

# ABBASID POWER UNDER ABU JA'FAR AL-MANSUR THROUGH IBN KHALDUN'S ASHABIYAH CONCEPT

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Received: July 31, 2025

Revised: November 05, 2025

Accepted: December 05, 2025

## **Abstract**

*The Abbasid dynasty, one of the most successful in Islamic history, emerged from a revolution that overthrew the Umayyad Caliphate. This study examines the role of Abu Ja'far al-Mansur, the second Abbasid caliph, in establishing power and upholding the dynasty's stability and legitimacy. Using a qualitative methodology rooted in historical research, a comprehensive literature review analyzes the historical context of the Abbasid revolution, al-Mansur's contributions, and Ibn Khaldun's concept of ashabiyyah. The findings demonstrate that al-Mansur's diverse strategies, including urban development, economic reform, military organization, and ideological governance, were crucial in strengthening Abbasid power. The establishment of Baghdad as the capital, the integration of various ethnic groups, and the promotion of religious legitimacy through alliances with the ulama were key factors in enhancing the dynasty's resilience. The Umayyad dynasty served as a common enemy, fostering solidarity (asabiyyah) among various factions and facilitating the rise of the Abbasids. Al-Mansur's inclusive policies strengthened loyalty and resolved divisions within the empire. This study concludes that al-Mansur was a transformative leader who successfully unified the political, religious, and social spheres, embodying the principles of asabiyyah and establishing a pattern of ideological solidarity that sustained Abbasid rule for centuries. The implications of these findings highlight the importance of an interdisciplinary approach, the relevance of the concept of asabiyyah in the modern context, the significance of the common enemy narrative, and the need for further social theory studies on al-Mansur's leadership.*

**Keywords:** Abbasid Dynasty; Abu Ja'far al-Mansur; Ibn Khaldun's Ashabiyyah Concept.

## **Abstract**

Dinasti Abbasiyah, salah satu dinasti yang paling sukses dalam sejarah Islam, muncul dari sebuah revolusi yang menggulingkan Kekhalifahan Umayyah. Studi ini meneliti peran Abu Ja'far al-Mansur, khalifah kedua Abbasiyah, dalam memantapkan kekuasaan dan menegakkan stabilitas serta legitimasi dinasti tersebut. Menggunakan metodologi kualitatif yang berakar pada penelitian sejarah, dengan tinjauan pustaka komprehensif menganalisis konteks sejarah revolusi Abbasiyah, kontribusi al-Mansur, dan konsep ashabiyyah dari Ibn Khaldun. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa strategi al-Mansur yang beragam,

termasuk pengembangan kota, reformasi ekonomi, organisasi militer, dan pemerintahan ideologis, sangat penting dalam memperkuat kekuasaan Abbasiyah. Pendirian Baghdad sebagai ibu kota, integrasi berbagai kelompok etnis, serta promosi legitimasi keagamaan melalui aliansi dengan para ulama menjadi faktor kunci dalam meningkatkan ketahanan dinasti tersebut. Dinasti Umayyah berperan sebagai musuh bersama, mendorong solidaritas (ashabiyah) di antara berbagai faksi dan memfasilitasi kebangkitan Abbasiyah. Kebijakan inklusif al-Mansur memperkuat loyalitas dan mengatasi perpecahan di dalam kekaisaran. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa al-Mansur adalah pemimpin transformatif yang berhasil mempersatukan ranah politik, agama, dan sosial, mewujudkan prinsip-prinsip ashabiyah dan membangun pola solidaritas ideologis yang menopang kekuasaan Abbasiyah selama berabad-abad. Implikasi dari temuan ini menyoroti pentingnya pendekatan interdisipliner, relevansi konsep ashabiyah dalam konteks modern, signifikansi narasi musuh bersama, serta perlunya studi-teori sosial lebih lanjut tentang kepemimpinan al-Mansur.

**Kata Kunci:** *Dinasti Abbasiyah; Abu Ja'far al-Mansur; Konsep Ashabiyah Ibnu Khaldun.*

## Introduction

The Abbasid Dynasty stands as one of the most enduring and influential political entities in Islamic history,<sup>1</sup> celebrated for its pivotal role in shaping the trajectory of Islamic civilization. Its rule marked the zenith of the Islamic Golden Age a period distinguished by extraordinary advancements in governance, scholarship, science, and culture.<sup>2</sup> Historically, the Abbasid Dynasty arose from a revolutionary movement orchestrated by the Banu Abbas and their allies, which brought an end to nearly nine decades of Umayyad rule (41–132 AH / 661–750 CE).<sup>3</sup> In its formative stage, the Abbasid movement operated clandestinely, a necessity born from its initial absence of a strong sociopolitical base.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, its operations were characterized by strategic organization and disciplined coordination, enabling it to evade Umayyad suppression and to build a coherent ideological foundation.

