach other goals. Farabi continues that sometimes citizens seek both dominance and other benefits simultaneously (Farabi, 1996, p. 12).

Therefore, The First Type is a city whose entire populace seeks dominance and superiority over other societies, often with the sole intent of achieving dominance, regardless of how it is acquired. Sometimes, they may inflict harm on others (such as killing), without gaining any benefit, and merely for the pleasure they derive from it (Farabi, 1996, p. 112).

The Second Type is a Dominant City that pursues dominance merely to achieve material benefits, and if those benefits are attained without force, it refrains from using force. Farabi believes these societies are desirable to people because every desire and whim can be satisfied within them. The Third Type is a group that seeks material benefits through force and dominance and would refuse to accept those benefits if they were acquired without force. Farabi calls this group the "Masters of Arrogance/Leaders of Pride" (*Arbāb al-Ta'azzuz/Sardmadārān al-Ta'azzuz*) (Farabi, 1996, p. 113).

Farabi believes that the first group, which seeks only dominance, may forego material benefits if attained and may even be respected and admired for this behavior. He suggests that this group may include those who value honor and esteem. However, most dominant cities tend toward tyranny and despotism rather than honor. Sometimes, people in wealth-seeking cities, after acquiring wealth, become arrogant and consider themselves uniquely happy and

respected by other nations. This group considers the first type foolish (Farabi, 1996, p. 113).

Farabi's framework for the Ignorant Cities (*al-Madā'in al-Jāhila*) is essentially centered around the Dominant/Tyrannical City (*madīna taghallub*). As explained, he believes that the title Dominant City applies to any society that seeks superiority and mastery over others, whether for survival, wealth, material pleasures, or honor and greatness. Since the Collective City/City of the Free (*madīna jamā'iyya*) includes individuals pursuing these diverse goals, it can also be considered a Dominant City. Next, we will examine the types of Non-Virtuous Cities from Plato's perspective. As will be observed, despite the similarities, there are significant differences in how the two philosophers portray the cities opposing the Virtuous City.

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4. Plato's Virtuous City and Its Opposites

In the *Republic*, particularly in Books VIII and IX, Plato discusses the Virtuous City (*Kallipolis*) and its gradual decline into less perfect political systems. Plato's Virtuous City is an ideal society founded on justice, harmony among the social classes (philosopher-rulers, guardians, and producers), and the supremacy of reason over the other parts of the soul (Plato, 1992, pp. 427e–445e). However, Plato believes that even this ideal city is susceptible to decline due to human flaws and social changes. He introduces four types of imperfect political systems as stages of degeneration from the Virtuous City: 1- Timocracy (rule of honor/esteem): (*hukūmat-i sharaf/iftikhār*) 2- Oligarchy (rule of the wealthy): (*hukūmat-i sarvatmandān*) 3- Democracy (rule of the people): (*hukūmat-i mardum*) 4- Tyranny/Despotism (autocratic/oppressive rule): (*hukūmat-i khodkāma/zālimāna*) These systems gradually deviate from justice and the common good, and each is associated with specific characteristics of the human soul and social organization (Plato, 1992, p. 544a).

4-1 Timocracy

Timocracy is the first stage of decline from the virtuous city. Plato explains in *The Republic* that this system emerges when harmony among the classes of the virtuous city is disrupted, particularly when guardians, who are meant to follow reason and the common good, come under the influence of the spirited (*thumoeides*) part of the soul. This part of the soul, associated with honor, ambition, and the desire for fame, takes precedence over reason (Plato, 1992, p. 548c). Timocracy is a system where honor and military prowess become the primary values, and rulers pursue personal glory and power rather than the common good. Plato compares timocracy to states like Sparta or Crete (Plato, 1992, p. 545a). In this system, the ruling class (formerly guardians) turns to wealth accumulation and luxury, which conflicts with the principles of the virtuous city, where guardians own no private property (Plato, 1992, p. 547b). Timocracy is also characterized by competition and envy among rulers, as personal ambition overshadows the collective good.

4-2. Timocracy's Connection to Honor, Power, and External Domination

Timocracy is particularly associated with honor and ambition. Plato believes that in a timocracy, "ambitious and honor-loving" individuals rise to power. These individuals seek fame through military victories and dominance over others (Plato, 1992, p. 549a). Unlike the virtuous city, where reason guides the common good, in timocracy, the primary motivation of rulers is achieving honor and superiority, often through external wars. This system prioritizes military power and competition with other cities, with success in war serving as a measure of the rulers' honor and value. This characteristic is tied to the spirited part of the soul, which Plato describes in *The*

Republic as related to anger, honor, and self-defense. In timocracy, this part dominates reason, driving rulers toward external wars. Plato notes that this system, while better than other imperfect systems, deviates from justice due to its focus on honor and power (Plato, 1992, p. 547c).

