

The Formation Of The Curriculum Of The Nizhamiyah Madrasah Of Baghdad: The Politics Of Knowledge And The Construction Of Sunni Orthodoxy In The Time Of Nizam Al-Mulk (1067–1092)

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Abstract

Departing from the problem that the study of Nizhamiyah has tended to stop at historical descriptions of the establishment of institutions, teaching figures, and their contribution to the development of classical Islamic education, this study places the curriculum as a strategic arena where knowledge is selected, sorted, legitimized, and distributed. This study aims to explain: first, how the curriculum formation of Madrasah Nizhamiyah Baghdad was formed; second, how the politics of knowledge affects the selection and hierarchy of disciplines in it; and third, how the curriculum functions in the construction of Sunni orthodoxy and the reproduction of Islamic scientific authority in the Saljuk era. This research method is a qualitative literature study with an intellectual history approach and knowledge genealogical analysis inspired by Michel Foucault. Primary sources include Nizam al-Mulk's Siyasatnama, al-Ghazali's works, and classical historical sources; while secondary sources include the work of George Makdisi, Jonathan Berkey, Marshall Hodgson, Michael Chamberlain, Ira Lapidus, and contemporary studies of madrassas and Sunni orthodoxy. The findings of the study show that the Nizhamiyah curriculum is not neutral and is not

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solely in the form of a list of subjects. The curriculum was formed through the political patronage of Saljuk to produce Sunni orthodoxy that could function as a discipline, authority, and reproduction system of the elite of scholars.

Keywords: Curriculum; Madrasah Nizhamiyah; Nizam al-Mulk; Politics Knowledge; Sunni Orthodoxy.

INTRODUCTION

The 11th century was one of the important turning points in the history of Islamic education. In this phase, the Islamic world is no longer only marked by the transmission of knowledge in mosques, halaqah, scholars' houses, or private teaching networks, but also by the growth of institutionalization of education that is increasingly structured. The transformation took place in the context of major political changes: the weakening of the Buwaihiyah dominance in Baghdad, the strengthening of the Saljuk dynasty as a Sunni power, and the urgent need to reorganize the relationship between political power, religious authority, and knowledge production. In such a historical space, madrassas emerged not only as administrative innovations, but as social technologies that linked patronage, legitimacy, and reproduction of scientific authority.

The emergence of the Saljuk Dynasty brought about fundamental changes in the Abbasid religious and political landscape. Saljuk, as a Sunni military force that has managed to establish its influence in the heart of the Islamic world, needs legitimacy that cannot be supplied by the military alone. This is where the figure of Nizam al-Mulk plays a central role. As a vizier who bridged the interests of the sultan and caliph, Nizam al-Mulk was not only known as an accomplished administrator, but also as an architect of knowledge policy. He understood that the stability of the government and the hegemony of the sect were not sufficiently enforced through territorial control; both must also be instilled through institutions capable of producing classes of ulama, qadhi, teachers, and bureaucrats who disseminate the official definition of legitimate Islam. Therefore, the Nizhamiyah madrasah project should be read as a systematic knowledge politics strategy.

The Nizhamiyah Madrasah of Baghdad, founded in the second half of the 11th century, is commonly seen as one of the most influential models in the history of Islamic education. It is often referred to in historiography as a formal institution that brought together state patronage, school teaching, and the strengthening of Sunni identity. However, many readings of Nizhamiyah are still

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stuck in the prestige narrative: who are its founders, who are its teachers, and who are its alumni. Such reading is important, but not sufficient. For the real center of the problem lies not only in the existence of the institution itself, but in the curriculum regime that works within it: what knowledge is given priority, what knowledge is placed in subordinate positions, who is recognized as having the authority to teach it, and what kind of truth is produced through the structure.