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<sup>1</sup>Antony Black, "The History of Islamic Political Thought: From the Prophet to the Present," *Choice Reviews Online* 49, no. 09 (July 7, 2012): 49–5332, <https://doi.org/10.5860/choice.49-5332>.

<sup>2</sup>Daniel Fuks, Oriya Amichay, and Ehud Weiss, "Innovation or Preservation? Abbasid Aubergines, Archaeobotany, and the Islamic Green Revolution," *Archaeological and Anthropological Sciences* 12, no. 2 (July 7, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12520-019-00959-5>; Jingyao Zhao et al., "Role of the Summer Monsoon Variability in the Collapse of the Ming Dynasty: Evidences From Speleothem Records," *Geophysical Research Letters* 48, no. 11 (July 7, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.1029/2021gl093071>.

<sup>3</sup>Hedley V Cooke and Philip K Hitti, "History of the Arabs: From the Earliest Times to the Present," *The Western Political Quarterly* 5, no. 4 (July 7, 1952): 713, <https://doi.org/10.2307/442733>; Jon Camuera et al., "Drought as a Possible Contributor to the Visigothic Kingdom Crisis and Islamic Expansion in the Iberian Peninsula," *Nature Communications* 14, no. 1 (July 7, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-023-41367-7>.

<sup>4</sup>Camuera et al., "Drought as a Possible Contributor to the Visigothic Kingdom Crisis and Islamic Expansion in the Iberian Peninsula."

According to historical records, the Abbasid movement had already taken root during the reign of Caliph ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Aziz,<sup>5</sup> when discontent against Umayyad elitism was mounting. The movement’s adoption of the name “Abbas”—after al-‘Abbas ibn ‘Abd al-Muttalib,<sup>6</sup> the Prophet Muhammad’s uncle—was not a mere symbolic gesture.<sup>7</sup> It represented a calculated attempt to establish a lineage-based legitimacy, connecting the Abbasids to the Prophet’s clan, Banu Hashim. This genealogical association was crucial in mobilizing popular support and legitimizing the claim to leadership, particularly among those marginalized under Umayyad rule, including non-Arab Muslims and Alawite sympathizers. The Abbasid revolution thus evolved into both a political and ideological project rooted in restoring justice and equity within the Muslim ummah.

From the theoretical perspective of Ibn Khaldun, the success and endurance of the Abbasid Caliphate can be interpreted through the lens of ‘Ashabiyah, or group solidarity. Ibn Khaldun posited that every civilization and ruling power emerges, thrives, and declines in accordance with the strength of its social cohesion. In this framework, the early Abbasid movement exemplified *‘ashabiyyah diniyyah*—a form of solidarity bound not merely by tribal or ethnic ties but by shared religious and ideological commitments. This spiritual and collective unity enabled the Abbasids to rally diverse social groups under a common purpose, ultimately transforming a dispersed revolutionary network into a stable and centralized polity.

The Abbasid Revolution (747–750 CE) marked a decisive transformation in Islamic history, ending Umayyad dominance and ushering in a new political and intellectual era. Rooted in widespread dissatisfaction with Umayyad favoritism toward Arab elites and the marginalization of non-Arab Muslims, the revolution united diverse ethnic and social groups—particularly Persians—under a common cause for justice and inclusion within the Islamic polity. This coalition not only succeeded in overthrowing the Umayyads but also laid the foundation for a more inclusive governance system that reshaped the sociopolitical and cultural landscape of the Muslim world.<sup>2</sup> As Topçu and Menek note, early Abbasid society embodied a cooperative spirit, integrating various ethnicities and traditions into a shared framework of governance.<sup>3</sup> Seeking legitimacy, the Abbasids patronized scholarship and founded Baghdad, which emerged as the epicenter of the translation movement and a global hub of intellectual exchange. El-Hibri observes that the synthesis of Islamic theology and Greek rationalism during this period not only transformed Islamic thought but also influenced later European intellectual developments.<sup>4</sup> Despite these achievements, the Abbasids faced internal challenges such as the Zanj Rebellion, revealing the complexities of maintaining unity in a vast and diverse empire. Yet, agricultural and economic innovations—often termed the Arab Agricultural Revolution—strengthened the caliphate’s prosperity and stability.<sup>5</sup> Ultimately, the Abbasid Revolution was not merely a dynastic shift but a profound

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<sup>5</sup>Black, “The History of Islamic Political Thought: From the Prophet to the Present”; Luis De La Calle, “Compliance vs. Constraints: A Theory of Rebel Targeting in Civil War,” *Journal of Peace Research* 54, no. 3 (July 7, 2017): 427–41, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343316686823>.

