A Comparative Approach to Two Stabbilist Traditions in the Face of Revolution: A Study in the Views of al-Māwardī, al-Ghazālī, Ibn Taymiyya, and Edmund Burke

Mohsen Mohajernia
Associate Professor, Department of Politics, Research Institute of Islamic Culture and Thought, Qom, Iran (Corresponding Author) ORCID: 0000-0003-1207-6195 Mohajernia@gmail.com

Seyyed Ebrahim Masoumi
Assistant Professor, Department of Islamic Studies, Faculty of Literature and Foreign Languages, University of Kashan, Kashan, Iran. ORCID: 0009-0008-0475-9424 masomi6228@kashanu.ac.ir

Abstract
The question of the relationship between political stability and revolutionary change is among the fundamental issues in political thought, one that has been formulated differently across various intellectual traditions. Adopting a comparative approach, the present article examines two stabilist traditions in their encounter with revolution: first, the stabilism found in the views of al-Māwardī, al-Ghazālī, and Ibn Taymiyya within the framework of Sunni political jurisprudence (*fiqh*); and second, the stabilism of Edmund Burke within the tradition of Western political thought. The main research question is how these two traditions—despite their differences in historical, conceptual, and normative contexts—nevertheless adopt a cautious stance toward radical political change, and to what extent the limits and boundaries of this similarity extend.
The research has been conducted using a comparative-qualitative method, relying on content analysis. Within this framework, the texts and views of the representatives of the two aforementioned intellectual traditions have been examined in order to clarify the internal logic of their positions toward political order, revolution, chaos, reform, and authority. The research findings indicate that in both traditions, there exists a certain distrust toward abrupt and subversive transformations, and that the preservation of public order, the prevention of chaos, the safeguarding of social cohesion, and the preference for gradual reform over revolutionary change hold a fundamental place. In the tradition of Sunni political jurisprudence, this tendency is formulated through concepts such as *jamāʿa* (community), *imāmah* (leadership), *fitna* (sedition or civil strife), *ṭāʿa* (obedience), and *maṣlaḥa* (public interest); whereas in Burke's thought, the defense of stability is grounded in historical tradition, accumulated experience, institutional continuity, and a critique of abstract rationalism.
The comparative examination shows that the similarity between these two traditions cannot be taken to mean a complete unity of theoretical foundations or conceptual equivalence. Opposition to rebellion (*khurūj*), sedition, or disruption of political order in Sunni political jurisprudence is not necessarily equivalent to opposition to revolution in its modern sense; just as Burke's conservatism is not merely a static defense of the status quo, but rather pertains to a kind of gradual reformism that is anti-discontinuity. Therefore, the valid basis for comparison between these two traditions should be sought at the level of functional affinity, rather than at the level of theoretical identity.
The conclusion is that, despite serious differences in their epistemic sources, conceptual language, and normative horizons, the stabilism of Sunni political jurisprudence and Burke's conservatism draw close to one another in their assessment of the consequences of political instability and the perils of revolution. This research demonstrates that a precise understanding of this proximity

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requires avoiding hasty equivalences and paying simultaneous attention to the historical and conceptual differences of both traditions.

Keywords
Sunni political jurisprudence (*fiqh*), political stability, revolution, al-Māwardī, al-Ghazālī, Ibn Taymiyya, Edmund Burke, conservatism, stabilism, comparative analysis

1. Introduction

Political stability and the question of how to preserve order within the sphere of political thought are among the issues that have been formulated differently across various intellectual traditions. In the tradition of Sunni political jurisprudence (*fiqh*), this issue is primarily understood in relation to concepts such as *imāmah* (leadership), *jamāʿa* (community), *ṭāʿa* (obedience), *fitna* (sedition or civil strife), and *khurūj* (revolt)—meaning that the preservation of established order and the prevention of disunity take precedence over any abrupt and disruptive transformation. Accordingly, al-Māwardī, al-Ghazālī, and Ibn Taymiyya, each in their own way, have endeavored in expounding and defending political stability to prevent a rupture in the unity of the *ummah* and the descent of society into chaos. It is within this very horizon that opposition to disrupting political order is formulated not merely as a practical stance, but as a theoretical principle in political jurisprudence (Burke, 2003, p. 110; Ghazālī, 2010, p. 152).

On the other side, Edmund Burke, in his encounter with the French Revolution, critiques radical transformations and praises historical and institutional continuity, thereby defending an order grounded in experience, tradition, and caution in change. In his thought, revolution is not merely a political event, but rather a threat to the historical bonds of society and the opening of the door to instability. In this respect, Burke, like the thinkers of the Sunni political jurisprudence tradition, sides with stability—with the difference that this stability is understood within another conceptual and historical horizon and rests upon different foundations (Māwardī, 1996, p. 23; Ibn Taymiyya, 2000, p. 125).

Nevertheless, to ensure that this overlap at the level of appearances does not lead to conceptual confusion, a distinction must be made between concepts that are close but distinct. For this reason, prior to entering into the comparison, the present research delineates boundaries between revolution, rebellion, *khurūj* (revolt), *fitna* (sedition), and stabilism. In this article, revolution is understood as radical and disruptive transformation in the political and social order; rebellion as collective action against established authority; *khurūj* as the jurisprudential form of uprising against the *imām* (leader); *fitna* as a state of chaos, disorder, and disunity; and stabilism as the theoretical inclination toward preserving order and avoiding abrupt and costly transformations. The relationship between stabilism and conservatism is also significant because in Burke's thought, the defense of tradition and historical experience is accompanied by a kind of structural caution in the face of change.

