

**The Wahhabi Political Doctrines in the Middle Eastern Westphalian System: The
Evolution of the Concept of Jihad in the Three Saudi-Wahhabi States**

**Les doctrines politiques wahhabites dans le système westphalien du Moyen-Orient:
L'évolution du concept de djihad dans les trois États saoudiens-wahhabites**

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by

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

الحجرات ١٣

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

O mankind! Truly We created you from a male and a female, and We made you peoples and tribes that you may come to know one another. Surely the most noble of you before God are the most reverent of you. Truly God is Knowing, Aware.¹

Al-Hujurat, 13

To my parents, wife, and children,

Was it even possible if it were not for you?

¹ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Caner K. Dagli, Maria Massi Dakake, Joseph E. B. Lumbard, Mohammed Rustom, eds., *The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary* (New York: HarperOne, 2015), 1262.

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Abstract

Contrary to the view that Saudi Arabia has the most theocratic religious form of government, a closer look at its behavior reveals that a strong and dominating sense of Realpolitik centred on the survival of the state and its political expedience and contingencies drove its religious doctrine. With the introduction of the Westphalian state system into the Middle East, one is bound to ask how did the Wahhabi political and jihad doctrines (WPJD) evolve to ensure the sustainability of the Saudi state? As nation-states interacted with one another and strove to cement their role in the international political system, this dissertation examines the process through which the Wahhabi state adapted its political and jihad doctrines to survive and prosper in this newly introduced state system.

This thesis uses a multidisciplinary qualitative methodological approach to study the evolution of the WPJD. Critical analysis of the discourse and primary sources supplemented the methodology, while being aware of the significance of political concepts such as constructivism in understanding the role of ideas in the political environment. The methodology includes case study analysis of the three Saudi-Wahhabi states, coupled with synchronic and diachronic narrative analysis approach of the texts. Synchronic as in analysing the text within the time it was written, while being cognizant of the historicization of the events surrounding the author, and diachronic by analysing how the text was interpreted and the language had evolved from one period to another. Critically analysing the texts of Wahhabi clerics will help identify how context and text interact.

This thesis analyzes how major clerics interpreted the religious texts within the political context and provide an interpretation of what drives them to act the way they did. The contextual approach to the WPJD will highlight subtle truths about the Kingdom's strategic orientation. The research shows that religious sentiment per se (sharia) did not drive the arch of the WPJD's evolution; instead, it is driven by power – both its maintenance and expansion.

This dissertation is based on extensive research on Wahhabi and Sunni primary sources, many which have never been translated to the English language, making this study both original, significant, and unique in relation to both Saudi Arabia and Wahhabism studies in the West.

The research provides an assessment of the evolution of the WPJD during the three Saudi-Wahhabi states by explaining the process through which Wahhabi clerics reacted to domestic, regional, or international events. The paper surveys a variety of cases over two centuries to grasp the methods and processes used by the Wahhabi ulama to create, maintain, or defend the power of the state. Even though the research material was religious, the research will show how the religious aspect of narrative control and discourse manipulation was in play to direct and structure political views in times of peace and war.

The thesis paper demonstrates that the Wahhabi thinkers were not homogenous, nor should it be treated as such. Instead, the dissertation identifies how, when, and for what purpose did each thinker change their doctrine and, consecutively, how they were able to successfully support different rulers to stabilize and legitimize their rule. The research looks at distinct phases of Wahhabism: out-of-power or in-power. Additionally, the paper explains how the writings of each cleric was affected by linkages to cultural weight of his surroundings and how

each one of them adapted their discourse to help his political masters survive the conflict of the day.

The dissertation contributes to the historiography of Wahhabi jihad and political succession. By analysing what constituted just war and just leadership theory in Islam, the paper sheds light on how Wahhabi leaders and jurists formulated and executed their IR and military strategies, in addition to how Wahhabi ulama and jurists adjusted their fatwas to support the state's strategy and grand strategy (*jus ad bellum*). Examining those same ulama shows how they considered the concept of political power in their formulation of their theories in support of the state. More so, the dissertation highlights the differences in how Wahhabi states conducted war (*jus in bello*) and identifies any similarities between the Wahhabi way of war and the Western one.

The study of the relationship between the clergy (Wahhabi ulama) and the statesmen (Al-Saud tribe) demonstrates a compromise and a mutual accommodation between Sharia and State, with the primacy of the latter. In this relationship, the clerical establishment and the Al-Saud ruling family entered a pact where political considerations increasingly took over the religious precepts both domestically and, more importantly, internationally. Wahhabism, simply put, is not about Islam or the strict application of Shariah, it is rather about power.

Résumé

Contrairement à l'opinion selon laquelle l'Arabie saoudite possède un gouvernement religieux le plus théocratique, un examen plus approfondi de son comportement révèle que la doctrine religieuse est guidée par un sens fort et dominant de la Realpolitik centré sur la survie de l'État saoudien et sur ses opportunités et contingences politiques. Avec l'introduction du système étatique westphalien au Moyen-Orient, on ne peut que se demander comment les doctrines wahhabites sur la politique et le Djihad (DWPD) ont évolué pour assurer la continuité de l'État saoudien? Alors que les États-nations interagissent les uns avec les autres et s'efforcent de cimenter leur rôle dans le système politique international, le processus par lequel l'État wahhabite a adapté ses doctrines politiques et de jihad pour survivre et prospérer dans ce système étatique nouvellement introduit a été analysé.

Cette dissertation utilise une approche méthodologique qualitative multidisciplinaire pour étudier l'évolution du DWPD. La méthodologie est complétée par une analyse critique du discours et des sources primaires, tout en étant conscient de l'importance des concepts politiques tels que le constructivisme dans la compréhension du rôle des idées dans l'environnement politique. La méthodologie comprend des analyses d'études de cas des trois États saoudiens wahhabites, associées à une approche d'analyse narrative synchronique et diachronique des textes. L'analyse synchronique consiste à analyser le texte au moment où il a été écrit, tout en tenant compte de l'historicité des événements qui ont entouré l'auteur, et l'analyse diachronique consiste à analyser la manière dont le texte a été interprété et dont le langage a évolué d'une période à l'autre. L'analyse critique des textes des clercs wahhabites permettra d'identifier comment le contexte et le texte interagissent.

Cette thèse analyse la manière dont les juristes religieux clés ont interprété les textes religieux dans le contexte politique et offre une interprétation de ce qui les a poussés à agir de sorte. L'approche contextuelle du DWPD mettra en lumière des vérités subtiles sur l'orientation stratégique du Royaume. Notre recherche montre que l'évolution du DWPD n'est pas motivé par le sentiment religieux en soi (la charia), mais plutôt par le pouvoir - à la fois son maintien et son expansion.

Cette thèse est basée sur des recherches approfondies sur des sources primaires wahhabites et sunnites, dont certaines n'ont jamais été traduites en anglais, ce qui rend cette étude à la fois originale, significative et unique par rapport aux études précédentes sur l'Arabie Saoudite et le wahhabisme en Occident.

La recherche offre une évaluation de l'évolution du DWPD durant les trois États saoudiens-wahhabites en expliquant le processus par lequel les clercs wahhabites ont réagi aux événements nationaux, régionaux ou internationaux. La dissertation examine une variété de cas sur deux siècles afin de saisir les méthodes et les processus utilisés par les oulémas wahhabites pour créer, maintenir ou défendre le pouvoir de l'État. Même si le matériel de recherche était généralement d'essence religieuse, la recherche montrera comment l'aspect religieux du contrôle narratif et de la manipulation du discours a été en œuvre pour diriger et structurer les opinions politiques en temps de paix et de guerre.

La thèse démontre que les penseurs wahhabites n'étaient pas homogènes, et ne devraient pas être traités ainsi. Au contraire, la dissertation identifie comment, quand et dans quel but chaque penseur a changé sa doctrine et, consécutivement, comment ils ont pu soutenir avec succès différents dirigeants pour stabiliser et légitimer leur pouvoir. La recherche examine les différentes phases du wahhabisme : hors du pouvoir ou au pouvoir. En outre, la thèse

explique comment les écrits de chaque juriste ont été affectés par les liens avec le poids culturel de son environnement et comment chacun d'entre eux a adapté son discours pour aider ses maîtres politiques à survivre le conflit de l'époque.

Cette thèse contribue à l'historiographie du jihad wahhabite et de la succession politique. En analysant ce qui constituait la guerre juste et la théorie du leadership juste dans l'Islam, la thèse met en lumière la manière dont les dirigeants et les juristes wahhabites ont formulé et exécuté leurs stratégies en relations internationales et militaires, ainsi que la manière dont les ulémas et les juristes wahhabites ont ajusté leurs fatwas pour soutenir la stratégie et la grande stratégie de l'État (*jus ad bellum*). Ces mêmes ulémas ont été examinés pour montrer comment ils ont considéré le concept de pouvoir politique dans la formulation de leurs théories en faveur de l'État. Plus encore, la thèse met en évidence les différences dans la manière de mener la guerre (*jus in bello*) par les États wahhabites et sunnites et identifie au passage, les éventuelles similarités entre la manière wahhabite de faire la guerre et la manière occidentale.

L'étude de la relation entre le clergé (ulémas wahhabites) et les hommes d'État (tribus des Al-Saoud) démontre un compromis et un accommodement mutuel entre la charia et l'État, avec la primauté de ce dernier. Dans cette relation, l'establishment clérical et la famille régnante Al-Saoud ont conclu un pacte où les considérations politiques prennent de plus en plus le pas sur les préceptes religieux, tant au niveau national que, surtout, international. Le wahhabisme, en termes simples, ne s'intéresse d'abord au pouvoir qu'à l'islam et à l'application stricte de la charia.

Table of Contents

Abstract	iv
Résumé.....	vii
Table of Contents.....	x
Chapter 1 – Introduction	1
1.1 Literature Review and Gaps.....	2
1.1.1 From a Bedouin to an Urbanized Society	2
1.1.2 Literature on Wahhabism, the Saudi State, and the Wahhabi Political and Jihad Doctrines (WPJD).....	4
1.1.3 The Rentier State	6
1.2 Research Question.....	8
1.3 Hypothesis	8
1.4 Contribution	9
1.5 Content.....	11
1.6 Nomenclature	12
1.6.1 Jurisprudence (Fiqh).....	12
1.6.2 Wahhabism.....	15
1.6.3 Jihad.....	16
1.6.4 WPJD.....	18
1.6.5 The Westphalian State System / Nation-States	19
1.6.6 The Late Ottoman Empire.....	25
1.7 WPJD Texts	27
1.8 Methodology	37
1.8.1 Methodological Approaches to the Text: A cursory Comparison Across Disciplines	49
1.8.2 Current Research Methodologies on Military and Strategic History.....	54
1.8.3 Historiography and the History of Warfare and Strategy in the Middle East	58
1.8.4 WPJD’s Evolving Point of View: Interaction Between Text and Politico-Historical Contexts.....	60
1.9 Limitations on the Scope of Research	61
1.10 Conclusion and Beyond	62

Chapter 2- Philosophical Foundations of WPJD	63
2.1 Ahmed bin Hanbal (780-855)	64
2.2 Ibn Taymiyya (1263-1328).....	69
2.3 Contextual Concepts.....	80
2.3.1 Order (Ni'dham) and Chaos (Faw'da)	80
2.3.2 Welfare (Maslaha) and Advice (Nasiha).....	82
2.3.3 Enjoining Good and Forbidding Wrong (al-amr bil ma'aruf wal nahi 'an al-munkar (ABM)).....	84
Chapter 3: The Politics of Wahhabism	89
3.1 Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1792): Wahhabism, the House of Saud, and the Arabian Desert	89
3.1.1 Political Theology	97
3.1.2 Jihad and the Instrumentalization of Tribal Warfare (Ghazu).....	98
3.1.3 Asymmetric Warfare	99
3.1.4 Salafism in the Eyes of Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab	104
3.2 Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab's Agenda: To Create a Mulk (Kingship).....	110
3.3 Wahhabi Muftis: Muhammad bin Ibrahim Al al-Sheikh (1893-1969) (Grand Mufti: 1953-1969).....	114
3.3.1 Contexts	116
3.3.2 The Creation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (1932 Onwards).....	117
3.3.3 International/Regional Context: Rebellion Against the Ottomans and the Alliance with the British Empire (Early Twentieth Century).....	118
3.3.4 International/Regional Context: Countering Communism during the Cold War	121
3.3.5 Regional Context: Al-Sharif Hussein and the Expansion of the Al-Saud in Arabia	123
3.3.6 Regional Context: Yemen War/Expansion into Yemen (1962-1970)	127
3.3.7 Local Context: Faysal Dethrones King Saud (1964)	132
3.4 Wahhabi Muftis: Abd al-Aziz ibn Baz (Ibn Baz) (1910-1999) (Grand Mufti: 1993-1999)	133
3.4.1 International Context: USSR Invasion of Afghanistan (1979-1989).....	134
3.4.2 Regional Context: Iraq-Iran War (1980-1988).....	136
3.4.3 Regional Context: The Gulf War, Iraq's Invasion of Kuwait, and Foreign Troops on KSA's Land (1990-1991)	144
3.4.4 Local Context: King Faysal's Assassination (1975).....	147

3.4.5 Local Context: 1979 Meccan Rebellion.....	150
Chapter 4: The Alim and the Ruler – Building the State	154
4.1 Leadership and Jihad: A Concept through History	154
4.1.1 Al-Nawawi (1233-1277).....	155
4.1.2 Ibn Taymiyya (1263-1328).....	156
4.1.3 Mohammed bin Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1792)	157
4.1.4 Wahhabism and Leadership: The Absolute Primacy of Order over Justice.....	159
4.1.5 Wahhabism and ABM	160
4.1.6 First Saudi State (1744-1818)	161
4.1.7 Second Saudi State (1824-1891)	164
4.2 The First Wahhabi Mufti: Muhammad bin Ibrahim Al al-Sheikh (1893-1969).....	166
4.2.1 Introduction.....	166
4.2.2 On Leadership	170
4.2.3 How to be a Leader.....	172
4.2.4 Relationship with the Leader.....	173
4.2.5 Concept of Justice.....	174
4.2.6 Jihad.....	176
4.2.7 Views on WPJD	181
4.2.7.1 WPJD and Welfare (Maslaha).....	181
4.2.7.2 WPJD and ABM.....	183
4.2.7.3 WPJD and al-Hisba.....	184
4.2.7.4 WPJD and Loyalty and Disavowal (Al Wala wal Bara).....	186
4.2.7.5 WPJD and the Monopolization of the Narrative	188
4.2.8 Ibn Ibrahim and the Birth of the KSA	189
4.2.9 The Ikhwan Rebellion (1927-1930).....	192
4.2.10 WPJD and the Right to Declare Jihad.....	201
4.2.11 Positive Laws	204
4.2.12 The Qadi’s Characteristics	207
4.2.13 Public Opinion.....	208
4.2.14 The World Muslim League: The Globalization of WPJD	210
Chapter 5: The Alim and the Ruler – Securing the State	214

5.1 Wahhabi Muftis: Abd al-Aziz ibn Baz (Ibn Baz) (1910-1999).....	214
5.1.1 Intro	214
5.1.2 Allegiance to the Leader	215
5.1.3 Views on WPJD	219
5.1.4 ABM.....	221
5.1.5 Countering Arab Nationalism	224
5.1.6 Countering Other Forms of Ideologies	229
5.1.7 The Soviet-Afghan War (1979-1989).....	235
5.1.8 The Meccan Rebellion (1979).....	240
5.1.9 The Invasion of Kuwait (1990-1991): An Evolution in the WPJD – The Unjust Ruler	243
5.1.10 The Invasion of Kuwait (1990-1991): An Evolution in the WPJD – Justifying Seeking Support from Non-Muslims	249
Chapter 6: Conclusion.....	253
6.1 Intro	253
6.2 A Return to the Research Question	254
6.3 The Hypothesis Examined	255
6.4 The Contribution of the Dissertation	255
6.5 Limitations	257
6.6 Further Research Opportunities	258
6.7 Closing Remarks	259
Maps.....	260
Pictures.....	263
Chronology of Events	268
List of Abbreviations	270
Glossary	271
Bibliography.....	275
Primary Sources	275
Secondary Sources (English and Arabic)	306

Chapter 1 – Introduction

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) is one of the many Westphalian nation-states created in the Middle East after WWI. Just like other countries in the region, it was put together through the struggle of strong leaders, tribal and ethnic alliances, and the support of new colonial masters in the region. It was also a political product of centuries-old struggle between the Al-Saud tribe and the Ottoman Empire, and a religious creation based on the teaching of Wahhabism.

Understanding this interaction between the political and the religious is necessary to explain how a tribal band was able to reach political stability and religious homogeneity in a region rife with civil strife and sectarian disputes. Saudi Arabia reflects the historical religious characteristics of the Middle East while being at the same time a stable state in a region ridden by chaos.

This dissertation unravels the political development of the KSA considering the religious discourse that governs its character, shedding light on the politico-religious dynamics of the nation and what makes Saudi Arabia distinct from the other states in the region.

1.1 Literature Review and Gaps²

The academic literature on Saudi Arabia and Wahhabism can be classified into three sections, each of which has been reviewed based on Western and Arabic academic sources. The first section discusses the literature on transformation of Arabia from a Bedouin to an urbanized society, while the second section reviews Wahhabism, the Saudi state and Wahhabi political and jihad doctrines (WPJD). The final section briefly reflects on study of the KSA as a rentier state.

1.1.1 From a Bedouin to an Urbanized Society

The interaction between Bedouin values, tribal alliances, and state building was a notion that has been explored by many researchers. T. E. Lawrence and H. St. John Philby both stressed the importance of Bedouin culture and tribal unification under a charismatic leader as a recipe for success in the battlefield and in the creation of stable nation-states.³ Philby even explored the role Wahhabism played as a uniting factor under Abd al-Aziz bin Abdul Rahman Al Saud (Ibn Saud); however, his diaries centred on a single temporal aspect of Wahhabi jihad

² I have listed an extensive bibliography of the works related to Wahhabism and the Saudi states in the Primary and Secondary bibliographies below.

