


Oppositional Genealogy of Ḥanābilah towards al-Ma'mūn's Miḥna Policy: Nomos and Authority Conflict

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Abstract

While consolidating democracy in Muslim-majority countries like many Arab countries today, the problem of opposition between the people and the rulers still leaves a latent conflict. The opposition is not new in the Islamic world. In this context, the Ḥanābilah oppositional movement against the al-Ma'mūn's miḥna policy finds its significance here. The article aimed to determine the genealogy of the Ḥanābilah opposition to the al-Ma'mūn's miḥna policy and to correct the Weberian perspective in reading socio-religious movements, mainly the movement carried out by the Ḥanābilah ulema community by offering a socio-convergent perspective. This article is more a religious research than research on religion. The data in this study were sourced from books written by Ibn Ḥanbal and other relevant books. Data were analyzed using data display, data verification, and conclusions techniques. The results show that Ibn Ḥanbal's opposition to the miḥna is motivated by maintaining theological orthodoxy and protecting the authority of the Sunni ulema. Ḥanābilah's oppositional actions are more related to the conflict of authority. This convergence thesis is in line with the blurred approach of Edmund Burke and Adonis or the double-edged sword theory of Alberto Melluci. Opposition as part of efforts to construct a civilized political system which is not only seen from an opposing side but also as a sparring partner in carrying out the function of *amr ma'rūf nahy munkar* 'commanding right and forbidding wrong' to the government to realize good governance.

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INTRODUCTION

In Islamic politics, the opposition '*mu'aradah*' or '*muqāwamah*' carried out by the ulema against the government was more related to the issue of the caliph's religious policies than political issues. The presence of Surah al-Taubah 58 is motivated by the emergence of oppositional actions against the policy of the Prophet when distributing *ganīmah* 'spoils of war' valued by *Ẓu al-Khuwaisirah* unfairly (al-Suyūṭī, 2002). This phenomenon proves that opposition in Islam is an integral part of Islamic political life along with the birth and development of Islam itself. Ḥanābilah's opposition to the al-Ma'mūn's miḥna policy is evidence of that (March, 2015).

However, studies on the Ḥanābilah's opposition tend to be read in a normative and narrative-elitist way. It means that the normative narration and its substance are more concerned with the interests of the caliph rather than the interests of the ulema, so it has implications for inadequate historical reading (Von Grunebaum, 2017). This historical pattern correlates with the incubation of several *fiqh al-siyāsah* 'political fiqh' thoughts, which contains the doctrine of prohibition of oppositional acts. This perspective is intertwined with religiopolitical power relations in which the caliph is revered as God's representative as the Umayyads view it (Arnold, 2016), and the caliph is the shadow of God upon the earth as adopted by the Abbasids (al-Ṭabarī, 1969).

Based on the concept of power relations, absolute obedience to the caliph and eliminating opposition have become a classic Islamic political doctrines until now in some Muslim societies. From that doctrine, the negative stigma such as *bugāt*, *zindiq*, and *mulhid*, every act of opposition fills a lot of space in the history of Islamic governance, including the opposition by Ḥanābilah to the religious policies of Caliph al-Ma'mūn (Anshori & Milanova, 2012). The implications of the

religiopolitical concept, which focuses on the power of the caliph alone, further complicate the actions of the opposition as a media and process of social criticism, as well as various manifestations of people's rights. This fact also shows that opposition has not been entirely accepted as a necessity of the caliphate's political system (March, 2015).

The urgency of this research is to show that the role of the opposition in a democracy is crucial. Not to drop power but to carry out the function of controlling policy. The opposition is a watchdog to prevent the government from being authoritarian and issuing easy policies. Thus, when the government begins to go off track, the opposition must be at the forefront of correcting it (Nawas, 2017). In real politics, i.e., Indonesia, the acknowledgment and implementation of democracy would be in vain if the government is run daily without adequate controls or balancer from the opposition. In this context that the Ḥanābilah's opposition finds its significance here. If we observe further, actually the pattern of opposition in this world refers to the Ḥanābilah's opposition, namely the opposition to the hegemony of the caliph authority (government), social justice, and the marginalization of the Ulema.

Martin Riexinger has put forward several recent studies on Islamic opposition research about Islamic opposition to the Darwinian theory of evolution. He argued that Islamic opposition is reasonable to the scientific theory of "Darwinism". This theory is the greatest challenge to Theistic religions (Riexinger, 2012). But he did not detail the Islamic opposition in the context of its genealogy and historicity. In addition, Richard C. Martin, in *The Role of the Basrah Mu'tazilah in Formulating the Doctrine of the Apologetic Miracle*, discusses Muslims and non-Muslim orientalist who have long argued that the Sunni doctrine of the Prophet's apologetic miracles '*Ijāz al-Qur'ān*' was formulated by the Ash'ari group, al-Baqillani as the principal architect. In this case, the role of the Mu'tazilah group in Basra cannot be separated from the doctrine of the creation of the Qur'an (Martin, 1980). Afrohah also discussed the correlation between fundamentalist ideology and Islamic movement ideology. However, she did not detail the genealogy of the Islamic opposition and its historicity (Afrohah, 2018). In line with that, Carol Kersten also discussed Islamic post-traditionalism in Indonesia with a focus on revising the traditions and future of Islam (Kersten, 2013). Indonesian scholar Azyumardi Azra also discussed the political transformation of Islam. He focused on radicalism, caliphate, and democracy (Azra, 2016).

On the other hand, Christopher Melchert (Melchert, 2012) discusses the biography of Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal in detail but does not discuss the genealogy of Ḥanābilah's opposition to al-Ma'mūn's miḥna policy from the nomos side and conflict of authority. Nimrod Hurvitz (Hurvitz, 2002a) examines the Formation of Ḥanbalism, but does not go into detail about the conflict of authority. Likewise, Livnat Hotzman (Holtzman, 2018), examines the life biography of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, and others. From the literature study above, the study of Islamic opposition from a historical perspective, Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal (Ḥanābilah), and the ideology of radicalism in Islam have not been adequately detected. Therefore, this article intends to explain in more detail this theme.

Problems of this narrative-elitist historiography and the disclaimer of opposition both at the level of *fiqh al-siyāsah* 'political fiqh' and sociologically imply a recommendation that an Islamic study of opposition from a socio-historical perspective is very urgent to be carried out as part of efforts to present an interpretive-sociological historical landscape. Therefore, the discussion of opposition in this study no longer lies in the normative paradigm and its negative labeling but examines how the social genealogy of Ḥanābilah's opposition to al-Ma'mūn's miḥna policy who experienced a process of construction in such a way either theologically or sociologically.

METHODS

This article is a type of religious research and not research on religion. Religious research emphasizes religious material or places religion as a doctrine, while religious research focuses on religion as a social phenomenon (Anshori & Milanova, 2012). Therefore, the study perspective in this research focuses on the phenomenon of religious movements and not on normative aspects of religion (Mahmud & Zaman, 2022). Although this type of research is more of religious research, up

to a certain level, as long as there is relevance, religious doctrine is also studied, especially to understand the value system reflected in oppositional actions.

Data acquisition was obtained through library research consisting of primary and secondary sources (Huberman & Miles, 2002). Primary sources are the works of Ibn Ḥanbal and contemporaneous sources. The secondary sources are *turās* books, journals, and books relevant to this theme. Meanwhile, data is collected through documentation. Technical data analysis uses data display, data verification, and conclusions.

To examine oppositional actions, the authors chose the Ḥanābilah's opposition because one of the narrations reveals about Nirmrod (Hurvitz, 2002a), which describes the nomos theory, that the understanding of law or orthodoxy of Ḥanābilah became the driving force for his opposition to the religious policies of the caliph al-Ma'mūn. However, based on the initial study, the researcher realizes that the nomos theory cannot completely unravel the historical reality of the Ḥanābilah movement. Because of that, the researcher offers a theory of convergence, which is not only "nomos", but also "conflict of authority". Dahrendorf's conflict theory confirms the conflict of authority that the struggle (contestation) of religious authority between Ḥanbali and al-Ma'mūn is a source of the conflict whose coherence will be seen in this article.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Clarification of the Opposition Meaning

Opposition comes from English, the opposition which means against (Salim, 1991). In the Arabic dictionary, the opposition is equivalent to the word *Mu'aradah* or *Muqāwamah*, and the opposing party is called *hizb al-mu'aradah* (Baalbaki, 2006). Longman defines opposition as "strong disagreement with or protests against something such as a plan, law, system, etc." Being out of government is a prerequisite for opposition (Mayor, 2009). In line with this, Esposito defines the opposition as "the legitimation disagreement with particular policies of specific leaders within the mutually accepted framework of the principles of an underlying constitution" (Esposito et al., 2015).