In that context, the curriculum cannot be understood as a neutral list of subjects. The curriculum is a selection tool. It determines what is considered legitimate to be taught, what is of value to social reproduction, and what is excluded from the center of legitimacy. In Madrasah Nizhamiyah, the curriculum functions not only to transmit knowledge, but also to produce authority. The knowledge chosen became the basis for the formation of Sunni orthodoxy, especially through the strengthening of Shafi'i fiqh, ushul fiqh, Ash'ari theology, hadith science, tafsir, and Arabic language devices that support textual authority. Thus, the curriculum works as an instrument of discourse regulation: it directs the subject to a certain form of religiosity, arranges the hierarchy of disciplines, and establishes criteria for scientific validity.

The study of the politics of knowledge is important because it opens up the possibility of reading the history of Islamic education more critically. Instead of viewing education as an autonomous space from politics, this approach asserts that knowledge is always generated in certain power relations. Inspired by Michel Foucault's thought, we can see that knowledge is not simply a reflection of reality, but part of the mechanism that shapes social reality itself. Through institutions, disciplines, classifications, and normalization processes, the knowledge regime generates "truths" that are recognized as orthodox while placing other knowledge in marginal, deviant, or perverted positions. In the history of 11th-century Islam, the formation of Sunni orthodoxy was inseparable from such an institutionalization process.

Previous research has generally discussed the history of Madrasah Nizhamiyah, the biography of Nizam al-Mulk, the role of al-Ghazali in Nizhamiyah, the development of classical Islamic education, and the teaching system of madrasas. George Makdisi's work emphasizes the institutional structure of madrasas and their relationship with the development of colleges in Islam; Jonathan Berkey underlines the transmission of scientific knowledge and authority in Muslim societies; Marshall Hodgson read the Sunni revival as part of a broader configuration of civilization; Michael Chamberlain shows the close relationship between knowledge, patronage, and elite reproduction; while Ira Lapidus placed the madrasah within the framework of the socio-political transformation of Islamic society. Although very important, most of these studies still have limitations. First, many of them are more descriptive-historical. Second, these studies have



not explained the curriculum as a political arena of knowledge. Third, the relationship between Saljuk's political patronage and disciplinary selection has not been discussed in depth. Fourth, it is not yet revealed how the curriculum was used to form Sunni orthodoxy. Fifth, the systematic use of genealogical approaches and power-knowledge relations is still relatively limited.

This research offers a new perspective by positioning the curriculum of Madrasah Nizhamiyah Baghdad as a political instrument of knowledge that functions in the construction of Sunni orthodoxy, the legitimacy of scientific authority, and the reproduction of the intellectual elite during the time of Nizam al-Mulk. In contrast to previous research that focused on historical-descriptive aspects, this study uses a genealogical perspective of knowledge to explain the linkages between political power, curriculum, and the production of Islamic knowledge. This perspective allows a search not only of what is taught, but also of the historical conditions that make one discipline dominant, and another marginalized.

Based on this background, the formulation of this research problem is: (1) how the curriculum formation of Madrasah Nizhamiyah Baghdad during the time of Nizam al-Mulk; (2) how the politics of knowledge affects the selection and hierarchy of disciplines in Madrasah Nizhamiyah; and (3) how the curriculum functions in the construction of Sunni orthodoxy and the reproduction of Islamic scientific authority. In line with that, this study aims to explain the formation of the Nizhamiyah curriculum, examine the mechanism of knowledge politics in the selection of disciplines, and analyze the function of the curriculum in the formation of Sunni orthodoxy and the reproduction of intellectual elites.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research is a qualitative research based on a literature study. His main focus is the search, critical reading, and interpretation of written sources relevant to the history of the Nizhamiyah Madrasah of Baghdad, the knowledge policy of the Saljuk Dynasty, as well as the formation of Sunni orthodoxy in the 11th century. The approach used is intellectual history, because this research is not only interested in the chronology of events, but also in the circulation of ideas, the social position of knowledge, and the relationship between texts, institutions, and authorities.