The main research question is: what conceptual and methodological relationships and differences exist between stabilism in Sunni political jurisprudence and the conservatism of Edmund Burke? Can a kind of theoretical convergence be demonstrated between the logic of defending order in the works of al-Māwardī, al-Ghazālī, and Ibn Taymiyya, and the logic of defending tradition in Burke's thought—or does this similarity remain merely at the functional level, in their shared opposition to revolution? Employing a comparative-qualitative method and relying on content analysis of primary texts, this article seeks, through an examination of the internal logic of these two traditions,

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to clarify the limits of their similarity and difference in relation to the problem of stability and change.

2. Theoretical Foundations: Conceptual Definitions of Revolution and Stabilism

2.1. The Necessity of a Conceptual Distinction

One of the prerequisites for any comparative study on the subject of confronting political transformation is a precise distinction between concepts that are often used interchangeably in many texts, despite being non-identical in historical, normative, and analytical terms. In modern political literature, the concept of "revolution" typically denotes a sweeping, rapid, and subversive transformation in the political and social order; whereas in the tradition of Islamic political jurisprudence, concepts such as *khurūj* (revolt) and *fitna* (sedition) have been used more to describe rebellion against the *imām* (leader), the disruption of public order, or the descent of society into internal strife. Similarly, "rebellion" as a general concept can encompass various forms of violent disobedience or limited uprising, without necessarily possessing the comprehensive and foundational dimensions of revolution (Ibrahim, 2024). Hence, any comparison between the tradition of Sunni jurisprudence and modern conservatism, without a critical clarification of these concepts, will be exposed to historical confusion and conceptual imposition.

2.2. The Concept of Revolution

In this article, "revolution" is understood as a radical, rapid, and disruptive political transformation that leads not merely to the replacement of rulers, but to changes in the foundations of legitimacy, the structure of power, the legal order, and sometimes the dominant social model. Revolution, in this sense, is not identical to limited protest, coup d'état, localized rebellion, or mere political discontent; for it entails a claim to the re-establishment of political order and the replacement of the prior foundations of authority. Accordingly, the concept of revolution in its modern sense is most closely associated with the modern political experience, and in particular with models such as the French Revolution—a model in which rupture from tradition, redefinition of sovereignty, and reconstruction of the social order are pursued on a comprehensive scale (Motahhari, 1989, p. 36; Mohajernia, 2022, p. 28; Amid Zanjani, 1998, p. 10; Malakoutian, 2020, p. 38). Consequently, it must be noted that the application of this concept in the analysis of classical Islamic texts is always accompanied by a certain methodological caution; for these texts often speak in a language and with concepts different from the literature on revolution in its modern sense.

2.3. Rebellion

"Rebellion" in this article is regarded as a broader concept than revolution and refers to any collective action against established authority, which can range from violent protest and limited uprising to more extensive political movements. Rebellion does not necessarily seek a fundamental transformation in the construction of legitimacy or social order, and may merely be a temporary reaction to oppression, inefficiency, or contestation over power. From this perspective, every revolution typically entails some form of rebellion, but not every rebellion is a revolution (Huntington, 1991, p. 86; Malakoutian, 2020, p. 42). This distinction is important for the present article, because much of what has been discussed in the jurisprudential tradition under opposition to the ruler or disruption of political order pertains to situations that are more explainable in terms of the concept of rebellion or *khurūj* (revolt) than revolution in its precise modern sense.

2.4. *Khurūj* (Revolt)

Khurūj (revolt) in the literature of Islamic political jurisprudence is a relatively more specific and more normative concept than rebellion, and typically refers to defiance or uprising against the *imām* (leader) or the established ruler. This concept has been formulated in connection with the issues of obedience, preservation of the community (*jamāʿa*), prohibition of disunity, and

prevention of internal bloodshed; hence, rather than being merely a political description, it carries a jurisprudential judgment as well. *Khurūj* in this tradition has generally been understood not as an attempt at the fundamental reconstruction of political order, but as a form of disrupting established authority and threatening the unity of the *ummah*. For this reason, a significant part of the sensitivity of Sunni jurists (*fuqahāʾ*) toward *khurūj* is rooted in the concern for preserving order, preventing the conflictual pluralism of rival claimants to power, and safeguarding the integrity of the political community (Mohajernia, 2022, p. 41; Amid Zanjani, 1998, p. 13). Nevertheless, *khurūj* should not be simplistically equated with any revolution in the modern sense; for the scope, context, and conceptual burden of the two are not identical.

2.5. *Fitna* (Sedition)

Fitna (sedition) in the Islamic tradition is a key and yet multi-layered concept that encompasses a spectrum of meanings, from trial and tribulation to chaos, disunity, civil war, and disruption of social order. In the literature of political jurisprudence, *fitna* often refers to a situation in which the authority of legitimate rule is weakened, the boundaries between obedience and opposition become blurred, and society is exposed to a widespread and debilitating conflict. In this respect, *fitna* is not merely a political event, but rather a condition that threatens security, social cohesion, and the possibility of collective life. The significance of this concept for the present article lies in the fact that a significant portion of the opposition by the jurists under discussion to uprising against the ruler is formulated not merely in defense of the ruler as such, but out of fear of society falling into a state of *fitna* (Zare, 2000, p. 58; Malakoutian, 2020, p. 46). Thus, *fitna* can be regarded as one of the most important conceptual links in explaining jurisprudential stabilism—a concept that, in terms of political function, is to some extent comparable to the conservative concern over anarchy and the collapse of order, though it is not identical with it in terms of religious and semantic context.