In Western politics, the concept of opposition was first popularized by Italian historians in the 14th century AD with the notion of overthrowing a government (Kuper, 2013). A similar understanding was also conveyed by al-Mawardi in *fiqh al-siyāsah* 'political fiqh' in the Classical Islamic century with the word *al-bagy*. In the middle ages, it was also used by Ibn Khaldūn with the word *al-šaurah* (Khaldūn, 2006). Both are interpreted as a rebellion against the government. However, in line with the development of democracy, as formulated by Longman and Esposito above, the opposition is no longer defined as rebellion or treason against the government but rather as an act of disagreement towards government policies based on constitutionally accepted principles, not intending to overthrow the legitimate government, and not using bypass or anarchism (violence) (Esposito et al., 2015). This formulation is in line with the thesis *al-waṣaṭiyah*- is Yūsuf Al-Qarḍāwī (Al-Qarḍāwī, 1997), which emphasized that the opposition should not be carried out through violence.

The concept of opposition that has been put forward above negates the term action *al-bagy* 'treason'. As formulated by 'Abd al-Qādir 'Awdah that an act of resistance to the government is categorized as *al-bagy* when three conditions are met, namely opposing the government '*al-khurūj 'ala al-imām*', which means to overturn with force '*an-yakūna al-khurūj mugālibah*', and malicious '*al-qasd al-jina'i*' ('Awdah, 1997). Based on the notion of opposition that Longman, Esposito, Al-Qarḍāwī have put forward, and the term *al-bagy* from 'Awdah, an action is categorized as the opposition if it fulfills three conditions, namely 1) acts of disapproval of government policies; 2) does not intend to overthrow the legitimate government; and 3) not carried out by way of violence or anarchism.

The Opposition of the Islamic Classical Era: *Ahl al-Hadīṣ* of Ḥanābilah

The opposition of *ahl al-hadīṣ* of Ḥanābilah as a representation of the Islamic Classical era needs to be explained again because it became an integral part of the opposition of the Classical Islamic era, even as a clarification of wrong perspectives that tend to corner and generalize between oppositionists and *bugāt*. Based on the clarification of the meaning of opposition and *bugāt* above, the act of *ahl al-hadīṣ* of Ḥanābilah opposition is an authentic example of an oppositionist, not a criminal, as so many historians write (Adrahtas & Milani, 2021).

Ahl al-hadīṣ of Ḥanābilah often referred to as part of the traditionalist (Patton, 2010) or orthodox (Hitti, 2002). The mention is contrasted with the *mutakallimīn* people or rationalists when arguing about the orientation of religious understanding in Islam. Not all *ahl al-hadīṣ* apply oppositional when dealing with government religious policies that contain dimensions of social conflict *vis a vis* threat to his social existence and theological convictions. Because oppositional actions to the government are perceived as contrary to the doctrine of "obedience" to the authorities '*ūli al-amr*'.

In the history of the caliphate, it was found that the only group that survived the textual tradition and was independent in *miḥna* cases was *ahl al-hadīṣ* of Ḥanābilah (Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal), even though various repressive actions by the authorities attacked him, he was even criminalized. This act of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal then gave birth to followers who are called Ḥanābilah early generation. Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal has an important position and role in the community *ahl al-hadīṣ* as a guardian of the implementation of teachings and guardian of Islamic orthodoxy or –borrowing Max Weber's term– religious authority.

For example, legal historians J. Schacht and S.A. Sectorsky viewed the Ḥanbali school as a branch of the *ahl al-hadīṣ* movement, which grew out of his dissatisfaction with al-Syāfi'i's jurisprudential principles (Hodgson, 1974). However, this does not mean that the al-Syāfi'iyyah group is categorized as not *ahl al-hadīṣ* (Hodgson, 1974). Therefore, in this context, there are two groups *ahl al-hadīṣ*, compromising and uncompromising traditionists. Al-Syāfi'i belongs to the first group, while Ibn Ḥanbal belongs to the second group. Ibn Ḥanbal's disagreement with al-Syāfi'i's legal principles is mainly related to the comparison method (analogical inferences) that gave birth to the formalization of Ḥanbalism. However, this does not mean that Ibn Ḥanbal disagrees with the legitimacy of other *fiqh* principles. In short, that difference –as Marlow says– doesn't cover major controversies, but minor controversies (Marlow, 2002).

Basically, in micro-history, as Nimrod Hurvitz called it “zooming in motion of a camera” (Hurvitz, 2002a), it can be said that Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal throughout his intellectual life was the most consistent figure in maintaining orthodoxy. Acts of opposition to al-Ma'mūn's *miḥna* policy have implications for the development of Sunnism religious understanding, and it is not even surprising if there are opinions that say, Hurvitz, for example, that Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal's success in protecting Islam was through his orthodoxy resistance to *miḥna* at the time of the Abbasid Caliphate matched with Caliph Abū Bakr in crushing the apostates, thus giving rise to the Riddah War policy (Hurvitz, 2002a).

Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal as the early generation of Ḥanābilah is the authorized holder of the Ḥanbali school. His father is of Arab origin, Bani Shayba from Bakr ibn Wā'il clan, namely Muhammad ibn Ḥanbal Abu' Abdullah al-Shaybain. His father lives in Merv, north of the city of Khurasan. He was a captain in 'Abbasid in Khurasan who was involved in overthrowing the 'Umayyads (Lucas, 2008). In the caliphate of 'Abbasid, his family left Khurasan for Baghdad, where a few months later Ibn Ḥanbal was born in the month of Rabi'ul Awwal in 164 AH/780 AD and died in Baghdad in 241 AH/855 AD (Patton, 2010). When he was a teenager at the age of 15, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal learned hadith to 'Abdullah ibn Mubārak, where simultaneously Imām Mālik ibn Anas died in 179 AH. Therefore, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal did not have time to study with Imām Mālik. After that, it wasn't long before his teacher, Mubārak, left Baghdad until Ibn Ḥanbal studied at Hushaym ibn Bassr al-Sulami for approximately four years. At 30, his father died, and his mother continued his education process (Patton, 2010).

Ibn Ḥanbal learned from Hushaym 300 thousand hadiths, and then Ibn Ḥanbal wrote a book about Hajj which contains 1000 hadiths and partly contains interpretations and laws (bin Ramli, 2015). To deepen the science of hadith, Ibn Ḥanbal made his intellectual pilgrimage to Kufa, Basrah, Mecca, Medina, Yemen, Sham, and Mesopotamia (Patton, 2010). Ibn Ḥanbal, -together with Abū Yūsuf, a judge who died in 182 AH-, studied jurisprudence and *usūl fiqh* from al-Syāfi'i (Al-Magrizi, 1937). He began to learn from al-Syāfi'i since coming to Baghdad in 159 AH and ending when al-Syāfi'i moved to Mecca in 197 AH. Then he studied with Sufyan ibn Uyainah in Mecca in the year 198 AH when performing Hajj (Patton, 2010).

Ibn Ḥanbal has a very high scientific commitment and dedication, respects teachers, and studies based on pious resolution, independence, and *wira'ī* 'dignity' (Al-Magrizi, 1937). This character was evident from his attitude of rejecting the advice of his friend Yahya ibn Ma'in, who suggested that there is no need to go to Yemen if only to agree with Abd al-Razzaq (*ahl al-hadīṣ*), but it is enough to meet in Mecca when performing the pilgrimage to save months of time and money from going to Yemen. Hearing this, Ibn Ḥanbal rejected the idea because he saw it as inconsistent with the principle of pious resolution. Shortly, Ibn Ḥanbal arrived at his teacher's place and studied there for two years. While studying, he was offered by Abd al-Razzaq provision assistance, but Ibn Ḥanbal politely refused that the provisions were still sufficient (Spectorsky, 1982).