The research analysis framework uses a genealogy of knowledge inspired by Michel Foucault. Through this approach, the research does not seek to find the single and essential origins of the Nizhamiyah curriculum, but rather to trace how the configuration of the curriculum is formed from power networks, sectarian conflicts, political patronage, and the need for state



legitimacy. Genealogy is used to read the curriculum as a contingent but effective historical product in producing orthodox truths and subjects.

The data collection technique is carried out through documentation. Primary sources of research include Nizam al-Mulk's *Siyasatnama*, al-Ghazali's *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din* and al-Munqidh min al-Dalal, *Tarikh Baghdad*, as well as other historical sources of classical Islamic education that contain information about madrasas, teachers, and disciplines. Secondary sources include the work of George Makdisi, Jonathan Berkey, Marshall Hodgson, Michael Chamberlain, Ira Lapidus, Ahmad Syalabi, Azyumardi Azra, Abuddin Nata, Michel Foucault, and historians of contemporary Islamic education.

Data analysis was carried out through five stages. First, data reduction, namely selecting data that is relevant to the themes of curriculum formation, patronage, orthodoxy, and scientific authority. Second, the categorization of data into themes such as political context, disciplinary structure, legitimacy mechanisms, and elite reproduction. Third, historical interpretation to place data in the context of the Saljuk Dynasty and the development of Islamic education in the 11th century. Fourth, genealogical analysis to trace the relationship between knowledge selection and power relations. Fifth, drawing conclusions by affirming the position of the curriculum as an arena of knowledge politics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Political and Religious Context of the Saljuk Dynasty

To understand the curriculum of Madrasah Nizhamiyah Baghdad, it must first be understood the political and religious context behind it. The 11th century was a period of intensification of Sunni-Shia competition in various centers of the Islamic world. The competition takes place not only at the theological level, but also at the level of institutions, patronage, and control of public space. On the one hand, there was a Fatimid presence with an Ismaili orientation who built their own centers of knowledge and propaganda. On the other hand, the Abbasid in Baghdad sought to restore its symbolic authority after a long period of pressure from regional powers. Saljuk, which came in as a Sunni military force, provided new opportunities for Sunni restoration, but that restoration required a more established institutional form.

Saljuk's political legitimacy is essentially hybrid. They had military power, but needed religious legitimacy that could be accepted by urban society, clerics, and Abbasid institutions. Nizam al-Mulk understood this problem sharply. In *Siyasatnama*, he emphasized the importance of government order, moral supervision, and the placement of competent people in strategic



positions. But his political ideas were inseparable from the broader project of organizing intellectual life. Education is a very important field because it is there that the definition of Islam, law, and authority can be stabilized through a long-term process of regeneration.

At this point, the Sunni-Shia conflict became the decisive setting. Nizhamiyah was not born in an academic vacuum, but in a situation when Sunni orthodoxy needed to be reaffirmed against intellectual and political competitors. This helps explain why Nizhamiyah madrassas were built in strategic cities such as Nishapur and Baghdad. Baghdad as the Abbasid capital as well as the symbolic center of the caliphate had a very important meaning: building a madrassas there meant instilling the hegemony of Sunni knowledge at the heart of classical Islamic authority. Thus, madrassas function as an instrument of institutionalization of orthodoxy.

Nizam al-Mulk's role here is more than just an educational benefactor. He is the patronage designer who connects the state, scholars, waqf, and educated people. Through financing, appointing professors, providing learning facilities, and providing stipends for students, he created a space where Sunni knowledge gained stable material support. From the perspective of knowledge politics, this material support is essential: a regime of truth can only dominate social space if it has the infrastructure to reproduce itself. Nizhamiyah is one of those infrastructures.

The need for institutionalization of Sunni education is also related to the changing form of cleric authority. Before madrasas, the transmission of knowledge often took place in a relatively fluid and personal network. The madrassas did not remove the pattern, but gave it a new form that was more centralized and more easily associated with state patronage. Scientific authority still depends on the reputation of teachers and isnads, but now that reputation is being institutionally strengthened. In this case, the madrasah allows the merger of scientific charisma and administrative structure. Thus, the success of the Sunni project in the Saljuk period was not only a theological success, but an institutional success.