³ See H. St. John Philby, *The Heart of Arabia: A Record of Travel and Exploration*. Vols 1 & 2 (London: Constable and Company Ltd, 1922) and T. E. Lawrence, Jeremy Wilson, and Nicole Wilson, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom: The Complete 1922 Text* (Fordingbridge, Hampshire: J. and N. Wilson, 2004).

and political doctrine – they were largely based on Ibn Saud and the early creation of the Third Saudi-Wahhabi state.⁴

As for Ken Booth, in his magnum opus *Strategy and Ethnocentrism*, he did explore the notion of how ethnicity plays a role in the strategy-making of nation states in the Middle East. However, his study was more centred on the role of Arab nationalism than on the roles of religious or Bedouin culture.⁵

⁴ Philby, *Saudi Arabia*.

⁵ Ken Booth, *Strategy and Ethnocentrism* (London: Croom Helm London, 1979).

1.1.2 Literature on Wahhabism, the Saudi State, and the Wahhabi Political and Jihad

Doctrines (WPJD)

The literature on Wahhabism had focused on the religious and theological characteristics of Wahhabism. Most of the academic work here discussed the historical currents and biographical sketches of this sect and its leaders,⁶ its logical and theological provisions,⁷ and the dialectical process that brought forth this ideology and how it had influenced militant and terrorist movements' worldwide – especially after 9/11.⁸

Scholars such as Carl Brockelmann, Ali al-Wardi, David Dean Commins, Joseph Kostiner, Albert Hourani, Mary C. Wilson, and Philip S. Khoury wrote about and highlighted

⁶ See, for example: H. St. John Philby, *The Heart of Arabia: A Record of Travel and Exploration*. Vols 1 & 2 (London: Constable and Company Ltd, 1922); Natana J DeLong-Bas, *Wahhabi Islam: From Revival and Reform to Global Jihad* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Anwar Abdullah, *Al Ulama wal Arsh [The Ulama and the Throne]* (Paris: La Librairie de l'Orient, 2004); Butrus Abu-Manneh, "Salafiyya and the Rise of the Khālidīyya in Baghdad in the Early Nineteenth Century," *Die Welt Des Islams* 43, no. 3 (2003): 349-372, <https://doi.org/10.1163/157006003322682654>; Jalal Abualrub, *Biography and Mission of Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab*, ed. Alaa Mencke (Florida: Madinah Publishers, 2003); Khalid S. al-Dakhil, "Social Origins of the Wahhabi Movement" (PhD diss., University of California, 1998); Mohamed A. al-Freih, "The Historical Background of the Emergence of Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab and His Movement" (PhD Diss., University of California at Los Angeles, 1990); Albert Hourani, Philip Khoury and Mary C. Wilson, eds., *The Modern Middle East* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2014); Carl Brockelmann, *History of the Islamic Peoples* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1960); and, Jeff Den, "Did Ibn Saud's Militants Cause 400,000 Casualties? Myths and Evidence about the Wahhabi Conquests, 1902-1925," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* Vol.46, no. 4, (8 Aug 2019): 519-534, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13530194.2018.1434612>.

⁷ See, for example Joseph A. Kechichian, "The Role of the Ulama in the Politics of an Islamic State: The Case of Saudi Arabia," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 18, no. 1 (1986): 53–71, <https://doi.org/10.1017/s002074380003021x>, and Samira Haj, "Reordering Islamic Orthodoxy: Muhammad Ibn 'Abdul Wahhāb," *The Muslim World* 92, no. 3-4 (2002): 333–70.

⁸ See, for example, Jason Burke, *Al-Qaida: In the Shadow of Terror* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2003); John L. Esposito, *Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); and Thomas Hegghammer, "Jihadi-Salafis or Revolutionaries?," *Global Salafism*, (2014): 245–66, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199333431.003.0011>.

the role and influence of Saudi Arabia and the Wahhabi ideology on the currents of contemporary Arab and Islamic political systems. The powerful tribal alliances created by Al-Saud and the use of religious identity, coupled with the riches of oil,⁹ were contextualized to explain contemporary Islamic and Arab issues. Madawi al-Rasheed and Natana DeLong-Bas, for example, wrote extensively on the history of the three Saudi-Wahhabi states.¹⁰ However, exposing the link between ideology and power, especially how the Wahhabi political and jihad doctrines evolved in Saudi Arabia, was infrequently touched upon. This blind spot left a large gap in the academic literature – a gap that could help shed light on the nature of the flexibility and the agility of the Wahhabi political and jihad doctrines (WPJD).

The history of Saudi Arabia itself can be divided into three main eras - the three Saudi-Wahhabi states. The First Saudi-Wahhabi State (Emirate of Dir'iyah, 1744-1818) is the period in which Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab allied with the Al-Saud tribe and during this period of time one can reflect on how the nascent emirate came into being in face of the Ottoman and Egyptian powers. The Second Saudi-Wahhabi State (Emirate of Najd, 1824-1891) provides a comprehensive understating of Wahhabism out-of-power where the Al-Saud tribe and the Wahhabis struggled against major tribal alliances in the region and failed to secure a stable state due to internal strife. Lastly, the Third Saudi-Wahhabi State (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia), provides the most thorough case of Wahhabism in-power and the process by which the Wahhabi-Saudi alliance was able to create and maintain a stable powerful state in the Middle East.

⁹ Discovered around 1938.

¹⁰ The three Saudi states being: the First Saudi-Wahhabi State (Emirate of Dir'iyah): 1744-1818; the Second Saudi-Wahhabi State (Emirate of Najd): 1824-1891; and the Unification of Saudi Arabia: 1902-1932 and the Third Saudi-Wahhabi State (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia): 1932-Present.

Beyond the notion of the nation-state, the literature on Wahhabism had increased after the events of 9/11. However, the role of Wahhabism within international relations (IR) was not explored in detail. This is mainly because Wahhabism has been associated with terrorist groups and, consequently, has been a main area of study in security and counterterrorism centres.

Specific literature on how Wahhabi scholars and political leaders were able to evolve their *fiqh* (jurisprudence) of jihad to allow them to successfully stabilize Saudi rule since WWI is almost non-existent except for the excellent study put forth by Nabil Mouline *The Clerics of Islam: Religious Authority and Political Power in Saudi Arabia*.¹¹ However, even though Mouline's books explored the relationship between the Wahhabi clerics and the Saudi leadership, the author did not delve into the WPJD of the Wahhabi clerics themselves. Understandably, that was mainly because the author approached the study in a diachronic way, while the actual WPJD texts of the *ulama* (scholars) was not thoroughly analysed. This would have, understandably, required immense resources based on the timescale the author was covering.

1.1.3 The Rentier State

Within the realm of IR, the literature on Saudi Arabia had centred on its role as a rentier state. With one of the largest oil reserves in the world, both Saudi Arabia and the Saudi Arabian Oil Company (formerly known as Arabian-American Oil Company (ARAMCO)) has been the

¹¹ Nabil Mouline, *The Clerics of Islam: Religious Authority and Political Power in Saudi Arabia*, trans. Ethan S. Rundell (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014).

centre of many studies. Hazem Beblawi, Giacomo Luciani, Mahmoud Abdel-Fadil, and Dirk Vandewalle, for example, explored the notion of stability vis-à-vis state-building.¹² Scholars attributed, as with any rentier state, nation stability to the separation of rulership from taxation and public involvement. However, the evolution of religious and political doctrines within the Saudi-Wahhabi state, especially as support and stabilizing mechanisms, were overlooked by many scholars.

When reviewing the literature on the formation and political development of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, it becomes clear that the concept of the rentier state is central. However, it has minor impact on this research; specifically on the discussion pertaining to WPJD. It was included here merely as a background on the type of literature conducted on the Saudi state.

Following through from the literature review above, one notes a gap in academia when it comes to understanding the role of Wahhabi ulama in formulating the state's political and jihad doctrine. More importantly, there have not been any studies that had explored the evolution of the Wahhabi political doctrine writ large or the evolution of the Wahhabi jihad fiqh doctrine during the three Saudi-Wahhabi states.

¹² Hazem Beblawi and Giacomo Luciani, eds., *The Rentier State* (London: Croom Helm, 1987).

1.2 Research Question

Given the introduction of the Westphalian state system into the Middle East post-WWI and the regional and political context of Arabia, how did the Wahhabi political and jihad doctrines (WPJD) evolve to ensure the sustainability of the Saudi state? In other terms, how did the Wahhabi state adapt its political and jihad doctrines to survive in the newly created post-WWI Westphalian Middle Eastern state system?

1.3 Hypothesis

Contrary to the common understanding that Saudi Arabia has the most theocratic religious form of government, a closer look at its behavior and at the intellectual pillars and components within the political contexts reveals that the religious doctrine, including jihad, was driven by a strong and dominating sense of Realpolitik centred on the survival of the Saudi state and its political expediencies and contingencies. The study of the relationship between the clergy (Wahhabi ulama) and the statesmen (Al-Saud tribe) demonstrates a compromise and a mutual accommodation between Sharia and State, with the primacy of the latter. In this relationship, the clerical establishment and the Al-Saud ruling family entered a pact where political considerations increasingly took over the religious precepts both domestically and, more importantly, internationally. Wahhabism, simply put, is not about Islam or the strict application of Shariah, it is rather about power.

1.4 Contribution

The literature on the evolution of Wahhabi political and jihad doctrines is underdeveloped, and the subject has not been explored in the depth and the breadth contained in this dissertation. More so, the process by which Wahhabi doctrine had evolved to support the rule of the state had not been surveyed other than in some stand-alone cases where the writing of a Wahhabi or a Salafi writer was investigated within a purely religious context;¹³ no other

¹³ See: Abualrub, *Biography and Mission of Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab*; Al-Freih, "The Historical Background of the Emergence of Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab and His Movement;" Ayman al-Yassini, "Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab, Muhammad," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World Vol. 2*, ed. John L. Esposito (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); Paul Berman, "The Philosopher of Islamic Terror," *New York Times Magazine*, March 23, 2003; Michael A. Cook, "On the Origins of Wahhabism," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 2, no. 2 (1992): 191-202; Thomas Eich, "Abu l-Huda l-Sayyadi-Still such a Polarizing Figure (Response to Itzchak Weismann)," *Arabica* 55, no. 3/4 (2008): 433-44; Roxanne L. Euben and Muhammad Qasim Zaman, eds., *Princeton Readings in Islamist Thought: Texts and Contexts from Banna to Bin Laden* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2009); Hala Fattah, "'Wahhabi' influences, Salafi responses: Shaikh Mahmud Shukri and the Iraqi Salafi Movement, 1745-1930," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 2 (2003): 127-48; Gibril Fouad Haddad, *Sunna Notes Volume 2: The Excellent Innovation in the Qur'an and Hadith with Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali's The Sunna of the Caliphs*, Studies in Hadith and Doctrine (London: Aqsa Publications, 2005); Samira Haj, "Reordering Islamic Orthodoxy: Muhammad Ibn 'Abdul Wahhāb," *The Muslim World* 92, no. 3-4 (2002): 333-70; Wael Hallaq, *Ibn Taymiyya Against the Greek Logicians* (Oxford University Press, 1993); John Kelsay, *Arguing the Just War in Islam* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007); John Kelsay and James Turner Johnson, eds., *Just War and Jihad: Historical and Theoretical Perspectives on War and Peace in Western and Islamic Traditions* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1991); Henri Laoust, *Essai sur les doctrines sociales et politiques de Taki-d-Din Ahmad b. Taimiya* (Cairo: Institut Francais d'Arche'ologie Orientale, 1939); Henri Laoust, "Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab, Muhammad b," in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, ed. B. Lewis, V. L. Menage, Ch. Pellat, and J. Schacht (Leiden: Brill, 1971); Donald P. Little, "Did Ibn Taymiyya Have a Screw Loose?," *Studia Islamica*, no. 41 (1975): 93-111; V. E. Makari, *Ibn Taymiyya's Ethics: the Social Factor* (California: Scholars Press, 1983); George Makdisi, "Ibn Taimiya: A Sufi of the Qadiriya Order," *American Journal of Arabic Studies* 1 (1974): 118-29; Masood Alam Nadwi, *Mohammad bin Abdul Wahab: A Slandered Reformer*, trans. M. Rafiq Khan (India: Idaratul Buhoosil Islamia, 1983); George Snavelly Rentz, *The Birth of the Islamic Reform in Saudi Arabia: Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703/04-1792) and the Beginning of the Unitarian Empire in Arabia* (London: Arabian Publisher, 2004); Paul Owen Lutz Ryan, "The Role of Religion, the Ikhwan and Ibn Saud in the Creation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia" (master's thesis, The University of Texas at Austin, 2018); W. F Smalley, "The Wahhabis and Ibn Saud," *The Moslem World* 22, no. 3 (1932): 227-46; and, Samir Faruq Traboulsi, "An early refutation of Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab's reformist views," *Welt des Islams* 42, no. 3 (2002): 373-415.

work had explored the evolution of thought of the various Wahhabi thinkers proposed above. Most of the Western academic work merely centred on and emphasized the works of early thinkers such as Ibn Hanbal, Ibn Taymiyya, or Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab.

Research into Wahhabism had treated the body of Wahhabi thinkers as a homogenous group. Conversely, however, this thesis' approach will focus on identifying how, when, and for what purpose did each thinker change their doctrine and, consecutively, how they were able to successfully support different rulers in stabilizing and legitimizing their rule.

This study identifies and distinguishes the distinct phases of Wahhabism: Wahhabism out of power, Wahhabism in power. This methodology is applied to contemporary Wahhabi and Saudi thinkers. This thesis also explores how in-power versus out-of-power status affected the writings of such thinkers as Ibn Hanbal, Ibn Taymiyya, Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, Ibn Ibrahim, and Ibn Baz.

In addition, this dissertation contributes to the historiography of Wahhabi jihad history and political succession. Through the analysis of what constitutes just war and just leadership theory in Islam, this study sheds light on how Wahhabi leaders and jurists formulated and executed their IR and military strategies. This novel approach will also shed light on how Wahhabi Saudi Arabia utilized the power of its theologians to exert control and influence in the region and in the international system. Furthermore, this thesis provides an original contribution into how various concepts played a role in shaping the Wahhabi way of war. For example, it assesses how Wahhabi ulama, jurists, and leaders adjusted their fatwas to support the state's strategy of war (*jus ad bellum*) and grand strategy. It also examines how those same ulama considered the concept of political power in their formulation of their theories in support of the state. In addition, this paper highlights the differences in how war was conducted (*jus in bello*)

by Wahhabi and Sunni states, a conceptual paradigm shift from previous research which heavily focused on Sunni Islam in general.

The definition of power itself is elusive. It why this dissertation approaches the concept of power definition from three main axes: power as the capacity to achieve one's goal, power as a resource, and power as a relationship with others to get them to do what you want them to do and/or help attain it.¹⁴

1.5 Content

This dissertation ascertains how the Wahhabi jihad doctrine evolved during the period of the three Saudi-Wahhabi states and, especially, during the post-WWI Westphalian state up to the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. It also ascertains how the Wahhabi jihad doctrine evolved to provide legitimacy for the rule of Al-Saud and sustain the rule of that family.

The research reviews the concepts of strategy of war in Wahhabi Islam. It examines which methods were used by the Wahhabi clerics to weaken their adversaries, whether they were secular (Arab nationalists and Communists) or religious (other Muslim governments).

It also provides examples of how the Wahhabi clerics and leaders adapted the WPJD during the three Saudi-Wahhabi states' period. To determine how did the WPJD allowed for a coalition with *dar al harb* (the West) against *dar al Islam* (Muslim states/non-state actors).

¹⁴ David A. Baldwin. *Power and International Politics: A Conceptual Approach* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 12, 30, 176, 179-180, and 186.

More so, it examines how the Wahhabi clerics, ulama, and leaders managed the psychological dissonance (discursive contradictions) of being pro-Western on the international arena but anti-Western at home.

1.6 Nomenclature

This section will provide the reader with a quick tour de force of the main nomenclature used, and the major historical contexts required to better understand the evolution of Wahhabism and the process by which the Saudi state came to exist. The sub-sections strives to orient the reader towards the major historical, political, and religious arcs that envelop the history of the region and of the religion.

1.6.1 Jurisprudence (Fiqh)

To understand and fully appreciate the role of Wahhabism in influencing the nation's political discourse, one must analyse the doctrine upon which fatwas and political decrees were issued. The role of the Wahhabi cleric and doctrinarian is to legitimize the authority of the of the state and, to do so, he¹⁵ must utilize the power of jurisprudence to craft the law that would, in turn, become the policy of the state.

¹⁵ The Wahhabi ulama body is composed completely of male ulama.

The study of Islam has different themes, jurisprudence being one of them. In general, one can note that:

Islamic Studies comprises six major themes, which are Quran Studies, Hadith Studies, Usul al-Din (principles of faith), Fiqh (Jurisprudence), Sirah (biography) and civilization... A close study of these branches of scholarship suggest the Islamic Studies to be classified into three areas of research, all of which is characterized with peculiar method and procedure, only in some points do they inter-weave... The second area of research is that of Usul al-Din, also called Tawhid. Researchers in this area are interpreters of the Quran and Sunnah on matters related to the fundamentals of faith. They use the methodology of jurist in their interpretations and analyses, but are not compelled to adopt the principles of Qiyas [logic] and Maslaha [public good]. The third area of research within the domain of Islamic Studies is the field of Hadith and Civilization. This area comprises various fields of Hadith Sciences, Muslims contributions in politics, economics, history and other similar subjects. ¹⁶

The history of jurisprudence in Islam is complex and, depending on which sect one focuses on, the starting point would vary accordingly. Since Wahhabism takes root in Sunni Islam, the starting point would be in one of the four Sunni jurisprudence schools, them being: Hanafi, Hanbali, Maliki, and Shafi'i. Since Wahhabism takes it root from the Hanbali school (named after Ahmed bin Hanbal), a strong understanding of the laws of jihad according to Ibn

¹⁶ Yusuf Dalhat, "Introduction to Research Methodology in Islamic Studies," *Journal of Islamic Studies and Culture* 3, no. 2 (2015): 147-152.

