Jahiliyya and Hakimiyya in Islamic Thought: Historical Trajectories, Ideological Transformations and Contemporary Implications

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ABSTRACT

Islamic scholarship has continuously developed interpretations of concepts such as jahiliyya and hakimiyya, underscoring their significance in shaping Islamic discourse across various historical periods. This research examines these terms from their historical origins to contemporary adaptations by extremist groups, highlighting their importance in supporting particular ideologies and actions. By reviewing key figures such as Ibn Taymiyya, Mawdudi, and Qutb, alongside an analysis of the ideological frameworks of groups like ISIS, the interaction between historical Islamic traditions and contemporary challenges was elucidated. This study highlights how these traditions have been dynamically reinterpreted to address modern complexities. The study aims to deepen the understanding of jahiliyya and hakimiyya in contemporary radical Islamic thought, underscoring their significance and influence within the broader context of Islamic intellectual discourse. By exploring this complex tapestry, the study highlighted the adaptability of religious terms and their impact on the socio-political dynamics of the Muslim world.

Keywords: Jahiliyya; hakimiyya; Ibn Taymiyya; ISIS

INTRODUCTION

Navigating the vast spectrum of Islamic thought reveals the prominent and evolving positions of concepts such as *jahiliyya* and *hakimiyya*. Historically, *jahiliyya* denoted the pre-Islamic "age of ignorance", but its implications have grown, reflecting broader societal nuances. On the other hand, *hakimiyya*, symbolizing divine governance, adjusts its meaning in tandem with changing socio-political backdrops. In modern times, these terms have not only gained renewed prominence but have also been reinterpreted by extremist factions to substantiate specific ideologies and actions.

Islamic radicalism shares a complex intellectual lineage with detailed constellation mappings. In his examination of Sayyid Qutb's (d. 1385/1966) doctrine of *jahiliyya*, William Shepard adopts a methodological approach, meticulously unfolding the core tenets of this seminal concept. He emphasizes the imperative for a comprehensive understanding of its evolution within Qutb's body of work (Shepard 2003). Moving from Qutb's nuanced ideology, we

come across Quintan Wiktorowicz's "A Genealogy of Radical Islam" (Wiktorowicz 2005). This work can be likened to an essential cartographic venture, delineating the ideological trajectories leading to the "global jihad movement". While Wiktorowicz expertly traces the philosophical lineage of al-Qaeda, a noticeable absence of references to or analysis of ISIS in his work suggests an intriguing avenue for further academic exploration.

Further enriching this exploration, scholars like Cole Bunzel and Wiktorowicz navigate the labyrinthine corridors of theological influence, bringing to the fore Mohammed Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab's (d. 1206/1792) appreciation of Ahmad Ibn Taymiyya's (d. 728/1328) discourse on *tawhid* (monotheism) (Bunzel 2023). Simultaneously, Wiktorowicz identifies the resonances of Ibn Taymiyya within Abul Aʿla Mawdudi's (d. 1399/1979) ideologies, echoes of which can later be discerned in Qutb's writings (Wiktorowicz 2005, 77–81). Yet, it is Fawaz Gerges who introduces an element of intrigue, proposing a potential link between ISIS's ideology and Ibn Taymiyya (Gerges 2016, 45–46).

This proposition, while captivating, beckons a more thorough investigation. Cumulatively, these scholars underscore the significance of diving deep into the intricate historical and ideological roots to grasp the contemporary manifestations of Islamic radicalism.

This study seeks to weave together these threads, tracing the historical and ideological trajectories of *jahiliyya* and *hakimiyya* and their implications in the contemporary landscape of Islamic radical thought. Through this endeavour, the research aims to highlight the enduring significance of these concepts and the transformative power they hold within the broader tapestry of Islamic intellectual dialogue.

CONCEPT OF *JAHILIYYA*: A TERMINOLOGICAL OVERVIEW

The term *jahiliyya* is traditionally translated into English as the "age of ignorance", alluding to the period in west-central Arabian history right before Prophet Mohammed's mission. However, a deeper exploration of its origins suggests more intricate interpretations. In its early usage, stemming from its root j-h-l in the pre-Islamic era, *jahiliyya* did not primarily signify mere ignorance. Rather, it denoted a propensity for extreme behaviors, such as violence, boasting, excessive drinking, or even unchecked generosity. Sometimes, in the context of pre-Islamic Arab culture, such behavior was even seen as virtuous (Bowering 2013, 1511–15).

However, in the Qur'an, this understanding undergoes a transformation. Here, the term, depending on context, can allude either to unbridled behavior or simple ignorance, but is never depicted as a virtue. In its four occurrences in the Qur'an, *jahiliyya* consistently points towards some form of opposition or defiance to God, often rooted in moral excess. For instance, Qur'an 48:26 talks of the "fierce arrogance of *jahiliyya*", drawing a contrast with the "self-restraint (*taqwa*)" Muslims are expected to embody (1511–15). Furthermore, Qur'an 33:33 serves as an advisory to the Prophet Mohammed's wives, urging them not to display themselves in the manner reminiscent of the initial *jahiliyya*, reflecting the term's association with extreme behavior (Shepard 2003, 522–23).

Interestingly, while the Qur'an primarily positions *jahiliyya* as a moral state, over the ages, it has expanded to represent a distinct historical epoch. This shift can be attributed to the dissolution of the pagan Arab society, historically imbued with *jahiliyya* traits, even though some of its features

endured (Bowering 2013, 1511–15). This evolved understanding is evident in the hadith collection by Bukhari, wherein *jahiliyya* is predominantly described in reference to a bygone era, as seen in quotes like "The best people in the *jahiliyya* are the best in Islam, if they have understanding." (1511–15). Yet, Shepard echoes that the essence of *jahiliyya* remained palpable even after the advent of Islam. For instance, Prophet Mohammed, in a hadith, is cited, telling an adherent, "Within you is *jahiliyya*" (Shepard 2003, 522–23).

THE CONCEPT OF *JAHILIYYA* IN EARLY MODERN ISLAMIC SCHOLARSHIP

Rather than merely a chronological reference, *jahiliyya* has more profound implications and dimensions that transcend time and space, as discussed by the Medieval Sunni jurist Ahmad Ibn Taymiyya in his work, *Iqtida' al-sirat al-mustaqim* (the Necessity of the Straight Path). Delving into his words, the term *jahiliyya* can denote a state or condition, which is the predominant usage in the Qur'an and hadith. It can also refer to someone possessing that state or condition. To exemplify this, Umar ibn al-Khattab, the second Islamic Caliph, reflected on his pre-Islamic days, saying, "I made a vow during the *jahiliyya* to seclude myself for a night." Likewise, Aisha, Prophet Mohammed's wife, pointed out the diverse matrimonial practices of that era by noting, "Marriage during *jahiliyya* was of four types." Moreover, the Prophet Mohammed, addressing the companion Abu Dharr, remarked, "You are a man in whom there is *jahiliyya*." Here, the Prophet Mohammed was pointing to remnants of ignorance in Abu Dharr's behavior, not just to a historical period (Ibn Taymiyya 1995, 1:254-258).