Plato's descriptions of timocracy are comparable to Farabi's discussions of the honorable city and the domineering city. Although Farabi distinguishes these two societies, as noted, honor and recognition in the honorable city constitute a form of domineering society, where individuals seek superiority over others for the sake of honor.

4-3. Oligarchy

The next stage of decline is Oligarchy (rule of the wealthy). In this system, wealth becomes the primary value, and power is concentrated in the hands of a small number of rich individuals. Plato writes that oligarchy emerges from Timocracy (rule of honor) when ambition and honor give way to greed (Plato, 1992, p. 551a). This regime is associated with the appetitive (epithumetic) part of the soul, which seeks material pleasures and wealth (Plato, 1992, p. 553c).

Oligarchy, in Plato's view, is more unjust than Timocracy because even honor fades, and the rulers focus solely on preserving their wealth and power (Plato, 1992, p. 554a). Farabi's Mean City (*madīna nadhāla*) holds a similar position to Oligarchy. In both of these regimes, the goal is the accumulation of wealth. However, Farabi does not limit the pursuit of wealth to the rulers and explicitly states that the accumulation of wealth can lead to a desire to dominate other societies to gain access to their financial resources. Thus, the Mean City is also potentially a Dominant City (*madīna taghallub*). Nevertheless, Farabi does not delve into the internal dynamics of the

Mean City, emphasizing that its leader is superior to others in accumulating wealth and remains in power as long as they assist the citizens in this pursuit.

4-4. Democracy

Democracy is the next stage of decline. Plato sees democracy as the result of the revolt of the poor against the rich in the Oligarchy. In this system, freedom becomes the primary value, but this freedom leads to anarchy and disorder (Plato, 1992, p. 557b). Plato describes democracy as a system where all individuals pursue their own desires, without regard for the common good or justice. Democracy is characterized by diversity and a lack of order, but this excessive freedom sets the stage for tyranny (Plato, 1992, p. 558c). Farabi's description of the Collective City/City of the Free (*madīna jamā'iyya* or *madīnat al-aḥrār*) is a reflection of democracy; he describes a condition where freedom acts as a means to pursue diverse goals such as wealth, honor, necessities, and others.

4-5. Tyranny

Tyranny is the most extreme and worst form of political system, and it emerges when an individual in a democracy exploits the anarchy and seizes power. Plato describes tyranny as a system in which the ruler is completely dominated by his personal desires (Plato, 1992, p. 571a). This regime is highly unjust, as the ruler prioritizes his private interests over the common good and enslaves the people (Plato, 1992, p. 576a). Farabi does not portray tyranny as a distinct form of government but states that any of the various (Non-Virtuous) Cities can lead to tyranny, depending on the interaction between the ruler and the citizens. The Collective City (City of the Free - *madīna jamā'iyya*) might be an exception, as there, power and respect are only attained by those who satisfy the desires and ambitions of the people.

4-6. Plato's Focus on Timocracy

Plato devotes the more attention to timocracy in *The Republic* because it is the first stage of decline from the virtuous city and still bears some resemblance to it (Plato, 1992, p. 545c). Timocracy serves as a bridge between the virtuous city and imperfect systems. Plato carefully explains how minor flaws in the education and training of guardians, such as inappropriate music or physical exercise, can lead to the dominance of the spirited part of the soul (Plato, 1992, pp. 546d–547a). He also provides a psychological analysis of the timocratic individual, describing them as ambitious, honor-loving, and inclined toward competition (Plato, 1992, pp. 548c–549b).

Timocracy is significant for Plato because it marks the beginning of deviation from justice. He also notes that timocracy, due to its emphasis on honor and military power, can be relatively stable in the short term but ultimately collapses into oligarchy due to greed (Plato, 1992, p. 550d).

In contrast, Farabi focuses on the domineering city, not because it is the initial stage of decline, but because it is, firstly, the worst type of city and, secondly, not fundamentally different from other non-virtuous cities. Farabi considers the collective city, which is akin to democracy, and sometimes the honorable city, to be better than other non-virtuous cities. The centrality of the domineering city is more strongly supported in Farabi's works, particularly as he frames the beliefs of the inhabitants of non-virtuous cities around the pursuit of dominance.

