

The Political Legitimacy And Doctrinal Maturity Of The Fatimid State

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Abstract

Political legitimacy in Islamic history has seen significant developments and has been characterized by diversity in terms of the means to achieve power and secure the allegiance of the subjects. Among these states is the Fatimid Caliphate, which was distinguished by a unique legitimacy associated with several factors including doctrinal, genealogical, and proselytizing elements. All these aspects contributed to some extent to the establishment of this state's legitimacy. However, during its reign, the state experienced specific breakthroughs that led to weaknesses and a lack of cohesion. Initially, from the year 297 Hijri until 358 Hijri, it was a phase of building and establishing the state and laying its initial foundations and preserving them. Later, especially after the transfer of the Fatimid Caliphate to Egypt, the state began to enforce legitimacy through preachers and religious institutions, actively working on developing political legitimacy based on the Shia doctrinal vision and disseminating it among the people. Nevertheless, in a subsequent phase, especially during the reign of Caliph Al-Mustansir Billah, the state suffered from divisions and instances of fragmentation and lukewarmness in practicing this legitimacy and convincing the populace of it, while maintaining the state's prestige through it amid economic and political crises that spread within it, making it impossible to restore affairs to their proper state again after ministers intervened in appointing and deposing caliphs.

Keywords: Political legitimacy, Caliphate, Proselytization, Fatimid, Imamate.

Introduction

In Islamic history, concerning the emergence and establishment of states, it became imperative for each state to have a legitimacy upon which it is founded and by which it governs and derives loyalty, including fiscal collection and financial levies. Thus, most states established in the medieval period had relative legitimacy, meaning linked to genealogy, where loyalty depended on the strength of this genealogical claim. Additionally, doctrinal affiliation granted these states authority and acceptance among their subjects. There are various examples and differences among these states regarding legitimacy, but we discuss the legitimacy that is continuous over time or that should not expire. For example, the Abbasid state saw itself as legitimately genealogically linked to Abbas, the Prophet Muhammad's uncle, peace be upon him. Similarly, the Fatimid Caliphate claimed legitimacy through descent from Fatima al-Zahra, the daughter of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. Hence, both states used the same rationale; however, in terms of genealogy, the Fatimid Caliphate had a stronger claim to legitimacy than the Abbasid Caliphate. This became evident when conflicts arose between the two states; the Abbasid Caliphate questioned the genealogical legitimacy of the Fatimid state, accusing it of falsifying its lineage, thereby delegitimizing it among the subjects and the public and denying its right to the caliphate. This study aims to explore the strength of legitimacy in the Fatimid state and what affected it during the absence of this state until its demise at the hands of Saladin. From this, we raise the following problem: What is the relationship of the Fatimid identity to the establishment of the Fatimid state, and did this factor continue to influence the strength of the Fatimid Caliphate's legitimacy? Did it experience several breakthroughs that led to its weakening and instability, thus weakening loyalty to the caliphate and causing the state to lose its direction?

1- The Meaning of Caliphate and Imamate

The term "Caliphate" or "Grand Imamate" refers to the leadership of the Islamic state, where the Caliph or the Grand Imam is the supreme head of the Islamic state. Since the Islamic state is based on Islam, which governs individuals and groups and guides them in their worldly lives toward specific directions, Islamic jurists define two main functions for the Caliph: the first is the establishment of Islam and the implementation of its laws. The second is managing the state's

policies within the limits defined by Islam. However, it is sufficient to say that the Caliph's function is to establish Islam because Islam is both religion and state, and establishing Islam means setting up the religion and managing state affairs within the Islamic framework (Ouda 1981, 121).

This explains why there is confusion about the term "Caliphate." During the medieval period, a debate occurred across the East and West, during which the nation experienced three caliphates: the Abbasid Caliphate in Baghdad, the Fatimid Caliphate from the Maghreb, and the Umayyad Caliphate in Cordoba. Therefore, the legitimacy to be acknowledged is that which is richest in terms of jurisprudential arguments and proofs, in terms of genealogy and its substantiation, and in terms of the love and allegiance of the people, which comes as a subsequent stage.