Remarkably, although the term began as a descriptor for a specific state, its usage evolved over time to become a noun referring to a time frame, a social condition, or a cultural form. This evolution reflects the multifaceted nature of the term and its adaptability to different contexts. Notably, Ibn Taymiyya clarified the differences between types of *jahiliyya*: there is simple *jahiliyya*, which is not knowing the truth; and compound *jahiliyya*, which is believing in falsehood despite knowing the truth. This suggests that *jahiliyya* is not fixed but is subject to change and evolution. When discussing *jahiliyya* in other religions, Ibn Taymiyya posits that any teachings contrary to the teachings of Islam are considered *jahiliyya*, whether Jewish, Christian, or

otherwise. Adding another layer to the discourse, Ibn Taymiyya discerningly observed that *jahiliyya* did not vanish with the advent of Islam. Instead, its presence morphed and became more selective. While the world before Prophet Mohammed was steeped in *jahiliyya*, the succeeding era was not entirely free from such *jahiliyya*. It could persist in regions that rebuffed Islam, and individuals could still be entrenched in this state until they align with the Islamic doctrine (1:254-258).

Building upon this, Ibn Taymiyya believed that the main problem of his time was that God was no longer worshipped properly, as many Muslims had strayed from the correct method of doctrine and action, due to the misrepresentations of philosophers and theologians, and of Sufis, Shiites, Christians and others. For him, the solution was to return Islam in doctrine and action to its sources: the Qur'an and Sunnah and the Salaf's doctrine, represented by the three generations that came after the Prophet Mohammed, believing this to be the true religion, before being corrupted by error and sectarian division. According to Ibn Taymiyya, the interpretations of those who followed the Prophet Mohammed were incorrect and should be measured against the doctrines of the first Islamic generation (Hoover 2016, 634).

Ibn Taymiyya affirms that the religion has two principles: we worship only God, and we worship him only in ways He has prescribed. For him, these two principles correspond to the two parts of the testimony of Islam: there is no god but God; and Mohammed is the messenger of God. There is no God but God means that only God is to be worshipped, and Mohammed is the Messenger of God means that God must be worshipped by the law he inspired in his Prophet Mohammed (Hoover 2019, 46–47). Hoover notes that this gives both parts of the testimony an evident moral character, since the testimony is not merely an expression of faith but a call to action (46–47). However, the moral interpretation of the first part of the testimony (*tawhid al-ilahiyya*) conflicts with the theological context in which Ibn Taymiyya lived. The prevailing interpretations of *la ilaha illa allah* (there is no god but God) in his time were metaphysical and ontological, and he had to deal with the nature of what existed (46–47). For instance, some Sufis understand *la ilaha illa allah*, in the sense that ultimately there is nothing but God. While the Ashʿari theologians interpreted *la ilaha illa allah* as proof of the existence of only one God and the unity of the same God, and the uniqueness

of this God as the creator of the universe. Ibn Taymiyya never denies these meanings of the oneness of God but takes a distinct moral turn by assigning the central meaning of testimony in the world of human action, which indicates that no one but God is worthy of worship and obeyed. God's exclusive right to be worshipped is the fundamental right, and all other meanings of monotheism follow this. So, morality comes first and ontology takes second place (46–47).

Ibn Taymiyya distinguishes between two different types of polytheism. The first is *tawhid al-ilahiyya*, the worship and love of creatures besides God; the second is *tawhid al-rububiyya*, which is to deny that God is the creator of everything and all that happens. Ibn Taymiyya believes that it is possible to prove *tawhid al-rububiyya* with the violation of the requirements of *tawhid al-ilahiyya*. For him, this was the case of the Arab polytheists before Islam, who believed that God was the creator alone, despite their worship of idols. For Ibn Taymiyya, this was the danger posed by the Ashʿarites belief, because it prioritizes *tawhid al-rububiyya* over *tawhid al-ilahiyya* (Hoover 2019, 53).

It should be noted that Ibn Taymiyya's philosophy of monotheism, especially concerning *tawhid al-ilahiyya*, stems from the idea that deeds must enter into the meaning of faith. The mere belief of heart or mouth does not achieve the whole meaning of faith but rather must be associated with act and practice. Unlike some Islamic doctrines faith, from Ibn Taymiyya's perspective includes the speaking and acting of it, as well as the saying of the heart and tongue, and the act of the heart, tongue and deeds (Ibn Taymiyya 1995, 3:151, 162). When Ibn Taymiyya enters deeds into the meaning of faith, the situation is different for some other Islamic sects, such as Ashʿarites, Kurramites, Jahmites and Murjiʾites (7:141, 20:86). Ibn Taymiyya argues that, whoever declares the origin of faith, the *la ilaha illa allah* testimony, and does not obey the commands and avoid prohibitions, is not a believer (12:474). For him, worship involves everything God loves, including rituals, social commitment and spiritual virtue, bringing together everything one says and does, internally and externally. Worship includes the basic rituals of Islam: prayer, almsgiving, fasting and pilgrimage, along with other religious acts of piety such as supplication, remembrance of God and recitation of the Qur'an. Worship requires fulfilling one's obligations to family members and society and taking responsibility for the moral lifestyle

of society by enjoining good and forbidding evil (Hoover 2019, 59–60).

The intricate relationship between Ibn Taymiyya's interpretation of *jahiliyya* and his concerns about the state of Islam during his era sheds light on his broader vision for the faith. In understanding *jahiliyya* as not merely a historical period but a continuum, Ibn Taymiyya suggests that ignorance or misguidance is not confined to pre-Islamic times; it is an enduring challenge. This perspective ties directly into his worries about the influences leading Muslims astray from authentic practices in his time. The deviations and misinterpretations that plagued his era can be seen as new manifestations of *jahiliyya*, presenting a renewed challenge for the faithful. This evolution of *jahiliyya* underpins Ibn Taymiyya's call to return to the bedrock principles of Islam. As *jahiliyya* morphed over time, so too did the threats to true Islamic practice, prompting his urge to reconnect with the Qur'an, Sunnah, and the early doctrines. Furthermore, the very essence of *jahiliyya*, as a state of ignorance or misguidance, mirrors the dangers Ibn Taymiyya saw in the diverse interpretations of Islamic tenets, especially *tawhid*. His emphasis on the moral dimension of monotheism served as a counter to what he saw as the compound *jahiliyya* of his time—knowledge juxtaposed with potential misdirection. Thus, Ibn Taymiyya's works, while diagnosing the prevalent issues, also offer a roadmap to combatting the ever-present specter of *jahiliyya* in all its manifestations.