Curriculum Formation of Madrasah Nizhamiyah Baghdad

The curriculum of Madrasah Nizhamiyah Baghdad is not structured as a uniform modern syllabus in the contemporary administrative sense. However, historical sources and modern studies allow for a reconstruction of the core of the discipline taught and the hierarchy of its importance. The center of the curriculum is fiqh, especially fiqh Syafi'i, accompanied by ushul fiqh as the methodological tool. Around it developed the teaching of hadith, tafsir, Arabic language, adab, and to a certain extent Sunni theology. This formation shows that the main purpose of madrassas is not general education, but the formation of legal and religious experts who are able



to maintain orthodoxy and serve the socio-political needs of the Muslim community.

The dominance of Shafi'i fiqh is no coincidence. The Shafi'i school in the 11th century had developed as one of the important Sunni sects and had a strong network of scholars, especially in Khurasan and Iraq. Nizam al-Mulk's proximity to the Shafi'i-Ash'ari orientation also explains why this school gained a central position in the Nizhamiyah. Fiqh Shafi'i provides normative tools to regulate worship, muamalah, adjudication, and social life; Ushul Fiqh provides a methodological basis for legal reasoning. The combination of the two is very suitable for forming an elite of scholars who are not only pious, but also able to give decisions, teach, and mediate in the community.

Hadith and tafsir occupy an important position as the support of textual authority. In a Sunni environment, the legitimacy of fiqh and theology requires a strong attachment to the Qur'an and Sunnah. Therefore, the teaching of hadith is not just an addition, but an element that strengthens the claim that the legal norms taught in madrassas are rooted in the main sources of Islam. Tafsir also functions thus, especially in connecting legal verses and moral principles with the framework of established Sunni interpretation. Through these two disciplines, the Nizhamiyah curriculum builds a chain of legitimacy from the text of revelation to the formulation of fiqh and orthodox identity.

Arabic science—nahwu, sharaf, balaghah, and other linguistic tools—has a strategic role as a hermeneutic infrastructure. Mastery of Arabic is not only a technical skill, but a condition of access to text authority. A curriculum that prioritizes Arabic means that it is affirming that religious meaning must be mediated by legitimate philological competence. Thus, language becomes a gate of power: those who master language according to scientific standards gain legitimacy to interpret; Those who do not, are eliminated from the center of authority.

Manners also occupy an important space. In the classical sense, manners are not merely literature or etiquette, but the formation of intellectual subtlety, learning ethics, rhetoric, and social skills. The existence of manners in the curriculum shows that Nizhamiyah not only forms legal experts, but also educated subjects who are able to operate in the public space of palaces, bureaucracy, and urban society. This is where the curriculum functions as a habitus former. He instilled not only substantive knowledge, but also speaking style, way of arguing, scholarly ethos, and forms of self-discipline.

The position of rational science is more problematic and clearly shows the politics of knowledge selection. Nizhamiyah is not synonymous with a total rejection of rationality. The presence of Ash'ari theology, for example, indicates the use of rational arguments within accepted



limits. Al-Ghazali himself, who had taught at the Nizhamiyah of Baghdad, showed a high mastery of philosophy and logic. However, rational sciences are not given a dominant position like fiqh and hadith. Rationality is accepted as far as it supports the defense of orthodoxy, not as an autonomous terrain that can shift the centrality of sharia sciences. This is one of the main features of the Nizhamiyah curriculum: it is not anti-reason, but it subordinates reason to orthodox architecture.

Why are certain sciences prioritized and others marginalized? The answer lies in the socio-political needs of the Saljuk regime. Fiqh, ushul fiqh, hadith, tafsir, and Arabic produce normative stability; they provide tools to affirm Sunni identity, solve social problems, and form a cadre of clerics compatible with the interests of the state. In contrast, disciplines that do not directly underpin orthodoxy architectures or have the potential to produce an uncontrollable epistemic plurality are not given the same institutional center. In other words, the Nizhamiyah curriculum is the result of a strategic calculation of knowledge.