<sup>6</sup>Auer, “Symbols of Authority in Medieval Islam”; Renima, Estes, and Tiliouine, “The Islamic Golden Age: A Story of the Triumph of the Islamic Civilization.”

<sup>7</sup>Michael Brett, “‘Abbasids, Fatimids and Seljuqs” (Cambridge University, 2004), 675–720.

social and intellectual reformation that laid the groundwork for the Islamic Golden Age, shaping the evolution of culture, science, and governance across civilizations.

Under Caliph Abu Ja'far al-Mansur, the second Abbasid caliph and principal architect of the dynasty's consolidation, the principles of *'ashabiyyah* were institutionalized within the fabric of governance. Al-Mansur's administrative reforms, city-building initiatives—most notably the founding of Baghdad—and patronage of scholarship collectively reinforced the social and political cohesion necessary for the caliphate's longevity. His policies fostered unity among various ethnic and intellectual groups, balancing religious legitimacy with bureaucratic efficiency. As a result, the Abbasid Caliphate not only secured its legitimacy but also sustained its dominance for centuries, transforming the concept of *'ashabiyyah* from a revolutionary force into a stabilizing principle of empire.

Through his visionary leadership and strategic governance, Caliph Abu Ja'far al-Mansur successfully elevated the Abbasid Caliphate into a formidable power within the Islamic world, laying the enduring foundations for its political strength, cultural brilliance, and intellectual supremacy in the centuries that followed.

In this context, Ibn Khaldun's theory serves as a vital analytical tool to understand how the Abbasid Caliphate, particularly during the reign of Abu Ja'far al-Mansur, transformed *'ashabiyyah* from kin-based solidarity into an ideological and institutional foundation of governance. The Abbasid experience thus exemplifies how cohesive social and moral bonds, when properly directed by wise leadership, can ensure both the legitimacy and the endurance of a political dynasty.

## Method

This study is classified as library research, a methodological approach aimed at gathering data and information from various resources available within a library setting. Conducted systematically, library research involves collecting, processing, and analyzing data using specific methods or techniques to address the research questions posed.<sup>8</sup> The rationale for employing this approach lies in the researcher's need to draw upon a diverse array of literary sources, including books, journals, and relevant articles, which serve as foundational data sources. This method facilitates the acquisition of a theoretical framework pertinent to the research topic. The literature review acts as a preliminary step in formulating the research framework, allowing the researcher to gain insights into similar studies, enhance theoretical analysis, and refine the research methodology.<sup>9</sup> The research methodology employed in this study involves a comprehensive review of books, journals, papers, and other relevant sources related to the subject matter. Specifically, this research prioritizes books as the primary sources of information concerning the caliphate of Abu Ja'far al-Manshur and the concept of *ashabiyah* as articulated by Ibn Khaldun.

The methodology employed is qualitative, in line with the principles of historical research studies. This collective approach leverages knowledge and analytical skills to

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<sup>8</sup>Daniel Khashabi et al., "Question Answering as Global Reasoning over Semantic Abstractions" (cornell university, July 2, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.48550/arxiv.1906.03672>.

<sup>9</sup>Charles Kivunja, "Distinguishing between Theory, Theoretical Framework, and Conceptual Framework: A Systematic Review of Lessons from the Field," *International Journal of Higher Education* 7, no. 6 (July 7, 2018): 44, <https://doi.org/10.5430/ijhe.v7n6p44>.

understand larger and more complex systems. It is particularly suited for researching historical artifacts, aiming to uncover the multifaceted dimensions of an event, including its historical, social, political, and religious aspects.

## Result

### Abu Ja'far al-Mansur's Role in Abbasid Power Consolidation

Abu Ja'far al-Mansur, the second Abbasid caliph, played a crucial role in consolidating power for the Abbasid dynasty following its ascendancy to power in the mid-8th century. His leadership marked a distinctive turn in the Abbasid governance style, characterized by effective centralization and the establishment of a bureaucratic state that would be foundational to the dynasty's long-term stability.