IBN TAYMIYYA'S LEGACY: THE THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF IBN ʿABD AL-WAHHAB

Ibn Taymiyya, in the midst of a rich and varied theological landscape, posited a dual principle of monotheism, emphasizing both the sole worship of God and the specific means by which He should be worshipped. This principle was more than mere theology; it was a call to arms, a beckoning to action. Ibn Taymiyya stated, 'Worship (ʿibada) is a collective term for everything that Allah loves and is pleased with from the outward and inward sayings and actions' (Ibn Taymiyya 1995, 10:149). This encapsulates the comprehensive nature of worship as Ibn Taymiyya saw it, underscoring both action and belief. Yet, as Hoover outlines, while Ibn Taymiyya's propositions shifted the theological conversation from the nature of being to the nature

of morality, they did not gain immediate and widespread acceptance, even among the Hanbalites to which he belonged. As the sands of time shifted, another voice emerged from the Arabian Peninsula. Mohammed Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab, influenced by Ibn Taymiyya, took up the mantle in the 18th century. As described by Hoover, he attempted to refine and present these ideas to a newer generation. Just like his predecessor, he too accentuated the moral aspect of *tawhid*, often foregoing intricate theological nuances (Hoover 2016: 642–43). Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab asserted that:

If you know that Allah created you for His worship, then understand that worship is not called worship except with monotheism, just as prayer is not called prayer except with purification. So, if polytheism enters into worship, it corrupts it just as impurity corrupts purification. Therefore, if you realize that polytheism, when it mixes with worship, ruins it and nullifies the deed, making its doer among those who will stay eternally in the fire, you will know that the most important thing for you is to understand this, hoping that Allah may save you from this snare, which is associating others with Allah.

(Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab 2000, 27)

But he was also far more stringent, cutting out what he viewed as unnecessary or deviant in religious practices, which included venerating saints or visiting their shrines (Hoover 2016: 642–43).

Drawing from Roel Meijer's observations, Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab perceived a deviation among Muslims from the core teachings, leading to a significant spiritual and political decline from Islam's golden era, emphasizing Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab belief that Muslims had descended into a state of *jahiliyya*, or profound ignorance This state was seen as a testament to the religious deviations and misunderstandings that had crept into the community, distancing them from the foundational principles and beliefs of Islam. For Ibn Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab, the remedy to this decline and the return to Islam's authentic greatness was through re-establishing unwavering monotheism and adhering strictly to the teachings of the Qur'an and the Sunna. He was especially critical of practices that involved intermediaries in worship, equating them with the idolatry prevalent in pre-Islamic Mecca (Meijer 2009, 5–6).

Building on this narrative, Bunzel provides further insight into the relationship between Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab. As Bunzel notes, the latter held the former in high regard, frequently referring to his works and absorbing his perspectives. Both scholars shared a common

ground in emphasizing the unadulterated oneness of God. Ibn Taymiyya's emphasis on direct communion with God without human intermediaries, especially with regards to opposing the veneration of saints, found a keen listener in Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab. Yet, as Bunzel mentions, Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab further intensified these views, ensuring that no practices could endanger the essence of *tawhid*, and even though he revered Ibn Taymiyya, he strived for an independent theological identity, signalling that his perspectives were not mere reflections of any one school or scholar (Bunzel 2023: 92–126).

In essence, while Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab both championed *tawhid* and proper worship, their methodologies and reception in their respective eras show subtle variations. Yet, Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab's concerns about the prevailing *jahiliyya* and his call for religious rejuvenation can be viewed as a rigorous continuation of Ibn Taymiyya's foundational teachings.

MAWDUDI'S MODERN *JAHILIYYA* AND THE BIRTH OF *HAKIMIYYA*

Navigating away from the medieval theological contours shaped by figures like Ibn Taymiyya and developed later by Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab, we arrive into the 20th century, where the intricate tapestry of Islamic thought encounters a new set of challenges and dynamics. With the pervasive influence of Western modernity beckoning the Islamic world, voices emerged that sought to reconcile, resist, or redefine the relationship between Islamic traditions and Western influences. Central to this intellectual discourse was Abul Aʿla Mawdudi (d. 1399/1979), a luminary who, while drawing from the wellspring of past scholars, confronted the pressing questions of his time with a unique fervour.

Mawdudi, a critical figure in modern Islamic thought, has an intricate relationship with Western modernity. Quintan Wiktorowicz explains that Mawdudi was influenced by the intellectual lineage of conservatives, including figures like Sayyid Ahmad Rai-Barelvi, who traditionally viewed Western ideas as antithetical to Islam. Unlike his predecessors, however, Mawdudi held a nuanced perspective. He recognized the potential of appropriating beneficial aspects of the West, such as science and technology, to bolster the Muslim community against the onslaught of Western imperialism, while simultaneously advocating

for a return to fundamental Islamic principles (Wiktorowicz 2005: 77–79).

One of the most profound ideas stemming from Mawdudi's thought, as identified by both Wiktorowicz and William Shepard, is the modern reinterpretation of *jahiliyya* (Shepard 2003: 522–23; 79). Mawdudi argued that:

As for the nations that have a clear conception of the supreme deity - that is, God Almighty - their system of divinity operates on the basis that God Almighty is the king, and all other gods serve as ministers, courtiers, companions, employees, and workers under Him. It is beyond human capacity to reach the supreme king directly, and all affairs of human life are entrusted to these subordinate deities. As for the nations where the conception of the supreme deity is stripped away or almost non-existent, their divinity is divided among various separate deities. This forms a second type of ignorance that humanity has been entangled in, following the pure ignorance from the earliest ages of history to our day.

(Abul Aʿla Mawdudi 1967: 23)

This perspective extends the concept of *jahiliyya* beyond its historical confines to describe contemporary deviations from Islam, whether due to the influence of imperialist powers or the embrace of non-Islamic laws. Shepard further adds that, while Mawdudi identified traces of *jahiliyya* in both Western and communist domains, he did not denounce the entire Islamic world in the manner that Qutb did (77–79; Shepard 2003: 522–23; 79).