2.6. Stabilism

"Stabilism" in this article is defined not as a codified and uniform school of thought, but rather as an intellectual tendency in which the preservation of political order and the continuity of society are preferred over abrupt and costly transformations. Stabilism is premised on the assumption that any political order—even if it possesses shortcomings—is in many cases less costly than a state of disorder, civil war, or the collapse of public authority. From this perspective, stabilism does not mean an absolute defense of every status quo or the negation of the possibility of reform; rather, it more significantly denotes a preference for gradual reform, caution in change, and distrust toward the uncontrollable consequences of radical transformations (Pye, 1966, p. 43; Huntington, 1968, p. 80). In the Sunni jurisprudential tradition, this tendency manifests through emphasis on *jamāʿa* (community), *ṭāʿa* (obedience), prohibition of *khurūj* (revolt), and avoidance of *fitna* (sedition); whereas in Burke's thought, it appears as defense of tradition, historical institutions, accumulated experience, and opposition to the abstract reconstruction of social order.

2.7. Relationship between Stabilism and Conservatism

Although a kind of functional affinity can be observed between stabilism in Sunni political jurisprudence and Burkean conservatism, the two should not be readily regarded as synonymous. Conservatism—particularly in its modern sense—has been formulated within the context of modern European developments and in reaction to abstract rationalism, extreme individualism, and the French Revolution; whereas stabilism in the Sunni tradition of political jurisprudence has taken shape in a different context and relies on concepts such as Sharia (divine law), *ummah* (community), *khilāfa* (caliphate), and the avoidance of *fitna* (sedition). Hence, the use of the concept of stabilism in this article is an attempt to avoid the hasty application of the

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label "conservatism" to thinkers who think within a different conceptual and historical horizon. In other words, "stabilism" here is an intermediate and analytical concept that makes comparison possible without leading to a complete assimilation of the two traditions (Ibn Taymiyya, 2000, p. 138; Burke, 2003, p. 194).

Drawing on this conceptual distinction, it can be said that the main subject of the present article is not the absolute examination of any form of political opposition, but rather the analysis of two different modes of theoretical defense of order against severe and disruptive transformations. Within this framework, "revolution" in the sense of radical and divisive transformation, "rebellion" in the general sense of uprising against established authority, *khurūj* (revolt) as a specific jurisprudential concept concerning defiance of the *imām* (leader), and *fitna* (sedition) as a state of chaos and the collapse of social cohesion—each occupies a distinct place in the formulation of the problem. Accordingly, stabilism, as the central concept of the article, makes it possible to analyze the commonalities and divergences between Sunni political jurisprudence and Burkean conservatism in confronting radical change, without conflating concepts and without imposing one tradition upon another.

3. Stabilism in Sunni Political Jurisprudence: Components and Foundations

Stabilism in Sunni political jurisprudence cannot be regarded as a coherent and uniform theory with fully systematic components; rather, it is more appropriate to speak of it as a dominant tendency within a part of this tradition—a tendency in which the preservation of political order, the safeguarding of the Muslim community, and the prevention of society from falling into *fitna* (sedition) are prioritized over many forms of radical political transformation. This tendency is not merely the product of political pragmatism, but arises from a combination of jurisprudential, theological, historical, and social considerations. For this reason, understanding stabilism in this tradition requires simultaneous attention to the logic of legitimacy, the question of obedience (*ṭāʿa*), the place of the community, the historical experience of internal conflicts in the Islamic world, and the concern over the consequences of the rupture of political authority.

One of the primary components of this stabilism is the centrality of the community and the unity of the *ummah*. In the tradition of Sunni political jurisprudence, the gathering of Muslims under a single political authority is not regarded merely as an administrative matter or conventional expediency, but rather as part of the very conditions for the possibility of the religious and social life of the Islamic community. From this perspective, political disunity does not merely signify the collapse of governance, but also constitutes a threat to the entirety of the *ummah* and paves the way for conflict, insecurity, and disruption in the implementation of religious rulings (*aḥkām*). For this reason, many jurists and thinkers of this tradition—even when confronted with an unjust ruler—have preferred caution in abandoning rebellion and avoiding internal conflict, because they considered the cost of the disintegration of the community in many cases to be greater than the continuation of imperfect governance (Māwardī, 1996, pp. 20–25). In this framework, the main issue is not an ethical defense of all the actions by the ruler, but rather the defense of the very principle of political cohesion of society against fragmentation and chaos.

The second component is the priority of order over disorder. In this tradition, governance has generally been regarded as preferable to a state of statelessness, continuous conflict, and multiple rival claimants to power. This perception arises from the fact that political order is the condition for security, adjudication, the execution of penal provisions (*ḥudūd*), the protection of Islamic territory, and the regulation of social relations. Therefore, any action that disrupts this framework in an abrupt and unpredictable manner must, from the perspective of many Sunni jurists, be viewed with caution. This attitude has been reinforced particularly in the context of the historical

experiences of early Islam and the subsequent conflicts—experiences that have consolidated in the political memory of Muslims the notion of *fitna* (sedition) as a costly, bloody, and difficult-to-contain condition (Amir-Moezzi, 2016, pp. 82–83). Accordingly, the preference for existing order over potential chaos has become an implicit rule within a significant part of this tradition.