Hanbal would be necessary to understand the epistemological¹⁷ mental model upon which Wahhabi ulama built their political and jihad world views. Following Ibn Hanbal, Taqi al-Din bin Taymiyya¹⁸ (1263-1328) would be the next logical step since it was from him that Muhammed Ibn Abd al-Wahhab derived his puritanical model of governance and statesmanship.

After the creation of the Third Saudi State, the jurisprudence process was fully institutionalized within the KSA. It touched on all parts of the Saudi state and the population's daily lives. Since the creation of the KSA, there has been hundreds of Wahhabi jurists that answered the call to support the state; however, a few rose above the masses as the leaders of the movement, those being Muhammad bin Ibrahim Al al-Sheikh (Ibn Ibrahim) (1893-1969) and Abd al-Aziz ibn Baz (Ibn Baz) (1910-1999).¹⁹ Those two Grand Muftis not only crystallized the concepts of jihad and politics in Wahhabi Islam, but also served as the force of Saudi legitimacy and Wahhabi proselytization globally. Their views and writings will be explored in Chapters Four and Five, specifically in the context of domestic, regional, and international events.

¹⁷ Teun A. Van Dijk, *Ideology and Discourse: A Multidisciplinary Introduction* (Barcelona: Pompeu Fabra University, 2004).

¹⁸ For example, Ibn Taymiyya's *al-Fatawa al-Kubra: Majmu'a Fatawa, Kitab Minhaj al-Sunna al-Nabawiyya fi Naqd Kalam al-Shi'a wa al-Qadariyya wa bi Hamishihi Bayan Msarih al-Ma'qul li-Sahih al-Manqul, Al-Siyasa Shar'iyya fi Islah al-Ra'i wal-Ra'iyya*, and *Minhaj al Sunnah al Nabawiyyah* are considered by the Wahhabi and Salafi movements as foundational texts from which rules, doctrine, and regulations pertaining to jihad and political theory are derived.

¹⁹ See his *Tanbihat fi al-Radd 'ala man Ta'awwala al-Sifat*.

1.6.2 Wahhabism

Wahhabism, the official ideology of Saudi Arabia since 1932, is a strict, literalist, and exoteric sect of Sunni Islam that branches from the Hanbali school of thought. It is a sect that interweaves jurisprudence with tribalism from central Arabia.

Wahhabi Islam extends beyond the borders of Saudi Arabia. It is the sect to which many Persian Gulf Arab monarchies and tribes adhere to, as do many Sunni jihadi and Salafi militant terrorist groups worldwide. In the 20th century, the political and Jihadi tenets of Wahhabism have seeped into the thinking of the majority of Sunni Salafi²⁰ and Takfiri²¹ movements²², in addition to populist ideologies such as the Muslim Brotherhood.

It is also important to note here the context in which the term Wahhabism is used in this dissertation, by which it refers to the adherents and followers of the teachings of Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab. “The term Wahhabi is used primarily by outsiders to distinguish the movement; adherents often refer to themselves as *salafi* (‘followers of the pious forbears’), a term used by followers of other Islamic reform movements as well.”²³ (Italics in original). With the diffusion of Salafi movements in all walks of Muslim lives, the term Wahhabism helps focus the research on the adherents of the founder of the movements and, specifically, to the ulama and clergy body with modern Saudi Arabia. More so, “Wahhabi theology and

²⁰ Salafism (from al-Salaf al-Salih, the pious predecessors) refers to any movement that emulates the teachings of Muslims who lived during the first and the second Hijri centuries (622-900 C.E.).

²¹ Takfiri is derived from takfir – accusing another Muslim of apostasy. Also, to excommunicate someone.

²² This includes non-traditional Wahhabi groups, such as the Muslim Brotherhood and the Naqshbandi Sufi order in Iraq.

²³ “Wahhabi Islamic Movement,” Encyclopedia Britannica, accessed February 19, 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Wahhabi>.

jurisprudence – based, respectively, on the teachings of the theologian Ibn Taymiyya and the legal school of Ahmed ibn Hanbal – stress literal interpretation of the Quran and Sunnah and the establishment of an Islamic society based only on these two bodies of literature.”²⁴

1.6.3 Jihad

Jihad in Islam is composed of two parts: greater jihad and lesser jihad. Greater jihad (*al-jihad al-akbar*) is the struggle that each Muslim undergoes to better themselves and their soul. It is the soul-searching battle each Muslim must undertake against the trials and tribulations of life and is the process through which Muslims enhance their faith and moral discipline.

Lesser jihad (*al-jihad al-asghar*), on the other hand, is the physical process through which Muslim conduct war against aggression. According to the majority of Shia and Sunni Muslims, lesser jihad is conducted in the extreme cases of self-defence. However, according to a minority of extremist literalist sects, lesser jihad has overtaken the greater one and became an article of faith to those groups. Within the literalist, purist school of Wahhabism, lesser jihad became a synonym with all forms of jihad, and the process of conducting jihad worldwide became the *raison d'être* of the majority of jihadi and takfiri groups, all of which adhere to the doctrine of Wahhabism. The line between lesser and greater jihads seemed to have slowly eroded, with more focus on the pursue of power and rulership.

²⁴ Ibid.

The Wahhabi political and jihad doctrines (WPJD) itself evolved in tandem with the three Saudi-Wahhabi states. Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab, from whom the sect gets its namesake “Wahhabism,” provided the Al-Saud family with the necessary religious fatwas and doctrine that helped establish the First Saudi-Wahhabi state (1744-1818), also known as the Emirate of Dir’iyah. Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab’s books set out the necessary rules of engagements and provided the needed fatwas to wage war against the Shia and Sunni neighbouring tribes. His doctrine also provided the Al-Saud family with the religious and political justification to wage jihad against the Ottoman Caliphate.

As for Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab’s and Ibn Saud’s military force, it was aptly named *al-Muwahhidun* (those who profess the unity of God), named specifically to highlight its members’ true path in contrast to the rest of the Muslim population. This newly created dichotomy within the Muslim *ummah* (community) revolutionized the jihad doctrine, a move that was rarely attempted since the rebellion of the Kharijites in the 7th century. The strength of came from its ability to claim the concept of tawhid solely to itself and reject, theologically, all other sects and all forms of opposition. The power of this theological stance stems from the claim that only “true Muwahhidun” can declare jihad and, consequently, amass unconditional support from its supporters and its society. This reinterpretation of the principles of tawhid and jihad helped the Wahhabis establish a new and a formidable political rule, and order, in the region.

In response, it was none other than Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab’s brother Sulaiman who tried to reverse this effect by labelling the group as Wahhabis²⁵ to undermine this newly

²⁵ Sulayman bin Abd Allah bin Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab, *Al-Sawa’iq al-Ilahiyya fi al-Radd ‘ala al-Wahhabiya [The Devine Thunderbolts in Refutation of the Wahhabis]* (Cairo: Maktaba al-Tahdhib, 1900).

found Jihadi doctrine - but to no avail. It was not until the defeat of the Wahhabis in Unyniya in 1818 by Ibrahim Pasha of Egypt that the First Saudi-Wahhabi state ended.

However, in 1824, the region saw the resurgence of the Second Saudi-Wahhabi State (Emirate of Najd) which lasted until 1891. Here again one sees the revival of Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab's jihad doctrine. The collapse of the Second State, however, came about through internal conflict between the Wahhabi tribes and the more powerful and better equipped Al-Rashid tribe. It was not until the rise of the Third Saudi State (current Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA)) that the Wahhabi state's political and jihad doctrines became institutionalized as part of the law of the newly created state.

The Bedouin tribes of Arabia were unified under the command of Ibn Saud and Wahhabism became the creed of the Kingdom. With the unification of state and religion, Ibn Saud was able to revolutionize the political order of Saudi Arabia by consolidating power under a single tribe, Al-Saud, and under a single creed: a Wahhabi neo-leviathan power.

1.6.4 WPJD

Wahhabi political and jihad doctrines (WPJD) is a multi-faceted epistemological system that explains how the Wahhabi religious and political leaders approach policies of war and peace. WPJD refers to the legal methods, doctrines, and practice of war and peace by Wahhabi political and religious leaders and figures.

Political and military affairs are bound by what the *fuqaha 'a* (religious leaders/ulama) deem *halal* (permissible) or *haram* (not permissible). For an *alim* (singular of ulama) to determine if a specific action is permissible, he or she must investigate the nature of the law (jurisprudence) which, in Islam, falls under the privy of the ulama. When a conclusion is reached, the faqih issues a *fatwa* (a religious decree) on the matter being investigated.

WPJD is also the process by which Wahhabi ulama investigate the theological sources of Islamic law from Islam's fundamental sources - the Quran and the Sunnah - and, in turn, can declare fatwas on matters of war and peace. Specifically, this research proposal will investigate how Wahhabi leaders and ulama evolved their Jihadi doctrine and practice in the post-Westphalian state system to support their state (Third Saudi State).

1.6.5 The Westphalian State System / Nation-States

A long time before the establishment of the modern Saudi state, the Wahhabi movement and the Al-Saud tribe caught the attention of Western powers. The rise of European powers as international players, especially with the colonization of India and East Asia, from one side of the globe, and the Napoleonic expansion into Egypt from another, introduced a wild card into the strategic chessboard of the Middle East region. Authors like al-Rasheed and al-Wardi claimed that these expanding European powers had a significant negative effect on the Ottoman Empire's regional status quo.²⁶ Napoleon's invasion of Egypt was considered the first Christian

²⁶ Madawi al-Rasheed, "Durable and Non-Durable Dynasties: The Rashids and Sa'udis in Central Arabia," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 19, no.2 (1992), 151.

invasion and conquest of Muslim land since the Crusades.²⁷ This incursion helped set the scene for the rise of numerous rebellious movements, some of which were Wahhabi led, as was the case with their rebellions in the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries. In addition, this Western involvement in the Middle East helped many principalities to break away into separate states, as was the case with Muhammad Pasha of Egypt and the territories of Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon.

Furthermore, this weakening of the Ottoman Empire propelled the Arab population back to tribal and Bedouin values,²⁸ since the tribal confederate hierarchy provided a system of local support and protection from other rival principalities in the region. Having already a keen sense of Bedouin values, Wahhabi leaders were able to take advantage of this cultural aspect and use it to recruit a large military force that resulted in the creation of three Saudi armies (during each of the three Saudi states' eras) and culminating in the rise of the Wahhabi military force known as the Ikhwan (1902-1929).

Regionally, the Wahhabi success in controlling coastal towns on the Persian Gulf in the later 18th century made them the subject of attention to various international players, especially to the European navies exploring the Middle East. To most Western powers, access to the Persian Gulf's coastlines was an important strategic logistical resource,²⁹ especially since Persia was powerful enough to deny any outsiders access to its coastlines.

The British, for example, used the Wahhabi control of central Najd and the Eastern coastlines to help them maintain the flow of communications between the British Empire and its many outposts in Asia, not to mention the lucrative access to the Silk Road – an area which was

²⁷ Ali al-Wardi, *Lamahat 'Ijtima'iya min Tarikh Al-Iraq Al-Hadith* [Social Glimpses of Iraq's Modern History], vol. 2 (Beirut: Dar Al-Rashid, 2013), 15.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 10-11.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, *Lamahat*, 59.

denied to them due to Ottoman hegemony over the region.³⁰ The British even signed a peace treaty with the First Saudi state in 1810,³¹ and the French, in turn, tried to contact the Wahhabis in order to setup bases and create alliances to attack the British.³² Napoleon Bonaparte, for example, had an alliance with the Sharif of Mecca (the governor of Mecca on behalf of Istanbul); however, after realizing the Sharif's weakness, Napoleon instructed his commanders to make contact with the Wahhabis.³³

After Napoleon invaded Egypt, he corresponded with the Saudi Emir to setup an alliance that could further unsettle the Ottoman Empire's grip on the Middle East.³⁴ Napoleon sent one of his commanders to investigate the Wahhabi movement and to provide support to them in their fight against the Ottomans in Iraq and Syria in exchange for military support in India against the British Empire.³⁵ The Wahhabis were also very interested in making a deal with the French, since it gave them access to the Levant region in order to spread their doctrine and furnish them with an opportunity to utilize the economic power of the Mediterranean.³⁶ However, the French deal failed to see the light of day because of Napoleon's occupation with the war in Russia, which significantly weakened his overall military capabilities in the Middle East.³⁷

³⁰ Zakariya A. D. Korshon, *Al-Uthmaniyun wa Al-Saud fi al-Arshif Al-Uthmani [The Ottomans and the Saudis in the Ottoman Archives]* (Beirut: Al-Dar Al-Arabiya Lilmawsuat, 2010), 81-82.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 83.

³² Korshon, *Al-Uthmaniyun*, 27.

³³ *Ibid.*, 83.

³⁴ Hamid Algar, *Wahhabism: A Critical Essay* (Oneonta, NY: Islamic Publications International, 2002), 29.

³⁵ Korshon, *Al-Uthmaniyun*, 83.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

The Wahhabis were pragmatic thinkers and had a clear understanding of the role of superpowers in helping them establish their own state. However, one wonders why other leaders in the region failed where the Wahhabis have succeeded? ³⁸ Wael Hallaq elaborated on this question, specifically when it comes the failure to establish an Islamic state, by highlighting the fact that a “state of this minimalistic nature, whether or not led by a misguided or devilish band, can never be modern in the true sense of the word.”³⁹ Hallaq ascribed ideological motives to the proponents of the state and views “the state as both an ontologically meaningful and analytically viable entity.”⁴⁰ In other words, one can go back to the research question and rephrase it by asking how did the Wahhabi clerics help maneuver in the secular world and help establish a religious state nevertheless, while other secularly ideological Arab states failed to maintain the stability of their rule in the newly found Westphalian secular state system? Finding an answer to this question will shed light on the hypothesis and research question by identifying the source of ingenuity in the Wahhabi rulers’ mindset.

The Saudi and the Wahhabi ulama were the most successful in not only establishing a state that lasted longer than all their contemporary Arab states in the region but, more so, they were able to guarantee the stability of their rule and expand their influence in the Middle East and worldwide. Therefore, to better understand the mental model of the Wahhabi leaders, the paper assesses the influence and the political parameters the Westphalian system had imposed on this newly created Arab state. Specifically, it examines the discourse used within the

³⁸ As an example, the Sharif Hussein of Mecca, the al-Asad Alawites in Syria, the Maronites in Lebanon, or King Farouk of Egypt, just to name a few, all had Western support yet failed to maintain their rule over their territories, in comparison to the long-standing Wahhabi-Saudi success.

³⁹ Wael B. Hallaq, *The Impossible State: Islam, Politics, and Modernity's Moral Predicament* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 19.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

Wahhabi leaders' texts to highlight how they were able to adapt their writings and legitimise the actions of the state in relation to different kinds of domestic challenges and external threats: the Ottoman Empire, Al-Rasheed tribe, the Sharif Hussein of Mecca, the Iraqi-Transjordanian monarchy, Arab Nationalism, the Muslim Brotherhood, Communism, Saddam Hussein, and the use of foreign forces to fight back a Muslim neighbour.

In addition, one must be cognizant of how the political scene in the Middle East was Westernized with the onset of nation-states. As Badie had stressed in his study of the international nation-state system:

Westernization occurred systematically as the Western states transformed the international scene in their own image. Contrary to certain hypotheses, the Western state is not the product of a new international system. We now commonly acknowledge that it originated in the workings of late medieval rural societies, and this has replaced the idea that it originated in the international system produced by market capitalism in the Renaissance.⁴¹

It is therefore necessary to investigate the process by which the Wahhabi leaders harmonized their jihad and political doctrines to help speed up and stabilize the creation of the Wahhabi state. To do so, one must focus on three axes,⁴² processes by which the concept of the nation-state influenced the international order: “the diffusion of the principle of territoriality, the diffusion of a normative system strongly marked by the Western conception of law, and, finally,

⁴¹ Bertrand Badie, *The Imported State: The Westernization of the Political Order*, trans. Claudia Royal (California: Stanford university press, 2000), 57.

⁴² Ibid.

the diffusion of international rules of conduct.”⁴³ Those three concepts put forth by Badie match the three-level analysis process that were used to analyse the WPJD texts: the domestic, the regional, and the international orders.

In the post-WWI Middle East, the most important characteristic of what defines a Muslim or an Arab state is its “independence from their European colonizers and establishing (or inheriting) their own independent modern nation-states.”⁴⁴ This independence is based on the ability of the state to create and institute its own laws; that is, legal monism or legal centralism, “according to which all law is and should be state-sponsored law, which is *uniform* and *equally applied* to all citizens across the board, being emphatically *superior to*, if not exclusive of, all other elementary regimes.”⁴⁵ (Italics in original).

In addition, the Westphalian nation-state system consolidated the power of violence in the hands of the government and de-legitimized the killing in the name of religion – only the killing in the name of the state was permitted.⁴⁶ However, the Saudi state did not follow this covenant of the Westphalian system, yet it still prospers. Jackson noted that modern Arab and Muslim states failed to rise to the level of Westphalian nation-state because of its implementation of legal pluralism.⁴⁷ Consequently, the research will focus on how the Saudi-

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Sherman A Jackson, “Islamic Reform Between Islamic Law and the Nation-State,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Islam and Politics*, ed. John L. Esposito and Emad El-Din Shahin (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 43.

⁴⁵ Sherman A Jackson, “Legal Pluralism between Islam and the Nation-State: Romantic Medievalism or Pragmatic Modernity?,” *Fordham International Law Journal*, 30.1 (2006), 158-163, emphasis in original.

⁴⁶ William Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 123-180.

⁴⁷ Jackson, “Islamic Reform Between Islamic Law and the Nation-State,” 44.

Wahhabi state opted not to follow legal pluralism and, instead, implement legal totalitarianism through its ulama and by adapting the Wahhabi political and jihad doctrines.