One of al-Mansur's significant achievements was his establishment of Baghdad as the capital of the Abbasid Caliphate in 762 CE. This city quickly became a center for trade and cultural exchange, symbolizing the Abbasid renaissance and fostering intellectual growth and political strength.<sup>10</sup> Al-Mansur's vision for a powerful and centralized administration is exemplified by his decision to construct Baghdad specifically to meet the needs of a flourishing empire.<sup>11</sup> The city soon developed into a major cultural and educational center, notably through institutions such as the Bayt al-Hikmah (House of Wisdom), which he initiated and expanded.<sup>12</sup> This institution became critical for translating and preserving classical knowledge, spanning the fields of science, philosophy, and literature, aligning with al-Mansur's objectives of enhancing Abbasid authority through intellectual pursuits.<sup>13</sup>

Additionally, al-Mansur's governance emphasized military and territorial consolidation. He implemented reforms that established systematic control over the provinces and ensured loyalty among regional governors.<sup>14</sup> This effort not only quelled dissent from remnants of the Umayyad regime but also integrated various ethnic groups within the empire, which had been historically marginalized, thereby reducing the potential for rebellion against Abbasid rule (Sulaiman, 2021).<sup>15</sup> His integrative policies lessened ethnic tensions and fostered a more inclusive political environment by promoting a shared identity among the empire's diverse population.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Saulat Pervez, "Muslim Intellectual History," *American Journal of Islam and Society* 39, no. 3-4 (2023): 206-72, <https://doi.org/10.35632/ajis.v39i3-4.2332>; Ruben Dario Mendoza Arenas et al., "Karşılaştırılmalı Bir Çalışma: İbn-i Haldun Un Asabiyesi Ve Habermas In Hayat-Evreni," *Journal of Ibn Haldun Studies Ibn Haldun University* 3, no. 2 (July 7, 2023): 9, <https://doi.org/10.22452/jat.vol17no2.11>.

<sup>11</sup>Arenas et al., "Karşılaştırılmalı Bir Çalışma: İbn-i Haldun Un Asabiyesi Ve Habermas In Hayat-Evreni."

<sup>12</sup>Andy R Pratama et al., "Bayt Al-Hikmah: Pusat Kebijaksanaan Dan Warisan Ilmu Pengetahuan Islam Dalam Peradaban Abad Pertengahan," *Jurnal Riset Rumpun Agama Dan Filsafat* 2, no. 2 (2023): 253-66, <https://doi.org/10.55606/jurrafi.v2i2.2122>; Arenas et al., "Karşılaştırılmalı Bir Çalışma: İbn-i Haldun Un Asabiyesi Ve Habermas In Hayat-Evreni."

<sup>13</sup>Pratama et al., "Bayt Al-Hikmah: Pusat Kebijaksanaan Dan Warisan Ilmu Pengetahuan Islam Dalam Peradaban Abad Pertengahan."

<sup>14</sup>Sulaiman Sulaiman, "Sistem Ekonomi Dinasti Abbasiyah ( Tinjauan Historis Pada Masa Pemerintahan Khalifah Al-Mansur 95 H-159 H/714 M- 775 M)," *Muamalatuna* 13, no. 1 (2021): 84, <https://doi.org/10.37035/mua.v13i1.4653>.

<sup>15</sup>Sulaiman.

<sup>16</sup>Sulaiman.

Moreover, al-Mansur was attentive to issues of legitimacy. He relied on religious scholars to create a political framework that intertwined governance with religious authority, thus enhancing his legitimacy as the leader of the Muslim community.<sup>17</sup> His patronage of Islamic scholarship is exemplified by the notable compilation of religious texts like al-Muwatta by Malik ibn Anas, illustrating his commitment to establishing a theologically grounded administration.<sup>18</sup> By securing the support of influential scholars, al-Mansur solidified his power while ensuring that the sociopolitical structures aligned with Islamic principles.

In terms of economic policies, al-Mansur's administration laid the foundations for economic prosperity through the development of trade networks and agricultural improvements, which would later characterize the Abbasid economic system.<sup>19</sup> The promotion of trade routes facilitated connections across the Islamic empire, enhancing commerce between East and West. Such economic advancements contributed to the Abbasid state's resilience and stability during his reign.

In summary, Abu Ja'far al-Mansur's efforts to consolidate Abbasid power were marked by strategic urban planning, military reforms, development of cultural institutions, and the integration of diverse groups within the empire. His leadership fortified the Abbasid dynasty during its early years and set a precedent for subsequent caliphs, shaping the trajectory of Islamic civilization.

#### **Ibn Khaldun's Concept of *Ashabiyah***

Ibn Khaldun's concept of *ashabiyah*, often translated as "group feeling," plays a pivotal role in his analysis of social cohesion and the dynamics of power in societies. This foundational idea is critical to understanding the rise and fall of civilizations, as articulated in his seminal work, the *Muqaddimah*. *Ashabiyah* functions not merely as a descriptive term for tribal bonds or family solidarity; rather, it embodies a more complex sociopolitical construct that drives collective action and social unity.<sup>20</sup>