After delving into Mawdudi's innovative interpretation of *jahiliyya*, we encounter another cornerstone of his theological thought: *hakimiyya*. Rooted in the Arabic term h-k-m, synonymous with ruling or judgment, *hakimiyya* articulates the essence of governance and sovereignty through an Islamic lens. While embodying the idea that true governance springs from divine directives, this term also has its own unique history. While the root h-k-m makes numerous appearances in the Qur'an, signifying divine judgment and governance, the specific term *hakimiyya* is not directly present. Yet its essence, highlighting the sovereignty and governance of God, is woven throughout the holy text. It is interesting to note that while the concept is Quranic, the term *hakimiyya* in its contemporary formulation was a product of later scholarship. Mawdudi, echoing the seminal works of earlier scholars, brought it to the forefront in this specific form (Calvert 2018: 214–15).

Mawdudi's understanding of *hakimiyya* was not crafted in a vacuum. Wiktorowicz argues that Mawdudi drew his work extensively from Ibn

Taymiyya, especially his writings on *hakimiyya*, based on Ibn Taymiyya's interpretation of *tawhid*, which is considered one of his most important contributions to Salafi thought, in particular his division of monotheism into two categories: 'the unity of lordship and the unity of worship' (Wiktorowicz 2005, 78). The first refers to the belief that God is the sole sovereign and the creator of this universe, while the second is the assertion that God is the sole object of worship and obedience. Even though the former is a subject of agreement among Muslims, the latter is a concern. For Ibn Taymiyya, the second type of *tawhid* requires following god's laws. In the case of contradicting this law, the use of human-made laws is seen to be tantamount to worshipping or obeying something other than God, and thus apostasy (78).

For Mawdudi, *hakimiyya* was not just a theological term but a political manifesto. He imagined a governance system where God's sovereignty harmoniously coexisted with human agency, envisaging "theo-democracy" or "democratic caliphate", which aimed to juxtapose Islamic tenets with modern democratic principles. Within this model, Muslims would engage actively in governance, always tethered to the directives of the Qur'an and Sunnah (Bowering 2013: 1760–62). Nevertheless, while Mawdudi supported the idea of working within the regime and constructed a political party and a social movement to encourage reformation, Qutb called for the establishment of an Islamic State through global jihad, generating a notable departure from Mawdudi's philosophy and exemplifying the philosophy that jihadist groups later embodied (Wiktorowicz 2005: 79).

In overview, as Islamic thought evolved from the influence of medieval Islamic scholars like Ibn Taymiyya to the challenges presented by Western modernity in the 20th century, Mawdudi stood out as a key figure. He synthesized insights from ancient thinkers with contemporary issues, valuing certain Western contributions in areas such as science, while urging a return to core Islamic values. Taking inspiration from the medieval Salafi scholar Ibn Taymiyya, Mawdudi highlighted the contrast between divine laws and man-made ones. Notably, he reframed *jahiliyya* to characterize modern departures from Islam and established *hakimiyya* as the bedrock of his ideology, underscoring its importance in creating an Islamic government that seamlessly melds divine guidance with democratic ideals.

SAYYID QUTB: RADICALIZING *JAHILIYYA* AND *HAKIMIYYA*

In the landscape of Islamic political thought, the contributions of Qutb are notably substantial. As Wiktorowicz posits, the intellectual bedrock for Qutb's formulations can be traced to Mawdudi's treatises, notably "jihad in Islam", "Islam and *jahiliyya*", and "Principles of Islamic Government". Having been translated into Arabic in the mid-20th century, these works offered Qutb a theoretical framework. Mawdudi's influence is further underscored through his student, Abdul Hasan Ali Nadvi. Nadvi's 1950 exposition, which accentuated Mawdudi's rendition of modern *jahiliyya*, drawing considerable scholarly attention, including from Qutb. Within "In the Shade of the Qu'ran", Qutb amplifies the concept of *jahiliyya*, articulating it as a paradigm where humanity endeavors to assume God's prerogatives (*hakamiyya*) (Wiktorowicz 2005, 78–81). He believed that *jahiliyya* is not merely a historical era but embodies any system where humans are subservient to others, marking its presence globally today. Qutb observes that contemporary human interactions are dominated by the exchange of ideas, principles, values, and laws among individuals, a phenomenon he identifies as *jahiliyya* in its entirety, characterized by the absence of divine worship and the idolization of humans. Thus, he believes that a Muslim's paramount obligation is to dismantle this form of *jahiliyya* and replace it with an Islamic state. In this regard, Qutb said that:

Other than the rule of Allah, the Shari'ah of Allah, and the programme of Allah, there is the rule of jahiliyyah, the Shari'ah of desires (hawa), and the programme of 'ubudiyyah [submission to anything other than Allah]...The jahiliyyah, as described by Allah and defined by His Qur'an, is the rule of people by people. This is because [jahiliyyah] is submission (ubudiyyah) of people to people and the turning away from submission (ubudiyyah) to Allah: denying His Divinity but acknowledging the divinity of some people and submitting themselves to them.

(Sayyid Qutb 1992: 2:904)

This approach recontextualizes Mawdudi's "modern *jahiliyya*" and integrates elements of Ibn Taymiyya's divine jurisprudential discourses. Qutb's interpretation, hence, presents a dichotomy: adherence to divine law or inclusion within the domain of modern *jahiliyya*. While Mawdudi envisaged societal transformation through systemic reform, Qutb's ideological trajectory veered towards

jihad as a means to institute an Islamic polity. Such an inclination subsequently informed foundational jihadist treatises, notably Mohammed al-Faraj's "The Neglected Duty". Radical ideologues, exemplified by figures like Omar Abdul Rahman and Ayman Zawahiri of al-Qaeda, attest to Qutb's seminal role in Islamic revolutionary thought. However, Wiktorowicz cautions against a reductive narrative that singularly ascribes the radicalized trajectory of Islamism to Qutb, advocating for a more nuanced understanding that recognizes diverse influences (Wiktorowicz 2005: 78–81).

Complementary to Wiktorowicz's analysis, Shepard examines Qutb's conceptualization of *jahiliyya*, primarily drawing from the 1964 opuses "Milestones" and "Social Justice in Islam". In Qutb's epistemology, *jahiliyya* emerges as a persistent ethos, characterized by the predominance of anthropocentric legalities over divine injunctions. Such a delineation crystalizes into a bifurcation between Islamic orthodoxy and *jahiliyya*. For Qutb, societies are restricted by their theological fidelity – those aligned with divine imperatives versus the *jahili*, distinguished by theological recalcitrance. An alarming assertion from Qutb, highlighted by Shepard, is the pervasiveness of modern *jahiliyya*, even within societies professing Islamic fealty – a trend attributed to extrinsic influences, particularly Western Orientalism. In terms of praxis, Qutb proposed the formation of a vanguard to uphold monotheistic tenets, drawing analogies with Prophet Mohammed's Meccan phase. This culminates in his advocacy for jihad as an instrument against systems resisting divine jurisdiction. Shepard's scholarship discerns an evolutionary arc in Qutb's thought, transitioning from an initial portrayal of *jahiliyya* as ignorance to its later identification as the dissonance between pristine Islam and contemporary global systems (Shepard 2003: 524–38).