From this teacher, Ibn Ḥanbal got many hadith narrated from Abū Hurairah, so since then, his name has been increasing as *ahl al-hadīṣ*, and hadith is practiced in everyday life (Patton, 2010). No information has been found on when Ibn Ḥanbal entered the intellectual establishment as a figure with the authority of hadith experts. But what is evident in the *miḥna* era, namely during the reign of al-Ma'mūn, al-Mu'taṣim, al-Waṣīq, and al-Mutawakkil, Ibn Ḥanbal is recognized as the holder of hadith authority the highest of society and government. He was diligent in teaching during the regime except when facing repression from the government (bin Ramli, 2015).

Ibn Ḥanbal was also a prolific scholar; among his works are *Kitāb Manāsik*, *Kitāb Radd 'ala al-Jahmiyah*, *Kitāb al-Rasūl*, and *Kitāb Musnād*. Regarding the Sunnah, *Musnād* was a comprehensive book, and its *isnād* 'hadith-transmission' was valid because everything comes from ṣaḥābah. Compared with Bukhari and Muslim, for example, then judging from its purpose, *Musnād* is meant to store hadith, while Bukhari and Muslim is more a record of a particular case, the *scope* is smaller than *Musnād*. During his life, Ibn Ḥanbal used to recite *Musnād* on his son, Sāliḥ, and Abdullah and his uncle, Ishāq ibn Ḥanbal. Then they formed *ḥalaqah* and studied hadith to Ibn Ḥanbal (Patton, 2010).

Ibn Ḥanbal adheres to social asceticism and likes to implement *nahy munkar* 'forbidding wrong' as a form of direct enforcement of religious law in social life. It is understood that the transformation of the 'Abbasids had given rise to the golden age of Islamic civilization and has had a strong influence until now. However, it cannot be denied that the achievement of progress not only exploded the conflict of religious and intellectual orientation, as will be explained later but also brought about the hedonism of the social life of the palace. For Ibn Ḥanbal, such developments are seen as paradoxical to Islamic social asceticism and the doctrine of *amr ma'rūf nahy munkar* 'commanding right and forbidding wrong'. Social asceticism and *amr ma'rūf nahy munkar* are a simple way of life of Ibn Ḥanbal in responding to palace life as well as antipathy to 'Abbasid hedonism, namely the simplicity of Ibn Ḥanbal about clothing (clothes), eating (food) and housing (place of residence or house) (Spectorsky, 1982).

Functionally the attitude of social asceticism presented by Ibn Ḥanbal is a social critique of the socio-cultural policies of the 'Abbasids, who tended to be hedonistic and far from orthodoxy. Despite receiving criticism, the 'Abbasid caliphate persisted in pursuing cultural-hedonistic achievements alongside intellectual-charismatic achievements (Wright et al., 1997). First, the cultural reach (cultural achievement) became limited consumption among the elite but gradually transmuted into a public culture that the wider community could access. Since then, scholars have begun to get nervous about this phenomenon. Finally, the ascetic lifestyle became an offer as well

as a target for preaching by the Ḥanābilah's opposition to the community (Robson, 1941). However, once again, the social criticism intensified in the form of social asceticism by the Ḥanābilah's opposition blade was not enough to dispel the hedonistic style of the palace so that the moral movement was transformed into a social opposition which had the dimension of "violence" (Hurvitz, 2002a), more specifically, in the post-era of miḥna.

Social asceticism and implementation of *nahy munkar* come from the moral essence, namely controlling the physical and lust of the glamorous pattern of life (Musa, 2021). In Ibn Ḥanbal's view, offering a pattern of moderate asceticism encourages enforcement of *amr ma'rūf nahy munkar*, that people who are involved in the euphoria of world games will neglect to carry out their religious obligations, waste time, damage the soul, consume excessive clothing, food, and household furniture only spending time and costs and money. The adherents of asceticism and individuals who wish to uphold the *nahy munkar* against themselves must minimize the consumption of alcohol and games in total because it can disturb and damage the soul (Cook, 2001).

Asceticism and *nahy munkar* had the same goal but had a different battlefield. Asceticism operates in the individual domain (rigorous self-discipliner), whereas *nahy munkar* (strident social activism) is in the public domain. The relationship between social asceticism and *nahy munkar* is not a unique phenomenon, as Max Weber described when discussing the relationship between religion and social behavior. Religious piety, especially a disciplined and natural way of life, always creates control over the interaction of communal life and creates religious radicalism and moral criticism (Weber, 1993).

Weber formulated two ascetic typologies, namely inner-worldly ascetic and world-rejecting ascetic. The first is a group of ascetic adherents who recognize worldly life; then, the consequences are involved in the activities of worldly life. While the second is an ascetic group that rejects the world, the consequence is that they must be alienated from the life of the world. If Weber's description is placed in this study, it must be understood that Ibn Ḥanbal's social asceticism was not only shaped by Islamic doctrine but also socially constructed during his time, namely as a social criticism of 'Abbasid hedonism which deviated from Islamic teaching standards.

Social Construction: The Hegemony of the Caliph Authority and the Marginalization of the Ulema

Authority means the authority to act or govern (Stevenson, 2010). Related to this, Arkoun formulates two kinds of authority: religious authority (sacred authority) and political authority (power authority). In Islamic history, the two authorities responded to each other, so if the religious authority is divorced from power will lose its relevance and function because the power concept has penetrated all aspects of the debate, both the theoretical level (sphere of theoretical) and governance practice space (bureaucratic administrative practice) (Gurbuz-Kucuksari, 2012). Holders of political authority are servants of the state (state servant), such as the president, prime minister in a democratic country, or King in a non-democratic country. The history of the growth of authority and politics shows that there is a relationship of legitimacy; for example, the Saudi King, who obtained his political legitimacy by force, still needs sacred authority by appointing himself as *ḥāris ḥaramaīn* (Arkoun, 2012).

From a socio-historical perspective, Islamic authority is defined as the authority to claim truth which chronologically underwent definitional articulation, internalization, and expansion from the Prophet's period to the 'Abbasid period. During the Prophet's period, authority consisted of teachings, orders, decisions, and initiatives. Therefore, the Islamic authority that has come to us today is the result of a long construction of defining, internalizing, objectifying, and externalizing history that developed from the Prophet's period to the 'Abbasid period in the dialectic of Islamic orthodoxy teachings with various other civilizations, namely pre-Islamic Arabs, Persian, and Greek (L. Berger, 2022).

Discussion on the conflict of authority and the marginalization of the ulema as a latent process of *ahl al-hadīs* opposition presented by Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal can be explained from the framework of the 'Abbasid religiopolitical conflict, which underwent a construction process since the early Islamic era. From this explanation will be obtained a world view (*weltanschauung*) regarding the genealogy of conflicts of political and religious authority which lead to the hegemonization of the caliph and the marginalization of the ulema constructed by the transformation and change of the caliphate structure (Sourdel, 2001). These transformations and conflicts have undergone a process of becoming (the process of being) after the influence of civilization from outside entered the Islamic world, for example, the Persian tradition and Hellenism as a logical consequence of the *futūḥāt* 'expansions' achievements which made its way through the Sassanian and Byzantine territories. This process took place massively from the beginning to the classical period of Islam and can even be traced back to the pre-Islamic era.

During the Abbasid era, the conflict of authority was not only in the theological and legal fields (Anshori & Milanova, 2012). Ulema also set hadith as a second source and serves as a filter for laws originating from local treasures. Consequently, the *ahl al-hadīs* ulema during the 'Abbasid caliphate was not only community-based but also had a strong bargaining position as indicated by the appointment of judges from among the *ahl al-hadīs* ulema. This conflict becomes complicated when it shifts to religiopolitical conflict, where the political dimension emerges as a determining factor. Nuances of political domination of the character of a centralized government were finally inevitable. To legitimize the character of a monarchical or centralized government, the 'Abbasid caliph developed religiopolitical engineering as an instrument (tool) to seize religious authority in the hands of the ulema. Meanwhile, the *ahl al-hadīs* ulema still claim that religious authority remains in their hands as part of efforts to maintain Islamic orthodoxy so that the conflict of authority between the two is real increasingly (Arnold, 2016; Watt, 2019).