At its core, *ashabiyah* refers to the social ties that bind individuals together in a group, which, according to Ibn Khaldun, is essential for a group's strength and effectiveness. He posits that strong *ashabiyah* enhances a group's ability to establish and maintain power, particularly in the context of emerging states and dynasties. Conversely, the erosion of *ashabiyah* leads to vulnerability and, ultimately, the decline of civilizations.<sup>21</sup> Khaldun outlines this cyclical process, where strong social bonds facilitate initial success, but as prosperity grows, complacency can lead to the weakening of these bonds, paving the way for decline.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Pervez, "Muslim Intellectual History"; Kamil H Rashid, Ismail A Omer, and Kaifee P Omar, "The Historians View (Al-Yaqubi and Al-Tabari and Al-Masoudi) for the Caliph of Abu Jaafar Al-Mansour," *Qalaai Zanist Scientific Journal* 8, no. 4 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.25212/lfu.qzj.8.4.6>.

<sup>18</sup>Pervez, "Muslim Intellectual History"; Arenas et al., "Karşılaştırmalı Bir Çalışma: İbn-i Haldun Un Asabiyesi Ve Habermas In Hayat-Evreni."

<sup>19</sup>Sulaiman, "Sistem Ekonomi Dinasti Abbasiyah ( Tinjauan Historis Pada Masa Pemerintahan Khalifah Al-Mansur 95 H-159 H/714 M- 775 M)."

<sup>20</sup>Ruben Dario Mendoza Arenas et al., "Ibn Khaldun, Muqaddima: Outline on Conflict and Social Cohesion at the Dawn of Sociology or Social Theory," *Journal of Law and Sustainable Development* 11, no. 7 (July 7, 2023): e1058, <https://doi.org/10.55908/sdgs.v11i7.1058>.

<sup>21</sup>Arenas et al.

<sup>22</sup>Arenas et al.; H Alexandre, "A Phenomenological Approach to Ibn Khaldun's Concept of Group Feeling," *Thesis Eleven* 187, no. 1 (2025): 128–44, <https://doi.org/10.1177/07255136241308892>.

Ibn Khaldun argues that *ashabiyah* is deeply rooted in blood ties and kinship, providing the necessary foundation for social cohesion and collective identity, which are vital for maintaining a state's stability.<sup>23</sup> This phenomenon is notably amplified during times of external threat or conflict; groups with a strong sense of *ashabiyah* are more resilient against external pressures, facilitating their survival and dominance.<sup>24</sup> Such dynamics are evident in his examination of historical examples, where the rise of new powers often coincided with unified social sentiments driven by *ashabiyah*.

In modern discourse, Ibn Khaldun's concept has been applied to various fields, transcending its original sociopolitical context to include economic and cultural dimensions, demonstrating its relevance in analyzing contemporary societies.<sup>25</sup> Scholars have explored how *ashabiyah* can foster solidarity in various social movements and adaptability in varied contexts, reflecting the ongoing importance of his ideas in current social science debates.<sup>26</sup>

Additionally, Khaldun's insights into *ashabiyah* provide a framework for understanding contemporary phenomena such as nationalism and collective identity, relating closely to the dynamics within modern states where group loyalty can influence political stability and social cohesion.<sup>27</sup> Consequently, *ashabiyah* serves as a crucial lens through which to examine the interconnectedness of social dynamics and political authority, marking Ibn Khaldun as a pioneering figure in sociological thought.<sup>28</sup>

Ibn Khaldun's concept of *ashabiyah* not only elucidates the mechanisms of social cohesion and authority within historical contexts but also offers profound insights applicable to understanding contemporary social and political issues. His work invites ongoing exploration into how collective identities shape governance and societal structure across time.

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<sup>23</sup>Sulfan Sulfan and Mukhsin Mukhsin, "Filsafat Politik Menurut Ibnu Khaldun," *Jurnal Tana Mana* 2, no. 2 (2022): 103–14, <https://doi.org/10.33648/jtm.v2i2.184>; Siniša Malešević, "Warfare and Group Solidarity: From Ibn Khaldun to Ernest Gellner and Beyond," *Filozofija I Društvo* 32, no. 3 (2021): 389–406, <https://doi.org/10.2298/fid2103389m>.

<sup>24</sup>Arenas et al., "Ibn Khaldun, Muqaddima: Outline on Conflict and Social Cohesion at the Dawn of Sociology or Social Theory"; Malešević, "Warfare and Group Solidarity: From Ibn Khaldun to Ernest Gellner and Beyond."

<sup>25</sup>Bünyamin Duran, "Karşılaştırılmalı Bir Çalışma: İbn-i Haldun'un Asabiyesi Ve Habermas'ın Hayat-Evreni," *Journal of Ibn Haldun Studies Ibn Haldun University* 6, no. 2 (2021): 129–43, <https://doi.org/10.36657/ihcd.2021.81>; Aurang Zaib, "Ibn Khaldun's Concept of Asabiyyah: Application on the Muslim Nationalism in Indian Sub-Continent Before Partition," *Annals of Human and Social Sciences* 3, no. II (2022), [https://doi.org/10.35484/ahss.2022\(3-ii\)66](https://doi.org/10.35484/ahss.2022(3-ii)66).