1.6.6 The Late Ottoman Empire

The Arabian Desert's Bedouin society was a remote, faraway land in the eyes of the Muslim world and the ruling Ottoman Empire. Historically, the Hijaz and Arabian Desert per se were Ottoman territory since 1517.⁴⁸ However, direct rule of these cities was administered through viceroys who ruled as they pleased, as long as they regularly sent soldiers and paid their taxes to Istanbul to ensure that the Empire had a continuous standing army to wage its wars in the East against Shia Iran, and in the west against the Europeans.⁴⁹ This classical system of governorship worked for over two centuries in Arabia, and rarely did any group break-off to create its own principality. It was not until the eighteenth century when the Ottoman Empire became weak, and the neighbouring Persian Empire started to lose its grip over the Persian Gulf that tribal chieftains in the area started to form breakaway emirates and principalities.⁵⁰

Rebellion and political friction were not uncommon in Ottoman land; however, they mostly concerned minorities and involved non-Muslim groups supported by European powers. To most of the Sunni Islamic world, the Ottoman Empire was seen as the state of Muslim orthodoxy, while the Persian Empire was seen as an imperial force.⁵¹ Rebellion against the

⁴⁸ DeLong-Bas, *Wahhabi Islam*, 246.

⁴⁹ Korshon, *Al-Uthmaniyun*, 8.

⁵⁰ Kamal S Salibi, "Middle Eastern Parallels: Syria-Iraq-Arabia in Ottoman Times," *Middle Eastern Studies* 15, no.1 (January 1979): 72-73.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

Ottomans, hence, was hard to justify, while military campaigns against the Persians was acceptable, mainly due to the support of the Sunni majority population.⁵² Some scholars even believed that historically, the Ottomans never fully controlled the Arabian region except for the peripheral cities.⁵³ Cities that were significant to the sultan as he held the title of the Custodian of Islam's two holy cities, Mecca and Medina, and also of economic importance, since many of those cities were located on the nerve centres of the Silk Road.⁵⁴ This also meant that those same peripheral cities became economic power houses, which made them targets for tribal ghazu (raids) and, in turn, a strategic target for the Wahhabi movement.

Representing the Sunni religious authority in the Muslim world, while amassing an enormous military prowess, the Ottomans were able to subjugate most of the Muslims peoples. Continuous Ottoman-Persian confrontations were the norm, and the upsurge of Ottoman-European wars in the Gulf, together with Napoleon's invasion of Egypt, set the stage for the emergence of many principalities within the Ottoman Empire, especially in Arabia.⁵⁵

Moreover, the rise of competing secessionist states, such as in Egypt under Muhammad Pasha, further weakened the Ottomans' grip on its Middle Eastern area. With time, the Europeans in the region became the actual kingmakers, especially after the eclipse of Nadir Shah's⁵⁶ power in the Persian Gulf region and the conclusion of the 1818 Wahhabi-Ottoman War.⁵⁷

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid., 75.

⁵⁴ Korshon, *Al-Uthmaniyun*, 5.

⁵⁵ Salibi, "Middle Eastern Parallels," 73-74.

⁵⁶ One of Persia's most powerful kings, d. 1747.

⁵⁷ Salibi, "Middle Eastern Parallels," 77.

The weakening of the Ottoman state, owing to the internal and external factors highlighted above pressed the Arabian population to become increasingly reliant on Bedouin values,⁵⁸ since tribal confederacies provided a system of local support and protection from other up and coming tribal principalities.

The French occupation of Egypt, which lasted a mere three years helped propel Egypt from the Middle Ages into the modern world.⁵⁹ The modernization of Egypt, both administratively and militarily, was the main reason behind the Ottomans' demand that the ruler of Egypt attack and quell the Wahhabi rebellion. Muhammad Pasha even took the extra step to invite French military advisers to serve on his staff and further modernize his military forces.⁶⁰ By the time of the outbreak of the first Ottoman-Wahhabi war, the Egyptian army was the most modernized, advanced, and powerful force in the region.

1.7 WPJD Texts

Wahhabi political and jihad doctrines' (WPJD) texts can be traced to the last founder of the four Sunni schools – Ahmed bin Hanbal (Ibn Hanbal). Ibn Hanbal's *Musnad* is considered the reference par excellence to which all Wahhabi ulama refer to regarding issues relating to jurisprudence, law, politics, and war. Ahmed bin Hanbal's rulings will be analysed in tandem with the Wahhabi scholars' and leaders' own rulings and decisions.

⁵⁸ Al-Wardi, *Lamahat*, 10-11.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 20.

Likewise, this dissertation takes note of two important Sunni scholar of Hadith whom all Sunni and Wahhabi rulers and faqihs refer to in any ruling they undertake: Muhammad bin Ismail al-Bukhari (known as Bukhari) and Abu al-Hussein Asakir al-Deen Muslim bin al-Hajjaj al-Nisabouri (known as Muslim). Specifically, each of their magnum opus, the sahihs: Sahih Bukhari and Sahih Muslim. Those two books that are part of the Sunni seven “correct” references are the go-to books that every single Sunni jurist, alim and leader from all schools of thought to which they must refer to if they chose to legitimize their rulings or decisions. The research will refer to the two Shahis only tangentially by highlighting a ruling put forth by a leader or an alim, and that is by refereeing to the location of the quoted text within the sahih. All rulings and decisions are always checked and rechecked extensively by the Sunni body of jurisprudence clerics, making sure the hadith being quoted does indeed exists in the cited books. This fact-checking process is called ilm al rijal⁶¹ (Science of Men, that is, the science of authentication of hadith references) in relation to which hadith they are quoting and from which source.

The other two fundamental authors that are referenced by all Wahhabi ulama and Saudi leaders are Ibn Taymiyya and Yihya bin Sharaf al-Deen al-Nawawi, a Sunni Shafi’i Imam (1233-1277),⁶² known for his *Forty Hadith* book in which he provided an exegesis of Prophet Muhammad’s Hadith. Ibn Taymiyya is the father figure of the Wahhabi movement, and his political writings are considered the main reference body by Sunni Salafis and Wahhabis jurists

⁶¹ The sentence literally translates to the study of men, which is a process by which every person quoting a hadith is checked all the way back to the originator of the saying (in the case the Prophet Muhammad) and each person is given a weight (assessment) of how truthful he or she is. The overall chain is then given a grade on its viability and truthfulness.

⁶² Abu Zakariya Yahya ibn Sharaf al-Nawawi, *Fatawi al-Imam al-Nawawi al-Musammah bil Masa’il al-Manthura [Imam al-Nawawi’s Fatwas, Known as The Scattered Matters]*, ed. Ala’a al-Deen Ibn al-Attar (Matba’at al-Istiqama, 1933), 3.

alike. Sunni Salafi and Wahhabi leaders toe the line to Ibn Taymiyya on all major issues concerning jihad, war, and politics.

Ibn Taymiyya's writings are important to analyse Wahhabi and Saudi leaders' decision-making process. That is not merely because of the foundational role he played in cementing the role of State and Church for the Wahhabi movement; the historical context in which Ibn Taymiyya authored his books played a particularly key role in his writings. For example, he gave race a leading role in his writings. He stressed the vital role Arab Islam should play in revitalizing the Islamic state. He lived through the Mongol invasion and subjugation of the Muslim world; he also had visceral hate to the Shia, viewing them as innovators and perverters, and as a threat to Islam. Reading his texts with a keen eye on the interplay between context, culture, and politics of that time offers a blueprint on how his writings and the usage of words influenced Saudi leaders and Wahhabi clerics.

In turn, one can understand how those leaders and cleric interpreted Ibn Taymiyya's texts and put forth strategic solutions to dilemmas that they perceived were akin to those of Ibn Taymiyya's. This parallelism was drawn by Wahhabi and Saudi authors in their texts, and this will highlight the pragmatic evolution of WPJD. Later in this thesis, one will note the same concept being pushed forth by Arab nationalist Islamic scholars in the 19th and 20th centuries when the Ottoman Empire was standing on its last leg and the Westphalian system was pioneered by Western powers in the Middle East.

Moving forward in time, it can be observed that texts from the early Second Saudi State period (1818-1932) are lacking, mainly because the Saudi state at that time was undergoing severe internal strife and was dominated by the powerful Al-Rashid state that ruled the area at

that time.⁶³ Most of the material that deals with that period was based on archival documents of empires that oversaw the region or the collected works of Wahhabi thinkers archived in the seminal Saudi-Wahhabi encyclopedic work *Al-Durar al-Saniya fi al-Ajwiba al-Najdiya [The Sublime Pearls in Answer to the Najdian Questions]*.

When it comes to modern KSA, the rise of Abd al-Aziz Ibn Abd al-Rahman Al-Saud (known as Ibn Saud (1876-1953), the founder and first king of the KSA) caught the attention of regional and world powers. Many of the political primary source material about him and his movement comes from Western and Ottoman archives, in addition to Saudi Arabian ones. More so, Ibn Saud's own declarations were printed and distributed by the official Saudi newspaper Umm al-Qura newspaper.⁶⁴ Furthermore, Ibn Saud aided the rise of several prominent Wahhabi ulama; ulama that authored several books relating to the political and religious foundations of the Saudi state and the Wahhabi movement, on which one relied to understand the evolution of the WPJD.

During Ibn Saud's reign, there were several notable and important Wahhabi leaders on whom this paper focuses; starting with Ibn Ibrahim (1893-1969), who rose to be the first Grand Mufti of the KSA, the highest religious position in the state. He was also the first to hold the position of President of the Council for Senior Scholars, President of the General Presidency of Scholarly Research and Ifta, and the President of the World Muslim League (WML). Ibn Ibrahim, briefly, was the pioneer of all the key religious positions created in the KSA; he was the spiritual father of the KSA.

⁶³ J. E. Peterson, *Historical Dictionary of Saudi Arabia* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2020), 222-223.

⁶⁴ Umm al-Qura newspaper is an official newspaper of the government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Ibn Ibrahim not only codified the fatwa process in the KSA,⁶⁵ but also was instrumental in creating the politico-religious institutions that governed the KSA until the early 2000s.⁶⁶ The thesis' examination of Ibn Ibrahim's texts was categorized into two sections: firstly, are the books that contains his rulings and fatwas, the main texts used to refer to his work in religious and political theory. Those fatwas and rulings were collected in his 13 volume collected writings titled *Fatawi wa Rasil Samahat al-Sheikh Muhammad bin Ibrahim bin Abd al-Latif Al al-Sheikh [His Eminence Sheikh Muhammad bin Ibrahim bin Abd al-Latif Al al-Sheikh's Fatwas and Letters]*. Secondly, there are the official statements that are preserved in the archives of each of the institutions the mufti headed. These texts are the primary source material put forth by these key Saudi-Wahhabi jurists during the period of the creation and expansion of the nascent Saudi state.

During Ibn Ibrahim's time as Grand Mufti, his second-in-command in all roles pertaining to religious, political, and administrative positions was Ibn Baz (1912-1999). Ibn Baz's career spanned decades of utmost importance to the KSA - the formation and creation of the nascent state, the menace from hostile neighbours, the danger from communists and Arab nationalists, and the threat from home grown extremists and puritans.

The long and extensive career of Ibn Baz affords a comprehensive overview of how a Wahhabi political and religious leader pragmatically and skillfully manipulated political and religious discourse to control the message of the state and to react to several types of internal and external crises and threats. Ibn Baz's compendium of written work is extensive, dealing with all types of complicated matters. More importantly, he was always able to adjust his

⁶⁵ Nabil Mouline, *The Clerics of Islam: Religious Authority and Political Power in Saudi Arabia*, trans. Ethan S. Rundell (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 130.

⁶⁶ Mouline, *The Clerics of Islam*, 134.

positions vis-a-vis the state and in support of the ruling family, even though his stances sometimes were diametrically opposed to previous ones.

Ibn Baz's main work is found in his collected volumes: *Majmu' Fatawi wa Maqalat Mutanwai'a* [Collected Fatwas and Various Writings] and *Fatawi Noor ala al-Darb* [Fatwas of Light on the Path], both sets of volumes furnish with a wide-ranging overview of how Ibn Baz dealt with issues directed at the state and the essence of the Wahhabi dogma. In tandem with these volumes, Ibn Baz played an executive role as Ibn Ibrahim's right-hand man, where he issued fatwas, provided advice to the Saudi leadership, and helped steer the state during many crises. Ibn Baz also wrote specific books that aimed at existential threats to Wahhabism and the KSA – such as *Naqd al-Qawmiya al-Arabiya ala 'Dawa' al-Quran wal Sunnah* (Criticism of Arab Nationalism on the Light of the Quran and Sunnah).⁶⁷ These texts and official records offer an insight of how such an important leader interacted with the political arm of the state and how his advice helped forge the nation.

Conversely, on the political spectrum, there is the first king and the creator of the Third Saudi State. Ibn Saud was the subject of a many books and studies, some independent, others sponsored by the KSA to bolster his image and the image of the newly founded state.⁶⁸ Each of the kings that followed Ibn Saud helped strengthen and entrench the Saudi state through the aid and evolution of WPJD. The succession of kings – Saud, Faisal, Khalid, and Fahd – was not without turmoil. However, in comparison to the Second Saudi state, where the Saudi realm saw divisions and civil wars between brothers,⁶⁹ the successions of rulers in the Third Saudi state

⁶⁷ Abdullah, *Al Ulama wal Arsh*, 181.

⁶⁸ See, for example, H. C. Armstrong, *Lord of Arabia: A Biography of Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud* (Beirut: Khayat's College Book Cooperative, nd) or any of the books written by H. St. John Philby.

⁶⁹ Madawi al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 22-24.

can be considered one of its least volatile in the KSA's history, notwithstanding the abdication of Saud on 6 January 1965 or the assassination of King Faisal on 25 March 1975. Additionally, Faisal and Fahd did more to advance and cement the power of the Saudi state and Wahhabism domestically, regionally, and worldwide. For each of the four kings, the paper examines their speeches and official communiqués and relate them with the Wahhabi ulama's decrees and fatwas.

With King Saud (1902-1969, reigned 1953-1964), the paper examines his relationship with the Wahhabi ulama and, by extension, the Wahhabi ulamas' responses to local, regional, and international events. The relationship between the state and ulama in his case are interesting because he did pioneer several progressive laws; for example, he allowed the education of females in the nascent state,⁷⁰ a move that received extreme opposition from the ulama.⁷¹ On the foreign relations front, Saud had to deal with the rise of Arab nationalism, especially with the figure of the popular Gamal Abdel Nasser. He also took steps to strengthen the Kingdom's relationship with the Hashemites of Jordan and Iraq. More importantly, the focus is on his relationship with his brother Faisal and how the concept of *wali al amr* (guardian or leader), a foundational principle of WPJD, was disputed by the Wahhabi ulama to forcefully abdicate Saud and usher in the reign of Faisal.

Faisal's (1906-1975, reign 1964-1975) reign started with a controversy and ended with a disaster. His brother Saud was abdicated from the throne in 1964 and Faisal was assassinated in 1975. Faisal's reign also went through some of the most turbulent times in the region in

⁷⁰ "Educator," King Saud Library, accessed January 22, 2021.
<https://www.thekingsaudlibrary.org/en/history/history-king-saud/educator/570/>.

⁷¹ Mouline, *The Clerics of Islam*, 145.

addition to facing one of the most existential threats to his kingdom. He took over from his brother Saud, not through normal replacement, as when a king dies due to natural causes, but by dethroning him with the support of the Wahhabi ulama. This dethronement case study will be a pivotal one. The decrees, speeches, and communiques by the Wahhabi ulama at that time furnishes this paper with superior material on how the political and religious arms dethroned Saudi king. Obedience to the ruler is one of the most sacred and strictly followed teachings of Saudi, Wahhabi, Hanbali and Sunni ideologies. As for the critical analysis of the discourse that allowed such an inconceivable action to take place, the thesis examined and compared texts on obedience to the ruler written by the most prominent leaders of the Sunni and Wahabi schools of thought: Ahmed bin Hanbal, Ibn Taymiyya, Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, Ibn Ibrahim and Ibn Baz.

Faisal's reign also presents an opportunity to analyse how the Saudi rulers and their Wahhabi religious caregivers fought to keep the rise of Arab nationalism at bay in the region and from affecting the well-being of the KSA. This struggle between Faisal and Gamal Abdul Nasser took the form of tit-for-tat attacks that made use of Islamic and Arab rhetoric, culminating in the disastrous war in Yemen from 1962-1970 and, in consequence, the defeat of Abdul Nasser in the Six Days War.⁷² Faisal took the opportunity of fighting the Arab nationalist and Communist threats to not only bolster the image of Saudi Arabia as the defender of the Muslim faith, but also to revolutionize and centralise his power in the KSA.

Faisal played a leading role in the 1973 energy crisis that affected the West due to the Arab-Israeli conflict that rocked the region. Even though Faisal did not send any troops or

⁷² Jesse Ferriss, *Nasser's Gamble: How Intervention in Yemen Caused the Six-Day War and the Decline of Egyptian Power* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 289-290.

sacrifice any Saudi soldiers in the war, he was able to strengthen the image of the KSA as the defender and aider of Muslims and Palestinians. King Faisal also came out of the conflict as the champion of Islam and Muslims worldwide. His fait accompli allowed him to buttress the role Saudi Arabia in the region and skyrocketed the spread of Wahhabism worldwide.

King Khalid (1913-1982; reign 1975-1982), the fourth king of the KSA, took over as king during one of the most controversial times in the kingdom's history – when King Faisal was assassinated by his half-brother's son Faisal bin Musaid.⁷³ This was the first time a king of Saudi Arabia was assassinated in the modern era of Saudi Arabia.

Although there are disputes about Khalid's role as decision maker, he had indeed the final say on all matters pertaining to the viability of the state and led his country through the post-assassination turmoil to stability, with some calling it the golden era of Saudi Arabia.⁷⁴ However, King Khalid was also blamed, or praised, for diffusing the central power of the king – leading to the empowerment of princes, a reversal of Faisal's centralization policies.⁷⁵ More importantly, he dealt with an existential threat that affected the kingdom – the siege of Mecca by Juhayman al-Utaybi in 1979, the event commonly known as the Siege of Mecca

On the regional and international scenes, Khalid influenced the policies that led the KSA's active participation in the Afghan War against the USSR (through the deployment of

⁷³ His father was Prince Musaid bin Abd al-Aziz was the stepbrother of the King. His brother, Khalid, was killed as he assaulted a TV station with other Wahhabis. See Associated Press, *The Journal (Meriden, Connecticut)*, "Prince Faisal in 1971: Reported Killer of Faisal Knew Drugs, Radicals," March 26, 1975.