As for "Imamate," as defined by Al-Juwayni: "The Imamate is a complete leadership and a general command that relates to both the specific and the general, in matters of religion and worldly affairs. Its purpose is to preserve the territory, care for the subjects, establish the call through argument and the sword, prevent fear and injustice, redress the wronged from the wrongdoers, exact rights from those who withhold them, and deliver them to those entitled" (Al-Juwayni 2003, 15).

From the above definition, it can be inferred that the Imamate holds complete authority in terms of both worldly and religious affairs. The Imam has numerous responsibilities such as dealing with the religious aspect, enforcing religious law on the subjects, ensuring its execution, and holding accountable those who violate it. Additionally, his authority extends to fulfilling the worldly matters related to the state's interests and the affairs of the subjects. Thus, if we were to summarize the terms "Imamate" and "Caliphate," we would say that the Imamate has more significance in terms of the religious dimension, given its sanctity and importance. Therefore, the Shia emphasize linking it to the Imams—Imams of the Household of the Prophet. Hence, we say that every Imam is necessarily a Caliph, but not every Caliph is necessarily an Imam, because the Imam must manifest certain qualities to be considered reliable and a model for others to follow.

2- Overview of the Fatimid State

The Fatimid State was distinctively a Shiite state, even though its roots were Ismaili, which is a Shiite branch emerging from

one of the lineages of Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq. Nonetheless, it was both a revolutionary and secretive movement at the same time, following a trajectory that led to the development and emergence of this sect. It must be noted that this sect later evolved in a subsequent phase of the Fatimid State history after the rise of political Shiism in Yemen. After overcoming certain challenges, it established a market system known as the post-Fatimid State, characterized by the Fatimid and Ismaili doctrine.

At the beginning of the Fatimid State, their first Caliph was al-Mahdi by Allah, Abu Muhammad Ubayd Allah ibn Ahmad ibn Ismail the third, son of Ahmad ibn Ismail the second, son of Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Araj, son of Ja'far al-Sadiq (peace be upon them). Their lineage has been narrated differently and involves much controversy, but according to some historians - not all - they were Ismaili Alawis with a valid lineage. This is the opinion relied upon by some historians and the lines of genealogists.

The issue of legitimacy initially rested on the call for al-Mahdi based on his lineage and connection to the house of prophecy. From this, we say that lineage coupled with the call was the foundational legitimacy block for the Fatimids.

Al-Mahdi was among the men of Banu Hashim in his era. It is said that he was born in Baghdad in the year 260, and others say he was born in Salamiyah, then arrived in Egypt dressed as a merchant. He revealed his mission in the Maghreb and called people to himself, gaining many followers who acknowledged him as the Caliph, thus strengthening his position and stature. He then moved to Kairouan, built a city named al-Mahdiyya, where he settled, and ruled over Ifriqiya, the Maghreb, and its surrounding regions. He then conquered Alexandria, collected its tribute and some from Upper Egypt, and died in the year 322. The caliphate then passed from one to another until it reached al-Adid, their last Caliph, Abu Muhammad Abd Allah ibn al-Amir Yusuf ibn al-Hafiz li-Din Allah (al-Taqtaqi 1997, 257).

Among the debates to be discussed is the sectarian Shiite parties to the Fatimid cause. Many assume that the early Ismaili events were spontaneous or due to contemporary circumstances; however, the reality is that the concept of revolution to claim rightful governance was present earlier and at the outset of the final Fatimid entity. The beginning of Ismailism, since the death of Ismail ibn Ja'far al-Sadiq to the appearance of Ubayd Allah al-Mahdi, the first Fatimid Caliph,

represents a lengthy phase of meticulous revolutionary preparation, secrecy, planning, organization, and considerable wealth and structuring. Ubayd sent preachers to various regions in Hejaz, Yemen, the Levant, and even the Islamic Maghreb, all of which marked a century-long revolutionary movement aimed at creating the appropriate environment and region for its operations. The founding phase in the Islamic Maghreb began in the year 297 AH and lasted until 365 AH, differing from the situation in Egypt, which can be said to begin a Fatimid Ismaili doctrinal phase after the year 365 AH.

The political legitimacy of the Fatimid State was initially based on the direct influence of the Shiite preacher Abu Abdullah among the Kutama tribes, evident in their obedience and commitment to his commands in all his movements, in war and peace. They faced many challenges, including rescuing Ubayd Allah al-Mahdi from his imprisonment in Ibn Madrar's prison in Sijilmasa, then moving with him towards Ifriqiya, passing through the Rustamid state, which they defeated and annihilated, and reaching Kairouan where Ubayd Allah al-Mahdi was pledged allegiance as Caliph and Imam to all people.