The third component is the prohibition or restriction of *khurūj* (revolt) against the ruler. In the works of al-Māwardī, al-Ghazālī, and Ibn Taymiyya, although there are differences in foundations and modes of expression, a general distrust toward uprising against the established ruler can be observed—a distrust that stems less from satisfaction with oppression and more from fear of the social and political consequences of *khurūj*. Here, *khurūj* is regarded not merely as an action against an individual ruler, but as a factor in severing the chain of authority, inciting conflict, and destroying collective security. Of course, this position does not mean absolute legitimation of despotism; rather, it signifies that in conditions where low-cost reform and a reliable alternative to authority are unavailable, rebellion may create a situation worse than the existing one (Hassan, 2017, p. 99; Yılmaz, 2018, p. 75; Gibb, 1982, p. 173). Consequently, the logic of prohibiting *khurūj*, in many cases, is a consequentialist logic oriented toward the public interest (*maṣlaḥa*).

The fourth component is the fear of *fitna* as an interpretive horizon of politics. *Fitna* in this tradition is not merely a political label for opposition, but rather a foundational concept for understanding moments of crisis, disruption of authority, conflict among social forces, and the collapse of public security. In other words, the Sunni jurist or political thinker frequently evaluates political action within a horizon in which the danger of *fitna* is always actually or potentially present (Māwardī, 2004, pp. 77, 117). Hence, the judgment concerning the legitimacy or illegitimacy of opposition to the ruler is not made solely on the basis of abstract right and wrong, but is also measured against the possibility of *fitna* occurring. This very factor causes political caution to attain a high status in this tradition, and the abrupt change of power—even in the presence of dissatisfaction with the ruler—to be regarded as highly perilous.

The fifth component is the predominance of the logic of gradual reform over radical transformation. Although one cannot speak of a modern theory of gradual reform in Sunni political jurisprudence, in practice and at the level of political advice, an implicit preference can be observed for curbing corruption, advising rulers, calling for justice, and reducing oppression—without collapsing the very principle of political order. Particularly in the tradition of *naṣīḥat al-mulūk* (advice to kings), criticism of the ruler and the call for his justice, alongside abstention from undermining the foundations of authority, form a model of non-revolutionary reform. Here, the survival of the political order is presupposed, and efforts for reform are pursued within that same framework (Nasafī, 2009, pp. 353–354; Ibn Khaldūn, 1967, p. 156). This issue represents one of the important points of distinction between jurisprudential stabilism and revolutionary approaches, which regard the fundamental transformation of the structure of power as a precondition for the elimination of corruption.

The sixth component is the link between political stability and the possibility of realizing the Sharia. In the view of many thinkers of this tradition, the Sharia is not realized in a political vacuum; the implementation of jurisprudential rulings, the safeguarding of religious penal provisions, the protection of Islamic territory, the defense of the Muslim community, and the regulation of social relations all require a kind of stable political authority. Consequently, the preservation of the state or governance (*imāra*) is regarded as a prerequisite for the preservation of religion and worldly affairs. This very close connection between political order and the possibility of implementing the Sharia causes the collapse of authority to be considered not merely

a political crisis, but also a kind of disruption in the conditions for the realization of religious life (Ghazālī, 2010, pp. 200–205; Ibn Taymiyya, 2000, p. 172). Therefore, stabilism in this tradition is not merely a conventional preference for security, but at deeper levels, is tied to a religious understanding of the necessity of order.

Among the thinkers under discussion, al-Māwardī formulates stabilism primarily in the form of the necessity of the *imāma* (leadership or governance) and its functions for the preservation of religion and the governance of worldly affairs. In his view, the existence of the *imām* (leader) is essential for preventing chaos and ensuring the implementation of rulings, and this very necessity provides a basis for preferring the continuity of political authority over its collapse. Al-Ghazālī, with greater emphasis on the necessity of the *sulṭān* (ruler or monarch) for the preservation of worldly order, explains the relationship between religion and power in such a way that the absence of rule appears far more perilous than tolerating imperfect governance. In his view, political order is the condition for the preservation of social life and the possibility of religiosity. Ibn Taymiyya, although in some instances shows particular sensitivity toward justice and commanding right and forbidding wrong (Ibn Taymiyya, 2000, p. 96; Māwardī, 1996, pp. 60–65), nevertheless insists that the absence of authority and the spread of conflict lead society into a condition in which oppression and corruption become more widespread. Thus, in all three thinkers, despite important differences, a kind of preference for stability over instability and caution regarding rebellion can be observed.

That said, it is necessary to avoid any excessive homogenization. Stabilism in Sunni political jurisprudence is neither present to the same degree in all thinkers nor formulated in a single sense. Moreover, this tendency by no means implies complete satisfaction with oppression or the total elimination of the possibility of criticizing power. What is prominent in this tradition, above all, is the political calculus of the costs of change: whether disrupting the established order truly leads to a better situation or plunges society into a greater *fitna* (sedition). Thus, stabilism should be regarded as a kind of cautious political rationality in which the survival and cohesion of society are preferred over uncertain hopes for abrupt transformation.

Accordingly, stabilism in Sunni political jurisprudence can be summarized in several main axes: the preference for the community over disunity, the preference for order over chaos, the restriction of *khurūj* (revolt), the fear of *fitna* (sedition), the priority of intra-structural reform over revolution, and the linkage of political authority with the possibility of realizing the Sharia. This set of components provides the necessary groundwork for comparison with Burkean conservatism; for in both traditions, a kind of shared sensitivity toward the costs of instability and the unpredictable consequences of political rupture can be observed. Nevertheless, as will follow, this commonality at the level of consequence and function does not preclude serious differences at the level of foundations, conceptual language, and historical context.