THE ISIS IDEOLOGICAL NEXUS: CO-OPTING HISTORICAL NARRATIVES

Despite the nuances that distinguish jihadists, they universally harbour a deep-rooted dedication to reinstating *hakamiyya* as the bedrock of governance, vehemently opposing man-made institutions like elections and democracy. A testament to this is ISIS, the sole jihadist group to proclaim an Islamic state and, subsequently, a caliphate. This audacious venture was backed by their dominion over vast territories in Iraq and Syria, roughly equivalent to the size of the UK and housing an estimated five to eight million people. Fawaz Gerges underscores that Abu Bakr Naji, a principal architect of ISIS, while not overtly crediting Qutb, has laced his writings with Qutb-esque terminology, such as *al-Qilla al-Mumtaza* (the vanguard) and *Zulm al-jahiliyya* (the ignorance-induced darkness). Nevertheless, Naji ardently taps into the ideologies of 14th-century theologian Ibn Taymiyya, a figure whose religious edicts have spurred many Salafi-jihadist waves, including ISIS. At the heart of Naji's blueprint lies a strategic leverage of media and propaganda, purposed for rallying Muslims towards the Salafi-jihadist cause and, later, for their integration under an Islamic banner. ISIS's ideological revival, reflective of this, draws deeply from the teachings of figures like Mawdudi and Qutb, emphasizing the pivotal role of *hakamiyya* (Gerges 2016: 45; 207). Building on Gerges' observations, Jeffrey Macris further elucidates that the ideological underpinnings of ISIS, particularly their push to remove Western military presence from the Middle East, to depose current Muslim leaders in the region, and to reject democratic governance, seem to be heavily influenced by modern Islamic political philosophers such as Qutb. This connection between ISIS and figures like Qutb is evident in their publications like *Dabiq*, where not only are traditional Islamic concepts discussed, but also ideas inspired by Qutb and similar thinkers are integrated (Macris 2016: 253–55). This represents an ideological leap in the understanding and application of *hakamiyya*, transforming it from a theological concept into a practical governance model.

Stemming from this philosophy, the organization presents *jahiliyya* as a negative situation into which the Muslim community has fallen. In ISIS outlets, *jahiliyya* is always linked to the issue of rulings and laws, such as in democracies and the like, which the organization views as non-Islamic. ISIS believes that, after God's rule, there are only the rulings of *jahiliyya*, seen as unjust and dark. The group argues that, regardless of however different the names of these laws and regulations, they are nothing more than *jahiliyya,* manipulated by the whims of the infidels, and have no significance in regard to religion or life. Furthermore, ISIS argues that Muslims have missed the virtue of ruling with what God has revealed, and instead believe in human law, meaning that, eventually, the rule of shariʿh has become an unattainable dream. But the case is different for the Islamic State which, from its early

stages, was modelled by Jordanian Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, al-Qaeda's leader in Iraq until his death in 2006, and his successors, all of whom have called for the unification of God, expressing disbelief with the *taghut* (tyrant), and fighting it and its followers (al-Naba' 2020a 247:10).

ISIS prides itself on confronting the *jahiliyya* that has surrounded Muslims, countering it with the power of the Holy Qur'an and the sword of victory, by imposing a new reality that fits the instinct of the true believer, resulting from the failure of many groups and parties to confront this ignorant reality and fight it. ISIS stresses that the Islamic State has taken it upon itself to work until the religion is completely for God alone or until death. Just as ISIS calls any non-Islamic rulings *jahiliyya*, it also calls any law or rule that comes from an authority other than God's the *taghut* (al-Naba' 2020b, 251:10). For ISIS 'anyone from whom two opponents seek judgment, while he judges by other than the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger, then he is a *taghut*, as he has transgressed his limit' (Rumiyah 2017b, 8:35), just as a person can only be considered a Muslim if they believe in God and disbelieve in the *taghut*. The situation is the opposite when referring legislation to non-Islamic law, where those who do so are seen as believing in this law and thus not being Muslim (8:35). Proclaiming such a mission against the backdrop of contemporary geopolitics is undeniably an ideological leap, challenging both Islamic and non-Islamic states alike.

ISIS conveys its ideological stances in the thirty-third edition of the al-Naba' weekly newspaper, using both vivid visuals and comprehensive written narratives. The final page boasts a distinct "al-Naba' infographic" section, highlighting pivotal subjects like *hakimiyya*. Although seldom mentioned explicitly in their literature, the meaning of *hakimiyya*, an embodiment of anti-*jahiliyya*, is deeply entrenched in their doctrine. ISIS posits it as the manifestation of God's unified rule. The group staunchly believes that only Allah holds the authority to legislate, emphasizing the perfection of His decrees. Any belief, action, or statement contrary to this principle is labelled as *jahiliyya*. Hence, *hakimiyya* stands as a counter-narrative, legitimizing ISIS's efforts to purge societal *jahiliyya* (al-Naba' 2016a, 33:16). Beyond this, the publication delves into other areas of ideological scrutiny. One such piece preceding the infographic evaluates the trajectory of the Taliban after the era of Akhtar Mansour, its erstwhile leader. criticizing

the Taliban's affiliations, particularly to the "Iranian and Pakistani *taghut* governments" (33:15). The edition's introductory proclamation, "Our war with the polytheists remains", further accentuates the group's unwavering confrontation against factions they brand as "polytheists" (33:1).

The definition of *hakimiyya* contains three pillars: God's unification of legislation, rule and judgment. Any defect in these pillars causes the actor to fall into the act of *jahiliyya* (33:16). ISIS believes that four matters nullify the required *hakimiyya* and lead those who believe and work in it out of the circle of Islam. First, is the belief that an agent other than God has the right to legislate or that His law is deficient and unsuitable for all times and places, as well as the belief that judgment by any method other than the law of God is permissible or believing that the rule of any entity other than God is better or equal to God's. Second, the legislation is thought to contend with God in his lordship, and the actor of this is called a *taghut*, since the legislation is the right of God alone, which includes candidates in legislative elections, voters, constitutional referendums, etc. (33:16). Third, anyone that aims to rule by any way other than that which God has revealed is also called *taghut*, such as leaders and judges who rule by positivist or tribal laws, including candidates and voters in executive elections. Fourth, when seeking decisions other than God's in trials and judgments, is seen by ISIS to involve a transformation to the *taghut's* law, and thus infidelity and polytheism, even if he/she claims to reject the *taghut* law but only seeks its judgment to gain some benefit or repel some harm. This includes those who litigate in civil, military, commercial, trade union courts, UN-international courts, etc. (33:16).