The Politics of Knowledge in the Selection of Disciplines

If the curriculum is read through the concept of power/knowledge, it can be seen that the selection of disciplines in Nizhamiyah is not just a pedagogical choice, but a political action. The curriculum works as an instrument of legitimacy because it transforms school preferences and intellectual choices into a seemingly natural scientific order. What is taught continuously by prestigious institutions will be accepted as a reasonable core of religion. In this process, the madrasahs produce what Foucault calls the regime of truth: a set of procedures, institutions, and authorities that determine which knowledge is recognized as true and who has the right to pronounce it.

The selection of knowledge that is considered legitimate can be seen from the combination of three elements: patronage, personnel, and text. Patronage provides funds and institutions; personnel provide teaching authority; Text provides material that can be codified and inherited. When Nizam al-Mulk appointed certain scholars, provided endowments, and built the reputation of the Nizhamiyah, he was creating conditions in which certain disciplines became the center of intellectual gravity. Thus, the validity or not of knowledge is not only an epistemological issue, but also a question of access to institutions and resources.

Here, the production of religious truth takes place concretely. Shafi'i Fiqh, Sunni theology, and its supporting sciences are not simply taught as one option, but are presented as a more official, more credible, and more inheritable form of knowledge. Through teaching routines,



awarding diplomas, teacher reputation, and alumni network, madrassas normalize a certain understanding of Islam. The resulting truth is not a fabrication without a textual basis, but the result of the selection and sequencing of very specific traditions. Precisely because it is rooted in the text and authority of scholars, the truth has a high normative power.

The relationship of power and scientific authority is also seen in the professional structure of scholars. Those who are formed in the Nizhamiyah curriculum have a greater chance of gaining recognition as jurists, teachers, qadhi, khatib, and political advisors. This means that the curriculum not only shapes knowledge, but also a symbolic market. Degrees, reputation, and connections with science centers become social capital that determines mobility. In Foucault's perspective, this suggests that knowledge operates through disciplined bodies and institutions that govern the distribution of legitimacy.

It is important to note that these mechanisms are not always overtly coercive in nature. Many students and scholars entered the structure of the Nizhamiyah because they saw it as a space of glory of knowledge, not a tool of the state. But this is precisely where the effectiveness of knowledge politics lies: it works through the internalization of values, not just through coercion. When subjects believe that a particular discipline is the primary path to truth and honor, the curriculum has succeeded in establishing epistemic adherence. Thus, dominance does not always have to appear as a prohibition; It works quite as a normalization.

From this point of view, Nizhamiyah is an arena where the state does not simply "control the ulama", but rather negotiates with them in the production of orthodoxy. The state needs clerics for legitimacy; Clerics need patronage and institutions to expand their social authority. The curriculum is the meeting point of interest between the two. Therefore, the politics of knowledge in Nizhamiyah cannot be reduced to mere state propaganda; it is a complex articulation between the sect, patronage, scientific charisma, and social needs of Sunni urban society.

The Construction of Sunni Orthodoxy through the Curriculum

One of the most important functions of the Nizhamiyah curriculum is the construction of Sunni orthodoxy. Orthodoxy is not born only from the formulation of theological creeds or polemics, but also from the constant habituation of intellectuals. Through the curriculum, orthodoxy acquires a pedagogical form: it is taught, memorized, explained, debated within a certain limit, and then inherited as legitimate knowledge. In this way, orthodoxy becomes not only the content of beliefs, but also the way of learning, the way of arguing, and the way of judging deviations.