4. Edmund Burke's Conservatism: Components and Foundations

Edmund Burke's conservatism must be regarded as one of the most important theoretical reactions to the problem of radical transformation in the modern world. Burke, particularly in his encounter with the French Revolution, sought to demonstrate that political society cannot be conceived as an abstract plan amenable to reconstruction from scratch. From his perspective, political order is not the product of a simple contract or the momentary will of human beings, but rather takes shape over the course of time, tradition, historical experience, social habits, and gradually tested institutions. Hence, any attempt at an abrupt rupture with the past and the complete recreation of the social order on the basis of abstract principles can lead, instead of freedom and progress, to instability, violence, and new despotism (Burke, 2003, p. 202; O'Gorman, 1973, p. 56). In this

sense, Burke's conservatism is less a mere defense of the status quo than a defense of the rationality embedded in historical continuity and caution in change.

One of the main components of Burke's thought is the primacy of tradition and historical experience. Burke holds that political and social institutions have taken shape over time, through a gradual process and by way of trial and error, and for this reason, they carry within themselves a kind of accumulated wisdom that cannot be replaced by purely theoretical reasoning. In his view, tradition is not merely a remnant of the past or an obstacle to innovation, but rather a repository of the practical experience of society, consolidated in the form of law, custom, institutions, and social relations (Burke, 2003, pp. 186–187; Cone, 1960, p. 45). Accordingly, disregard for tradition means ignoring the complexities of social life and placing excessive trust in the capacity of abstract reason for engineering society.

The second component is distrust of abstract rationalism and political engineering. Burke opposes those political approaches that suppose society can be redesigned on the basis of a few general principles, severing all connection with history and tradition. In his view, society is a living and complex organism, not a mechanical device whose parts can be arbitrarily disassembled and reorganized. For this reason, revolutionary projects that seek to entirely overturn the ancient order by relying on abstract concepts such as the general will or pure rights are, in Burke's view, guilty of a dangerous oversimplification (Burke, 2003, p. 151; Hampshire-Monk, 1987, p. 89). This distrust of abstract rationalism is one of the most central aspects of his conservatism, and it is precisely at this point that his opposition to the French Revolution acquires meaning.

The third component is the preference for gradual reform over radical change. Burke does not oppose change as such; what he rejects is rupture-inducing, hasty change lacking any connection to the historical contexts of society. In his view, if society stands in need of reform, that reform must proceed along the lines of traditions, with an awareness of the limitations of social reality and with due regard for the capacity of existing institutions. Within this framework, reform is not the negation of the entire past, but rather a cautious and gradual revision of it (Burke, 2003, p. 119; Hobbes, 1996, p. 236). Hence, Burke's conservatism should not be equated with rigidity or the denial of any political change; rather, it should be understood as an approach that deems change justified only when it is endogenous, gradual, and commensurate with the historical structure of society.

The fourth component is the fear of the collapse of order and the unpredictable consequences of revolution. Burke does not regard revolution merely as the transfer of power from one group to another, but rather as a rupture that can expose all the moral, legal, and institutional foundations of society to destruction. In his view, once the sanctity of traditions and the authority of longstanding institutions are eroded, society enters a state in which violence, extremism, instability, and even a new despotism become possible (Burke, 2003, p. 110). Therefore, one of the main motivations of Burke's conservatism is not merely an emotional attachment to the past, but rather a profound concern over the power vacuum, social anomie, and the emergence of forces that can no longer be easily contained. In this sense, his opposition to revolution represents a specific formulation of the defense of order against political chaos.

The fifth component is the organic understanding of society. Burke does not view society as a collection of isolated and disconnected individuals, but rather as a living historical whole that links past, present, and future generations to one another. This conception does not reduce society to a transient contract or something dissolvable by the momentary will of individuals. On this basis, Burke also regards politics as something that must be understood in connection with historical memory, collective sentiments, traditions, and social continuity (Burke, 2006, pp. 144–150). This

very organic conception of society makes him pessimistic about revolutionary ruptures; for in his view, revolution severs the chain of historical bonds and deprives society of its meaningful and institutional supports.

The sixth component is the valorization of intermediary institutions and historical hierarchies. In Burke's thought, the stability of society is not maintained solely through central authority; rather, intermediary institutions, established customs, gradual power relations, and social bonds also contribute to it. From this perspective, revolution becomes dangerous when it shatters not only sovereignty but also these intermediate layers of society, replacing them with an abstract, uniform, and rootless structure. Consequently, Burke's defense of political order is not merely a state-centered defense, but rather extends to the wider network of institutional and social relations that make the equilibrium of society possible.

The seventh component is the relationship between liberty and order. In opposition to certain revolutionary readings that seek liberty in the rupture of all historical bonds, Burke holds that genuine liberty is possible only within the context of stable order, law, institutions, and political custom. Liberty, if severed from its moral and institutional framework, may lead to unruliness, chaos, and ultimately to a harsher domination (Burke, 2003, pp. 95–100; Oakeshott, 1991, pp. 168–170). Thus, in Burke's thought, liberty and order are not opposites but rather two interrelated truths, the absence of one threatening the other. This conception is one of the main reasons for his critique of the French Revolution; for he believed that by destroying the foundations of order, the revolution emptied liberty of its substance from within.

The outcome of these components is that Burke's conservatism can be regarded as a kind of caution-centered political rationality. This rationality emphasizes the cognitive limitations of human beings in fully understanding and engineering society, accords fundamental status to tradition and historical experience, and is distrustful of sudden transformations and radical programs of reconstruction. Within such a horizon, stability is not merely stasis, but rather the condition for the continuity of social life and the possibility of reasonable reform. For this reason, Burke, while accepting the principle of reform, opposes revolution as a form of abrupt and subversive rupture.