The religious and political weight of the Hejaz, referring to the sacred regions, spawned an intellectual and political theory during the fourth Hijri century. This era witnessed a struggle by the Abbasid Caliphate and the Fatimid rulers over the custodianship of the Holy Mosques. It became acknowledged in both official and popular circles that the legitimate Caliph representing the Muslims is the one for whom prayers are made on the pulpits of Mecca and Medina; thus, his caliphate is endowed with its legitimacy, providing a strong platform to influence the sentiments of Muslims who gather from all corners to perform the Hajj. Those who follow the relationships of the Hejazi people with the Abbasid, Fatimid, Buyid, Ayyubid, and finally the states of Bani Rasul and Bani Najah in Yemen fully understand the importance of this theory, both intellectually and politically, in grounding these states and adopting the political legitimacy in the eyes of Muslims (Zaghroun 1409).

3- The Eastern Orientation of the Fatimid Caliphate and the Plan to Conquer Egypt

In this context, to reinforce the religious legitimacy associated with proximity to the Hejaz and influential areas, and in relation to the heritage of their ancestors, the Fatimids focused

on shifting eastward to compete with the Abbasids for spiritual and religious authority in the region. Part of the completeness of the caliphate is the invocation on the pulpits of Mecca and Medina in the sacred places, to complete the spiritual significance of the state for the entire community, especially through the Hajj due to its great sanctity for Muslims.

Some historians describe this shift and move as due to compelling circumstantial reasons that the Fatimids faced rebellions in the Maghreb and numerous defections from other tribes, while others see resources as the reason. The scarcity of resources in the Maghreb, the minimal material capabilities, and being a theater for strife and disturbances that sporadically arise among tribes or competing political forces—along with resistance from the Sunni population—were other reasons that led the Fatimids to consider moving to Egypt.

Indeed, the Fatimids' dreams and political ambitions were larger than establishing a Shiite caliphate in the distant Maghreb, away from the heart of events in the East. They planned to extend their influence over the entire Islamic world to establish a global Alawite caliphate under which all Islamic peoples would unite, and to eliminate the Sunni Abbasid Caliphate in Baghdad (Maliki 2010, 272).

Shahr bin Hawshab, a missionary in Yemen, saw the Maghreb as a region prepared for supporting the Ismaili call. Since its inception, Shiism adopted an anti-Arab stance and, in the East, relied on the mawali and Persians, and in the Maghreb, it relied on the Berber mawali. Indeed, a Shiite family of the Hassanid branch established the Idrisid dynasty in 788 AD, which controlled the Far Maghreb with relative ease. The Middle Maghreb in the second half of the third century Hijri/ninth century AD, excluding the lands of the Imam of Tahert, included many emirates under the Alawis, totaling nine Alawi emirates (Maliki 2010, 265).

The initial Ismaili call to the Maghreb was a foresighted and strategic view, moving away from the intense conflict among all political actors in the East, especially as the Abbasid state was present with its eyes and spies, suppressing any movement here and there. The choice of the Maghreb was for this reason, and many states with Eastern ideologies and doctrines were established and succeeded there. Why not this new call succeed, knowing that the move to the Maghreb was a temporary circumstantial matter or due to a need? Regarding the return of the Fatimid Caliphate to the East, because this

was the basic starting point that should have been at the beginning; otherwise, the Islamic Maghreb was just a step, a mere beginning, or an alternative solution for the foundation that was hoped to be in the East and was postponed for a while.