5. Beliefs of the Inhabitants of Virtuous and Ignorant Cities

Before discussing the beliefs of the Non-Virtuous Societies, Farabi outlines the shared beliefs of the inhabitants of the Virtuous City (*al-*

Madīna al-Fāḍila). These beliefs include: Knowledge about the First Cause of beings, immaterial entities, and celestial bodies. Knowledge about the generation and corruption of natural bodies and the understanding that all that occurs in bodies follows a wise, just, and orderly pattern. Knowledge about humans and their faculties. Knowledge about the First Ruler and revelation. Knowledge about the successors of the First Ruler. Knowledge about the Virtuous City and its people. And knowledge about the Virtuous and Non-Virtuous Nations (Farabi, 1995, pp. 142-143).

Farabi states that these knowledges and their details are known either through direct contemplation by the souls and intellects or through imaginative representation. The philosophers of the Virtuous City understand these matters through demonstration (*burhān*) and their own insight. Those who are on a lower level than the philosophers know these matters as they are, but they rely on the knowledge and insight of the philosophers and trust their sayings. The rest of the people understand these matters through representations and analogies (*tamthīlāt*), which bring these concepts closer to sensible perception, because they lack the intellectual capacity or aptitude to grasp these matters as they are (Farabi, 1995, p. 143). The knowledge of the philosophers is naturally superior to the knowledge of others. Those who know these matters through representations may do so with examples that are close to the truth, somewhat distant, very distant, or infinitely far from the truth (Farabi, 1995, p. 143).

These matters and truths are represented to every nation and people through representations familiar to them, which are ordered according to their significance. The type of knowledge of these matters may differ among various nations. Consequently, these truths are depicted differently for each nation compared to how they are presented in other nations. For this reason, Virtuous Cities (*al-*

Madā'in al-Fāḍila) and their nations may differ from one another, but all believe in the same happiness (*sa'āda*) and a singular goal. When these matters are known and proven through demonstration (*burhān*), there remains no room for disagreement or sophistical arguments; neither through sophistry nor from someone who is incapable of understanding them due to misunderstanding (Farabi, 1995, p. 144).

However, if these matters are known through representations (*tamthīlāt*), there might be a basis for disagreement in these representations. This disagreement might be less in some cases and more in others, sometimes obvious and sometimes hidden. Some of those who know these truths through representations might resist specific examples (Farabi, 1995, p. 144). These individuals are divided into several groups. One group is seeking guidance. If the representations they deem false are replaced with representations closer to the truth and they are persuaded, the goal is achieved. If these representations also seem false to them, they are explained using other representations at a higher level. This process continues until they are either persuaded, or if all representations appear false to them and they have the capacity to understand the truth, they come to know the truth itself and join the ranks of the philosophers' followers. If they are not persuaded but show an inclination toward wisdom, those who have the ability proceed to study wisdom (Farabi, 1995, p. 144).

These statements indicate that, in Farabi's view, it is permissible to have multiple Virtuous Cities (*al-Madā'in al-Fāḍila*). However, these cities will never enter into war with one another, because they all believe in a single, unified truth. Their only differences arise from the multiplicity of imaginative representations (*tamthīlāt*) of these truths, which may lead to seemingly different outward beliefs. But upon examining the beliefs of the inhabitants of the Ignorant Cities (*al-Madā'in al-Jāhila*), it will be observed that

they are highly susceptible to war-mongering, which stems from their desire for dominance (*taghallub*) in various domains.

6. Ignorant and Erring Cities

Farabi attributes the emergence of all types of Ignorant (*Jāhila*) and Erring (*Ḍālla*) Cities to the metaphysical belief that "intrinsic conflict governs beings." He believes that Ignorant and Erring Cities come into existence when a nation's ontological foundations are built upon corrupt and defunct beliefs. One of these incorrect assumptions is that some believe that all beings are in strife with one another, and each seeks the destruction of the other. They claim that every being is equipped with the means to preserve its existence and repel its opponent. Some beings are created to dominate others and use them for their own benefit. This belief leads to the conclusion that every being is created solely for itself, and the existence of others is harmful to it. Therefore, every being must either destroy the other or subjugate it for its service (Farabi, 1995, pp. 147-148).