<sup>26</sup>Alexandre, "A Phenomenological Approach to Ibn Khaldun's Concept of Group Feeling"; Arenas et al., "Ibn Khaldun, Muqaddima: Outline on Conflict and Social Cohesion at the Dawn of Sociology or Social Theory."

<sup>27</sup>Mohammad J Fedayee, "Ibn Khaldun's Contribution to the Study of the Social Dynamics of International Relations," *Journal of Ibn Haldun Studies Ibn Haldun University*, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.36657/ihcd.2023.108>; Zaib, "Ibn Khaldun's Concept of Asabiyyah: Application on the Muslim Nationalism in Indian Sub-Continent Before Partition."

<sup>28</sup>Fedayee, "Ibn Khaldun's Contribution to the Study of the Social Dynamics of International Relations"; Duran, "Karşılaştırılmalı Bir Çalışma: İbn-i Haldun'un Asabiyesi Ve Habermas'ın Hayat-Evreni."

## Analysis and Findings

### 1. Analysis

#### a. The Contribution of Abu Ja'far al-Mansur and the Impact of His Policies on the Stability and Legitimacy of the Abbasid Dynasty

Abu Ja'far al-Mansur, the second Abbasid caliph, played a foundational role in establishing the stability and legitimacy of the Abbasid dynasty during its formative years. His strategies encompassed urban development, economic reforms, military organization, and ideological governance, each contributing significantly to the resilience of Abbasid rule.

One of al-Mansur's most notable contributions was the establishment of Baghdad as the capital of the Abbasid Caliphate in 762 AD. The city was strategically located and designed to serve as a center for administration, trade, and culture, distinguishing itself from the Umayyad capital of Damascus. This move not only solidified the economic foundations of the Abbasid dynasty by positioning it as a hub of trade but also fostered a sense of unity among the diverse groups within the empire. The city's rapid growth and its reputation as a cosmopolitan center facilitated the flourishing of education, science, and culture, particularly with the establishment of the House of Wisdom (Bayt al-Hikmah), which became pivotal for knowledge translation and preservation during the Islamic Golden Age.<sup>29</sup>

Economically, under al-Mansur's regime, the Abbasid state instituted a range of fiscal and economic reforms aimed at fortifying state revenues and ensuring sustainable economic growth. Al-Mansur emphasized the importance of agriculture and trade, reforming tax policies to enhance economic productivity and creating a more effective bureaucracy to manage the state's wealth.<sup>30</sup> As trade routes expanded and agricultural practices improved, the state experienced significant economic growth, which in turn supported military expeditions and infrastructure projects that reinforced the legitimacy of Abbasid authority.<sup>31</sup>

In terms of military organization, al-Mansur recognized the need for a stable and loyal military structure to safeguard the regime against internal and external threats. He established the first standing army, which was essential for maintaining order and quelling any uprisings, thereby increasing the security and stability of the Abbasid state. Historical reports indicate that his governance laid the groundwork for what would become a complex military apparatus that served as a primary means of exerting Abbasid control across its territories.<sup>32</sup>

Al-Mansur's policies included the promotion of religious legitimacy through an alliance with the scholarly and religious classes. He actively engaged theologians and scholars, using their support to forge a narrative that positioned the Abbasid regime as

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<sup>29</sup>Pratama et al., "Bayt Al-Hikmah: Pusat Kebijaksanaan Dan Warisan Ilmu Pengetahuan Islam Dalam Peradaban Abad Pertengahan"; Arenas et al., "Karşılaştırılmalı Bir Çalışma: İbn-i Haldun Un Asabiyesi Ve Habermas In Hayat-Evreni."

<sup>30</sup>Sulaiman, "Sistem Ekonomi Dinasti Abbasiyah (Tinjauan Historis Pada Masa Pemerintahan Khalifah Al-Mansur 95 H-159 H/714 M- 775 M)."

<sup>31</sup>Sulaiman.

<sup>32</sup>Rashid, Omer, and Omar, "The Historians View (Al-Yaqubi and Al-Tabari and Al-Masoudi) for the Caliph of Abu Jaafar Al-Mansour."



the rightful leaders of the Muslim community.<sup>33</sup> By integrating Islamic principles into government policies and emphasizing religious authority through endorsements from respected scholars, he enhanced the dynasty's legitimacy and solidified its rule.