4- Doctrinal Maturity

The doctrinal maturity of the Fatimid State is undoubtedly a focal point for many researchers, as the beginning of the Fatimid presence in the Islamic Maghreb was fraught with numerous challenges and problems that complicated the Fatimids' process of settling and thus establishing the foundations of the Ismaili doctrine and spreading its ideas among the general populace. Knowing that the majority in the Maghreb were Sunnis, many of them did not voluntarily submit to the authority of the Fatimid State except perhaps out of awe, unless they were part of another group that accepted the strict prevailing system in the region. Therefore, we cannot speak of the concept of Ismaili doctrinal maturity during this period from 297 to 362 Hijri. We cannot discuss the Ismaili doctrine with its various principles, components, and ideas evolving in terms of education, broadcasting, publication, and the calling of the state. During this phase, the state faced many dilemmas, including fighting the Kharijites, the movement of Abu Yazid Mukhallad ibn Kaydad al-Yifrani, and other movements, all of which severely troubled and exhausted the Fatimid State. Therefore, we cannot say that in this turbulent period, with such problems and disturbances, we can speak of doctrinal maturity. This raises a significant question: where did the legitimacy of the Fatimid State and the doctrine come from if it had not developed, flourished, or stabilized its foundations? The truth is that what Abu Abdullah al-Shi'i, the missionary, did had a significant impact on stabilizing this state among the Kutama, as they held great love, loyalty, and obedience to this state even after the killing of Abu Abdullah al-Shi'i due to issues between him and Ubayd Allah al-Mahdi.

We always sensed this loyalty from the Kutama towards Ubayd Allah al-Mahdi and his sons after him in their rule over Ifriqiya and the Islamic Maghreb, even in their wars with the Fatimid State. They were the backbone the state relied on in its wars and its stability, and even in its process of moving to the East. Much of this depended on the Kutama, known for their loyalty, obedience, and other qualities. Thus, if we say that the legitimacy of the Fatimid State in its Maghrebi period was due

to what Abu Abdullah al-Shi'i did in the call before anything else, Ubayd Allah al-Mahdi did.

4-1 Mahdism as a Concept of Salvation

In the context of the Fatimid caliphate, the concept of the awaited Mahdi, which was ingrained in the popular literature of the Maghreb before the establishment of the Fatimid State, inevitably served as a supportive element for the call. The tales of the Mahdi and his state spread through poems, stories, and other mediums, becoming well-known among the population in markets and neighborhoods, and among the majority in power. This prepared the groundwork for a popular base that would later be utilized to strengthen the state's foundations, allowing the call for the Fatimid Mahdi to be embraced without military confrontation and thus to control the minds of the general public.

4-2 Questioning the Fatimid Lineage

The issue of questioning the Fatimid lineage reached its peak during the reign of the Abbasid Caliph Al-Muqtadir Billah, who prepared a document signed by Iraqi jurists and some prominent Iraqi Alawis, such as Al-Sharif Al-Radi, testifying to the alleged forgery of the lineage of the Egyptian Fatimid Caliph Al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah. Subsequently, this issue waned in importance, possibly due to its lack of credibility, the collapse of its evidence, the exposure of its falsification, and the futility of pursuing it. However, with the fall of the Fatimid Caliphate in Egypt and the Ayyubids imprisoning the remnants of the Fatimid lineage and the Ayyubid dynasty taking the throne of Egypt, the opportunity arose to question the Fatimid lineage once again after their state had vanished, their enemies had multiplied, their Shiite supporters and allies had been broken, and their legacy had been eradicated (Sayyid 2002, 69).

The Abbasid state's attack on the validity of the Fatimid lineage was a reaction to the Fatimid's strong presence in the East. The military clashes were scarce and modest, and they failed to prevent the Fatimid and even the Qarmatians in Bahrain, as well as other emirates that emerged here and there near the Abbasid capital, from advancing. This implicitly indicates that questioning the lineage was an attack on the legitimacy of the Fatimid State, thereby cutting off the allegiance to it from the populace. However, this did not occur; instead, the internal

conditions of the Fatimid State itself weakened it, gradually eroding its legitimacy.

4-3 Espionage to Manufacture Allegiance, with Ibn Hawqal as an Example

It is believed that Ibn Hawqal was an agent or spy for the Fatimids, reporting back to them on the regions he visited. He provided them with extensive information about the conditions and situations of those countries, which helped the Fatimid State to develop suitable strategies for expansion and for deploying missionaries and spreading the Ismaili doctrine in those areas, as well as for military expansion.

Ibn Hawqal was known to be a trader originally from Mosul. On his travels, which took him through many countries, he entered the Maghreb, Sicily, and traveled through the lands of Al-Andalus. Among the works he left behind is the book "Al-Masalik wal-Mamalik" (The Routes and the Kingdoms) (date unknown, p. 5). Ibn Hawqal was a young man when he left Baghdad in 331 AH and traveled through many regions. He wrote a geography book describing the countries he visited in a unique and novel description, noting places like Tarsus, Aleppo, and other lands. It is said that he remained alive until 370 AH (Al-Adim 1988, 4672).