Farabi attributes the emergence of this view among humans to individuals or groups who relentlessly seek to dominate one another, without regard for order or proportionality. Based on this belief, every individual must dominate others to gain access to goods and benefits. This belief leads to the rise of cities in which no natural or voluntary friendship and association exist, except in necessary cases. Even in these cases, the association only lasts until the need is fulfilled, after which enmity and separation resume (Farabi, 1995, p. 149). Avoiding social conflict is a self-serving strategy to preserve personal interests more effectively.

7. The Origin of the Concept of Justice in Non-Virtuous Cities

Based on the key beliefs outlined regarding the Ignorant Cities (*al-Madā'in al-Jāhila*), Farabi analyzes the presence of concepts like

justice or piety (*dīndārī*) in Non-Virtuous Societies and argues that these concepts essentially carry meanings contrary to their true sense. According to him, in these societies, some believe that when tribes or cities are differentiated from one another through various associations, similar to the distinction between individuals, they should seek to dominate one another based on the principle of intrinsic conflict among beings and groups. The goods they compete to acquire include health, honor, wealth, and pleasure. Each tribe strives to deprive others of their benefits and appropriate them for itself. The tribe that prevails in this competition is considered happy (*sa'ād*). Farabi states that, according to this view, justice means domination and superiority (*taghallub*). Based on this definition, if a tribe is defeated, it is either destroyed or enslaved to serve the interests of the victorious tribe. These actions are also considered natural justice, where "what is in nature is just". In other words, "might makes right" (Farabi, 1995, p. 152).

However, within a single society based on such a conception of justice, the benefits gained through domination over other societies must be divided according to the effort each individual or group has exerted. If material goods are absent, honor or other things are granted according to effort. However, matters such as fairness in buying and selling, trustworthiness, or refraining from usurping others' property are observed only due to fear or inability (Farabi, 1995, p. 153).

The above view is similar to Thrasymachus' statement on justice in *The Republic*. Thrasymachus says: "Justice is nothing other than the interest of the stronger... Each government enacts laws for its benefit... and declares these laws just for its subjects" (Plato, 1992, pp. 338c–339a). Thrasymachus considers justice the result of one-sided domination by power. Just laws are enacted by rulers to consolidate their dominance, and justice operates to the detriment of the weak and in favor of the powerful minority.

Farabi, in one of his works, recounts Thrasymachus' narrative under the title "the praiser of injustice". He quotes the praiser of injustice as saying: "Justice is the matter that benefits the stronger" (Farabi, 1997 a, p. 152), although in the introduction to his work, he refers to "Thrasymachus" as a sophist teacher and rival of Socrates. Furthermore, Farabi offers another interpretation of justice in ignorant cities that is closer to Glaucon's account of the origin of justice. Farabi states that some citizens of ignorant cities believe that when two tribes or individuals are equal in power and have both experienced victory and defeat, they agree to divide benefits justly and refrain from encroaching on each other's property. This agreement persists until one party becomes stronger and seeks to break the covenant to dominate the other (Farabi, 1995, p. 154).

In Book II of the *Republic*, Glaucon also presents a similar view regarding the origin of justice, focusing on the concept of the social contract and the balance of power. He argues that justice is neither an intrinsic good nor the product of human nature, but rather arises from a balance of power among equals in society. Glaucon, much like what Farabi attributes to the beliefs of the inhabitants of the Ignorant Cities, believes that human beings naturally seek their own interests and prefer to inflict injustice. However, when the power of individuals or groups is equal, no one can dominate the other (Plato, 1992, p. 358e). Consequently, justice emerges as a compromise to avoid mutual harm. He states: "People say that to inflict injustice is naturally good and to suffer injustice is bad, but that the badness of suffering injustice is greater than the goodness of inflicting it. So when people have both inflicted and suffered injustice and have had experience of both, those who lack the power to do the one and avoid the other decide that they had better agree among themselves to neither inflict injustice nor suffer it. Hence they began to make laws and covenants;

and what the law commands they call lawful and just" (Plato, 1992, pp. 358e–359a). He reinforces this idea with the story of the "Ring of Gyges," suggesting that if an individual possessed unlimited power (like invisibility), they would abandon justice, because the motivation for justice is not an intrinsic good, but a necessity stemming from the balance of power (Plato, 1992, pp. 359c–360d).