From the perspective of *ahl hadīs* ulema, Caliphate had no shari'a authority. Shari'a is a law given by Allah to humans. Therefore it cannot be controlled by humans so what humans can do is interpret it against the principles, and its implementation remains in the authority of the ulema. Thus the caliph does not have legislative duties, except for domains that the determination of their duties has not yet touched, the creation of new institutions according to needs, for example, *muḥtasib* as market supervisory institutions adopted from Byzantium since the so-called Umayyad era *agaramonos* (inspector of markets) which then transformed into the moral police (Anshori & Milanova, 2012). Another example is *al-naẓār fī al-muẓalim*, a kind of public complaint investigation agency in the judicial field investigating complaints that might be called the Judicial Commission in contemporary terms. This institution was still survived by the 'Abbasid, who had previously been adopted by the Umayyads from the Persian government tradition. So, shari'a, at the theoretical level, cannot be controlled or even intervened too deeply by humans, but at the practical level, it is modified (Watt, 2019).

However, it should be underlined that up to the first and second generations, namely the era of Abū 'Abbās al-Ṣaffā and al-Manṣūr, the transformation of the 'Abbasid caliphate was still more political, theological, and legal than ideological. A new ideological transformation took place in the third generation, to be exact after al-Manṣūr, in the form of efforts to build 'Abbasid religiopolitical authority through rapprochement (healing) between the 'Abbās clan and the 'Alī clan on behalf of the Prophet's family '*ahl al-baīt*'. For that, the caliph used the title al-Mahdī as a symbol that represents not only political authority holders but also religious authorities as worn by the *Imām* in the Shi'a tradition (London, 2016).

The discourse of *ahl al-baīt* was done by giving gifts to the 'Alī family in the form of positions of power in the palace. Apart from that, they also tried to win the support of the 'Alī clan in the Hijaz by recruiting 500 Ansar of Medina as bodyguards for the caliph and building the Mecca and al-Aqsa mosques in Jerusalem. The religious symbol was intended so the Abbasid caliphate would gain established religious authority or legitimacy. However, this effort met with internal

challenges because the 'Abbās and 'Alī clans each claimed to be the authority of legal *ahl baīt ṣaḥīḥ* 'ahl baīt holder'.

Since the time of the Caliph Hārūn al-Rasyīd, Barmaki already had ideological ideas by reconciling with the 'Alī clan on behalf of the Prophet's family as had been exemplified by caliph al-Mahdī, but Hārūn rejected the idea. The question, then, is why did Barmaki take the path of reconciliation? What is the political dimension? Barmaki's argument believed that the caliphate should have absolute religious authority, as advocated by the 'Alī clan. However, Hārūn rejected this idea because he wanted to expand the politics of independence free from the influence of Barmaki and Shi'a. This rejection shows that Barmaki's influence in the 'Abbasid government in the era of caliph Hārūn is already weak. According to him, Barmaki's role was driven by the issue of succession after Hārūn (Davis-Secord et al., 2021). As was the tradition carried out by the 'Abbasid caliph, Hārūn appointed the crown prince as caliph successively, namely al-Amīn and al-Ma'mūn.

Political contestation within the elite caliphate between the *Kuttāb Barmakī* and the *Abnā' al-Daulah* military continues to give birth to political polarization, where al-Amīn as the first candidate, received support from the military. At the same time, al-Ma'mūn had the support of the *Kuttāb Barmakī* (Kennedy, 2022). As explained above, the presence of Barmaki as the incorporator of Persian civilization into the 'Abbasid did not just give birth to a new social structure called secretaries but also brought autocratic understanding to the Abbasid caliphate system (Watt, 2019).

From the perspective of Hellenism, the proper autocratic understanding imported from Persian civilization contradicts the freedom of thought that *ahl al-ra'y* usually promoted. However, based on considerations of Mu'tazilah political pragmatism, the deification of reason as mainstream Islamic civilization, as called by the *ahl al-ra'y* group or in the term Ibn Ḥanbal called *Jahmiyah*, turned out to be a supporter even autocratic understanding of the caliphate followers. Until the Mu'tazilah alliance with the caliph al-Ma'mūn in fighting *ahl al-hadīs* did not have an impact on the intellectual growth of Islam but also gave rise to controversy (Frye, 1943; Hourani, 2013) or conflict of authority with *ahl al-hadīs* who claim that religious authority rests only with those who believe that truth only comes from revelation (Al-Gazālī, 2008).

Meanwhile, as described by Thomas Arnold, the position of the caliph is good as the supreme ruler in Islamic society (the supreme head of the Muslim community), and mujtahids do not only have political duties but also carry out religious interpretations (Arnold, 2016). Uniquely, this understanding declined after the 'Abbasid government, the era of caliph al-Ma'mūn. The power of the caliph eventually became no more than a mere unifying symbol, namely in the political field, the military held it, while the ulema entirely held the religious field (Watt, 2019).

The religiopolitical conflict is even more complicated when elements of ethnic interests/fanaticism become part of the conflict. The complexity of Persian and Arab fanaticism is reflected in the dialectical statement that the Persians feel superior to the Arabs, while the Arabs identify themselves as a group superior to the Persians. The arrogance of each ethnic group was noted by Abū Bakr ibn Abī Dawūd that one thing Ibn Ḥanbal priority was representing Arab Islam based on three things that the Prophet liked; namely, the Prophet was an Arab, the Qur'an is in Arabic, and residents of Paradise speak Arabic (Al-Farra', 1996).

The complexity of this religiopolitical conflict boils down to two extreme camps, namely between groups that limit the caliph's authority only in political matters, here in after referred to as the constitutionalist bloc, and groups that carry caliph authority in politics and religion, which is called the autocratic block (Watt, 2019). The autocratic bloc comprised the Abbasid caliphs, Persians, Shi'a, and Mu'tazilah. They have the same political interests, although ideologically different thoughts. They both appreciate reason in interpreting religion and politics and are involved in the power struggle against constitutionalists, as pointed out by Aḥmad Amīn that the majority of Shi'a people in Iraq, Sham, and Persia are Mu'tazilah. Many Shi'as shared the same faith as the Mu'tazilites at one time. They believe that the caliph also has the right to assume religious authority

as an expansion of the interpretation of the Qur'an to accommodate the ever-changing needs of society (Amīn, 1933).

The constitutionalist bloc generally comes from Arab circles, usually called *ahl al-hadīṣ* adherents, where one of the protagonists is Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal and its generation is called Ḥanbalī (Watt, 2019). They carry the political doctrine that the caliph's power is bound by shari'a or Islamic orthodoxy (Watt, 2019). They believe that the caliph's power is nothing more than an executive whose authority must be limited by the teachings contained in the Qur'an and Sunnah. Simply put, the Shi'a and the Mu'tazilah carry out the autocratic understanding, while the Sunni carries out the constitutionalist ideology. Both of these camps are in binary opposition in defining their charismatic authority.

In the Sunni stronghold, the authority is only limited to the Prophet Muhammad and continued by the Khulafā al-Rāsyidīn, while for the Shi'a, the authority lies only with 'Alī and his descendants (Arkoun, 2012). The role of authority as the primary preference (supreme common reference) for the ummah is also different in the Sunni tradition and Shi'a. In the Shi'a tradition, the role of authority held by *marja' taqlīdī* is not only acting as a legal and moral preference but also as a "mouthpiece" or mediation between the Twelve Shi'a and the Shi'a followers in the form of spiritual, moral, and jurisprudential recognition. So, the leadership of *marja'* is understood as a deputy on behalf of the Imām who is camouflaged in the moral, jurisprudential, and spiritual fields.