⁷⁴ Ghadah Alghnaim, "Conflict between Saudi Arabia and Iran: An Examination of Critical Factors Inhibiting their Positive Roles in the Middle East" (PhD diss., Nova Southeastern University, 2014), 41.

⁷⁵ Iris Glosemeyer, "Saudi Arabia: Dynamism Uncovered," in *Arab Elites: Negotiating the Politics of Change*, ed. by Volker Perthes (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2004), 148-149.

mujahideen to Afghanistan), the 1979 Iranian Islamic revolution, and the 1980-1988 Iraq-Iran War. King Khalid's discourse on these events, taken in tandem with the Wahhabi ulamas' own rhetoric, sheds lights on how the KSA managed its realpolitik posture during these strenuous times. The critical analysis of the decrees, fatwas, and messages put out by the ulama exemplifies the pragmatic capability of the Church and State in manipulating the interpretation of historical texts to counter the existential threat of Juhayman and his messianic group towards the viability of the state and the Wahhabi creed.

Lastly, the dissertation explores the reign of King Fahd (1921-2005; reign 1982-2005), who is credited with introducing the Basic Law of Saudi Arabia in 1992,⁷⁶ considered to be the constitution of the KSA. The discourse used to introduce such a novel measure would be essential to one's understanding of the evolution of this Westphalian state, more than six decades after its creation.

King Fahd reigned during the height of the Iran-Iraq war, at time when both countries suffered innumerable losses and the region became a hot zone for escalating violence. Fahd's and the Wahhabi ulama's decrees and fatwas in support of Saddam (a secular Arab nationalist) against Ayatollah Khomeini (a Muslim revolutionist) shed lights on how the state and the Wahhabi ideologues were able to foster popular and monetary support for the former and opposition and hate to the latter. The literature produced by the Saudi scholars during the Iran-Iraq war had the long-lasting impact of feeding the sectarian bloodshed that came to full life after the US invasion of Iraq in 2003. Such decrees and fatwas helped support and gave a raison

⁷⁶ Fahd's speech can be read on the following archived site: https://web.archive.org/web/20120528031657/http://www.saudiembassy.net/about/country-information/laws/King_Fahd_Speech.aspx, while the Law can be accessed here: https://web.archive.org/web/20140323165604/http://www.saudiembassy.net/about/country-information/laws/The_Basic_Law_Of_Governance.aspx.

d'être to such groups as Al-Qaida, Al-Qaida in Iraq and Sham, Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula, al-Zarqawi network, and the Ba'athist-Wahhabi alliances that sprung in Iraq post 2003.

King Fahd's reign also provides an insight into how a state and its supporting religious cadre pivoted from backing a candidate in one situation (Saddam in his war against Iran) to fully villainizing and ex-communicating him. The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait not only helps underline the exceptional pragmatism played by the Wahhabi ulama in support of the state, but the event itself was one of the most significant and long-lasting existential threats to the kingdom and the Wahhabi creed. That was not because of the fear of Saddam invading Saudi Arabia; instead, it was because of Fahd's decision to allow US and other Western forces to use Saudi Arabian land to attack a Muslim country. The rhetoric of that period and the turmoil that engulfed the Saudi-Wahhabi intellectual space is of great interest due to its long-lasting linkages on the relationships between the Wahhabi Church and the State.

1.8 Methodology

This dissertation uses a multidisciplinary qualitative methodological approach to study the evolution of the Wahhabi political and jihad doctrines (WPJD). The methodology is supplemented with a critical analysis⁷⁷ of the discourse and primary sources, while being aware

⁷⁷ Norman Fairclough, *Language and Power* (Harlow: Longman, 2001); Ruth Wodak, *Language, Power and Ideology: Studies in Political Discourse* (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1989); and, Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer, *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* (London: SAGE, 2009).

of the role of such political concepts such as constructivism have on the understanding of the role ideas and beliefs have on the political environment, and on the formulation and evolution of WPJD during the three Saudi-Wahhabi states. The methodology will include case study analysis of the three Saudi-Wahhabi states, dividing the research into the three periods that signify the most important phases of its creation and evolution.

The approach taken to narrative analysis will be both synchronic and diachronic: synchronic as in analysing the text within the time it was written, while being cognizant of the historicization of the events surrounding the author, and diachronic by analysing how the text was interpreted and the language had evolved from one period to another. Examining comparative-historical analysis to dissect and understand the causal narratives will allow aid in exploring “the causes of a particular social phenomenon,”⁷⁸ or, as Lange had noted, use the narrative to help explore the causality of the phenomenon one is trying to explain - in that case, the evolution of WPJD through three distinct phases.⁷⁹

Critically analysing the texts of Wahhabi clerics will help identify how context and text interact. Abdolkareem Soroush, for example, identified in his tour de force about the theory of contraction and expansion that the interpretation of Sharia⁸⁰ (and by extension law) must be considered under the notions of what is constant and what is changing.⁸¹ He noted that there is a significant difference between religion and the understanding of religion,⁸² stressing that the

⁷⁸ Lange, *Comparative-Historical Methods*, 43.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Abdolkareem Soroush, *Al Qabd wal Bast fil Shariah [The Theoretical Contraction and Expansion of Religion: The Theory of Evolution of Religious Knowledge]* trans. Dalal Abbas (Beirut: Dar Al-Jadeed, 2010), 25.

⁸¹ Ibid., 30.

⁸² Ibid.

first is constant (*thabit*) while the latter is ever-changing (*mutahawil*), and that by understanding these notions one is able to then understand the contexts in which rules and decisions are made.⁸³

Furthermore, if one takes the IR Constructivist theory into consideration, one notes that it emphasizes⁸⁴ that to understand an agent's actions, one must understand how it holds and shares ideas and, additionally, how the agent's identities and interests are constructed.

Specifically, the researcher must comprehend that:

(1) the structures of human association are determined primarily by shared ideas rather than material forces, and

(2) the identities and interests of purposive actors are constructed by these shared ideas rather than given by nature.⁸⁵

Therefore, it is necessary to analyze the religious and the political actions of the agent's powerbrokers – the Al-Saud regal group and the Wahhabi ulama – separately, as one would do so in relation to any other Westphalian state, i.e., by looking at the mechanics of the Church and the State separately. However, what this study does is it synthesizes one's understanding of the actions of those agents and reassess the relationship between the holy and the secular in the creation and implementation of strategy.

⁸³ Ibid., 26.

⁸⁴ Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 1.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

To achieve this goal, this paper analyzes how each leader interpreted the religious texts and provide a comprehensive explanation of what drives a leader and an alim to act the way they did. This contextual approach to WPJD from the point of view of the interaction between text and politico-historical contexts will highlight a subtle truth about the strategic engine that drives the KSA, a truth based on the hypothesis that both the religious thinkers and the Al-Saud leaders are pragmatic in their approach to their interpretation of religious texts and world affairs. The research shows that the arch of WPJD evolution is not driven by religious sentiment per se (sharia); instead, it is driven by power – both its maintenance and expansion.

To gain contextual knowledge of how Saudi leaders and Wahhabi ulama evolved WPJD to support and expand the modern Saudi state within the newly introduced Westphalian system, one must research how power reigned supreme in KSA's leaders' interpretation of religious texts and world affairs. To do so, the thesis critically analyzes the discourse purported by the Saudi leaders and Wahhabi ulama, and examine the texts they relied on, bringing into light how such contextual interpretations impacted the content and evolution of WPJD.

Our point of departure will start with Ahmed bin Hanbal, whose namesake defines one of the four main schools of Sunni Islam,⁸⁶ Hanbalism, from which Wahhabi Islam also derives its dogma and fiqh (jurisprudence). After Ibn Hanbal, the research paper examines the works of Taqi al-Din Ahmad bin Abd al-Halim bin Abd al-Salam (1263-1328) who was considered essential in understating the laws of war, peace, and politics that govern the Saudi state and the Wahhabi sect. After this historical dive, one moves forward to Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, the creator of Wahhabism. From Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab onwards, the assessment will be limited to the leaders and ulama of the three Saudi-Wahhabi states, with the Third Saudi-

⁸⁶ The other three being Shafi'ism, Hanafism, and Malikism.

Wahhabi State taking the lion's share of the analysis since it is the state that was created under the Westphalian system post-WWI.

During the assessment of the central texts used by the subjects of investigation, the thesis examines the historical backdrop in which the text was written and read – written by the author and read by the person of interest to this research study. While analyzing Ibn Taymiyya's texts, for example, one takes into consideration the hate and fear he held to the invading Mongols and the Shia sect, since he saw them both as existential threats to Arab Islam and Arab power.⁸⁷ This worldview that governed Ibn Taymiyya's life painted, by extension, his intellectual engine, hence affecting his interpretations of events and ideas,⁸⁸ furnishing the reader with a novel approach to ijtiḥād.

Ijtiḥād, or the process by which a religious authority provides a ruling based on his or her understanding of a specific text, is not centered solely on the deductive or inductive reasoning process of attaining a specific goal that leads to a fatwa. Instead, ijtiḥād contains within itself the accumulated sets of perceptions, interests and contextual influences that led the mujtahid to his or her decision. In terms of IR analysis, constructivism's⁸⁹ emphasis on ideas and interests play a key role in unearthing the motive behind an action. When mujtahids had access to the same text as their predecessors, one is tempted to ask why those same mujtahids from the same school of thought provide different exegetical interpretations and rulings which, by extension, influenced the political and military decisions of their leaders, as was the case

⁸⁷ Even though Ibn Taymiyya himself was not an Arab but a Kurd. A similar view was held by Rashid Ridha and Sati al Husri (with al Husri himself also not an Arab but an Ottoman Turk)

⁸⁸ Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, XX.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 1.

with Ibn Taymiyya, Muhammad bin Abd Al-Wahhab, Muhammad bin Ibrahim Al al-Sheikh (Ibn Ibrahim), and Abd al-Aziz bin Baz (Ibn Baz).

Additionally, the thesis examines the contextual influence on the evolution of thought by exploring the same authors over time to see how the rulings changed to suit their needs, even though the text itself had remained the same. For example, there is the case of Ibn Baz who flip-flopped in his interpretations of texts and provided various rulings based on different contextual situation, even though the text itself never changed.

To aid with the analysis, the thesis examines the Wahhabi ulamas' fatwas based on historical and contextual backdrops. It focuses on three concentric circles of analysis, mimicking a Waltzian⁹⁰ and a Wallerstein⁹¹ form of analytical framework, to better understand the Saudi leader's or Wahhabi alim's course of action:

1. The International sphere (in relation to the Middle East);
2. The regional sphere of the Middle East; and,
3. The Saudi Arabian domestic sphere.

In using a variety of methods to understand the text, such as CDA, one understands that these tools are not meant to be used as standalone methods;⁹² instead, they are used in combination with other methodologies, such as case analysis. As experts in the field remarked

⁹⁰Kenneth N. Waltz. *Man, the State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis*. New York (Columbia University Press, 1959).

⁹¹ Immanuel Wallerstein, *World-Systems Analysis: An Introduction* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2004).

⁹² Teun van Dijk, private email to author, November 16 and 18, 2019.

that when utilizing, one must strive to consider several assumptions in their analysis. For example, language is considered a social phenomenon;⁹³ that is, the language and the narrative used by the jurists are based on the social mental models and political frameworks the cleric is working within. Historicizing the narrative and the language used is therefore of utmost importance; hence the need to analyze the evolution WPJD in three different eras (i.e., the three Saudi-Wahhabi states).

This study takes into consideration the role of the institution, in addition to the individual, when one analyzes the text.⁹⁴ A fatwa or a decree written or uttered about a specific situation or issue must be analysed within the paradigm that governs the institution's world view. For example, when reading Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's book *Kitab al-Jihad*, one notices that he opened the door wide-open when it comes to defining and condemning those who should be considered as a *mushrik* (polytheist) and against whom war can be waged.⁹⁵ The reason Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab used such a *carte blanche* was because the first Saudi-Wahhabi state was still in its infancy and it needed to expand into Sunni and Shia territories. Therefore, Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab had to loosen the definition of what was considered an enemy to allow for elastic rules of engagements for his soldiers. For example, he generalized his definition of jihad by stating that anyone that "wore a ring or a string or anything of such"⁹⁶ would be considered a polytheist and, hence, should be fought.⁹⁷ In another section of the book, he directed his attention to internal dissent movements, specifically Hanbali and Sufi orders in

⁹³ Ruth and Meyer, *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, 5-6.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁹⁵ Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab, *Kitab al-Tawhid* (Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm, 2012).

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 22-23.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

Najd (his home province), by attacking their holy sites. Many Sunni sects held special affinity to a holy tree in the area and Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab directed his attacks on it by stressing that anyone that sought “the blessing of a tree or a rock” was considered a polytheist.⁹⁸ Such a fatwa was specific and direct – Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab knew his enemy and directed his fatwas towards them effectively.

Another more recent example was the shift in attitude towards the conduct of jihad during Afghan-Soviet war period. During that war, Ibn Baz set minimal limitations on who, when and how one can participate in jihad against the USSR. As for another prominent Wahhabi thinker, Muhammad bin Saleh al-Uthaymeen (al-Uthaymeen), the most important criteria for jihad was getting one’s parents’ consent to go to war.⁹⁹ However, to bolster the number of mujahideen, he diluted this rule by stating that in the case of an imam or country-sanctioned decree (which was the case with the Wahhabi-Saudi call for jihad against the Soviets), then even the consent of the parents is no longer required.¹⁰⁰ According to al-Uthaymeen, all men were supposed to partake in jihad, even if they were engaged in non-military actions, such as studying in a foreign country.¹⁰¹

As for how the Wahhabi ulama had adapted the WPJD in response to an internal threat, there are many cases to observe. For example, when Juhayman al-Utaybi rebelled against the Saudi government and seized the Grand Mosque of Mecca in 1979, the Saudi ulama had to be extremely specific in their condemnation of al-Utaybi and his group. Al-Utaybi was a product

⁹⁸ Ibid., 26-27.

⁹⁹ Muhammad ibn Salih al-Uthaymeen, *Majmu’u Fatawi wa Rasail Fadhilat al-Sheikh Muhammed bin Salih al-Uthaymeen [Collected Fatwas and Letters of his Eminence Sheikh Muhammed bin Salih al-Uthaymeen]*, vol. 5 (Unayza: Dar Al-Thuraya lil Nashr wal Tawzee’e, 2008), 352-354.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

of the Saudi-Wahhabi doctrine. He married into the Saudi Royal family, was a student of the grand mufti and leader of the Wahhabi ulama Ibn Baz, and he was following in the footsteps of Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab by demanding a return to the purist, populist form of Wahhabi Islam. As a result, one notes a different approach taken by the Wahhabi ulama, where the majority¹⁰² of clerics issued *Mu'thakkarat al-Nasiha* [Advice Petition] that was specific in why and how al-Utaybi and his group were considered enemies of the state. By 1979, one can note a transformation in Wahhabism from what Olivier Roy calls popular Islam to an elitist tradition.¹⁰³

Another assumption Wodak, Meyer and Kress noted was that the “reader/recipients are not passive recipients in their relationship to text.”¹⁰⁴ This assumption will help assess how Wahhabi ulama and Saudi leaders understood and interpreted the text of their predecessors. Although Ibn Hanbal was the point of reference of all Sunni Hanbali thinkers, including the Wahhabis, this paper is interested in how his texts (specifically *al-Musnad*) was interpreted by Muhammad ibn Abd Al-Wahhab, Ibn Ibrahim, and Ibn Baz. This methodology will guide the research in understanding and identifying the different mental models¹⁰⁵ and epistemological communities¹⁰⁶ that drove each thinker in each era to justify and share their beliefs on war and

¹⁰² Abdullah, *Al Ulama wal Arsh*, 477-494.

¹⁰³ Oliver Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam*, trans. Carol Volk (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994), 28-29.

¹⁰⁴ Ruth and Meyer, *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, 6.

¹⁰⁵ Van Dijk, *Ideology and Discourse*, 21-29.

¹⁰⁶ Ties A. Van Dijk, *Discourse and Knowledge: A Sociocognitive Approach* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 4.

peace (i.e., how the WPJD evolved). This approach, consecutively, clarifies how ideologies evolved and how the historicization of events shaped ideologies and discourses.

This thesis' methodology applies to each of the three Saudi-Wahhabi states' cases. In each epoch, it will synthesize the research by showing how WPJD evolved to ensure the survivability and sustainability of each of the Saudi-Wahhabi states with a focus on the Third State. The three cases will be as follows:

1. First Saudi-Wahhabi State (Emirate of Dir'iyah): 1744-1818;
2. Second Saudi-Wahhabi State (Emirate of Najd): 1824-1891; and,
3. The Unification of Saudi Arabia: 1902-1932 and the Third Saudi-Wahhabi State (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia): 1932-Present.

Since a case “connotes a spatially delimited phenomenon observed at a single point in time or over some period of time,”¹⁰⁷ this thesis has opted to use the three stages of Saudi-Wahhabi state formation as separate temporal cases; yet, at the same time, each case “comprises the type of phenomenon that an inference attempts to explain;”¹⁰⁸ in that case, the evolution of WPJD. Since the study “attempts to elucidate certain features of nation-states ... cases [that] are comprised of nation-states (across some temporal frame)”¹⁰⁹ would be the best option in clarifying the evolution WPJD.