Al-Mansur's reign was characterized by a centralized philosophy of governance that sought to assert control over vast lands and diverse populations. His administration effectively managed the relations between different ethnic groups, particularly by integrating non-Arab Muslims into the administration, which helped mitigate ethnic tensions that had previously plagued the Umayyad regime. This inclusivity not only strengthened his rule but also established a sense of collective identity among the subjects of the Abbasid Caliphate.<sup>34</sup>

Abu Ja'far al-Mansur's contributions were multifaceted, encompassing urban planning, economic reforms, military organization, and the reinforcement of religious legitimacy. Each of these dimensions played a critical role in stabilizing the Abbasid dynasty and securing its position as a leading power in the Islamic world during a time of significant transition. However, beyond their immediate administrative success, al-Mansur's policies reveal a deliberate effort to transform the revolutionary energy of 'ashabiyyah into a structured mechanism of statecraft. By institutionalizing loyalty through bureaucracy, integrating diverse ethnic elements into governance, and linking religious authority with political power, al-Mansur redefined the basis of dynastic cohesion—from kinship-based solidarity to an ideological and administrative unity. This transformation not only ensured the endurance of Abbasid rule but also marked a critical evolution in Islamic political theory, illustrating how pragmatic governance, when grounded in social cohesion and religious legitimacy, could sustain imperial stability for centuries.

#### **b. The Umayyad Rule as a Common Enemy**

The Umayyad dynasty served as a common adversary that significantly contributed to the solidarity (ashabiyyah) among disparate factions, ultimately facilitating the rise of the Abbasid regime. Under Umayyad rule, various groups, including the Shi'a, non-Arab Muslims, and marginalized communities, experienced systematic exclusion and oppression, which fostered a collective animosity towards the Umayyad administration. This resentment became a critical catalyst for unification, as it engendered a sense of common purpose among these previously fragmented groups, enabling them to unite under the Abbasid banner in their pursuit of justice and reform.<sup>35</sup>

Al-Mansur's emergence as a pivotal figure in the Abbasid ascendancy was predicated on a shared experience of victimization, framing the opposition to the Umayyads not merely as a political revolution but also as a moral and social imperative to restore equity within the Islamic community (Sarifudin et al., 2024).<sup>36</sup> By advancing

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<sup>33</sup>Rashid, Omer, and Omar.

<sup>34</sup>Sulaiman, "Sistem Ekonomi Dinasti Abbasiyah (Tinjauan Historis Pada Masa Pemerintahan Khalifah Al-Mansur 95 H-159 H/714 M- 775 M)."

<sup>35</sup>Kiki W Sari, Uswatun Hasanah, and Fitria Fitria, "Opposition Movement Against the Umayyad Dynasty's Rule (661-750)," *El Tarikh Journal of History Culture and Islamic Civilization* 4, no. 1 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.24042/jhcc.v1i1.10688>.

<sup>36</sup>Husen A Sarifudin et al., "Transformasi Peradaban Dinasti Abbasiyah Perspektif Sejarah Kebudayaan Islam," *Akhlaqul Karimah JPAI* 3, no. 2 (2024): 98–112, <https://doi.org/10.58353/jak.v3i2.222>.

the narrative of the Umayyad dynasty's tyranny, al-Mansur effectively mobilized support from diverse factions, transforming tribal identities defined by *ashabiyah* into a more unified anti-Umayyad sentiment. Consequently, the common enemy narrative facilitated the resilience necessary for the Abbasid rise, enhancing group solidarity among its supporters and ensuring a stronger foundation for the new regime.

Furthermore, the policies enacted by al-Mansur following the establishment of the Abbasid dynasty were pivotal in cultivating an inclusive identity that integrated elements from diverse cultures and regions. This inclusivity further reinforced the bonds of loyalty and mutual dependence within the empire.<sup>37</sup> In contrast to the Umayyads' Arab-centric policies, this approach not only legitimized Abbasid authority but also enhanced *ashabiyah* within the empire, effectively countering the fragmentation that characterized pre-Abbasid sociopolitical structures. Essentially, the Umayyad dynasty's role as a common adversary was instrumental in fostering group solidarity among previously conflicting factions. The resultant formation of a unified front under the Abbasids, bolstered by inclusive governance and a shared narrative of liberation, laid the foundation for a dynamic and enduring dynasty that would significantly influence Islamic civilization.