The standardization of Sunni thought is seen in the emphasis on disciplines that allow for the consolidation of a common identity. Fiqh provides a praxis framework; hadith and tafsir give scriptural legitimacy; Ushul Fiqh provides a methodology; Sunni theology gives conceptual boundaries about faith and doctrine; Arabic provides the means of interpretation. When all these elements are combined in one institutional ecosystem, a grammar of orthodoxy is formed, which is an intellectual grammar that governs how Islam is understood correctly. This grammar does not necessarily result in total uniformity, but it is strong enough to distinguish the center and the periphery.

The strengthening of the Shafi'i school in Nizhamiyah is one of the important elements in the process. The school here is not only a school of law, but a network of knowledge and authority. By placing Shafi'i fiqh in a central position, Nizhamiyah helped strengthen certain Sunni configurations that were compatible with the Saljuk project. This is not to say that other Sunni traditions have disappeared, but madrassas have given the main stage to the Shafi'i-Ash'ari orientation as the most institutionalized normative representation of Islam.

The role of the ulama in the construction of orthodoxy is very central. Madrassas cannot work without teachers whose reputations are recognized. Figures such as Abu Ishaq al-Shirazi and later al-Ghazali gave great symbolic weight to the Nizhamiyah. Their presence proves that orthodoxy is not produced by empty institutions, but by encounters between institutions and authoritative figures. However, institutions expanded the reach of those figures: what was originally perhaps only a teaching in a particular circle, through the madrassas turned into an architecture of knowledge that could be repeated and inherited.

The curriculum also produces a religious identity. The students formed in the Nizhamiyah not only acquire knowledge, but also learn to position themselves as part of an educated Sunni community. They absorb intellectual habitus that assesses text, authority, debate, and deviation with specific parameters. In Foucault's terms, this is a process of subjectivation: the curriculum forms a type of subject that recognizes itself as a legitimate carrier of knowledge. Therefore, Sunni orthodoxy through the curriculum is not only a doctrinal project, but also a project of self-formation.

Reproduction of Intellectual Elites and Scientific Authorities

Another very decisive function of the Nizhamiyah curriculum is the reproduction of the intellectual elite. This madrasah did not merely produce educated individuals, but a network of people who later occupied important positions in the Islamic world: teachers, qadhi, khatib,



religious bureaucrats, writers, and political advisors. Here, the curriculum acts as a mechanism for the distribution of symbolic capital. Those who escaped the teaching process and gained recognition from Nizhamiyah teachers brought legitimacy that could be converted into social influence.

The alumni network is important because it expands the reach of orthodoxy beyond Baghdad. Each alumnus brings with them a book, method, and epistemic orientation studied at the center. Thus, elite reproduction takes place spatially as well as generationally. Madrassas produce not only local knowledge, but also standardization that can spread through the mobility of scholars. This explains why the Nizhamiyah model has an influence far beyond the political age of its founders.

The social mobility of scholars is also closely related to this institution. In medieval Islamic societies, knowledge was one of the main pathways to social honor. Chamberlain asserts that the production and patronage of knowledge is an important mechanism in the formation of elite households. In the context of Nizhamiyah, the curriculum provides a highly recognized form of capital: mastery of fiqh, the ability to argue, access to a network of professors, and legitimacy as a defender of orthodoxy. Therefore, madrassas help transform knowledge into social status.

The scientific legitimacy produced by Nizhamiyah also works through an informal-formal recognition system. Although classical diplomas are not synonymous with modern certifications, teacher authorities and institutional affiliations have a strong validation function. A person who studied under a well-known teacher in Nizhamiyah, mastered the core texts, and was recognized for his competence, had a greater chance of being accepted as a reference. This is a form of reproduction of authority that does not rest on the state bureaucracy alone, but on the link between scientific and institutional reputation.

Thus, the Nizhamiyah curriculum serves as a mechanism for reproducing authority. He ensured that the prioritized knowledge structure would continue to live through a new generation of authority bearers. This is where the link between curriculum and power becomes very clear: whoever controls the curriculum is, to some degree, in control of the future of the legitimate definition of science. The Nizam al-Mulk project was not just to establish schools, but to shape the future of Sunni social knowledge.