After explaining the meaning of justice in the beliefs of the inhabitants of the Erring Cities (*al-Madā'in al-Ḍālla*), Farabi addresses piety or the concept of religious devotion (*dīndārī*). He states that, according to the people of the Erring Cities, piety means affirming the existence of a God who administers the world and spiritual beings who oversee human actions. If a person engages in worship, glorification, and sanctification of God and renounces worldly goods, they will receive a great reward after death. However, if they cling to worldly goods and neglect these acts, they will face punishment in the hereafter (Farabi, 1995, p. 155). Farabi states that in Non-Virtuous Cities, these beliefs are regarded as a kind of deception and trickery used by some to gain benefits. Those who are unable to dominate overtly use these beliefs to deceive others into renouncing benefits, pretending to be uninterested in worldly goods to gain the trust of others and achieve their goals without resistance (Farabi, 1995, pp. 155–156). This interpretation is close to the statements of Callicles in the *Gorgias* (481b–527e). Callicles divides justice into "natural" and "legal". He believes that legal justice, established by the weak, is an attempt to restrain the powerful and acts contrary to nature. Callicles says: "Nature itself shows that it is just that the better should have more than the worse, and the stronger more than the weaker... but these weak masses... establish laws and call what is to their advantage just" (Plato, 1925, p. 483c).

Farabi states that another group that adheres to these matters

has either been deceived or continues this path due to fear of losing their benefits. These religious beliefs stem from observing nature and beings and have taken root in many souls. However, once these benefits are obtained, they must be preserved and increased, either through voluntary transactions or by dominating others (Farabi, 1995, p. 156).

What Farabi states above is discernible in a Socratic dialogue. Glaucon sees justice as the result of a balance of powers, where neither party can dominate the other. This view is pragmatic, considering justice a compromise to maintain order in conditions of relative equality. In contrast, Thrasymachus emphasizes inequality, viewing justice as a tool for the stronger to exploit the weaker (Plato, 1992, p. 338c). Unlike Glaucon, he believes that justice exists even in conditions of inequality but operates in favor of the powerful.

Nevertheless, it cannot be definitively stated that Farabi drew these beliefs directly from *The Republic*. The significant point about him is that, in describing the beliefs of the inhabitants of ignorant cities, he aligns with Glaucon's view that justice becomes meaningful when both factors are weak (Plato, 1992, p. 358e). The difference is that Glaucon considers justice between two human individuals, whereas Farabi appears to extend this concept to relations between groups and cities in ignorant cities. In other words, what Glaucon proposes is merely a social contract requiring a higher authority, namely the law and its enforcer, the city's leader. However, Farabi initially accepts the principle of similarity between individual and societal behavior and states that, according to the beliefs of the inhabitants of ignorant cities, when tribes or cities are distinguished from one another through various connections, similar to the distinction between individuals, they must seek to dominate one another. He further states that some citizens of ignorant cities believe that when two tribes or individuals

are equal in power and have experienced both victory and defeat, they agree to divide benefits justly and refrain from encroaching on each other's property. This agreement persists until one party becomes stronger and seeks to break the covenant to dominate the other (Farabi, 1995, pp. 147–148).

The extension of this concept of justice to relations between cities or states and conflicts among various nations is not explicitly stated by Glaucon. While Farabi explains justice from the perspective of the inhabitants of non-virtuous cities as stemming from an inability to dominate, this aligns with the centrality of the domineering city among non-virtuous cities.

8. Farabi, Glaucon, and Thucydides

Farabi's interpretations in this section are more akin to the statements of the Athenians in their dialogue with the Melians, as narrated by Thucydides in *The History of the Peloponnesian War*, than to Glaucon's views. The Melian Dialogue, found in Book V of *The History of the Peloponnesian War*, describes a negotiation between representatives of Athens and the people of the island of Melos in 416 BCE. The Athenians, as the stronger power, demand the surrender of the Melians, who, as the weaker party, appeal to hope and justice. The Athenians present a realist perspective, stating that justice is relevant only when the power of the parties is equal: "In our view, in human affairs, justice is considered only when the power of the parties is equal; otherwise, the stronger do what they can, and the weaker must accept it" (Thucydides, 1963, p. 89). This statement reflects a realist approach that power determines relations in international affairs, and justice is relevant only when neither party can dominate the other. The Athenians argue that the Melians, due to their military weakness, cannot rely on justice or hope and must surrender, as justice has no

place in the absence of equal power (Emami Koopaee, 2021, pp. 90–91). This view emphasizes the principle that "might makes right" and considers justice a concept contingent on the balance of power.