Nevertheless, just as oversimplification must be avoided with regard to jurisprudential stabilism, Burke's conservatism too should not be reduced to an unconditional defense of every existing order. The main issue in his thought is the defense of historical continuity, social complexity, and political caution, not the absolute sanctification of any type of power. Rather than deriving legitimacy merely from the existence of order, he insists that every stable order is the product of layers of historical experience and tested mechanisms, the abrupt overthrow of which may prove detrimental to society. Hence, Burke's opposition to revolution is, in essence, opposition to a particular form of politics that seeks to rebuild society from the ground up on the basis of abstract principles.

In conclusion, if we wish to summarize Burke's conservatism in several main axes, we must refer to the following elements: the primacy of tradition and experience, distrust of abstract rationalism, preference for gradual reform, fear of the consequences of revolutionary rupture, an organic understanding of society, valorization of intermediary institutions, and the linkage of liberty with order. These elements provide a suitable ground for comparison with stabilism in Sunni political jurisprudence; for in both, a kind of shared concern over instability and the collapse of order can be observed. Nevertheless, the fundamental differences in the source of legitimacy, conceptual language, normative basis, and historical context indicate that these two traditions must be assessed in terms of "functional similarity," rather than in the mold of complete theoretical identity.

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5. Comparative Analysis of Stabilism in Sunni Political Jurisprudence (*Fiqh*) and Edmund Burke's Conservatism

Having elucidated the components of stabilism in Sunni political jurisprudence and reconstructed the main elements of Edmund Burke's conservatism, it is now possible to examine the relationship between these two traditions at an analytical level. The main question in this comparison is whether a theoretical resemblance can be established between the two, or whether one should speak merely of a kind of functional affinity and overlap in political consequences. The answer of this research, based on the examination of concepts and historical contexts, is that although there are significant similarities between these two traditions in the preference for stability over radical transformation, these similarities arise less from unity in theoretical foundations than from a shared political sensitivity to the perils of revolution, the collapse of order, and the rupture of authority. Therefore, the comparison of these two traditions is valid only if undertaken at a limited, constrained, and non-imposed level.

5.1. Points of Commonality: Preference for Stability over Radical Change

The first and most obvious point of commonality between stabilism in Sunni political jurisprudence and Burke's conservatism is distrust of abrupt and radical transformations. In both traditions, there exists the conception that the sudden disruption of the established political order—even if accompanied by claims of justice, reform, or liberation—can produce consequences far more harmful than the shortcomings of the existing order. In Sunni political jurisprudence, this concern is formulated in the language of fear of *fitnai* (sedition), the schism of the community, and the decline of public security; whereas in Burke's thought, the same concern appears in the language of the collapse of historical institutions, revolutionary chaos, and despotism arising from the vacuum of order (Hassan, 2017, p. 99; Burke, 2003, p. 194). Thus, both traditions evaluate political changes not merely in terms of intention or declared ideals, but in terms of their likely consequences for society as a whole.

The second point of commonality is the priority of preserving social order over the unconditional pursuit of the ideal of change. In both intellectual frameworks, political order is not merely an administrative mechanism for governing society, but rather the very foundation for the possibility of social life and the condition for preventing the collapse of human relations. Hence, whenever political change is such that it endangers the very principle of order, it is viewed with doubt and caution. In the Sunni jurisprudential tradition, this order is tied to the preservation of the community, political authority, and the possibility of implementing the Sharia (Ibn Khaldūn, 1967, p. 156; Māwardī, 1996, pp. 65–70; Ibn Taymiyyah, 2000, p. 112). Whereas in Burke's thought, order acquires meaning through the continuity of tradition, the survival of historical institutions, and the persistence of social cohesion. Despite these differences, in both cases a kind of shared belief in the intrinsic—or at least functional—value of political order can be observed.

The third point of commonality is the preference for gradual reform over revolution. Both traditions, in their overall outlook, seek the desirable solution not in the abrupt overthrow of order, but rather in its gradual adjustment, reform, and restoration. In Sunni political jurisprudence, this is often pursued in the form of advising rulers, calling for justice, commanding right and forbidding wrong, and reducing corruption within the framework of political authority (Ibn Taymiyya, 2000, p. 165; Anjum, 2012, p. 146). In Burke's thought as well, reform is legitimate and desirable only when it proceeds along the lines of traditions, with an understanding of the limitations of society, and without severing the thread of historical continuity. Consequently, both traditions, in contrast to revolutionary politics, prefer a kind of reformist and cautious politics.

The fourth point of commonality is the political understanding of the limits of human agency in controlling the consequences of change. In both traditions, there exists a kind of distrust toward the assumption that human beings can fully predict and control the consequences of a major political transformation. In Sunni political jurisprudence, this distrust manifests primarily in the form of attention to the outcomes (*maʾālāt*) of actions, assessment of detriment (*mafsada*), and concern over the spread of *fitnah* (sedition). In Burke, this same caution appears in the form of a critique of the rational engineering of society and skepticism toward the complete reconstruction of the social order on the basis of abstract principles (Māwardī, 1996, p. 27; Ghazālī, 2010, pp. 225–230). Thus, in both traditions, there exists a kind of cautious rationality regarding the limited capacity of human beings in designing and directing major political transformations.