4-4 Legitimacy: The Sultan's Obsession

Focusing on political legitimacy occupies every ruler, and he cannot ensure his survival unless he manages to entrench his legitimacy, especially when it concerns the caliphate of Muslims—a task that both the Abbasids and the Fatimids diligently undertook during their reigns. The focus on establishing authoritative legitimacy can only be achieved through three channels: the first involves the deliberate choice of titles that rely primarily on the symbolism of sanctity; the second involves the deployment of missionaries with the authority to persuade and extend influence; the third involves the creation of official texts that form the backbone of authority and are generally derived from the Quran and the Sunnah (Al-Jalasi 2023).

If we emphasize the importance of adopting titles for their symbolic significance in the legitimacy of the caliphs, we understand that the requirements for legitimacy are subject to historical events that occur among states and from intense political frictions that affect these governments. Discussing legitimacy always leads us to the origins upon which this rule is

based and also about what is known as public opinion. Eventually, public opinion must conform to this legitimacy and strengthen it over time. In the medieval period of Islamic history, legitimacy openly rested on affiliation with the Prophet's household or the Quraysh tribe, or on adopting a specific ideology or sect that was accepted and widespread among certain groups of people, inspiring them to respond to its call, even if it required warfare and entering into a vortex of military conflicts. This might also result from international and regional circumstances, such as what happened with the Muslims during the medieval period of Crusades; undoubtedly, anyone who carried the banner of jihad and unified Muslims to fight the Crusaders would gain popularity and presence in the consciousness of the nation, which would prioritize him over other princes and sultans, even if they had legitimacy by precedence or historical longevity. This actually happened with Saladin Ayyubi, who successfully repelled the Crusader attacks, and managed to undermine the foundations of the Fatimid State, stripping it of its legitimacy after the death of its last caliph, Al-Adid Li-Din Allah. This jihadist legitimacy enabled him to establish a new state, later known as the Ayyubid dynasty, which inherited the capacities of the Fatimid State, Syria, Hejaz, and parts of Yemen. Thus, we can say that legitimacy holds significant power in establishing states and in the collapse of states if their legitimacy weakens. Discussing the weakness of legitimacy, we begin to feel this weakness from the reign of Al-Mustansir Billah Al-Fatimi; in fact, we can say that the signs of this weakness began to appear during the days of Al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah and in his later days as well. We can point to the dominance of women in the palaces and their involvement in governance in one way or another, which brought disasters and woes to this state, thereby causing chaos and conflicts and losing its existential compass, which is legitimacy.

What the Fatimids experienced during the days of Al-Mustansir was a change in the meaning and strength of the caliphate; it was not the caliph who managed the state affairs, but the situation was under the sway of the army commander or the minister who managed the internal and external policies of the state, and perhaps even had the power to dismiss and appoint the caliph. In the time of Al-Mustansir or after him, we saw that this role was greatly diminished, or perhaps it became merely a formal aspect of the state, like the traditional protocols used, similar to what the Abbasid state also experienced in its later

periods after its era of strength, leading to control by army commanders and then by ministers, as if this was the fashion of that era.

In this context, the historian Ibn Taghribirdi describes the situation after Al-Mustansir in the reign of his son Al-Musta'li: "The one in charge of his caliphate was his minister, Amir al-Juyush Al-Afdal ibn Shahanshah, son of Amir al-Juyush Badr al-Jamali. This Al-Musta'li is the sixth of the caliphs of Egypt from the Banu Ubayd. Political maturity does not arise from a vacuum but results from numerous collisions with self and others and interpretations of legal texts, as well as interpretations related to the philosophy of governance stemming from readings of the political events of other bygone nations. All this contributes to the unending momentum of the concept of political legitimacy, as it accumulates and becomes interwoven as a result of cultural assimilation with the people, and nations that have contributed in one way or another to laying the building blocks of political understanding in governing nations. If we claim that Islamic political legitimacy is confined only to the Islamic nation, we would be mistaken, as societies cannot be segmented and isolated from each other in terms of influence and impact; there is always a dominator and a dominated, and the rule of the dominant one imparts its own unique imprint, which we see clearly in its governance. Here, we find a disparity in governance between the Rashidun Caliphate and the Umayyad state, and similarly, the situation differs from what it was in the Umayyad and Abbasid states and so forth. Social environments contribute to shaping the experience of the ruler, making him mirror his reality and environment because he is in the process of leadership. Thus, the ruler needs harmony and alignment with that environment to achieve the sought-after legitimacy, and we always see that the ruler positions himself at the center of his following, wherever it may be. It is illogical and against reason to find a ruler living in an environment that criticizes and opposes him and to leave an environment that is loyal to him. Perhaps the migration of the Prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Medina is the best example of the power of allegiance in extinguishing the Islamic state in general.