It is unclear whether Farabi had access to *The History* (Gutas, 1998, p. 28). What is certain is that Thucydides' *History* was not translated during the Arabic translation movement. However, according to some accounts and evidence, Farabi had some knowledge of Greek and likely consulted some available works with the assistance of translators like Yūnus ibn Mattā and others. Although there is no reference to Thucydides or his *History* in the Islamic works that have reached us (Rosenthal, 1968, p. 19), this weakens the hypothesis that Farabi had Thucydides' views in mind when presenting the beliefs of the inhabitants of ignorant cities.

Another hypothesis is that Plato, in dialogues such as *The Republic*, *Gorgias*, and *The Laws*, expressed Thucydides' views through characters like Glaucon and Thrasymachus and then critiqued them through Socrates. Thus, Farabi can be considered in an indirect dialogue with Thucydides.

We can now somewhat delineate Farabi's perspective on relations between cities and nations. Farabi divides cities into two main categories: virtuous and non-virtuous. He considers both virtuous and non-virtuous cities to be multiple. The factor of multiplicity in virtuous cities is the difference in the representations and analogies reflected in the beliefs of their inhabitants from unified truths. Thus, the core and root of the beliefs of virtuous cities are shared and unified. These cities do not seek to dominate one another, so there is no concern regarding relations between virtuous cities. However, non-virtuous cities are divided into types such as the necessary, vile, honorable, collective, and, finally, the domineering city. In this study, we have shown that the domineering city is the core

of non-virtuous cities. This hypothesis is based both on Farabi's descriptions of non-virtuous cities and on his descriptions of the beliefs of their inhabitants, which revolve around dominance and superiority.

The Athenians, Glaucon, and Thrasymachus view justice as a phenomenon dependent on power, not an intrinsic good. The Athenians in the Melian Dialogue explicitly state that justice is meaningless without equal power (Thucydides, 1963, p.89), and Glaucon also sees justice as the result of a social contract between the weak (Plato, 1992, pp. 358e–359a). Thrasymachus, while not considering equality a condition, links justice to power (Plato, 1992, p. 338c). All three view justice as a pragmatic, not moral, concept.

At the same time, the Athenians consider justice meaningful only in conditions of equal power, and in unequal relations, the stronger act without regard for justice (Thucydides, 1963, p. 89). Glaucon also emphasizes equal power but sees justice as the result of a social agreement within a society, where individuals submit to just laws to avoid mutual harm (Plato, 1992, pp. 358e–359a). Unlike the Athenians, his view focuses on internal relations and the social contract. Thrasymachus rejects the necessity of equal power and considers justice a tool of the stronger to control the weaker (Plato, 1992, p. 338c). Unlike the Athenians and Glaucon, he believes that justice exists even in conditions of inequality but operates in favor of the powerful.

9. Relations Between Cities and Nations

Although Farabi does not explicitly discuss the nature and extent of relations between cities or nations, he enumerates the characteristics of the virtuous city and non-virtuous cities and details the beliefs of their inhabitants. Like Plato, he focuses on justice as the central concept of the virtuous city. In contrast, ignorant cities are shaped

around injustice. For Farabi, this injustice manifests fully in the domineering city. Both in listing the types of non-virtuous cities and in referencing the beliefs of their inhabitants, he considers each of them a domineering kind of city. According to him, a non-virtuous city is a society that either openly seeks dominance and superiority for the sake of the pleasure of superiority or pursues dominance to achieve necessities, honor, wealth, freedom, or other bodily pleasures.

Based on the preceding premises, the Virtuous City (*al-Madīna al-Fāḍila*) confronts societies and nations that, either intrinsically or for the sake of other interests, seek to dominate it. In such circumstances, the strengthening of the Virtuous City becomes increasingly necessary. This does not imply an adherence to offensive realism, but rather that the protection of the Virtuous City necessitates the presence of a strong defensive force among the guardians. This perspective is reinforced by Farabi's justifications for various types of war.