5.2. Points of Divergence: Differences in the Foundations of Legitimacy and Conceptual Language

Despite the aforementioned commonalities, the most important point in this comparison is the difference in the theoretical and normative foundations of the two traditions. In Sunni political jurisprudence, stabilism is formulated in relation to concepts such as *imāma* (leadership), community, Sharia, obedience, *fitna*, and *maṣlaḥa* (public interest). The question of stability here is not merely that of preserving the state or preventing violence, but is also tied to the preservation of religion, the implementation of rulings, and the safeguarding of the Islamic *ummah*. In other words, political order in this tradition carries a religious and *ummah*-centered meaning. In Burke's thought, however, the defense of stability is grounded in historical tradition, accumulated experience, inherited institutions, social continuity, and a critique of abstract rationalism (Burke, 2003, p. 119). Hence, although both traditions defend stability, one speaks within a jurisprudential-religious horizon, while the other speaks within a historical-social and modern political horizon.

The second difference is the difference in the source of legitimacy of political order. In the tradition of Sunni political jurisprudence, the legitimacy of order is measured—at least at the theoretical level—by its relationship to the Sharia, the preservation of the community, and the functions of the *imāma* (leadership). Even in cases where governance falls short of ideal standards, its preservation may be preferred on account of its function in preventing *fitnah* (sedition) and disruption in the implementation of rulings. In Burke, however, legitimacy derives more from historical continuity, the function of institutions, tested traditions, and the bond between generations (Māwardī, 1996, p. 39; Nasafī, 2009, p. 74). Here, tradition is significant not in the sense of religious obligation, but rather as the bearer of the historical wisdom of society. Consequently, although both defend order, the source of the validity of that order is not the same in the two traditions.

The third difference is the difference in the question of the political agent and the object of concern. In Sunni political jurisprudence, the central issue is often the relationship between the *ummah* (community) and the *imām* (leader) or ruler, and the relationship between obedience and *khurūj* (revolt). For this reason, stabilism in this tradition is frequently formulated around the question of sovereignty, obedience, the community, and internal conflict. In Burke's thought, however, the issue is not merely the relationship between the people and the state, but rather the entirety of historical society, intermediary institutions, traditions, and social structures constitute the main object of reflection. Burke speaks of society as an organic whole (Hassan, 2017, p. 99; Marlow, 2021, p. 84). Whereas in Sunni political jurisprudence, the language of discourse is more jurisprudential, duty-oriented, and focused on preserving the religious community. This difference

at the level of the subject matter directly affects the way stability and revolution are understood in the two traditions.

The fourth difference is the difference in the historical context in which the two approaches took shape. Stabilism in Sunni political jurisprudence developed within the context of the early experiences of intra-Islamic conflicts, the question of the caliphate, civil wars, and the necessity of preserving the unity of the *ummah* (community). In contrast, Burke's conservatism is a reaction to the political crises of modernity, particularly the French Revolution and the new forms of mass, ideological, and rationalist politics (Ibn Taymiyya, 2000, p. 142; Burke, 2003, pp. 105–110). Thus, although both traditions adopt a cautious stance toward political rupture, the type of crisis they face is not the same. This contextual difference prevents hasty generalizations and complete analogies between the two.

5.3. Differences in the Concept of Revolution and Misguided Equivalences

One of the sensitive points in this comparison is the issue of equivalence of concepts. In Sunni political jurisprudence, terms such as *khurūj* (revolt), *fitna* (sedition), *baghy* (rebellion), or *shaqq ʿaṣā al-jamāʿa* (breaking the staff of the community) are not precisely equivalent to the modern concept of "revolution." Each of these concepts carries its own specific semantic weight and was formed in a context different from modern political theory. *Khurūj* is a normative concept in relation to the *imām* (leader) or ruler; *fitna* pertains to chaos, conflict, and disruption in social and religious order; *baghy* likewise has its own specific meaning and rulings in the jurisprudential tradition. Whereas revolution—particularly in its modern sense—generally refers to a fundamental and reconstructive transformation in the structure of power and political order (Burke, 2003, pp. 186–187; Nuʿmān, 2004, p. 83). Hence, if the opposition of Sunni jurists to *khurūj* or *fitna* is readily treated as equivalent to opposition to modern revolution, the comparison will veer toward conceptual imposition.

The same point applies to Burke's thought as well. Burke takes a stance against the French Revolution, but his opposition to revolution is not precisely of the same kind as the jurisprudential prohibition of *khurūj* (revolt). He speaks from a historical, institutional, and social perspective, and sees the crisis in the collapse of the moral and political fabric of society. Thus, although in both cases there exists a kind of opposition to radical change, these two oppositions are not of the same kind in terms of language, foundation, and subject matter. The conclusion is that conceptual precision requires that the comparison between these two traditions not be conducted at the level of "full equivalence of concepts," but rather on the basis of "similarity in political function."

5.4. The Valid Level of Comparison: Functional Similarity, Not Foundational Unity

On this basis, it can be said that the most valid level for comparing these two traditions is the level of functional similarity. What is meant by functional similarity is that both traditions—despite differences in foundations, language, and historical context—arrive at similar conclusions in practice regarding the evaluation of political transformation: both are distrustful of revolution, both emphasize the costs of instability, both prefer gradual reform over abrupt transformation, and both regard the collapse of order as a major threat to society. However, this similarity at the level of outcome should not lead to the notion that there exists between them a common theoretical lineage or complete conceptual correspondence (Burke, 2003, pp. 105–110; Dallal, 2015, p. 42). In fact, what justifies the comparison is the similarity in the formulation of a shared political problem: How can society be protected against the destructiveness of radical changes?