Since the Safavid dynasty, political leaders have manipulated religious authority for political legitimacy by appointing them as managers of the sacred (Arkoun, 2012). As for the Sunni tradition, this is not the case; the authority held by the ulema is only the primary reference for the ummah, but not as a mediator with God. This model has been used in the Sunni tradition since the Umayyads. However, both Sunni and Shi'a believe that authority still has the same role, namely maintaining the people's autonomy in their religious life and loyalty to religious leaders. Compared to the Shi'a tradition, the linkage of religious and political authority in the Sunni tradition tends to be confusing because there is no known hierarchy like in the Shi'a who are now in power in Iran, so the struggle for religious authority between the ulema and the caliph becomes a necessity. Indeed since the Umayyad caliphate, the structure of Sunni authority has been decentralized into a number of power, namely the caliph and the military, a stop representation (nation), and ulema and their followers as the bottom representation (public) (Fiorentino et al., 2018).

Transformation of conflict of authority from the caliphate power in the prophetic sunnah or orthodoxy resulted from ijtihad and the struggle of the ulema who carried out as part of a strategy to control the domain of influence of the caliphate's authority in religion (Arkoun, 2012). The intended conflict reached its lowest point when al-Ma'mūn tried to reconcile the authority status of the caliph as God's representative in Sunni political theology and the Imām as the holder of charismatic authority in Shi'a political theology. Sunni ulema perceived this reconciliation as a red card as orthodoxy authorities, so the frictional conflict between the caliph and hadith ulema became increasingly undeniable (Arkoun, 2012).

The conflict of authority in subsequent developments reflects a shifting conflict from the power of knowledge to the power of politics. The reason is that the position and role of hadith ulema as the embodiment of the power of orthodoxy increasingly aligns with the people's aspirations to obtain religious guidance in navigating a social life that tends to be liberal-capitalist, particularly in legal matters. Therefore, to balance the development of a law-literate society increasingly (legal literacy) and as part of the need for centralized political governance, caliph al-Ma'mūn signed controversial policies, i.e., *miḥna al-Ma'mūn*, a religiopolitical policy as engineering to reclaim religious authority from the hands of the ulema. This policy has spawned the opposition of Ibn Ḥanbal as a representative *ahl al-hadīṣ*.

As emphasized earlier, the characteristics of the 'Abbasid government adopted more Persian and Hellenistic traditions, so the adoption of the symbols of the traditions of the 'Alī clan further confirmed this thesis along with the adoption of this culture, original Arab descendants, such as the Muḥallabī by Syabānī where Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal originates, experienced marginalization from the

power vortex of the 'Abbasid palace. This social construction further strengthened his position when al-Ma'mūn's power shifted to his brother, Abū Ishāq, which is known as al-Mu'taṣīm in 218 AH/833 AD. The era of the reign of al-Ma'mūn to al-Mu'taṣīm referred to as the elite revolution, is an ideological transformation controlled by the caliph's elite (Kennedy, 2022).

Al-Ma'mūn's miḥna policy as a symbol of the 'Abbasid elite revolution was a middle way (a halfway house) between secular state monarchs of Umayyad heritage and theocratic state, a religiopolitical formula adopted by 'Alī's supporters. In this context, the title "*Imām*", which was first carried by al-Ma'mūn, was preserved by the 'Abbasid caliph by emphasizing that religious authority and political authority are in the hands of the caliph embodied in the title "*Amīr al-Mu'minīn*". This policy explicitly shows how significant the position of the Mu'tazilah was in the vortex of the 'Abbasid elite as a centrifugal force outside the palace (Kennedy, 2022). The theological adoption of the Mu'tazilah is proof that the Mu'tazilah has entered the political realm (Demichelis, 2012). Since then, the position of the Mu'tazilah has been increasingly taken into account, especially when the 'Abbasid government was moved from Baghdad to Samarra under the leadership of Mu'taṣīm. This occurrence is where the doctrine was born that whoever opposes the Mu'tazilah means opposing the 'Abbasid government (Kennedy, 2022).

In this context, the Mu'tazilah stand behind the scenes or backstage (Goffman, 2005) al-Ma'mūn's miḥna doctrine which states that the Qur'an is a creature. This fact is not surprising because previously, there had been a debate of thought between the Mu'tazilah and Ḥanābilah related to the Qur'anic discourse, whether a creature or not (Hourani, 2013). Mu'tazilah claims that the Qur'an is a creation, not the word of God, as believed by Ahl al-Hadith (Hourani, 2013). Caliph al-Ma'mūn adopted the Mu'tazilah theology marked by the issuance of a "miḥna decree" to perpetuate power (power of caliph) theocratically (by giving his world theocratic force) (Kennedy, 2022).

So, al-Ma'mūn's miḥna doctrine about the creation of the Qur'an can be used as an instrument of the caliph to increase the "degree of legitimacy" of his caliphate and become a symbol of the integration of religious and political relations of the caliphate (the imam-caliph) to the public and among government functionaries (P. L. Berger, 2011). More specifically, the information of the doctrine is intended as an instrument to test (touchstone) political loyalty, bureaucracy, clergy, and society. This doctrine was agreed upon and accepted by Samarra, adherents of non-Muslim Judaism and Christianity because it contained tolerance and received 'Alī's partisan appreciation on the one hand, but on the other hand, received resistance from religious groups of *ahl al-hadīṣ* represented by Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal with the argument that today there are no more Imām and must receive all the hadith as *the sine qua non-Islamic* truth. This resistance indicates ulema disagreement in the Samarra elite, who are considered to have usurped the authority of the ulema in religion (Kennedy, 2022). They are guided by the belief that the Qur'an is eternal with God. The Qur'an is not a creature. If the Qur'an is said to be created, then at one time, it means that the Qur'an can be modified (Watt, 2019). Thus, the conflict of authority in this context can be understood as a shift in the horizontal conflict between *ahl al-ra'y* and *ahl al-hadīṣ* on the vertical conflict between the caliphs and the *ahl al-hadīṣ* ulema when the caliph intended to appeal to religious authority to the political interests of the caliphate.

The policy of miḥna has implications for the marginalization of Sunni ulema in the field of government, for example, the appointment of *qādī* 'the judge' from the Mu'tazilah. In the era of al-Ma'mūn in 217 AH/827 AD, Akhthām as a *qādī* in Iraq from among the Sunnis was replaced by Aḥmad ibn Abū Duwād from among the Mu'tazilah. This appointment is intended to smooth the al-Ma'mūn's miḥna policy. For information, Aḥmad ibn Abū Duwād was an influential adviser to the caliph in the field of ideology from the caliphate of al-Ma'mūn to the beginning of al-Mutawakkil's reign (Kennedy, 2022). Since the year 218 AH/828 AD, Duwād has taken a central role in publicly implementing the decree of this miḥna. He is the most antipathy figure against Ibn Ḥanbal.

In addition, Duwād also once studied with Ḥajjāj ibn al-A'lā ibn al-Sulamīn the field of *kalām* or *tauhīd*, Ḥajjāj is also a student of Waṣīl ibn Aṭā', where he was the first person to

proclaim the doctrine of the creation of the Qur'an before the caliph al-Ma'mūn. Along with his position as *qādī*, the role of Aḥmad ibn Abū Duwād runs in three governments, namely from al-Ma'mūn, al-Mu'taṣim, to al-Waṣīq. Duwād was known to have fun with literature and dissipate in worldly entertainment until the Mutawakkil era, where in 236 AH/846 AD, he was tried, all his property was confiscated, and exiled to Baghdad to die there (Patton, 2010).

During the Mutawakkil era, the political situation changed, whereby he systematically tried to eliminate the old structures and ideologies. In 237 AH/851 AD, he sacked Aḥmad ibn Abū Duwād and all the Samarra elite. After that, the caliph appointed Ubaidillāh ibn Yaḥyā as the new *wazīr* (prime minister), replaced Ibn Muzayyah, and a new military recruitment was opened to replace the Turkish army. Even Mutawakkil had discussed moving the capital city of Samarra to Damascus. This policy then received resistance from the Turkish army, which led to his assassination, then replaced by al-Muntaṣir (Kennedy, 2022).