10. Just War

In the work *Fuṣūl Muntazaʿa* (Aphorisms Selected), Farabi addresses subjects that were less covered in his earlier works or about which he was questioned (Farabi, 1985, p. 76). Daneshpazhooh believes that *Fuṣūl Muntazaʿa* was written later in Farabi's life, after works such as *Attainment of Happiness* (*Taḥṣīl al-Saʿāda*), *The Opinions of the Inhabitants of the Virtuous City* (*Ārāʾ Ahl al-Madīna al-Fāḍila*), and *The Political Regime* (*Al-Siyāsa al-Madaniyya*) (Daneshpazhooh, 2011). In this work, contrary to his previous works, Farabi divides cities into two categories: the Necessary City (*madīna ḍarūriyya*) and the Virtuous City (*madīna fāḍila*). It seems that his concept of the Necessary City is a society in which association is either a vital necessity or a prerequisite for achieving material benefits through the domination of others.

Farabi divides war in this work generally into two types: Just War and Unjust War. In explaining Just War, he states that war is just when it is waged to repel an enemy and defend the city against foreign invasion. Furthermore, it is justified when war is initiated to secure benefits that the people of the Virtuous City are more deserving of than others (Farabi, 1985, p. 76). Farabi also says that war is just when its purpose is to compel a group to accept something that is better and more beneficial for them. He points out that these individuals may not recognize this good themselves and thus reject the words of those inviting them, in which case war becomes necessary (Farabi, 1985, pp. 76–77). He states that war is also justified against those for whom servitude is more suitable and beneficial but who refuse to accept it. Farabi believes that some people in this world ought to be servants (Farabi, 1985, p. 77).

Farabi says that sometimes the interests or rights of the city's people are usurped by citizens or nations of other cities. In such cases, war against them is appropriate. He believes the goal of initiating such a war is twofold: first, to secure benefits for the citizens; and second, to compel the usurping group to observe justice and fairness (Farabi, 1985, p. 77). Farabi considers another type of Just War to be a war waged to punish a group that has committed an offense, prevent its recurrence, and deter others from coveting the city. He says this action is a way of securing benefits for the city's people, in addition to restoring that group to a more suitable position and repelling a potential enemy (Farabi, 1985, p. 77). Finally, Farabi deems a war conducted with the aim of destroying and eradicating a group to be permissible and in the interest of the city, because their existence is harmful to the city's people (Farabi, 1985, p. 77).

In contrast, Farabi considers a ruler's war-mongering against a group to be unjust if it is solely for the purpose of forcing them to

submit, obey his commands, or show him respect, with no goal other than imposing obedience, gaining respect, or managing their affairs according to the ruler's desires (whatever they may be). Similarly, he states that if a war is waged purely for dominance (*taghallub*) and superiority-seeking, with the sole objective of victory and no other aim, it is also unjust war. Likewise, if a war or killing is solely for the purpose of quelling anger or obtaining the pleasure derived from victory, and without any other goal, it is unjust. Furthermore, even if a group has provoked the anger of a city's leader through their injustice, but the punishment they deserve is less than war and killing, then the war and killing are undoubtedly unjust (Farabi, 1985, p. 76).

Conclusion

This study explored Farabi's perspective on international relations, focusing on the concept of the Virtuous City (*al-Madīna al-Fāḍila*) and the Non-Virtuous Cities, and analyzed how his political philosophy reconciles Platonic ideals with realist views. The findings indicate that Farabi, influenced by Plato, sees the Virtuous City as a just society led by a philosopher-ruler toward happiness, but its survival among Non-Virtuous Cities, especially the Dominant City (*madīna taghallub*) driven by the pursuit of superiority, necessitates strong defensive capabilities. Farabi considers just wars to involve defense, securing legitimate rights, or guiding others toward the good, while unjust wars arise from mere dominance-seeking. The study argues that the expansion of the Virtuous City into a Virtuous Nation (*Umma Fāḍila*) and ultimately a Virtuous World Order (*Ma'mūra Fāḍila*) is a prerequisite for the complete elimination of war and the achievement of true happiness. Through a comparative analysis of Farabi's works with Plato's Socratic dialogues and Thucydides' Melian Dialogue, the research demonstrated that the beliefs of the inhabitants

of the Ignorant Cities, particularly concerning justice and dominance, closely align with the realist views of Thucydides.

By extracting the principles of international relations from Farabi's texts and emphasizing the Dominant City as the core of the Non-Virtuous Cities, this study revealed that Farabi's political philosophy integrates realist elements alongside its idealistic foundations, notably through its focus on the defensive power and global expansion of the Virtuous City. This research provides a novel framework for understanding interstate relations in Farabi's thought, contributing to a deeper comprehension of the balance between idealism and realism in Islamic political philosophy, and establishing Farabi's views as a bridge between these two paradigms in International Relations theory.

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