Within this same framework, jurisprudential stabilism cannot be regarded merely as a pre-modern version of modern conservatism, just as Burke's conservatism is not a secular translation of that same jurisprudential logic. Both traditions have taken shape within different civilizational horizons

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and have engaged with different questions. Nevertheless, their comparison can be methodologically fruitful, for it shows how two asynchronous and contextually different intellectual traditions, when confronted with the crisis of political order, arrive at similar solutions at the level of political advice. This overlap is not a sign of identity of essence, but rather evidence of the possibility of the emergence of caution-centered rationalities in different historical contexts.

5.5. The Limits of Comparison and Avoiding Oversimplification

One of the important conclusions of this comparison is that two common errors must be avoided. The first error is excessive homogenization—that is, regarding jurisprudential stabilism and Burkean conservatism as two expressions of a single truth. Such an understanding overlooks the profound religious, historical, conceptual, and normative differences between the two traditions. The second error is deeming any comparison impossible, as though the difference in contexts entirely invalidates any kind of comparative assessment. The middle path is to regard these two traditions not as identical, but as comparable at the level of the problem and function (Mernissi, 2000, p. 103). At this level, comparison can help clarify the internal logic of both traditions and demonstrate how the defense of political stability has been formulated within different intellectual horizons.

In conclusion, it can be said that stabilism in Sunni political jurisprudence and Edmund Burke's conservatism both represent a kind of cautious political rationality in the face of radical transformations. In both, one finds the preservation of political and social order, the avoidance of chaos, distrust toward the unpredictable consequences of revolution, and the preference for gradual reform over revolutionary rupture. However, jurisprudential stabilism is grounded in concepts such as the Sharia, *jamāʿa* (community), *imāma* (leadership), *ṭāʿa* (obedience), and *fitna* (sedition), whereas Burke's conservatism relies on historical tradition, intermediary institutions, accumulated experience, and a critique of abstract rationalism. Hence, one must speak of "functional affinity" between these two traditions, rather than "theoretical identity." The advantage of this formulation is that it both preserves the possibility of comparison and prevents the imposition of modern concepts onto classical Islamic texts, or vice versa.

Conclusion

This research has undertaken a comparative study of two intellectual traditions in their opposition to revolution: stabilism in Sunni political jurisprudence, with an emphasis on the views of al-Māwardī, al-Ghazālī, and Ibn Taymiyyah, and the conservatism of Edmund Burke. The main question is whether a theoretical kinship can be established between these two approaches, or whether comparison is only possible with due attention to conceptual and historical differences. The main conclusion shows that despite significant similarities in the preference for stability over radical change, these similarities indicate less a foundational unity and more a functional affinity in assessing the perils of political instability. For a valid comparison, it is first necessary to distinguish between the concepts of revolution, rebellion, *khurūj* (revolt), and *fitna* (sedition). In the jurisprudential tradition, *khurūj* and *fitna* acquire meaning in relation to *jamāʿa* (community), *imāma* (leadership), and the public interest (*maṣlaḥa*), and they cannot be equated with modern revolution. Likewise, Burke's opposition to the French Revolution is understandable within the context of tradition, historical experience, and a critique of abstract rationalism. Therefore, the comparison is valid only when hasty equivalence of concepts is avoided.

In examining jurisprudential stabilism, it became clear that this tendency is not a uniform theory, but rather a dominant inclination centered on the preservation of the community, the priority of order over chaos, the restriction of *khurūj*, the fear of *fitna*, the preference for gradual reform, and

the linkage of stability with the implementation of the Sharia. Al-Māwardī, al-Ghazālī, and Ibn Taymiyya—despite their differences—share a common concern over the collapse of political authority and regard the rupture of order as leading to internal conflict and the weakening of religion. This approach is a caution-centered rationality that views radical change with suspicion due to its likely consequences.

In Burke's thought, conservatism is not a simple defense of the status quo, but rather an outlook on the complexity of society, the primacy of tradition, the limitations of abstract reason, and the necessity of gradual reform. He does not regard society as capable of being redesigned from scratch, and considers political institutions as bearers of accumulated historical wisdom, an abrupt rupture from which leads to chaos and new despotism. Burke's conservatism too is a cautious rationality, but within a different historical-social horizon.

The most important point of commonality between the two traditions is distrust of the unpredictable consequences of revolution, the valorization of social order, and the preference for gradual reform over abrupt overthrow. In both, politics is the arena for weighing the real costs of change and the capacity of society to endure crisis. But the foundational differences are significant: in political jurisprudence, stability acquires meaning in relation to the Sharia, *jamāʿa*, and *imāma*, whereas in Burke's thought it rests on historical tradition, intermediary institutions, and a critique of political engineering. One speaks within a religious-jurisprudential and *ummah*-centered horizon, while the other speaks within a historical-social and institutional horizon.

The methodological conclusion of the article is that the relationship between these two traditions should be understood in terms of functional similarity, rather than theoretical unity. This distinction prevents excessive homogenization while preserving analytical utility. If overlooked, either jurisprudential texts are reread through modern concepts, or Burke's thought is reduced to a simplistic framework. However, comparison at the level of function and political problem shows that the two traditions have arrived at close—but not identical—responses. Ultimately, opposition to revolution does not necessarily arise from a single theoretical source; at times it stems from religious concern over *fitna* and disunity, and at other times from historical reflection on the fragility of social order. This conclusion enables a more precise understanding of varieties of stabilism and demonstrates that the defense of political order carries different meanings depending on the civilizational context. Rather than homogenization, the article contributes to clarifying the boundaries of scholarly comparison.

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