ISIS maintains that no excuse exists for anyone to commit any of these four types of acts, except coercion, believing that necessity and interest do not count as examples of coercion (33:16). The head of the judiciary of ISIS strongly emphasizes the centrality of God's law, or *shariʿah*, to the very identity of an "Islamic state". In his perspective, the title "Islamic state" conveys a profound commitment: that the state functions under the foundational tenets of Islam. He elucidates that *shariʿah's* application is not simply a symbolic gesture, nor just about imposing the hudud, the stipulated Islamic penalties for grave infractions, but rather that the essence of *shariʿah* permeates a broader spectrum of governance and societal norms. Moreover, he expresses an explicit critique of nations that profess to be an "Islamic state" without ensuring

a comprehensive enactment of *shariʿah*, comparing it to a mislabeling or inaccurate representation. It is crucial to note here that ISIS's primary sources have maintained discretion regarding the identity of this key figure, refraining from disclosing the name or specific identity of the head of their judicial authority (al-Naba' 2016b: 51:8).

For ISIS, the importance of *hakimiyya* is highlighted by the fact that it falls within the three types of monotheism in which it believes. Concerning the first type, *tawhid al-rububiyya*, just as God has the order, he also has the right to rule and legislate as one of his own acts. It also falls under *tawhid al-Asma' wa al-Sifat*, the belief that God is one without similitude in His names and attributes. Thus, *hakim* (the Judge) is the name of his names and governing is one characteristic of his attributes. God's sovereignty is also concerned with *tawhid al-ilahiyya*, which discusses His uniqueness in worship. Just as the individual is ordered to worship God alone, being governed by His law is the pure worship of Him alone. To be governed by another law is to commit an act that brings an individual out of Islam's circle (al-Naba' 2017b: 89:15). ISIS does not accept any claims taken as a pretext for not implementing *shariʿah* in a full sense made by some Islamist factions and groups, pointing out that, among their flimsy arguments, some say that the establishment of *shariʿah* incites the enemy, which might cause affliction. Others have argued that the greater good dictates *shariʿah's* non-establishment and that the harm it causes is greater than the benefits it provides. Some have linked the establishment of *shariʿah* with the party leader's consent from or consultation with the local population, seeking to gain their satisfaction regarding who is worthy of this task. Moreover, those who reject *shariʿah* or most of it, are not only secularists and modernists, since even the Muslim Brotherhood do so (89:15). Among the arguments seen by ISIS as flimsy is the one that says that liberated areas are places of war and that *shariʿah* law may not be established until after the war is over. ISIS responds by claiming that these factions and groups have distorted the concept of the land of war in line, based on their own interests, and are resistant to the duty of applying *shariʿah* law, which transforms their land from an Islamic land into places of war, making them vital targets of the Islamic state (89:15).

ISIS argues that, although such groups claim they will apply *shariʿah* law after war and liberation, their words and actions contradict this claim, saying that, despite their power in their regions, they do not generally govern under *shariʿah* law, applying it only partially and selectively, aiming at vulnerable people, not the powerful (Dabiq 2015b: 10:54). Even al-Qaeda's branch in Syria, known as al-Nusra Front, has lost the right path of jihad, ISIS argues, on the basis that it does not apply *shariʿah* law properly, its meaning distorted and limited only to judicial courts and arbitration committees, stressing that internal and external forces have made al-Nusra into a belief system without a specific project with clear features (73–74). ISIS states that:

[al-Nusra Front's] mission in Shām is nothing but a distortion of the meaning of hākimiyyah and this is the fitnah of the era. Allah's law is not just a building called a "court"! The laws of Allah and His shariʿah are more vast and more comprehensive than this. The meaning of Allah's shariʿah has been distorted and restricted to the domain of the courts and arbitration committees. Through this, the people are being misled into believing that the law of Allah is here. Rather the law of Allah will not be, except with a state and an amīr who enforces the law of Allah upon the people and leads them with the shariʿah" (73–74).

The elaborate articulation of ISIS's deep-seated ideological tenets, drawing heavily from the concepts of *jahiliyya* and *hakimiyya*, providing a comprehensive understanding of its foundational beliefs. However, to truly fathom the depth and intensity of its commitment to these principles, examining their practical manifestation in regions it currently governs or has previously governed is imperative.

Practically, ISIS's understanding of *jahiliyya* has been manifested in its actions on the ground. The group sees itself as a purifier, working diligently to cleanse the regions under its control of any vestiges of dissent or diversity. It is this zeal that has driven the group to undertake widespread cultural cleansing in both Iraq and Syria, wiping away elements that do not align with its rigid interpretation of Islam. As Gerges aptly notes, ISIS enforces "political and social uniformity and rigidity", indicating its efforts to create a homogenous society devoid of *jahiliyya*. This societal cleansing is further augmented by the group's comprehensive propaganda machine, which ranges from social media to television. By broadcasting its views and painting itself as a civilizational force, ISIS aims to "educate" the masses and rid them of *jahiliyya* (Gerges 2016: 207).

In an explicit demonstration of this, an article in the eighth issue of their propaganda outlet, *Dabiq* magazine, titled "Erasing the Legacy of a Ruined Nation", showcased photographs of ISIS

members destroying antiquities and relics in a museum. Through these actions, ISIS claimed to be following the footsteps of the Prophet Abraham, drawing parallels with his destruction of idols. They highlighted that, just as Abraham was indifferent to his people's sentiments when he demolished their idols, they too were unconcerned with the emotions of the "infidels" they believed cherished these artefacts. For ISIS, the act of destroying cultural heritage served dual purposes: emulating Prophets like Abraham and Mohammed, and inciting anger among those they deemed to be enemies (Dabiq 2015a).