¹⁰⁷ John Geering, *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 19.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

One is also mindful of the complexities each case brings: there are internal and external factors that is not possible to assess due to the lack of references or historical materials. However, a holistic view of the texts themselves is considered while comparing them to previous texts written by the same school of thought. This approach will help “analyze complex phenomena, highlight mechanisms, and consider diverse factors and their interactions.”¹¹⁰ At the same time, opting to using three distinct states’ periods will provide a descriptive and ideographic insight into each era.¹¹¹ In other words, the case study methodology will assist in describing “what happens in particular instances and explore the causes of one particular social phenomenon in one particular insight that is not meant to apply to the universe of cases but nonetheless has the potential to produce insight that can be applied to additional cases.”¹¹²

Furthermore, inductive discovery in the process of novel hypothesis formulation will be used; that is, process tracing which involves “looking at evidence within an individual case, or a temporally and spatially bound instance of a specified phenomenon, to derive and/or test alternative explanations of that case. In other words, process tracing seeks a historical explanation of an individual case ... to the wider phenomenon of which the case is an instance.”¹¹³ That way, each case study of each Wahhabi-State period will allow help identify the necessary explanations on how WPJD had evolved. This, coupled with primary sources analysis of the Saudi-Wahhabi leadership, will facilitate the ability to trace the phenomenon of evolution and answer the previously stated research question. Additionally, process-tracing the evolution of WPJD in the primary texts will aide in exploring the evidence in face of “rival

¹¹⁰ Lange, *Comparative-Historical Methods*, 40-41.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ Andrew Bennett, “Process Tracing: A Bayesian Perspective,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*, ed. Janet Box-Steffensmeier, Henry E. Brady, and David Collier (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 208), 704.

explanations and divergent predictions.”¹¹⁴ Progress would then emerge by “deriving new divergent predictions that previous studies had not yet explored.”¹¹⁵ As Bennett noted, it “is not the number of pieces of evidence within a case that fit one explanation or another, but the likelihood of finding certain evidence if a theory is true versus the likelihood of finding this evidence if the alternative explanations are true.”¹¹⁶

This dissertation had conducted extensive research on Wahhabi and Sunni primary sources.¹¹⁷ A bibliography is listed below with most texts written and used by Wahhabi ulama that touch about war and peace. This list constitutes a list of the books written by the most prominent and influential Wahhabi thinkers in the past two hundred years. It is important to note that most of the primary sources pertaining to Ibn Ibrahim and Ibn Baz were rarely translated to the English language, making this study both original, significant, and unique in relation to both Saudi Arabia and Wahhabism studies in the West.

¹¹⁴ Nina Tannenwald, “Process Tracing and Security Studies,” *Security Studies* (no. 24, 2015): 224-225.

¹¹⁵ Tannenwald, “Process Tracing and Security Studies,” 224-225.

¹¹⁶ Bennett, Andrew, “Stirring the Frequentist Pot with a Dash of Bayes,” *Political Analysis*, Vol. 14, No.3, (2006): 341.

¹¹⁷ See bibliography below for a list of primary and secondary sources that were used in this dissertation.

1.8.1 Methodological Approaches to the Text: A cursory Comparison Across Disciplines

To better situate the methodology used in this thesis, it is helpful to take a cursory review of other methodological approaches; particularly, those that had focused on the Middle East and Islamic way of warfare.

The war studies field in Western universities has been a rising household name since the end of WWII;¹¹⁸ and even though the war studies program has been centred on Western and European ways of warfare, resulting in a Eurocentric approach to the field of study,¹¹⁹ the focus on the Middle East and Islamic way of warfare has been gaining traction, especially since the unfortunate events of 9/11. These events electrified the ethnic/religious national debates in the West, creating a series of discussions on issues ranging from what is Islam and what is its nature? Or questions such as whether there is such a thing as a Middle Eastern or Muslim strategy of war? By extension, if the answer is in the affirmative to these questions, then one must identify and determine the characteristics of that strategy by conducting an in-depth analysis of its vectors; that is, whether the strategy driven by imperial aspirations,¹²⁰ or nationalistic ones.

Furthermore, the method of Islamic governance oscillated between a decentralized and centralized imperial/state order. For example, the Umayyads were adamant in their use of

¹¹⁸ Stephen Morillo, *What is Military History?* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013), 37-38.

¹¹⁹ Morillo, *What is Military History?*, 72.

¹²⁰ See Efraim Karsh, *Islamic Imperialism: A History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013).

tribalism, nationalism, and a centralized system of governance which was extremely successful in expanding and controlling the Islamic lands, but only lasted for a little more than a century. On the other hand, the Abbasids and Ottomans used a decentralized system of governance that allowed areas to be sub-governed through the ethnic and tribal composition of their geographic sub-states. However, the reasons behind the rise and decline of those empires are still an enigma. More so, the military and strategic concepts used by those empires, not to mention the Islamic basis for those diverse strategies are still in need of a comprehensive study.

Looking at the available literature on Islam and war, is there another area that must be reviewed – especially beyond the Western genus? Currently there is an obsession regarding sharia and legalistic view of Jihad (*jus in belli* and *jus ad bellum*), especially when it comes to current terrorist organizations and belligerent states.¹²¹ However, there seems to be a lack of studies regarding how each of the different schools of thought approached the concept of strategy and grand strategy and, more so, a lack of comparison between how the different sects within Islam derive the governing laws of war and strategy (from *usul* (principal or foundational) and *fur'u* (secondary or tangential)), and how the panning takes place: institutionally through the Hawza/Madrasah (Islamic schools), secularly through the diwan (state bureaucracy), or through a mixture of both state bodies and religious entities.

The debate was also taken more seriously by academics that focused on contemporary Middle Eastern politics, history, and religion. However, an in-depth study of the current status quo of academic research centred on Islamic and Middle Eastern military history and strategy studies would only keep the researcher's thirst unquenched. While the national debate is centred

¹²¹ John Kelsay, *Islam and War: A Study in Comparative Ethics* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), 57-77.

on sensational reporting, the academic field of Islamic military history and strategy is still struggling to find its *raison d'être*, especially within the field of war studies.

Accordingly, this thesis raises several eclectic methodological questions,¹²² coupled with warnings to the cultural biases, to better understand and deconstruct the key Islamic philosophical and religious points of views.

To start on the journey of both understanding and analysing the Middle Eastern and Islamic military history and strategy, one must take into consideration three key philosophical approaches. Firstly, one must avoid and remove the prevalent Eurocentric approach to the study of the Middle East. As was mentioned in the opening paragraph of this section of the study, the field of War Studies has been focused on and taught using tools that have been developed and shaped by Western scholars. “Anglo-American and Western European military history remains more developed both as objects of study and as the geographic homes of academics who (sic) do military history.”¹²³

This is not to undermine the vagueness nor the quality of the methodologies used by the aforementioned scholars; however, since “each language contains a peculiar *weltanschauung* which causes its speaker to view the world in a way different from the speakers of other language,”¹²⁴ it is only through the “analytic study of the conceptual key-terms of a given language [that] it [becomes] possible to grasp the *weltanschauung* of the people who use that

¹²² Peter Katzenstein and Rudra Sil, “Eclectic Theorizing in the Study and Practice of International Relations,” in *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations*, ed. by Christian Reus-Smit and Duncan Snidal (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

¹²³ Morillo, *What is Military History?*, 120.

¹²⁴ Abdul Kabir Hussain Solihu, “The Linguistic Construction of Reality: Toshihiko Izutsu’s Semantic Hermeneutics of the Qur’anic *Weltanschauung*,” in *Japanese Contribution to Islamic Studies: The Legacy of Toshihiko Izutsu Interpreted*, ed. Anis Malik Thoha (Kuala Lumpur, IIUM Press, 2010). 17.

language as a tool of conceptualizing and interpreting the world in which they live.”¹²⁵ As such, an in-depth deconstruction of the Western-led methodologies, coupled with a creation of an independent and organic Muslim conceptual framework that a scholar would be able to grasp the world view of the subject to which they are studying. As Toshihiko Izutsu tried to underline in his study of the Quran,¹²⁶ it is only when the reader has a solid understanding of the Arabic language and of the Arabic and Middle Eastern culture would they then be able to understand the worldview exposed by the Quran.¹²⁷ It is a question of ontology, and not mere linguistics.¹²⁸ A clear understanding of the strategic thought of a nation comes with an understanding of its political culture.

Secondly, the reader in Islamic and Middle Eastern military history and strategy must be able to deconstruct the socio-political and military condition of Islamic thought. More so, the scholar should strive to deconstruct and translate to the Western and Eastern audiences (including Muslims) the religious and philosophical foundational texts upon which these strategic and grand strategic theories stem their meaning and legitimacy.

If one reflects upon recent texts that try and identify the different schools of thoughts underpinning the concept of just war in Islam, one realises that the thrust of the analysis and the breadth of the exposition is, unfortunately, lacking. In *Arguing the Just War in Islam*, John Kelsay tried to take a tour de force of the central texts and schools of thought upon which Islamic warfare stems its legitimacy and how laws of war were and are derived within the Muslim community. However, a thorough analysis of the book exposes some pitfalls scholars

¹²⁵ Solihu, “The Linguistic Construction of Reality,” 17.

¹²⁶ Toshihiko Izutsu, *Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Qur’an* (Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust, 2004).

¹²⁷ Solihu, “The Linguistic Construction of Reality,” 19.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

usually fall into. The author not only politicised his research by spinning it with the recent media frenzy that tries to focus on fringe groups such as al Qaeda,¹²⁹ but the book lacked an in-depth analysis needed to differentiate between Shia and Sunni schools of thoughts. Not only does Sunni Islamic way of warfare takes most of the research in relation to Shia Islam,¹³⁰ but within the Sunni schools, the author focuses most of his effort on the Hanafi school of thought,¹³¹ which is only a segment of the overall rich reservoir of Sunni jurisprudence. Furthermore, when it comes to spoon feeding the reader with examples relating to post-9/11 narratives, the book lacked an understanding of the weltanschauung of the Sunni war strategy narrative, which is derived from the Wahhabi and Salafi schools of thought and their state sponsored geo-political manoeuvring.

Lastly, when it comes to analyzing the Islamic history of warfare and strategy, one must reflect upon how Muslims see the world and analyse that perspective accordingly. One must evaluate the epistemological frameworks in which Islamic philosophers and scholars saw the world and, in turn, determine if they (i.e., the scholars) themselves understood their own subjective position in the overall regional and international geopolitical arena. In that regard, one not only find themselves returning to the central philosophical and religious texts written and used by those authors but, moreover, searching within oneself on how one reads the text and understands the environment within which it was created.

To do so, one can turn to constructivism, as espoused by Alexander Wendt. In his ground breaking book *Social Theory of International Politics*, Wendt proposed a counterview to

¹²⁹ John Kelsay, *Arguing the Just War in Islam* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 156-164.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 122-124.

¹³¹ The author focused on al-Shaybani, a Hanafi jurisprudence alim and the codifier of the Hanafi school of thought.

the neorealist and the reductionist world views by stressing the need to integrate one's research with the cultural analysis of the subject.¹³² Wendt emphasised the need to look at the subject at hand from an object-subject point of view,¹³³ a proposal that has been prevalent in Islamic philosophy, as William Chittick had clearly articulated a similar point in his book *Science of the Cosmos, Science of the Soul*.¹³⁴ Wendt did not explicitly discuss Islamic philosophy or Middle Eastern military and strategy, but the correlation between the two studies can help bridge the gap found in studies of the Muslim world.

1.8.2 Current Research Methodologies on Military and Strategic History

Stephen Morillo identified two conceptual frameworks generally handled by military histories: theory of causation and theory of access to historical mentalities.¹³⁵ The theory of causation has several explanations such as Great Man history,¹³⁶ contingent history,¹³⁷ and the universal rationalist model.¹³⁸ However, the same author goes on to highlight major problems affecting each of these conceptual frameworks.

Regarding the universal rationalist model, for example, Morillo claimed that it had led military historians to ignore “social and cultural factors, separating the military art and military organization from its historical context in order to make clearer the supposed universal

¹³² Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, 141.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 39.

¹³⁴ As Tu Weiming did in his studies of Confucianism and Neo-Confucianism.

¹³⁵ Morillo, *What is Military History?*, 45

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 46.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 47.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 49.

principles and lessons.”¹³⁹ Keegan’s *Face of Battle*, for example, in which the author tried to bring out the social nuances of war, the author failed to meet Morillo’s standards because his theory assumes “similar emotions across both time and culture and, therefore, [it becomes] accessible and comprehensible to the modern historian.”¹⁴⁰ Morillo, however, did suggest that constructivism can provide a viable option in explaining cross-cultural leadership of war, even though it sacrifices the minute details gained from understating how leaders interact with the political and military problems they had faced.¹⁴¹ Nevertheless, he also emphasised the need to integrate religious studies into military and political studies, especially when these beliefs do not conform to the modern preconceptions, such as materialism,¹⁴² a point also emphasized by Wendt.¹⁴³

Modern social sciences assumes that individuals behave based on objective, observable, ontologically material motivations. The cause of war is equated with interest: a search for power, money, or geography. Constructivism, however, considers such motivations as constructs where actors construct the meaning of interest, power, and benefit. Construction is an interactive process between the actor and the social environment. What power means for country X does not equate with what power means for country Y. As such, one cannot assume that mathematically there is a fixed definition of power and that both countries are searching for the exact same thing. Concepts such as glory, dignity, nationalism, pride hold a special place to one leader versus another and, as such, interest is not an objectified realist definition of power

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 51.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 51.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 52.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, 38-40.

for that actor; instead, it is more complex, taking into consideration cultural and psychological premises such as fear of rejection or humiliation.

In their paper titled *Analytic Eclecticism in the Study of World Politics: Reconfiguring World Problems and Mechanism across Research Traditions*, Peter Katzenstein and Rudra Sil argued for a more holistic approach to the study of world politics and social science,¹⁴⁴ especially when the field of study itself is still under development and the research methodologies have not been in place or entrenched within the tradition of that particular field of study.¹⁴⁵ This approach, according to the authors, would allow the students to cherry pick not only low-hanging fruits across fields of research, but also allow the researcher to discover a new path that could be of use for their research component and, possibly, for future researchers in the same field.

Katzenstein and Sil's proposal also resonates with Wendt's own thesis regarding the study of political and social systems. Part of Wendt's proposition was for researchers to utilize a holistic approach to the study of systems, instead of relying on the neorealist individualistic measuring stick. Both approaches proposed by Sil, Katzenstein and Wendt can resolve two of the obstacles facing students of Middle Eastern and Islamic military history and strategy.

Firstly, a holistic approach would allow the researcher to integrate cultural studies into their research methodology, especially since Islamic political and military thinking evolved in accordance with the local cultural identity it was placed within. For example, the Wahhabi

¹⁴⁴ Peter Katzenstein and Rudra Sil, "Analytic Eclecticism in the Study of World Politics: Reconfiguring Problems and Mechanisms across Research Tradition," *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (June 2010): 421-425.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 425-426.

branch of Islam, which is based on a Bedouin and a puritanical approach to jurisprudence,¹⁴⁶ is clearly very different when one analysis its cultural, political, and military facets in relation to the Shia Islam of Iran or Iraq, which integrated Persian, Arab, and central Asian cultures, in addition to a different strand of jurisprudence based on the pedagogical system of schools (al-Hawza al-‘Ilmiya) or the concept of government based on Vilayat-e Faqih.¹⁴⁷

Secondly, to ensure an integrative study of the Islamic way of war and strategy, while striving to uncover a cross methodological and a wide understanding of the epistemological foundations governing its historical and contemporary texts, the holistic and eclectic approaches provide the best of venues – especially when it comes to a closer and a more truthful understanding of the text. More importantly, the researcher themselves cannot escape the weltanschauung in which they are thinking and writing and, therefore, widening one’s scope while integrating their cultural studies into their research filed can help resolve many epistemological obstacles one can face in cross-cultural and cross-historical studies.

¹⁴⁶ Based on Ibn Hanbal, Ibn Taymiyya, and Abdul al Wahhab.

¹⁴⁷ See Yitzhak Nakash, *The Shi’is of Iraq* (New Jersey, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), and, Vali Nasr, *The Shia Revival: How Conflicts within Islam Will Shape the Future* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2007).

1.8.3 Historiography and the History of Warfare and Strategy in the Middle East

When it comes to historical Islamic sources, Philip Hitti identifies three sources of Arabian (should read Islamic) history: “(1) Pre-Islamic stories, (2) traditions relative to the life and campaigns of the Prophet and the companions, and (3) genealogical lists and poetical compositions.”¹⁴⁸ Even though the list itself might not be academically rich in comparison to current fields of study, it would be important to note that there “is, perhaps, no people of earlier times that has left us so large an amount of documentary evidence as to its beginnings as they [that is, the Muslims] have.”¹⁴⁹ This statement suggests the possibility for an authentic and a continuous analysis of Islamic military history and strategy, which can truly revolutionize the field of study regarding not only Islam, but also all the areas and nations with which Islamic military and political powers came in contact with.

However, one must also be wary of distortions put into texts (on purpose or not), and properly decipher the historiography at hand. As Hitti wrote in his introduction to al-Baladhuri’s *Kitab Futuh al-Buldan [The Book of Nations’ Conquest]*, that even though this “form of historic composition is unique in the case of the Arabs and meets the most essential requirements of modern historiography, namely, ‘back to the source’ and ‘trace the line of authorities.’ The system, however, has its drawbacks in that it crystallized the record of events and rendered deviation from the trodden path sacrilegious.”¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸ Philip Khuri Hitti, *The Origins of the Islamic State* (Beirut: Khayats, 1966), 1.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, v.

¹⁵⁰ Hitti, *The Origins of the Islamic State*, 3.

Researchers must not only be aware of the integrative religious nature of historical narratives; they must also be able to deconstruct the text considering its historical environment and bring it under the microscope of modern analytical techniques, all the while respecting the world view of the author and their exoteric and esoteric intents. The need for modern criticism of ancient texts is necessary because, unfortunately, “the Arabian authors exercised very little power of analysis, criticism, comparison or inference, their golden rule being ‘what has been once well said need not be told again.’”¹⁵¹ Even though Hitti’s statement might be considered narrow when it comes to treating Muslims outside their Arabic cloak, coupled with his Arab-only approach to Muslim historiography, one must still be aware of such crystallization, since its fruits can be seen in the actions of and the legitimizing decrees put forth by many groups such as the Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham (ISIL/Daesh) and al-Qaeda.

Finally, to quote Morillo on how one can surpass the historiographical limitations of the conceptual frameworks, he related that “all history is based on assumptions, theories, and models. The historiographical lesson is that the assumptions, theories, and models that are taken most for granted and are thus least examined are the very ones that can be most misleading, spotting assumptions and being critical about underlying theory is often the first task of the intelligence student o military history.”¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Morillo, *What is Military History?*, 55.