Discussion Theory

The findings of this study demonstrate the strong relevance of Foucault's theory to the study of the history of Islamic education. The concept of power/knowledge helps to explain that



the Nizhamiyah curriculum is not a passive instrument, but a productive tool that produces a regime of truth. It selects disciplines, organizes hierarchies of knowledge, establishes orthodox subjects, and provides an infrastructure for the reproduction of authority. Genealogy allows us to see that the dominance of certain sciences in the Nizhamiyah is not something natural, but rather the result of historical struggles related to sectarian politics, patronage, and the need for state legitimacy.

In this case, the curriculum really appears to be the arena of knowledge politics. It is the point where the state, scholars, texts, and society meet in the production of truth. This view expands the classical reading of the Makdisi about madrasahs as legal institutions, by adding the dimension that the curriculum structure must also be read as a mechanism of normalization. Berkey helps us understand knowledge transmission and the importance of teacher networks; Chamberlain asserts that knowledge has to do with the reproduction of the social elite; Hodgson helps to see the consolidation of the Sunni within the broader horizon of civilization; while Lapidus shows how educational institutions are part of the socio-political transformation of Islamic society. This article attempts to synthesize these insights with a Foucauldian analytical tool.

The implications for the study of the history of Islamic education are quite significant. First, the history of the curriculum cannot be separated from the history of power. Second, the discussion of orthodoxy needs to include institutional and pedagogical dimensions, not just doctrinal. Third, classical Islamic education needs to be read not as a sterile spiritual-intellectual space from politics, but as one of the main fields where politics works through knowledge. From this, the theory of the Islamic education curriculum can be enriched by the awareness that the curriculum is always pedagogical, social, and political at the same time.

CONCLUSION

Based on the above discussion, it can be emphasized that the curriculum of Madrasah Nizhamiyah Baghdad during the time of Nizam al-Mulk was not neutral. It was formed in a very specific political and religious power relationship, especially in the context of the Saljuk Dynasty's need to assert Sunni legitimacy in the midst of sectarian competition and the struggle for religious authority. The Nizhamiyah curriculum is not just a list of subjects, but a political arena of knowledge where certain disciplines are chosen, sorted, and legitimized as the legitimate core of Islam.

The curriculum formation shows a strong priority on Shafi'i fiqh, ushul fiqh, hadith, tafsir, Arabic language science, and adab, while rational science is received selectively within boundaries



that do not interfere with the centrality of shari'i sciences. This selection shows that the curriculum serves as an instrument of the construction of Sunni orthodoxy. Through the institutionalization of teaching, the appointment of teachers, the financing of endowments, and the establishment of alumni networks, Nizhamiyah produced a regime of truth that stabilized the official definition of Sunni Islam. Furthermore, the Nizhamiyah curriculum became a mechanism for the production and reproduction of Islamic scientific authorities. He formed an intellectual elite that brought scientific legitimacy while at the same time playing a role in the spread of orthodoxy to various regions.

In the context of this research, it is also important to distinguish between the "content" of the curriculum and the "function" of the curriculum. The content of the curriculum concerns the subjects, books, and methods taught. The function of the curriculum concerns what the entire content is organized for. Historiography often stops at the reconstruction of content, without asking about its function in the formation of school hegemony. This article emphasizes that the function of the Nizhamiyah curriculum is to create an order of knowledge that is able to connect the political legitimacy of the Saljuks, the scholars' scientific authority, and the Sunni religious identity of urban communities. Without this functional dimension, the history of the curriculum easily turns into a catalogue of disciplines that is poor in analysis.

In the end, the success of the reproduction of the intellectual elite through the Nizhamiyah shows that the curriculum has a generative dimension. It not only reproduces the past, but also produces the future. The generation of scholars born from this structure then wrote, taught, gave fatwas, and filled religious positions. They became the living medium of the orthodoxy that had been shaped by the curriculum. Therefore, the curriculum is not only a mirror of knowledge politics, but one of its main engines.

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