This sentiment was further exemplified when ISIS attacked and obliterated the temple of Nabu in the ancient city of Nimrud. A propaganda video, titled "The Axe of Abraham", released on June 6, 2016, depicted ISIS militants demolishing the walls of Nimrud with bulldozers. The video was replete with statements from ISIS members, expressing their intent to remove symbols of polytheism and further their mission of spreading monotheism. The temple's destruction was seen by militants as a triumph, claiming that such structures were mere "landmarks of tyranny, ignorance, and moral degradation" (Wilayat Ninawa 2016). For ISIS, the modern reverence for ancient structures and idols, celebrated as signs of civilization, is misplaced. They contend that authentic culture is not about architectural marvels or urbanization but about adherence to what they believe are God's directives. In their eyes, Islamic civilization is superior, not because of urban development, but due to its embodiment of specific values and morals (Wilayat Ninawa 2016).

The fate of Abu Hiraz, an influential leader in the Jariri Sufi tariqah, was also inextricably tied to this redefined understanding of *jahiliyya*. The document clarifies the group's intent: "After the mujahidin waged jihad so that the word of Allah would be supreme... they endeavoured to establish the religion of Allah in the land and to remove the symbols of shirk and jahiliyyah." (Rumiyah 2017a, 12–15) By this declaration, it becomes evident that the leadership and practices of figures like Abu Hiraz were regarded as symbols of *jahiliyya*, necessitating removal in their eyes. This hostility towards Sufism and its leaders is further emphasized in their declaration that "there would not remain Sufi tariqas in a land in which the banner of jihad rose high" (12–15). This statement not only underscores their commitment to eradicating what they perceive

as *jahiliyya* but also singles out influential Sufi leaders, such as Abu Hiraz, as primary targets. ISIS, in its Interview with the Amir of Hisbah in Sinai, further alluding to Abu Hiraz's affiliations, noting his "strong relationship with the regime murtaddin [apostates]." In the eyes of ISIS, such associations would only deepen his embodiment of *jahiliyya*, further justifying their actions against him (12–15).

In examining ISIS's core ideological tenets, we recognize a recurring motif: the group's relentless pursuit to establish a puritanical form of Islam predicated on their unique interpretation of *tawhid*. They position themselves as the vanguards of *tawhid al-ilahiyya*, believing that only they uphold the sanctity of God's unique right to worship. By deeming other forms of governance and societal structures sinful, they advocate for a world without dissent or divergence from their strict interpretation of Islamic law. ISIS's view of *tawhid* serves not just as a theological stance but a potent weapon to legitimize violence, suppress dissent, and establish an uncompromising form of governance.

In more detail, the Muslim community for ISIS is contaminated by *jahiliyya,* due to the arbitration of laws other than those of God, and reliance on man-made laws. The salvation from this *jahiliyya* is to judge and rule according to the law of God alone. By establishing this philosophy, the organization leads us to think about the jurisprudential ruling of need to put purification before beautification. An example is the encouragement to start asking for forgiveness before supplication and glorification, or the idea that you cannot fill a heart full of sin with faith. Here, ISIS instils in the reader's imagination the urgent need to eliminate *jahiliyya* that has overshadowed the Muslim community. After attempting to convincing the reader of this fact, the group moves onto the idea of construction and mobilization, which concerns *hakimiyya*.

Through this methodology, ISIS justifies opposing Muslim rulers and fighting them, solving the issue of revolution against the Muslim ruler by affirming that such rulers are no longer Muslim (al-Naba' 2017a 82:15). This philosophy entails the legalization of the departure from the structures and organizations of Arab-Islamic societies and the failure to recognize the institutions and constitutions of the State on which they are based, in the sense that they are *jahili* societies whose rulers and citizens are seen as non-Muslims. Hence, the group considers that we are today in a situation of *jahiliyya,* like the one before Islam, or darker, considering that

everything around us expresses the manifestations of the *jahiliyya* of people's perceptions, beliefs, traditions, arts, literature and laws. Under these fixed positions, the group has worked on an objective identification of societies, considering that *jahili* society is every non-Islamic society. However, this brings a theoretical dilemma for ISIS: are Muslim societies, as societies that ideologically adhere to Islam and are constitutionally based on Islamic law, *jahili*, societies or not? ISIS responds definitively: Muslim societies fall within the framework of *jahiliyya* because they do not worship God rightly in their life system (al-Naba' 2017b, 89:15). Even if these Muslim societies do not believe anything other than that God deserves worship, they give the most specific characteristics of divinity to others rather than God and recognize the sovereignty of others rather than God by receiving orders, laws and values from alternative sovereignties. In doing so, they have failed to fulfil the true meaning of *tawhid al-ilahiyya*. In this context, No Islamic society can be fulfilled without the establishment of a caliphate, according to ISIS (89:15).

The main idea through which ISIS sought to build this demolition philosophy (*jahiliyya*) and then create a constructivist philosophy (*hakimiyya*) is rooted in the concept of *tawhid*, particularly *tawhid al-ilahiyya*. For example, the group justifies its opposition to and conflicts with Muslim rulers by judging them to be non-Muslims for failing to apply *shariʿh* law and engaging in, and dealing with, those who follow non-Islamic laws, which in turn contradicts ISIS' philosophy of *tawhid*. The group believes that there are three types of *tawhid*. one is *tawhid al-rububiyya*, just as God has the order, he also has the right to rule and legislate as one of his own acts. A second is *tawhid al-Asma' wa al-Sifat*, the belief that God is one without similitude in His names and attributes. Thus, *hakam* (the Judge), is the name of his names and governing is one characteristic of his attributes. God's sovereignty is also concerned with *tawhid al-ilahiyya*, which discusses the uniqueness of Him in worship. Because the individual is ordered to worship God alone, being governed by His law is the pure worship of Him alone, to be governed by another law (*taghut*) is to commit an act that brings an individual out of Islam's circle (89:15).

ISIS assert that the phrase *la ilaha illa allah* is the first pillar of Islam, includes monotheism, which means that no one is worthy of worship or obedience but God including *tawhid* in worship,

tawhid al-ilahiyya or *tawhid al-ʿibada* and *tawhid al-rububiyya,* which affirms that God is the sole creator of the world, as well as *tawhid al-Asma' wa al-Sifat*, the uniqueness of God's names and attributes (Rumiyah 2016b, 1:6). ISIS has defended its saying by appropriating words by Ibn Taymiyya in which he state that:

La ilaha illallah' affirms that He is singled out in ilahiyyah (godhood), and ilahiyyah encompasses the excellence of His knowledge, His power, His mercy, and His wisdom. It includes the affirmation of His benevolence towards His slaves. This is because the ilah (god) is the maluh, and the maluh is the one who is deserving of being worshiped, and the fact that He is deserving of worship is due to what He possesses of attributes which necessitate that He be the one who is loved utmost and submitted to fully (1:6).