1.8.4 WPJD's Evolving Point of View: Interaction Between Text and Politico-Historical Contexts

In accordance with the literature review, none of the research looks at WPJD either in general or from the point of view of an interaction between text and politico-historical contexts. What is emphasized in this research is how the text was read and produced within the politico-historical *weltanschauung* of the day. The study analyzes, for example, how Ibn Baz interpreted the religious texts in light of al-Utaybi's rebellion in Mecca and how Ibn Ibrahim and the Wahhabi ulama rallied the Saudi public to defy the Ikhwan's rebellion against King Ibn Saud. This approach, in turn, explains how the KSA's rulers and religious authorities evolved their WPJD to ensure the stability of the Saudi-Wahhabi states and how the Wahhabi state evolved its Jihad and IR doctrines to survive in the newly created post-WWI Westphalian Middle Eastern state system.

Since the WPJD is a child of marriage between the Al al-Shaykh (Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab's family) and Al-Saud, this thesis focuses on the political side of this marriage. And since the political analysis of how the KSA fits in within the Westphalian system in the Middle East, the thesis takes a special interest in the Saudi kings from the creation of the Third Saudi state up until the 1990 Invasion of Kuwait. This paper examines the actions and stances of the Saudi leaders that helped shaped the First and Second Saudi States; however, the research is contrasted on the relationship between the ulama and the Third Saudi State.

Understanding how text and politico-historical contexts affected the decision-making process of the Saudi leaders and the Wahhabi ulama will aide in determining how political and

religious points of views gave birth to policies and actions that might seem obscured by the fogs of history and war.

1.9 Limitations on the Scope of Research

The research will focus on the Wahhabi sect in Islam since the late 18th century and up to Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait in 1990. Wahhabism can be divided into further sub-sects, such as takfiris, Salafi, Salafi-jihadi, and much more. However, the focus will be on the overarching Wahhabi sect as a proponent of the Al-Saud tribe and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

This dissertation reviews the works of Sunni and Wahhabi scholars that are considered foundational to Wahhabi Islam in the following chronological order: Ahmed bin Hanbal, Ibn Taymiyya, al-Nawawi, Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab, Ibn Ibrahim, Ibn Baz, and Salih al-Lahaydan. This overarching overview of scholarship will provide the backdrop against which modern Wahhabi thought can be contrasted. Furthermore, a comparative analysis of contemporary Wahhabi thinkers will help identify fissures and splits within the movement based on events that rocked the Saudi kingdom and the Middle East area. However, the study will only be limited to Saudi-Wahhabi political policies and how those thinkers influenced or forced the Wahhabi state to adapt its doctrine to survive in the Westphalian Middle East political system.

1.10 Conclusion and Beyond

What is being proposed in this dissertation is a post-Westphalian approach that is built on the norms of constructivism that can help shed light on the fragile nature that plagues the Middle Eastern nation states. It aims to understand the evolution of the WPJD by reflecting on the text and the context surrounding the text itself. Realism and world-systems theory, for example, fail to rise to the challenge; however, constructivism, with its ability to integrate social science and political theory will better serve the needs of this dissertation. One can even propose an Islamic IR theory (IRT)¹⁵³ field of study, in a similar fashion to a Chinese IRT.¹⁵⁴ The Islamic *ummah* could be considered as a source “of post-Western IRT, because these concepts offer ‘an alternative conception of universality – and a potentially more ‘solidarist’ conception of international society – than that offered by Western Westphalian IR.”¹⁵⁵

However, one thing is for certain, and that is any scholar of the Middle East needs to expand their horizon beyond the usual fields of military history, political theory, and IR. An eclectic¹⁵⁶ approach is required, and it should integrate philosophy, religious studies, sociology, linguistics, and psychology, to say the least, from both Western and Eastern scholars of the Middle East.

¹⁵³ Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan, eds., *Non-Western International relations Theory: Perspectives on and beyond Asia* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 176.

¹⁵⁴ Acharya, “Dialogue and Discovery,” 625.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 633.

¹⁵⁶ Finnemore and Sikkink, “Taking Stock,” 409.

Chapter 2- Philosophical Foundations of WPJD

To start our journey of understanding the place of Wahhabism within Islam and the position of Saudi Arabia within the Middle Eastern Arabian and Muslim cultures, one needs to first analyse the philosophical foundations that brought about the Wahhabi movement to life. Since Wahhabism is located within the Sunni Hanbalite spectrum, our point of departure will be with the founding figure of Hanbalism, Ahmed bin Hanbal. Afterwards, this paper moves on to the most influential thinker in Wahhabi history before Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab, Ibn Taymiyya. After exploring those two theorists, this dissertation will delve into important contextual concepts that are foundational to WPJD: order (*ni'dham*) and chaos (*faw'da*), and welfare (*maslaha*) and advice (*nasihah*). Understanding those concepts will help the reader appreciate how the political, historical, and jurisprudence elements influenced the development of WPJD.

2.1 Ahmed bin Hanbal (780-855)

Abu Abdullah Ahmed bin Muhammad bin Hanbal al-Shaybani (Ibn Hanbal) (780-855), the founder of the Hanbali branch of Sunni Islamic jurisprudence and the fourth Sunni school of jurisprudence (fiqh)¹⁵⁷, was born in 780 in Baghdad, Iraq.¹⁵⁸ His grandfather was a supporter of the Abbasid rebellion against the Umayyad Empire, and his father was a soldier that served the Abbasids after they established their rule over Muslim land.¹⁵⁹ Ibn Hanbal spent his youth travelling the Muslim world in search of teachers from whom he learned the science of Hadith¹⁶⁰ – spending almost 23 years until he settled in Baghdad in 824.¹⁶¹ The total number of scholars that he quoted in his magnum opus *al-Musnad* (literally translates to “supported”) number almost 283 scholars.¹⁶²

Although there are a variety of Islamic jurisprudence schools, these four Sunni schools compose the major and main schools within the Sunni Islamic world. These schools of thought took on the name of their founding alims, and the rulings and fatwas were collected in reference books after their deaths where the followers of the sect could then derive rules and regulations pertaining to their religious needs. In the case of Wahhabi scholars, they used Ibn Hanbal’s rulings as the basis of their religious way of life since both Ibn Taymiyya and Muhammad bin

¹⁵⁷ There are four branches of jurisprudence in Sunni Islam: Hanafi, Malaki, Shafi’i and Hanbali. Each of the four schools is based on the name of its founder: Abu Hanifa al-Nu’man bin Thabit, Malib bin Anas, Muhammad bin Idris al-Shafi’i, and Ahmed bin Hanbal, respectively.

¹⁵⁸ Ahmad ibn Muhammad Ibn Hanbal, *Al-Musnad [The Supported Hadith]* (Beirut: Muassast al-Risala, 1995), 38.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Abu al-Faraj Abd al-Rahman ibn Ali Ibn al-Jawzi, *Manaqib al-Imam Ahmed bin Hanbal [Virtues of Imam Ahmed bin Hanbal]* (Egypt: Maktabat al-Khanji, 1931), 22-33.

¹⁶¹ Ibn Hanbal, *Al-Musnad*, 42.

¹⁶² Ibid.

Abd al-Wahhab were followers of Ibn Hanbal, hence following in the footsteps of their predecessors.

Ibn Hanbal's time was known as the time of al-Mihna (the Trial, the Test, or the Inquisition) during which the Abbasid Caliph, al-Ma'mun (reigned 813-833), tested Muslim scholars' positions vis-à-vis the Quran's status – was it created or was it eternal?¹⁶³ Debates of this nature were common, especially since the expansion of Islam into Greek, Roman and Persian territories brought forth new philosophical ideas that were debated by scholars, notably in relation to the Islamic faith, its principles of belief and the interpretation of scriptures.¹⁶⁴

However, during al-Ma'mun's predecessors time, al-Mu'tasim (reigned from 833-842) and al-Wathiq (reigned 842-847), the Mihna reached its peak where Ibn Hanbal was imprisoned and whipped¹⁶⁵ on order of al-Mu'tasim¹⁶⁶ and his supreme judge Ahmed bin Abi Dawood,¹⁶⁷ a Mutazilite¹⁶⁸ judge and a vehement enemy of Ibn Hanbal.^{169 170}

The Mihna or what some scholars call The Inquisition,^{171 172} had a deep impact on Ibn Hanbal – it not only caused personal pain and suffering, in addition to turning him into a

¹⁶³ Ibid., 43.

¹⁶⁴ Ian Richard Netton, *Allah Transcendent: Studies in the Structure and Semiotics of Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Cosmology* (Oxon: Routledge, 2006), 3-4 and 7-8.

¹⁶⁵ Ibn al-Jawzi, *Manaqib*, 327-329.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 319-347.

¹⁶⁷ Salih bin Ahmad bin Hanbal, *Sirat al-Imam Ahmed bin Hanbal [The Biography of Imam Ahmed bin Hanbal]* (Riyadh: Dar al-Salaf Lil Nashr Wal Tawzi', 1995), 57.

¹⁶⁸ A religious movement founded by Wasil bin 'Ata' in the eight century A.D.

¹⁶⁹ Ibn Hanbal, *Al-Musnad*, 43.

¹⁷⁰ Ibn al-Jawzi, *Manaqib*, 316.

¹⁷¹ Christopher Melchert, *Ahmad ibn Hanbal* (Noida: Oneworld Publications, 2009), 8.

¹⁷² Gerhard Bowering, ed., *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Islamic Political Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 255.

recluse,¹⁷³ but it also significantly affected Ibn Hanbal's followers, leading to riots and revolts throughout Abbasid territories.¹⁷⁴ However, when asked to rebel against al-Wathiq's authority, Ibn Hanbal advised his followers instead to reject the Caliph's authority in their hearts but not to disobey the ruler openly so as not to create *fitna*¹⁷⁵ (strife) among Muslims.¹⁷⁶ Ibn Hanbal did indeed emphasize the need to forgive those who hurt him,¹⁷⁷ but he also specifically informed his son and his own followers to stay home and not create any disturbances in relations to the events that have befallen him - not even travel to his location to visit him in case such a move could lead to conflict between his supporters and the Abbasid government.¹⁷⁸

Ibn Hanbal's followers' saw their leader's performance during al-Mihna as one on par with Abu Bakr's¹⁷⁹ (the first Islamic Caliphate) reaction during the Apostasy War;¹⁸⁰ even though in the latter's case an exceptionally substantial number of Muslims perished while in the first case the rebellion was scarcely noted. For it was in Ibn Hanbal's opinion that politics "was largely about recognizing the legitimate ruler (the Imam). He did not expect to participate in decision making."¹⁸¹ More so, it must be noted that the concept of leadership was not a central aspect for the Hanbali creed,¹⁸² with obedience to the ruler taking a foundational and prominent

¹⁷³ Ibn al-Jawzi, *Manaqib*, 348.

¹⁷⁴ Melchert, *Ahmad ibn Hanbal*, 13.

¹⁷⁵ The paper will delve deeper into the concept of Fitna and its central role to Sunni, Hanbali, and Wahhabi authority.

¹⁷⁶ Melchert, *Ahmad ibn Hanbal*, 13.

¹⁷⁷ Ibn al-Jawzi, *Manaqib*, 346-347.

¹⁷⁸ Salih bin Ahmad bin Hanbal, *Sirat al-Imam Ahmed bin Hanbal*, 104.

¹⁷⁹ Abi al-Hussein Muhammad Ibn Abi Ya'la, *Tabaqat al-Hanabila [History of the Hanbalites]* (Saudi Arabia: Al Amana Al Ama Lil Ihtifal Bi Muroor Mi'at Sana Ala Ta'asees al-Mamlakah, 1999), 28.

¹⁸⁰ The Apostasy War was a series of battles that took place after the death of the Prophet, during the reign of the First Muslim Caliphate Abu Bakr (573-634).

¹⁸¹ Melchert, *Ahmad ibn Hanbal*, 93.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*

role. For Ibn Hanbal and future Hanbali scholars, one must obey the leader whether they are righteous or not.¹⁸³

Ibn Hanbal's antagonistic relationship with the Abbasid rulers was solely based on religio-philosophical issues that had flared up due to the rationalist leaning of the Abbasid ruler al-Ma'mun, who was perceived as a rejector of traditional sources. Al-Mamun had "adopted a series of measures intended to enforce general recognition of his authority in matters of belief and practice. His most powerful opponents were the Sunnis, who sought guidance from the Hadith rather than from the Abbasid caliphs, who were regarded as usurpers."¹⁸⁴ For example, Ibn Taymiyya, who fought and opposed the Mongols during their invasion of Muslim land, did not feel any sympathy for the Abbasid demise due to his long-lasting hate to al-Ma'mun and the Inquisition he had imposed on the scholars of that time.¹⁸⁵

However, even with such strong feelings, Ibn Hanbal and his followers disengaged from challenging the caliphs with their Mihna prosecution, with the majority of Ibn Hanbal's colleagues and Sunni scholars ceding to the Abbasid caliphs' point of view.¹⁸⁶ One might also note that the inquisition practice ended without the need for the Hanbalites to further oppose the Abbasid leadership. When Abu al-Fadl al-Mutawakkil (reigned 842-861) followed al-Wathiq to the throne, he "banned theological disputation and extended official patronage to Sunni scholars

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Bowering, *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Islamic Political*, 328.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 240.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 328.

of hadith,¹⁸⁷ and, after that in 15 years, the Abbasid leadership adopted the Sunni theologians' doctrine,¹⁸⁸ reversing its stance and countering al-Mamun's policies towards the Sunnis.

It is important to note here that even though the Sunni and Hanbali scholars of hadith were spared the wrath of future Abbasid rulers, they still reserved negative feeling towards the Mutazilites and the Shia because they saw them as instrumental in the prosecution of the Hanbali clerics. Some of this dispute had its origin in al-Ma'mun's public support to the Fourth Islamic Caliph Ali (reigned 656-661) over the Umayyad Caliph Muawiya (reigned 661-680).¹⁸⁹ Others note that Hanbalite opposition to the Mutazilites and the Shia stems from the fact that during the reign of the Abbasid caliphs, many of their judges were from the Mutazilite creed, hence deepening the mistrust in the eyes of the Hanbalites. This Hanbalite opposition and excommunication reached its apex during the time of Ibn Taymiyya, Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab and the Wahhabi scholars of the KSA. It is noteworthy to state that Ibn Hanbal himself, though, did not excommunicate the Mutazilites or the Shia sects from the Muslim fold.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 255.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 328.

¹⁹⁰ Ibn Abi Ya'la, *Tabaqat al-Hanabila*, 33-34.

2.2 Ibn Taymiyya (1263-1328)

Taqi al-Din Ahmad bin Abd al-Halim bin Abd al-Salam, also known as Ibn Taymiyya (1263-1328), who was “more often cited than understood, constantly evoked and not sufficiently studied,”¹⁹¹ was born in what is considered present-day Turkey in the town of Harran to a family of Hanbali¹⁹² and Sufi¹⁹³ scholars. He escaped the Mongol invasion when he was young, spending the rest of his life between Arabia, Egypt (where he was imprisoned)¹⁹⁴ and the Levant, all under the Mamluk sultanate, dying in prison¹⁹⁵ in Damascus in 1328.¹⁹⁶

He was a Hanbalite who did not enjoy much support from his creed brothers due to “his contempt for fellow scholars and his sense of superiority.”¹⁹⁷ Conversely, he challenged Hanbali orthodoxy, and his views were often unwelcomed and even considered elitist, gaining him a mere dozen followers during his lifetime;¹⁹⁸ a view that might be shocking to many given his large following today. An argument, however, that was given in support of this dwindling number of followers in contrast to the large crowd that is usually cited to have had assembled at

¹⁹¹ Yossef Rapoport and Shahab Ahmed, eds., *Ibn Taymiyya and His Times* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2010), 4.

¹⁹² Bowering, *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Islamic Political*, 238.

¹⁹³ Ibn Taymiyya, Ahmad ibn Abd al-Halim, *Al Sarim al-Maslool ‘Ala Shatim al-Rasool [The Drawn Sword Against Those Who Insult the Messenger]* (Beirut: Dar al-Kotob al-Ilmiyah, 1998), 3.

¹⁹⁴ Ibn Taymiyya, Ahmad ibn Abd al-Halim, *Kitab al-Iman [The Book of Faith]* (Beirut: Dar al-Kotob al-Ilmiyah, 2001), 3.

¹⁹⁵ Ibn Taymiyya was imprisoned on six different occasions between 1306 and 1328. See Bowering, Gerhard, *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Islamic Political Thought*, 239.

¹⁹⁶ Hoover, John. *Ibn Taymiyya*. London: One World Academic, 2019, p.38.

¹⁹⁷ Rapoport and Ahmed, *Ibn Taymiyya and His Times*, 4.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 7 and 29.

his funeral was that people admired his opposition to the Mongols more than his political and religious views.¹⁹⁹

Caterina Bori, for example, underlined the fact that Ibn Taymiyya created his own creed based on what he called authentic religion (*al-din al-sahih*), which gave birth to an elitist view of understanding and practicing Islam.²⁰⁰ He was opposed for introducing new ideas, not only from within the Hanbali community, but even by his closest followers.²⁰¹ His isolation was exacerbated by his doctrines' radicalization, with a watershed moment coming to light when, during his "his first trial in Damascus ... he refused to seek shelter under his Hanbali credentials, and insisted that his famous creed, entitled *Al-'Aqida al-Wasatiyya*, was not merely a variation on Hanbali doctrine;"²⁰² (italics in original) that is, he saw him self as a reviver of the Hanbali and Sunni creed itself.

Ibn Taymiyya was a prolific writer, but he also participated in military campaigns. He was one of the Damascene leaders against the Mongol invasion in 1299-1300 and he helped release several Syrian prisoners through negotiations with the Ilkhanite Empire.²⁰³ This opposition of his to the Mongols gained him notorious support for his actions,²⁰⁴ but not his writings.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 7.

²⁰⁰ Caterina Bori, "Ibn Taymiyya wa-Jama'atu-hu: Authority, Conflict and Consensus in Ibn Taymiyya's Circle," in *Ibn Taymiyya and His Times*, eds. Yossef Rapoport and Ahmed Shahab Ahmed (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2010), 29.