From the explanation above, several thoughts can be drawn. First, all religious schools of thought in Islam, like Sunni, Shi'a, Khawārij, Isma'īlī, Jabariyah, Qadariyah, Mu'tazilah, Ḥanbali have collective memory which lives on as a living tradition which is delegated *heresy-graphical* by their respective protagonists from generation to generation in the form of texts, symbols, and narratives (Arkoun, 2012). Collective memory is the supreme standard reference for adherents and even provides related authority space (sphere of authority) to perform the incarnation. Thus, the concept of collective memory becomes the master key to the transformation of historical authority (Arkoun, 2012). Related to this relationship, John Wansbrough, Arkoun, and several other scholars finally came to the idea that Islamic authority developed in the sectarian milieu. In a sense, authority is described within the framework of certain beliefs in specific categories of religious understanding such as Sunni, Shi'a, Khawārij, Isma'īlī, Jabariyah, Qadariyah, Mu'tazilah, Ḥanbalī and so on (Arkoun, 2012).

Second, the social construction of Ibn Ḥanbal's opposition to al-Ma'mūn's *miḥna* policy implies the thought that from the aspect of the caliphate's interests, *miḥna* policy issued by al-Ma'mūn was a religiopolitical manipulation by al-Ma'mūn in dealing with al-Amīn which the majority are supported by the people of Baghdad, especially the Ḥarbiyah and the Syaibāni clan, where is Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal is an ulema and leader of the community. If examined from the perspective of the interests of the ulema, it is that Ibn Ḥanbal's oppositional actions to the al-Ma'mūn's *miḥna* policy not only interpreted as an effort to maintain the authority of the clergy in the field of religion or their position and role as guardians of true religion doctrine but also as a response to the hegemony of the caliph in power so that in carrying out his governmental duties he is always in a constitutional landscape, namely in the teachings of Islamic orthodoxy (Arnold, 2016).

Therefore, *miḥna*, as the history of Islamic dogma and social, not only contains theological controversy at the state level but also has the meaning of the public sphere in the Abbasid caliphate. In short, Ibn Ḥanbal's oppositional action against *miḥna* reflects the conflict of authority with the caliph, namely as an effort to maintain religious authority in the domain of the ulema.

The Theological Construction of the Ḥanābilah's Opposition Movement: Qur'anic Orthodoxy

In the era of caliph al-Ma'mūn, the doctrine of the creation of the Qur'an was adopted as a famous ruler's policy known as *miḥna*. This heterodoxy doctrine became the butt of the *ahl al-ḥadīṣ*'s opposition (Woltering, 2019). Substantially, *miḥna* related to the theological question of what the Qur'an is *makhlūq* 'created' or *gairu makhlūq* 'uncreated' is creat-specifically addressed to the ulema, not aimed at the general public. If this event is placed in the landscape of the caliphate's political interests, it implies an understanding of the response model adopted by the caliph in dealing with conflicts of authority.

This description means that *miḥna* as the history of dogma in Islam is understood not only to contain theological controversy at the state level but as a public sphere in the 'Abbasid caliphate, namely the arena of contestation of geopolitical power between the ulema and the ulema on the one

hand, and between the ulema and the caliph on the other. As described above, the battle power of *miḥna* lasted from caliph al-Ma'mūn to al-Mutawakkil. In the al-Ma'mūn era, politically, the *ahl al-ra'y* succeeded in shifting orthodoxy, whereas in the al-Mutawakkil era, orthodoxy succeeded in shifting back the *ahl al-ra'y*. The exciting thing about this battle is that they both won the theological power battle. This occurrence also cannot be separated from the role of the state.

Miḥna (inquisition) means test or interrogation, derived from the verb *Mahana*, translated into English testing. The *miḥna* terminology in this context refers to the inquisition of Mu'tazilism in the era of caliphs al-Ma'mūn to al-Waṣīq, which lasted from 218 AH/840 AD to 234/866 AD. The substance of *miḥna* is an interrogation on behalf of the caliph al-Ma'mūn of ulema with the central question: "Do they accept the doctrine of the creation of the Qur'an as adhered to by the government?" (Anshori & Milanova, 2012).

Therefore, in *miḥna* terms can be interpreted as "ideological interrogation" by the state in the name of claims of religious truth. *Miḥna* as a public space in the caliphate era meant a mere battle for authority and an intellectual battle between *ahl al-hadīṣ* and *ahl al-ra'y* scholars in the scope of the interests of the power of caliph al-Ma'mūn. As for what is meant by the ulema in this context are Sunni scholars because the Shi'a position is in a position that agrees with the Mu'tazilah regarding the creatureliness of the Qur'an, so the Mu'tazilah sympathizes with the Shi'a even though they are not Shi'a themselves. More specifically, the inner caliph's affirmation of *miḥna* contains a conflict of knowledge power between Ibn Ḥanbal and the followers of Jahmiyah or Mu'tazilah related to the relationship between religion and reason.

Ibn Ḥanbal discredited reason in religious knowledge as said by Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad, Abū Abbās al-Muqrī, that Abū Bakar al-Hilāl said: "I heard Ibn Ḥanbal when he was asked about *al-ra'y*, Ibn Ḥanbal raised his voice and said: *"lātaktubanna sya'ian min ahl al-ra'y"* 'never write anything that *ahl ra'y* said'. Meanwhile, *ahl al-ra'y* places reason as the main instrument for obtaining religious knowledge as indoctrinated by Abū al-Jad: *"anna al-'aql waḥdahū yakfi maṣdarān li al-ma'ārif"* 'actually logic is enough to be a source of knowledge' (Al-Ḥanbalī, 1998).

Concerning the doctrine of the creation of the Qur'an, anyone must note that the idea does not come purely from the Mu'tazilah but rather from a follower of Jahmiyah-Ḥanāfiyah named Biṣr al-Miṣrī (d. 833 AD) (Al-Subkī, 1964). He is known as the ulema who first voiced the doctrine of al-Jahmiyyah, especially creating the Qur'an after Jahm's death (Bulliet et al., 2013; Houtsma et al., 1927; Watt, 1973). The statement stated that Biṣr al-Miṣrī was the first to present this idea to Caliph Harūn al-Rasyīd (786-809 AD). However, the caliph disagreed with this idea and threatened to kill him. Finally, Biṣr al-Miṣrī went into hiding for twenty years until the death of Caliph Harūn al-Rasyīd (Watt, 1973).

Between the years 819-822 AD, namely the reign of al-Ma'mūn, who was a true Mu'tazilah, Biṣr al-Miṣrī seeded the same idea to the public for the second time (Hurvitz, 2002b). Even al-Mu'tazilah accentuated the theory of "freedom of will," which had significant contradictions in explaining human behavior with al-Jahmiyyah, in which they agreed on the creation of the Qur'an. This opinion can be proven by the many Mu'tazilah who became followers of the Jahmiyyah and spread the ideology of this teaching. Loust, as quoted by Watt, states that according to the records of followers of Imām Ibn Ḥanbal, namely Ḥanābilah, some of the Mu'tazilites were Ibn' Ulayya and Ibn Abī Du'ād (Watt, 1973).

Al-Ma'mūn officially issued the policy of *miḥna* in 212 AH/827 AD. However, due to resistance from Yazīd ibn Ḥārūn (military leader) and Yaḥyā ibn Akhtām (supreme judge), al-Ma'mūn just declared it to the people or carried out an inquisition of the ulema in 218 AH/ 833 AD (Watt, 1973). The idea of the creation of the Qur'an is not the main issue in *miḥna*. In 211 AH/ 826 AD, one year before the caliph al-Ma'mūn accepted this idea as correct, al-Ma'mūn declared a statement which stated that 'Alī ibn AbīṬālib was the best human after the Prophet Muhammad (Zaman, 1994). However, this idea seems less popular than the idea of the creation of the Qur'an in *miḥna*. The reason for caliph al-Ma'mūn was none other than to gain votes or gain support from 'Alī's supporters who were under his rule.

Post *miḥna* policy declared, *ahl al-hadīṣ*'s response in the form of resistance becomes inevitable. At least the response of *ahl al-hadīṣ* can be classified into three groups: pro, contra or opposition, and neutral. The first group is a group of ulema who are pro to al-Ma'mūn's policies, the second group is a group of ulema who are against or in opposition to al-Ma'mūn's *miḥna*, and the third group is impartial neutrals among whom are Shafī'i and Bukhari, but there is a possibility that they both sided with Hanbali.