5- The Decline of Political Legitimacy

The appointment of caliphs by ministers was a clear sign of the collapse of Fatimid legitimacy. For instance, in the days of Al-Musta'li, who was appointed by ministers after Al-Mustansir,

even on the external front, the Franks seized the coasts of Syria and took Jerusalem. The state of the Fatimids began to decline, their caliphate disintegrated, and ministers overpowered them. From then on, all that remained of the caliphate was merely the name.

The significance and power of the word "caliphate" and its full requirements in terms of its pillars and authorities are highlighted in what was said about the last of the Fatimid caliphs, Al-'Aadid li-Din Allah, concerning the cause of his death. Ibn Taghri Birdi mentions, "They differed on the cause of Al-'Aadid's death; it was said that he reflected on his situation with his minister Salah al-Din Yusuf ibn Ayyub, which caused him great distress and led to his death. Others said that when the sermon was given for the Abbasids in Cairo, hearing this deeply saddened [and killed] him. Still others claimed that upon realizing the [imminent fall of his state], he sucked on a poisoned gem on his ring and died from it" (Al-Din 1997, 298).

When discussing the real onset of the decline in legitimacy, one can closely examine the governance during the era of Al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah. As Al-Hakim's treatment of people worsened, including bloodshed, seizing lives and properties, striking down seniors, workers, leading ministers, commanders, and eminent soldiers, deviating from good governance and correctness, the fear among his servants and confidants about him grew, and they felt estranged by his actions. The prominent figures and faces complained to his sister Sitt al-Mulk bint al-Aziz about these situations. She recognized and magnified their grievances, acknowledged the validity of their complaints, and disliked what they despised. She promised them better management to curb his harm and a broader view of his affairs but found no other way to remedy his ill than to work on his destruction to stop his harm by his absence. She considered this secretly until she found an opportunity to have him assassinated during one of his trips, and his whereabouts were concealed (Al-Qalanisi 1983, 1/128).

This marked a new phase of severe female involvement in governance, allowing others the possibility to intervene whenever they could. The division among people about the death of Al-Hakim, whether he died or some considered him a deity, is another indication of the loss of the mentioned legitimacy, its strength, and its awe among people. After Al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah, the extremists in the doctrine said he was hidden in secrecy and must return, while he was actually born

in Cairo on a Thursday night, the twenty-third of Rabi' al-Awwal in the year 375 AH, and took command at the age of ten years, six months, and six days. He disappeared in the first ten days of Shawwal in the year 411 AH, at the age of thirty-six, and his rule lasted twenty-five years, two months, and several days. His ring was inscribed with "The High God triumphs, Imam Abu Ali," and he was known for his harsh nature, hard-heartedness, bloodshed, vile conduct, and bad governance, extremely bold in committing murder, not preserving the sanctity of a loyal servant or a companion of counsel. His son, Abu Al-Hasan Ali Al-Zaahir Li'Izz Al-Din, took over after him, and allegiance was pledged to him after his father on the day of Eid al-Adha" (Al-Qalanisi 1983, 1/128).

According to Ibn Al-Athir in his book "Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh," "It was said that the cause of his death was that the people of Egypt despised him for his apparent bad deeds. They used to send him insulting messages about him and his ancestors and curse him, to the point that they made a paper figure of a woman holding a message. When he saw it, he thought it was a complaining woman, (and ordered) the message to be taken from her. He read it, and it contained every curse and ugly insult, mentioning his sanctity in ways he hated. He ordered that the woman be sought, and it was said that she was made of paper, so he ordered Egypt to be burned and plundered, which they did. The people fought fiercely, and on the third day, the Turks and Easterners joined them, strengthening their position. They sent to the ruler asking for pardon and apologizing, but he refused. When he saw their strength, he ordered to stop the aggression. Some of Egypt was burned, and some plundered, and the Egyptians tracked down those who had taken their women and children, exposing them, which increased their rage and resentment against him" (Al-Athir 1997, 659).