ISIS's alignment with this specific interpretation suggests a profound connection between their version of *tawhid* and that of Ibn Taymiyya. The appropriation of Ibn Taymiyya's words in this manner illustrates ISIS deliberate attempt to root its beliefs within established, authoritative Islamic discourse, underscoring ISIS's keen interest in aligning itself with classical theological interpretations, perhaps to validate its ideological positions. The strategic inclusion of this reference in their outlet, *Rumiyah* magazine, especially in an article titled "The Religion of Islam and the Jamaʿah of the Muslims", further amplifies this intent, highlighting their desire to bolster their claims through well-regarded theological sources.

In practice, ISIS's strict interpretation of *tawhid* has driven their violent campaign against the
It is worth noting that Ibn Taymiyya's emphasis on *tawhid al-ilahiyya* has historically played a significant role in shaping Salafi's understanding of *tawhid*. Researchers have pointed out the connection between Ibn Taymiyya's teachings and those of later movements, especially Wahhabism and modern Salafism. As mentioned earlier, Hoover emphasized how Ibn Taymiyya highlighted the precedence of worship and ethics over complex theological debates, a sentiment that resonated with subsequent Salafist thinkers, including Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab (Hoover 2016 635; 642). Bunzel identified that such interpretations, anchored in the medieval scholarship of luminaries like Ibn Taymiyya, make up the foundational Salafi theological tenets that influence factions like ISIS (Bunzel 2015: 8).

ISIS's interpretation of Islam, with its rigorous emphasis on *tawhid*, deeply rooted in Taymiyyan teachings, and its interpretation as Islam's pure

and undistorted heart, means that they use it as the foundation for their aggressive actions against those they label as apostates, especially the Shia Muslim community. With ISIS's proclamation that "the rejectionists [i.e., the Shi'a] are a group of idolatry and apostasy", they see Shiʿa tradition as echoing *jahiliyya* (Bunzel 2015, 38), which gives them a theological rationale for undertaking the extreme measures noted above.

A clear manifestation of ISIS's intent is evident in its Arabic newspaper, *al-Naba'*. ISIS includes in this outlet a weekly statistic that often appears on the second page titled *hasad al-ajnad*, which means Harvest of the Armies. Here, the group refers to the tally of attacks carried out per week, including a statistic on the number of Shiʿa killed in combat operations, which indicates that the Shiʿa sect's followers are considered a strategic target by ISIS. For instance, in the 405th issue of *al-Naba'*, released on August 24, 2023, the group attributes the deaths of 8 Shiʿa individuals to its operations between August 18 and August 24, 2023 (al-Naba' 2023, 2).

This pronounced attention to the Shiʿa community is further emphasized by ISIS's actions against notable Shiʿa religious landmarks. One such incident is included in the first issue of *Rumiyah* magazine, where Abu Mansur al-Muhajir, a Lebanese man of Australian descent, cast as a bold figure in the ISIS storyline being a man who forsook his home in pursuit of martyrdom, eventually achieving it in a devastating suicide attack on a Shiʿa shrine in Iraq. This assault left a chilling aftermath, with a death toll surpassing 90, along with numerous injuries (Rumiyah 2016a, 16).

To summarise, ISIS's actions and ideologies are tightly woven around the concepts of *jahiliyya* and *hakimiyya*, driven by their interpretation of *tawhid al-ilahiyya*. The group's intent to eliminate diverse religious practices, cultural symbols, and even entire societies they view as contaminated by *jahiliyya* highlights their genuine commitment to establishing a puritanical Islamic state in all modern Muslim communities, which ISIS believes have strayed from the path of true *tawhid*. Central to this ideology is the conviction that only they uphold the sanctity of God's exclusive right to worship. Their rigid interpretation of *tawhid* is a powerful tool to legitimize violence, suppress dissent, and establish a governance system devoid of compromise. This interpretation is aligned with the teachings of scholars like Ibn Taymiyya, giving their stance a historical and theological precedence. In practice,

this ideology has led ISIS to shape a society where cultural diversity is suppressed in favour of a rigid interpretation of Islam. The group's strategic use of media and propaganda, combined with persistent actions on the ground, underscores their dedication to enforce their version of *hakimiyya* by eradicating perceived *jahiliyya*. These measures collectively establish an environment harmonizing with their vision of a purified Islamic state. The focus on the Shiʿa Muslim community exemplifies how ISIS view Shiʿa practices as manifestations of *jahiliyya*, thus rationalizing the extreme measures taken to eliminate them.

CONCLUSION

In weaving together the enduring narratives of *jahiliyya* and *hakimiyya* within Islamic thought, our study has charted a course through the ebb and flow of these concepts through history, doctrine, and their eventual manifestations in modern times. The multifaceted nature of *jahiliyya* serves as a testament to the nuanced interplay between tradition and moral judgment, charting society's alignment or divergence from divinely inspired paths of conduct. Ibn Taymiyya stands as a pivotal bridge in this continuum, linking the classical with the contemporary and setting the stage for the ideological evolutions spearheaded by Mawdudi and Qutb.

Mawdudi's engagement with the ideals of modernity, through the lens of *hakimiyya*, expanded the conversation initiated by Ibn Taymiyya, bringing it into dialogue with contemporary governance and societal order. This dialogue took on new dimensions with Qutb, whose radical stance cast these classical terms against a backdrop of political authority and governance, hinting at the complex relationship between divine law and state power. This complexity was further accentuated by the rise of ISIS, a group whose ideology crystallizes around these very concepts, underscoring their version of tawhid *al-ilahiyya* through forceful and often violent means, aiming to establish what they regard as authentic governance while deeming existing structures as embodiments of *jahiliyya*.

The research findings presented herein compel us to consider the future trajectory of *jahiliyya* and *hakimiyya* within the socio-political fabric of Islamic societies. The pressing question for future research, therefore, lies in assessing the influence these concepts wield over modern Islamic governance

and legal frameworks. How do these historical and theological notions intersect with the principles of contemporary governance, and in what ways do they challenge or reinforce the dynamics of power, law, and societal norms in Muslim-majority states? Furthermore, how do these terms, embedded with deep moral and historical significance, coexist with global human rights discourses and the aspirations for democratic participation?

As our study concludes, it is clear that the path ahead must explore these intersections, dissecting the layers of influence that *jahiliyya* and *hakimiyya* have on the governance models of today's Islamic societies. Such an inquiry will not only shed light on the internal dynamics of these communities but will also provide a broader understanding of the interplay between tradition and modernity, offering critical insights into the global narrative of religious, cultural, and political identity formation.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Idea, conceptualization and writing is mine. I have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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