Before approval *miḥna* by al-Ma'mūn, al-Syāfi'ī (d. 204 AH) dreamed of meeting the Prophet and said that Imam Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal would experience a test regarding Allah's religion; namely, he would be forced to say that the Qur'an is a creature, but Ibn Ḥanbal refuses this. Regarding the dream, al-Syāfi'ī narrated it to Ibn Ḥanbal by letter (Al-Magrizī, 1937). 'Umar Aḥmad al-Naisāburī narrated that Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl al-Turmuḏī said that al-Bukhārī believed that the Qur'an is a creature. However, it was denied by al-Bukhārī as told by Muḥammad ibn Nasr, and he said, "I heard al-Bukhārī say that the words of the Qur'an as a creature is a lie" (Al-Ḥanbalī, 1998). According to Watt, those who are in opposition are those whose lives are guaranteed by the Waqf institution, while those who agree are that their lives depend on the caliphate. Among the *ahl al-hadīṣ* ulema who are most vocal against the *miḥna* is Ahmad ibn Ḥanbal as shown in his attitude, which prefers to be criminalized in the form of violence from the caliph al-Ma'mūn rather than being piety like other *ahl al-hadīṣ*.

The basis of the oppositional theology of Ibn Ḥanbal as a representation of *ahl al-hadīṣ* can be seen from three things, namely the position of Ibn Ḥanbal in the ranks of the 'Abbasid scholars, the basis of his theological view of al-Sunnah about the position of the Qur'an, and his oppositional attitude towards al-Ma'mūn's *miḥna* policy to the caliph al-Mutawakkil. These three issues are an integral part of Ibn Ḥanbal's overall theology of opposition to al-Ma'mūn's *miḥna* policy. Ibn Ḥanbal's position among the 'Abbasid scholars was not single, meaning that there were many counterparts other scholars of his contemporaries. Among them is 'Alī ibn al-Madinī, Yazīd ibn Hārūn, al-Ḥusāin ibn Ismā'īl, Abū Ishāq al-Baṣrī al-Asadī al-Mu'talisī that is called Ibn 'Ulayya.

According to Patton, Hanbali is the best *fāqih* 'legal expert' and deserves to be called *ahl al-hadīṣ* rather than the counterpart. Ibn 'Ulayya, in the view of Ibn Ḥanbal, is called *bid'ah* because it stands on the side of al-Ma'mūn, who adheres to the doctrine of the creation of the Qur'an. Al-Karābisi (d. 245 AH), who was known as a *fāqih* and traditionalist, was not liked by Ibn Ḥanbal because he was the militancy of *ahl al-ra'y* who changed the altar to become Syāfi'ī until obtaining a degree to teach the teachings of al-Syāfi'ī. Hanbali looked at al-Karābisi's way of thinking and adhering to theological dialectics (*kalam*); for example, al-Karābisi changed his mind that the words of the Qur'an were not created, not based on its text, but as a result of theological conclusions. It has called al-Karābisi because he changed his belief in the Qur'an as *gairumakhlūq* 'not created'. So they dislike Ibn Ḥanbal counterpart simply because they adhere to the doctrine of the creation of the Qur'an. In this regard, al-Ya'qubī emphasized that the doctrine of *miḥna* based on the Mu'tazilah concept as *ahl al-tauhid* and *ahl al-'adl*. With the doctrine of *al-tauhid*, the Mu'tazilah rejected the nature of God because it was considered contrary to God's incomparable monotheism. The rejection of Ibn Ḥanbal's concept of the non-creation of the Qur'an by the Mu'tazilah is part of the denial of the nature of God (Patton, 2010).

Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal made the doctrine of Qur'anic orthodoxy the basis for his rejection of al-Ma'mūn's *miḥna* policy. His verbal data can be shown through his expression when answering Bukhārī's question to Ibn Ḥanbal about the Qur'an. Ibn Ḥanbal said that from the beginning to the end, the Qur'an is the word of Allah, and anyone who says the Qur'an is a creature is a jahmi and a kāfir 'disbeliever'. As narrated by Jarīr al-Ṭabari, Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl al-Turmuḏī, Ibn Ḥanbal said: "Who says the words of the Qur'an were a creature Jahmi". The basis is Surah al-Taubah verse 6: *hattayasma'u kalām Allāh*. More conceptually, Ibn Ḥanbal's foundation rests on his views on al-Sunnah. As be patient with his narrated by Ḥasan ibn Ismā'īl al-Rabi' that Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal said, al-Sunnah is: "Rejoice to the existence of Allah, surrender, and orders, do what God commands, abandon what is forbidden, believe in God's measure of good or bad, abandon debate in religious

matters, eliminate fear, fight jihad with the caliph, pray ahl al-qiblah. Faith is words and actions that increase with obedience and decrease with immoral acts; it held that the Qur'an is the word of God, revealed to the heart of the Prophet Muhammad, not a creature in any sense, patient with the government whether in a fair or not situation and does not leave the government with anarchism if it is considered a violation, believes believers even if they commit sins big The main people after the Prophet, peace be upon him, are Abū Bakr, 'Umar, Uṣmān and 'Alī, respecting all the companions of the Prophet, peace be upon him, his children, his wife, and his family. That is the Sunnah; you will gain guidance if you do it and go astray if you leave it." (Al-Hanbalī, 1998).

Narrated by Muḥammad ibn Ḥamīd that Ibn Ḥanbal said: "The nature of *al-mu'minin min ahl al-sunnah* is testifying that there is no god but Allah; Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah and ordained what the Prophet and Messenger brought, that everything has been ordained by Allah both bad and bad (Jabariyah). The Qur'an is *kalām* 'words' of God is not a creature, faith is *qaul* 'words' and *'amal* 'action', increase with good, and decrease from vice, admit *ahl al-tis'ah*, the Prophet's friend who has the right to be the caliph, namely Abū Bakr, 'Umar, Uṣmān, 'Alī, Ṭalhah, Zubair, Abdurrahman ibn 'Auf, Sa'ad was Abi Waqash, Sa'id ibn Zaid ibn 'Umar. They were with the Prophet in Hira Cave" (Al-Hanbalī, 1998).

Bādil ibn Muḥammad ibn Asād and Ibrāhīm ibn Sa'ad al-Jawhari met Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal on the day before his death. Ibn Ḥanbal emphasized that it is obligatory to follow the Sunnah. Do not follow the opinion of *ahl al-ra'y*. Then Ibrāhīm ibn Sa'ad said to Ibn Ḥanbal that al-Karābisī and al-Thaljī argue that the words of the Qur'an are a creature. Ibn Ḥanbal said that those who say the words of the Qur'an are creatures of *jahmiyyūn kāfir* (Al-Hanbalī, 1998). Narrated by Aḥmad ibn Ja'far ibn Ya'qūb, Jahmiyah believes that the Qur'an is a creature, Allah does not speak with Moses; in fact, Allah is not a speaking substance, so Ibn Ḥanbal emphasizes that Jahmiyah are enemies of Allah and they are *kuffār* or *zanādiqah* (Al-Hanbalī, 1998). Al-Waqīfah thinks that the Qur'an is the word of God, but its pronunciation and reading are creatures, so they are mentioned in Jahmiyah.

Also, Ibn Ḥanbal said that consensus scholars and previous leaders agreed that the Qur'an is the word of God, not a creature. Abdullah ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal asked Ibn Ḥanbal about people who said Allah spoke to Prophet Musa without a voice. Ibn Ḥanbal replied that Allah spoke with a voice. This opinion is based on the hadith of Ibn Mas'ud that God sends revelations and voices are heard. This view is rejected by Jahmiyah until he was called a *kāfir* by Ibn Ḥanbal. (Al-Hanbalī, 1998).