Then he estranged his sister and sent her ugly messages, saying: "I've heard that men are entering your place," and he threatened her with death. She sent for a major commander from the ruler's commanders, Ibn Dawas, who also feared the ruler, and told him: "I want to meet you because you know what my brother thinks of you, and that if he gets the chance, he won't spare you, and I'm in the same situation. What he shows of what Muslims hate and can't tolerate frightens me, that they might revolt, and he and we with him would perish, and this state would be uprooted." He agreed to what she wanted. She said: "He's going to climb this mountain

tomorrow, and he won't be with anyone except the rider and a boy, and he will be alone." She arranged for two men she trusted to kill him and the boy, and to establish her son after him, making him the state's manager, adding a hundred thousand dinars to his fief. She placed two men, and she gave them a thousand dinars each. They went to the mountain, and the ruler rode there as usual, alone, and they killed him" (Al-Athir 1997, 659).

This perspective, as per historian Ibn Aibid Al-Dawadari in "Kanz al-Durar," suggests, "I noted in my drafts that the one who caused his death was his sister Sitt al-Mulk. She was a woman of literature, intellect, religion, and had a good creed in Islam, unlike her family. She was devoted to prayer, fasting, reciting the Quran, and giving charity to the poor. When her brother's cursed claim became famous, she disapproved of it and advised him. He said to her: 'Woe to you, you sinner! Isn't what you're already doing with the servants you've taken in place of men enough, that you involve yourself in what doesn't concern you?' By God, I will certainly succeed in killing you. She knew that he would inevitably kill her. So, she prepared two slaves, one named Falah and the other Razin, whom she treated and loved like her children. She arranged what they should do, and they ambushed him in the place he often visited, and killed him as mentioned, and God knows best about his affair" (Al-Dawadari 1961, 300).

The historian's justifications for Sitt al-Mulk bint Al-Aziz's actions in killing her brother Al-Hakim are indicative of not understanding the extent to which the legitimacy of the state is compromised when one intervenes in governance to this extent under the pretext of the ruler's tyranny and his unfitness for the caliphate. This diminishes the caliph's stature and suggests that a woman can govern and manage the state's affairs. This incident will be repeated with the mother of Al-Mustansir Allah, who intervened to such an extent that she overshadowed the caliph himself, which undermined the credibility of the legitimacy system and made it vulnerable to interference, leading the state into a new phase of weakness and merely a matter of time before collapse.

Conclusion

In this research, we explored the concept of caliphate and ummah, which are closely related meanings that carry connotations of strength, prominence, and influence. A state that stands on these two meanings has a significant impact on

its subjects and in matters of loyalty and continuity. We saw that the Fatimid state, before its establishment, took it upon itself to spread the call and missionaries throughout Hejaz, Yemen, and Syria, and then moved this call to the Islamic Maghreb as a new stage for building and establishing the state away from its traditional enemy, the Abbasid state. Consequently, after forming the state and the emergence of loyalty that supported and backed it even during tough times, the policy or political legitimacy of the state began with the idea of Mahdism to convince people of it as the idea that should haunt them as a salvation from their political, military, and other turbulent conditions. Then, as circumstances of events took over, political legitimacy became contingent upon the state's conditions. Where the caliph had a strong personality, the legitimacy was associated with him; if the caliph was incapable or unfit, it allowed others the opportunity to control or intervene in the state's affairs, as happened with Al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah and Al-Musta'li by Allah. Through this, we find that the state's legitimacy in proving its existence began to weaken gradually due to interventions here and there and due to the surrounding conditions, and the state lost its basic role, which is the protection of individuals and subjects. So, when we talk about the religious aspect of the last caliphs of this state, we find that the state was devoid of its legitimate content that requires others to respect it, requires them to pledge obedience and allegiance to it, and its legitimacy completely vanished with the death of Al-'Adid by the hands of Saladin Ayyubi.

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