## 2. Findings

### a. The Contribution of Abu Ja'far al-Mansur to the Development of Islam

#### 1) Religious Legitimacy in the Government of Abu Ja'far al-Manshur

According to Ibn Khaldun, religion is neither innate nor an absolute necessity within the sphere of power. A state can persist even without being founded on religious principles, as authority is an intrinsic aspect of human civilization's natural character (*fitrah*).<sup>38</sup> While religion is not inherently tied to power, Ibn Khaldun nonetheless highlights its significant role in supporting authority.<sup>39</sup> Religion fulfills three primary roles in the context of power: First, it acts as a guide and moral compass, steering governance towards ethics and noble values; Second, it functions as a unifying force, bolstering *ashabiyah* (social solidarity) and fostering stability and success in the exercise of power; Third, it serves as a source of legitimacy for the political system, thereby granting authority moral standing and securing the obedience of the society it governs.<sup>40</sup>

#### 2) The Spread of Islamic Da'wah

Preaching during the reign of Al-Mansur was not limited only to the spiritual dissemination of Islamic teachings, but was also used as a political and cultural instrument in building the legitimacy of the Abbasid government as the rightful successor to the leadership of the Muslim community following the fall of the Umayyad dynasty.<sup>41</sup> In this context, preaching was aimed at reinforcing the dynasty's identity through religious symbols and institutions that reflected scholarly and religious

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<sup>37</sup>Ahmad S M Riyadi and Muhammad H A Putra, "Dearabization of Islamic Government During the Abbasid Dynasty," *Journal of Islamic History and Manuscript* 1, no. 1 (2022): 53–68, <https://doi.org/10.24090/jihm.v1i1.6591>.

<sup>38</sup>Arenas et al., "Ibn Khaldun, Muqaddima: Outline on Conflict and Social Cohesion at the Dawn of Sociology or Social Theory."

<sup>39</sup>Allen James Fromherz, *Ibn Khaldun* (edinburgh university, 2010).

<sup>40</sup>Black, "The History of Islamic Political Thought: From the Prophet to the Present."

<sup>41</sup>Auer, "Symbols of Authority in Medieval Islam."

authority. Al-Mansur recognized the importance of knowledge in shaping the image of a dignified and civilized caliphate, thus he gave full support to the establishment of various strategic institutions, such as hospitals and libraries.<sup>42</sup>

#### **b. Symbolic Politics of the Abbasids**

In Islamic tradition, holy sites hold a very central position in shaping the religious identity of the community while also reflecting the manifestation of divine power in the real world.<sup>43</sup> The Grand Mosque in Mecca is the most sacred site, serving not only as the qibla for all Muslims but also as the center for the Hajj pilgrimage. Due to its universal nature and ability to unite believers from all over the world, the Grand Mosque has historically also served as a symbol of unity (tauhi>d al-ummah) and as the center of legitimacy for Islamic authority.<sup>44</sup>

Since the time of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), holy sites have been an integral part of the spiritual and social structure of the Muslim community. Muslim rulers after him—whether the Rashidun Caliphs, the Umayyad Dynasty, or the Abbasids—all recognized the importance of guarding, maintaining, and developing holy sites as part of the responsibilities of Islamic governance. These policies were not only technical-administrative measures but also carried symbolic weight as evidence of piety, concern for the community, and the legitimacy of authority. In this context, the construction or expansion of holy sites can be understood as a strategy of symbolic politics to strengthen the spiritual and moral legitimacy of a caliph in the eyes of the people.

#### **Conclusion**

Caliph Abu Ja'far al-Mansur emerged not merely as the leader of a dynasty, but as the architect of classical Islamic civilization who seamlessly united the political, religious, and social spheres. Born into an environment rich in religious values and intellectual tradition, he grew into a leader who did not only strive for power, but also rebuilt the state's structure after the fall of the Umayyads. The founding of the city of Baghdad, governmental reforms, suppression of sectarian rebellions, as well as his patronage of scholars and knowledge, demonstrate that Al-Mansur was a transformative leader who combined practical strength with a civilizational vision.

From Ibn Khaldun's perspective, this figure represents a true embodiment of the principles of *ashabiyah*—which acts as a bond for political and social power. Through collaboration among various factions, such as the Banu Hashim, the Khurasan army, and the *mawali* groups, Al-Mansur succeeded in creating a new legitimacy based on solidarity and a more inclusive ideology. In this way, he not only fostered political stability but also established a pattern of ideological *ashabiyah* that sustained Abbasid rule for centuries.

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<sup>42</sup>M Faisal Awan, "Discussions on Democracy and Islamic States" (routledge, 2021), 401–13.

<sup>43</sup>Oren Golan and Michele Martini, "Religious Live-Streaming: Constructing the Authentic in Real Time," *Information, Communication & Society* 22, no. 3 (July 7, 2017): 437–54, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118x.2017.1395472>.

<sup>44</sup>William Ochsenwald, "Saudi Arabia and the Islamic Revival," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 13, no. 3 (July 7, 1981): 271–86, <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0020743800053423>.

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