Narrated by Ya'qūb from Muḥammad ibn Ishāq, Abū Bakar al-Shaghani said, "I dreamed as if the doomsday had come, and I saw God hearing the words and seeing the light. God said, "What do I know about the Qur'an". I replied, "*kalāmuka yā rabbal 'ālamīn*" (Al-Hanbalī, 1998). God said, "Who told?" I replied, "Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal. So ibn Ḥanbal was called and asked: What do you think about the Qur'an? He replied: "*kalāmukayā rabbal 'ālamīn*. How do you know? ibn Ḥanbal told two sources. One of them is from Shu'bah from al-Mughirah, the others Ata' from Ibn' Abbas, then called Shu'bah and Ibn' Abbas from where did you know that, from the Messenger of God, peace be upon him, so the Messenger was called and asked, "how did you know that, from Gabriel, then God confirmed it."

From several of these texts, it can be understood that religious truth claims, according to Ibn Ḥanbal's concept, must be based on al-Sunnah. It is not just a value system but also a behavioral system, as shown in the formulation that faith is manifested in words, deeds, and beliefs. Ibn Ḥanbal's consistency in defending his belief that the Qur'an is the word of Allah, not a creature, even though it carries the risk of criminalization, is proof of that. He stated vocally that the parties said the creature was *bid'ah*, *jahmi*, and considered not following the Sunnah of the Prophet.

Based on the al-Sunnah framework, Imām Ibn Ḥanbal then took oppositional actions against the al-Ma'mūn's *miḥna* policy as the antithesis of the doctrine of the incorruptibility of the Qur'an until the end of his life even though he had to suffer from caliph al-Ma'mūn to al-Waṣīq. Thus, acts of opposition to government policies are caused by social and theological factors.

Ḥanābilah's Opposition Social-Theological Convergence: Nomos and the Conflict of Authority

The socio-cultural history perspective towards opposition implies a conceptual framework that the factors of opposition are intertwined with two dimensions, namely ideological elements and social elements, which lead to the convergence thesis. Convergence means that two entities are seen as a whole social unit that intersects. Convergence construction in this context represents an oppositional movement of Ḥanābilah *ahl al-hadīṣ* –like a double-edged dagger– based on theological and social factors. Or, in Melluci terms, it is called a double-sword approach (Melucci, 1980) or blurred approach in Edmund's terms (Burke, 2012).

Socio-theological convergence is not only a general pattern of the Ḥanābilah's opposition but also a particular pattern, namely the social-intellectual pattern which is entwined in the resistance movement against the al-Ma'mūn's *miḥna* policy. It must be realized that theological commitment constructs the actual actions of community members and determines how far the community will cooperate with the authorities or even oppose them. This kind of reading is shared by Montgomery Watt, by saying that theology is an intellectual aspect that shapes political struggles in Islam (Watt, 2019).

Up to this point, the author differs from the above argument because, as previously explained, this manifest theological opposition is sustainability (continuation) or as a link – not to say accumulation – of the social construction of the Ḥanābilah's opposition movement. Therefore, the convergence of theological and social factors must become integral in interpreting an oppositional act. This Weberian perspective is also shared by Cover in viewing the Ḥanbalism movement in nomos theory -He believes that legal or doctrinal understanding plays a role in directing social behavior. In other words, the concept of nomos creates a framework that connects legal views with diamonds that are invaluable from religious thought in shaping behavior patterns. Thus, based on this nomos, oppositional attitudes grow to implement values, in which case the Ibn Ḥanbal adherents see themselves as guardians of Islamic orthodoxy dignity, whose job is to fight transgressor morals (Cover, 1992).

Over an extended period, this ideological commitment has become the character of the Ḥanābilah movement from its earliest stages *nahy munkar* so that the Ḥanābilah generation remained the most militant of the four schools of thought (Cover, 1992). Undeniably, the ideological commitment was one of the dominant factors in driving the birth of the Ḥanābilah opposition in the Abbasid era, although it cannot negate the socio-religious factors which ran simultaneously with the transformation of the caliphate.

The views of Weberian, Watt, and Cover indicate how essential theological or ideological elements in opposition movements represent cultural and historical perspectives. In a sense, the value system that Ḥanābilah believes in becomes a legitimate instrument (tool) for them to carry out the opposition. This perspective aligns with the theory of social movements in the 1970s, as stated by Robert Mircel, that social movements, including the opposition, are based on cultural concepts and identity construction. The term of his study always highlights the ideological aspects and belief systems that accompany the rise of social movements (Kuhn, 2012; Mircel, 2004).

However, in the author's view, the Weberian approach is insufficient to understand the reality of Ḥanābilah's oppositional actions without exploring its social context. The social factor of the Ḥanābilah oppositional movement was a response to the transformation of the caliphate, which "reclaimed" religious authority and positioned Sunni ulema as a second-class cluster in the era of al-Ma'mūn to al-Waṣīq. In other words, these oppositional actions are a reflection of reality and culminate in al-Ma'mūn's *miḥna* policy.

This view of convergence is in line with the views of Goodwin and Foran, who stated that not only did cultural factors play a central role in giving birth to opposition movements, but social factors also included socio-intellect, politics, and economics (Goodwin, 2001). From this point, the authors arrive at the convergence thesis that the Ḥanābilah opposition movement is not only driven by purely theological factors, as theorized by Cover but also by social factors, as theorized by

Edmund Burke and Alberto Melluci. The two factors are theological aspects and social aspects. Ḥanābilah's opposition shows that what emerges to the surface is the theological factor, while the social element, like an iceberg, lies behind the surface, which may have a greater impetus than the first aspect.

Ḥanābilah's opposition to the ruler was followed by his followers' scholars, including Ibn Taīmīyah and Ibn al-Qayyim Jauziyah, who often clashed with the rulers of his time. Ibn Taīmīyah was often in and out of prison because he often opposed the rulers. Ibn Taīmīyah is a figure of a scholar with a strong stance on upholding Islamic law. When the ruler's policy (*umarā*) was deemed not in line with Islamic law, Ibn Taīmīyah opposed it and took an oppositional stance. If the ruler's policies align with Islamic law, then Ibn Taīmīyah is in a supportive position. This fact was proven when there was an attack by the Mongol troops; Ibn Taīmīyah fought to help the Mamluk king. As explained above, the distinction of the Ḥanābilah's opposition lies in two things, namely the hegemony of the caliph's authority in religious matters which is overloaded, and the marginalization of the clergy to perpetuate their power. Meanwhile, the opposition carried out by Ibn Ḥanbal followers is more concerned with practical political issues, of course, in a different gradation from the Ḥanābilah's opposition.

CONCLUSION

The opposition as part of efforts to build a civilized political system should not only be seen from the negative side but also the positive side, namely as a sparing partner in performing functions of *amr ma'rūf nahy munkar* 'commanding right and forbidding wrong' against the government with a check and balance formula towards good governance realization. Likewise with the motives of Ḥanābilah's oppositional actions are motorized by Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal. His opposition to al-Ma'mūn's *miḥna* policy started from the intention to maintain theological orthodoxy, even maintaining the authority of the Sunni ulema. The opposition of Ibn Ḥanbal on *miḥna* policy become the last guard of defense of the constitutionalist shari'a or *ahl al-hadīś*. The theological dimension of Ḥanābilah's opposition to al-Ma'mūn's *miḥna* policy phenomenologically also contains a socio-religious dimension. In other words, if al-Ma'mūn's *miḥna* policy regarding the creation of the Qur'an is accepted as theological truth means that the caliph has authority in the field of religion. Meanwhile, caliph al-Ma'mūn, given that the ulema do not have the authority for that, hence rejecting al-Ma'mūn's *miḥna* policy means rejecting the caliph's authority in religion. This argument is the origin (genealogy) of Ḥanābilah's opposition to al-Ma'mūn's *miḥna* policy. So that Ḥanābilah's opposition actions reflect the perspective of a surplus of ulema authority. In looking at the Ḥanābilah opposition movement, a Weberian or a Marxian point of view alone is insufficient, except for bringing the two together as convergence, namely not only theological factors but also social factors. The Ḥanābilah oppositional actions have more to do with conflicts of authority. This convergence thesis aligns with the blurred approach theory of Edmund Burke and Adonis or double edged-sword by Alberto Melluci.

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