²⁰¹ Ibid., 234.

²⁰² Rapoport and Ahmed, *Ibn Taymiyya and His Times*, 7.

²⁰³ Bowering, *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Islamic Political*, 239.

²⁰⁴ John Hoover, *Ibn Taymiyya* (London: One World Academic, 2019), 39.

However, it is his prolific writings for which he is most well known for. He identified his political theories in two books: *Al-Siyasa al-Shar'iyaa fi Islah al-Ra'i wal Ra'iyaa [The Religious Law Government in Mending the Ruler and the Ruled]*²⁰⁵ and *Al-Hisba fi al-Islam [Public Duties in Islam]*,²⁰⁶ from which Islamist²⁰⁷ and, more importantly, Wahhabi clerics, traced their own political theories.

Specifically, on the political theory front, Ibn Taymiyya is widely known for three main ideas:²⁰⁸

1. Dividing the world into *dar al-Islam* (the abode of Islam) and *dar al-harb/al-kufr* (the abode of war or unbelief),²⁰⁹
2. *Takfir* (excommunication) of Muslims based on disobeying certain rules he setup himself; and
3. Killing or opposing a Muslim ruler who does not uphold the sharia (Islamic law).

It is important to note how the three central ideas stated above had evolved throughout the history of Wahhabism. Especially, it is of utmost importance to highlight the fact that the third point above is almost nonexistent in Wahhabi scholars' writings, except for the special

²⁰⁵ Ahmad ibn Abd al-Halim Ibn Taymiyya, *Al-Siyasa al-Shar'iyaa fi Islah al-Ra'i wal Ra'iyaa [The Religious Law Government in Mending the Ruler and the Ruled]* (Beirut: Dar al-Kotob al-Ilmiyah, n.d.).

²⁰⁶ Ahmad ibn Abd al-Halim Ibn Taymiyya, *Al-Hisba fi al-Islam [Public Duties in Islam]* (Beirut: Dar al-Kotob al-Ilmiyah, 2015).

²⁰⁷ Bowering, *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Islamic Political*, 239.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Ibn Taymiyya also provides a third type of abode: *murakkab* (the compound or composite).

case of dethroning a king. Even then, the dethroning was done peacefully – as was the case with Saud bin Abd al-Aziz in 1964. Furthermore, although Ibn Taymiyya's is often associated with strict obedience to ruler and the rules, he himself opposed the absolute obedience type of requirements put forth by the Tatars and considered this type of requirement for obedience *Jahiliya* (pre-Islamic ignorance).²¹⁰

Ibn Taymiyya designed his political theories with the flexibility to change the laws to benefit society, which fed into the overall corpus of the WPJD. Under the guiding principle of *al amr bil ma'aruf wal nahi 'an al-munkar* (enjoining good and forbidding wrong, here on ABM), Ibn Taymiyya noted that “it is the responsibility of everyone, each accordance with his capacity and place in society, and it is achieved through mutual consultation (*shura*). Rather than delegation, direct involvement is encouraged, as everyone is always, in some way, a shepherd (*ra'in*) entrusted with a flock”²¹¹ (italics in original).

For Ibn Taymiyya, *uli al amr* (the commanders and leaders) should be obeyed by their subjects; however, those same commanders must consult with advisers and, in matters of the soul, they have no authority over their subjects' conscience.²¹² It is important to note here that Ibn Taymiyya did not refer to the ruler as the Commander of the Faithful (*Amir al-Mu'mineen*), the honorary title given to caliphs throughout history to legitimize their rule. Conversely, though, the well known Muslim sociologist Abd al-Rahman bin Muhammad bin Khaldun (Ibn Khaldun) noted that the caliph had naturally been called by the honorary title the Commander

²¹⁰ Bowering, *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Islamic Political*, 240.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*

²¹² *Ibid.*

of the Faithful throughout history ever since the death of the Prophet of Islam.²¹³ For Ibn Khaldun, titles are derived from sect terminology and, therefore, calling a commander an Imam would depend on the sect in question as in, for example, with Imam where the Shia give such a title more of a religious clout than their Sunni counterparts.²¹⁴

Furthermore, on the matter of ruling, Ibn Taymiyya distinguished between two types of rulers: the caliphate (*khilafa*) and kingship (*mulk*).²¹⁵ The first type of rule for Ibn Taymiyya, constitutes the righteous rulers after the Prophet, while kingship is a purely temporal matter.²¹⁶ However, the ideal and best type of rule for Ibn Taymiyya would be the rightly caliphate (*khilafat al-nubuwwa*) which he associated with the first four caliphs after the Prophet (also known as the Rashidun Caliphates).²¹⁷ Muslims must strive to achieve the rightly caliphate rule; however, he maintained that “kingship is a sin.”²¹⁸ This is a crucially important point to note here, since future Wahhabi clerics did support rulers even though they called themselves kings, pointing to the dynamic nature of evolution of WPJD in support of the ruler as the protector of the Wahhabi creed.

Another view underlines Ibn Taymiyya’s alien political theory when contrasted against modern Salafi and Wahhabi political Islam and “its Westernized insistence on the necessity of a

²¹³ Abd al-Rahman ibn Muhammad Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddimat Ibn Khaldun [Ibn Khaldun’s Prolegomena]* (Beirut: Sharikat Dar al-Arqam bin Abi al-Arqam lil Tiba’a wal Nashr wal Tawzee’, 2001), 258.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 259-262.

²¹⁵ John Hoover, *Ibn Taymiyya* (London: One World Academic, 2019), 93.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 40.

strong state, indiscriminate use of violence, or recourse to terror.”²¹⁹ He supposedly held views that were anti-extremist in their approach to social rule and governance, emphasizing the strong ethical approach to life both on the individual and community scales.²²⁰ Contrariwise, Ibn Taymiyya’s most ardent follower,²²¹ Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab, was able to instrumentalize his master’s teachings and help formulate one of the most stable states in the modern Middle East, but with the use of extreme violence to subjugate both his subjects and anyone that opposed him. One can even say that Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab approached the works of Ibn Taymiyya from a reductionist point of view.

Yet before one moves to Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab and his political role in the creation of the Wahhabi state, one must discuss some of Ibn Taymiyya’s political theories so that one can formulate a better understanding how such ideas govern and inspire Wahhabi political clerics.

Misunderstanding Ibn Taymiyya’s rational stance is usually attributed to an incorrect or partial reading of his books *Naqd al-Mantiq [Criticism of Logic]*²²² and *Al-Radd ‘Ala al-Mantiqiyin [The Refutation of the Logicians]*.²²³ Instead, Jon Hoover “sees Ibn Taymiyya as an apologist for the coherence and the rationality of the theological data found in the tradition,

²¹⁹ Bowering, *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Islamic Political*, 240.

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Ibid., 241.

²²² Ahmad ibn Abd al-Halim Ibn Taymiyya, *Naqd al-Mantiq [Criticism of Logic]* (Beirut: Al-Maktaba al-Ilmiyah, 1951).

²²³ Ahmad ibn Abd al-Halim Ibn Taymiyya, *Al-Radd ‘Ala al-Mantiqiyin [The Refutation of the Logicians]* (Beirut: Dar Al-Kotoob Al-Ilmiyah, 2003).

offering ‘a philosophical interpretation and defence of tradition.’”²²⁴ For Ibn Taymiyya, the marriage between reason and divine revelation is meant to protect the divine word and hadith.²²⁵

However, this thesis is of the view that Ibn Taymiyya’s thought process can be considered a combination of traditionalism and rationalism,²²⁶ or as Mehmet Sait Ozervarli termed his theology “Qur’anic rationalism.”²²⁷ What Ozervarli means here is that Ibn Taymiyya insists on reason (*aql*) being in line with and not contradicting divine revelation (*naql*),²²⁸ since “revelation, all-inclusive and faultless, contains within itself perfect and complete rational foundations.”²²⁹

To further analyse Ibn Taymiyya’s thought process, one needs to understand the role terminology plays in fostering an understanding of context and, by extension, how it influences a leader’s or a cleric’s choices. For example, Salafism, which derives its name base from the Arabic word *salaf*, can be considered such a word. Salaf means “previous,” and it is usually used to indicate a specific set of people; specifically, *al-salaf al-salih*, which translates to the good or pious ancestors. Precisely, al-salaf al-salih refers to the companions of Prophet Muhammad and, by the extension, a Salafi would be a follower of those forefathers (the pious

²²⁴ Rapoport and Ahmed, *Ibn Taymiyya and His Times*, 9.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 9 and 74.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, 8.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 8 and 78.

²²⁸ M. Sait Ozervarli, “The Qur’anic Rational Theology of Ibn Taymiyya and his Criticism of the Mutakallimun,” in *Ibn Taymiyya and His Times*, ed. Yossef Rapoport and Ahmed Shahab Ahmed (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2010), 83-89.

²²⁹ Rapoport and Ahmed, *Ibn Taymiyya and His Times*, 8.

ancestors).²³⁰ “[A] historically grounded definition maintains that Salafis adhere to a literalist theology that rejects all allegorical interpretation and reason-based arguments and claim to be faithful to the teachings of the theological Hanbalites or the *Ahl al-hadith*”²³¹ (italics in origin). One can note from this definition how Ibn Taymiyya steers from the Hanbalite creed by giving reason a significant role in his heuristic interpretation of text as was noted above.

Salafis consider themselves the only Muslims adhering to the right path and that they are the followers of the “most authentic form of Islam.”²³² They are the victorious group (*al-ta’ifa al-mansura*) and the only saved sect (*al-firqa al-najiya*) that will be saved from hellfire, according to hadith related to the Prophet of Islam.²³³ Yet, for Ibn Taymiyya, the role of the salaf was indeed central to his doctrine,²³⁴ which can be highlighted in his *Muqaddima fi Usul al-Tafseer [An Introduction to the Foundations of Exegesis]*,²³⁵ where he emphasized the role of predecessors in understanding the truth. Walid Saleh, for example, noted that Ibn Taymiyya used “salaf-based epistemology as an alternative to the dominant tradition of Qur’anic exegesis, which is guided by philology.”²³⁶

²³⁰ Joas Wagemakers, *A Quietist Jihadi: The Ideology and Influence of Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 3-4.

²³¹ Bowering, *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Islamic Political*, 483.

²³² Wagemakers, *A Quietist Jihad*, 3.

²³³ *Ibid.*, 3-4.

²³⁴ Rapoport and Ahmed, *Ibn Taymiyya and His Times*, 10.

²³⁵ Ahmad ibn Abd al-Halim Ibn Taymiyya, *Muqaddima fi Usul al-Tafseer [An Introduction to the Foundations of Exegesis]* (Damascus: Matba’at al-Taraqqi, 1936).

²³⁶ Rapoport and Ahmed, *Ibn Taymiyya and His Times*, 10.

Alternatively, this proposed methodology of radical hermeneutics²³⁷ elevated the status and infallibility of those predecessors' interpretation of the truth to that of the Prophet's.²³⁸ This ability to interpret the word of God and that of the Prophet allowed future Salafi and Wahhabi clerics to expand their choices of who can be considered the best representative of the true word of God and his Prophet (from the salafi predecessors). Hence, those same clerics then cherry-picked whatever "historical truth" matched their needs and presented as the truth to their followers. This overall process of mixing and matching truths with current events is what allowed the Wahhabi political and jihad doctrines (WPJD) to evolve over the past two and half centuries.

It is also important to note the historical context within which Ibn Taymiyya formulated his ideas and issued his fatwas. To understand why Ibn Taymiyya identified the Shia as a threat in his writings and, by extension, why the same threat and opposition to the Shia is found in the writings of Hanbali, Salafi, and Wahhabi thinkers, was because of the geo-political events surrounding Ibn Taymiyya during his lifetime. For it was five years before Ibn Taymiyya's birth, in 1258, that Baghdad, the seat of Abbasid Caliphate fell to the Mongols – creating a widespread fear in the rest of the Muslim world of the Mongol horde's advance. The suffering was widespread, and the Muslim and Christian worlds experienced horrors on the hands on the advancing Mongol armies.²³⁹

²³⁷ The same theory of hermeneutics was propagated by Ibn Taymiyya's student Abu al-Fida' Ismail Ibn Kathir. See Walid A. Saleh, "Ibn Taymiyya and the Rise of Radical Hermeneutics: An Analysis of *An Introduction to the Foundations of Qur'anic Exegesis*," in *Ibn Taymiyya and His Times*, ed. Yossef Rapoport and Shahab Ahmed (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2010), 123-162, 123 and 148, 152-153.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, 10.

²³⁹ Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab People* (London: Faber and Faber, 2013), 85 and 88.

Furthermore, Ibn Taymiyya's fears were compounded when the leader of the Mongol Ilkhans, Oljeitu, converted to Shi'ism on the hands of his intellectual rival Allamah al-Hilli (1250-1325).²⁴⁰ From the West, there was also the Crusaders whom Muslims also saw as threat to their way of life.²⁴¹ Many atrocities were committed by the Crusaders against the Muslims and Jews, and more so against the Christians to whom they came to liberate from Muslim rule.²⁴²

Additionally, Ibn Taymiyya saw the Muslim spirit corrupted by the integration of Shia, Christians, and Jews into the society's body.²⁴³ For even though Sunni leaders were sometimes working together with Crusaders to attack the Shia enemy,²⁴⁴ one can deduce here how Ibn Taymiyya's puritan views did not allow for mixing of beliefs. Furthermore, Ibn Taymiyya's political theories were written at a time when Islamic self-confidence was regained through a series of victories against the Mongols and the Crusaders.²⁴⁵ Hence, this thesis debunks Ibn Taymiyya knee-jerk legacy as one merely due to the fear of the Mongols, the Shia or the Crusaders.²⁴⁶ Instead, it states that it is based on a comprehensive understanding of the role Islam played in the political and ethical lives of communities, in addition to the relationship between the rulers and their people.

²⁴⁰ Rapoport and Ahmed, *Ibn Taymiyya and His Times*, 15.

²⁴¹ Hourani, *A History of the Arab People*, 85 and 88.

²⁴² Tamim Ansary, *Destiny Disrupted: A History of The Islamic World Through Islamic Eyes* (New York: Public Affairs, 2009), 140.

²⁴³ Rapoport and Ahmed, *Ibn Taymiyya and His Times*, 15.

²⁴⁴ Ansary, *Destiny Disrupted*, 139.

²⁴⁵ Rapoport and Ahmed, *Ibn Taymiyya and His Times*, 15.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

These guidelines and reservations will form an essential part of future Wahhabi clerics' policies and fatwas, even though many of Ibn Taymiyya's stances would be taken out of context and used to pursue a goal unrelated to what Ibn Taymiyya espoused. This out-of-context hermeneutics was also the reason for the sudden interest in Ibn Taymiyya's writings over the past century,²⁴⁷ since his writings were manipulated by some of his followers and opposers to fit their own historical context and justify their action for or against policies that are unrelated to Ibn Taymiyya and his times.

For example, Yossef Rapoport and Shahab Ahmed noted that Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's assassins (from the al-Jihad al-Islami group) used Ibn Taymiyya's legal opinions against the Mongols, pertaining to a usurper ruler, to justify their assassination of the President of Egypt.²⁴⁸ The group's leader, Abd al-Salam Faraj's book *Al-Farida al-Gha'iba [The Neglected Duty]* formed the basis to launch such an attack against a Muslim ruler and use violence to dispose of him and his rule.²⁴⁹ "In Faraj's selective reading, the Egyptian regime [was] identified with the invading Mongols of Ibn Taymiyya's time in order to justify rebellion and assassination."²⁵⁰

It is this tangential approach to Ibn Taymiyya's writings that brought forth a sudden interest in his writings by both his supporters and antagonists. His writings were ignored by most Sunni writers and clerics in the Ottoman Empire,²⁵¹ that is, until the rise of the First Saudi-Wahhabi State at the end of the 18th Century.

²⁴⁷ Ibid., 17.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 18.

²⁵¹ Ibid., 16.

It is also this ignorant approach²⁵² to the historical surroundings governing Ibn Taymiyya's writings that led to the metamorphization of Sunni Wahhabi writings. More so, the cherry-picking approach to his writings also led clerics to promote one type of his writing over another. Specifically, the Salafi movement edited and translated Ibn Taymiyya's books that insisted on "the epistemological superiority of the salaf,"²⁵³ while ignoring the rest of his theological and legal writings. This approach, of course, helped promote the power and importance of the Salafi narrative within the Hanbali-Wahhabi worldview.

2.3 Contextual Concepts

2.3.1 Order (Ni'dham) and Chaos (Faw'da)

It is important now to define and explore several key concepts that appear in Saudi and Wahhabi leaders' discourses. These concepts are of importance because they help the leader and the cleric to mold the weltanschauung of the population to the goals of the state. As has been noted above, controlling the narrative helped the Saudi and Wahhabi leaders to command the actions and reactions of their audience – whether it was domestic, regional, or worldwide. As Teun A. van Dijk highlighted, "ideologies are largely acquired, spread and reproduced by text and talk;"²⁵⁴ hence, one can understand the use and abuse of power and its methods of production

²⁵² Ibid., 18.

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ Teun A. Van Dijk, "Ideology and Discourse," in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Ideologies*, ed. Michael Freeden, Lyman Tower Sargent and Marc Steer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 175.

and reproduction by interpreting the text and the speech within the surroundings and events governing those narratives.²⁵⁵

In addition, it is important to note here the context's influence over the concepts and terminologies examined. Consider, for example, the word *fitna*, which can be translated into discord, sedition, seduction, calamity, riot, or war (especially in relation to civil war). Throughout history, the word *fitna* carried a heavy weight on the minds of Muslims, especially when it is superimposed on what has been called the Great *Fitna*²⁵⁶ - when the Third Rashidun Caliphate Uthman bin Affan (573-576) was massacred with his family, leading to a chain of events and civil wars throughout the life, and the subsequent death of the Fourth Caliphate Ali bin Abi Talib. Out of these civil wars, or *fitnas*, different sects of Muslims were presumed to have branched out, leading to violent groups and endless wars that continue until today. This violent history, in turn, lends the word *fitna* its complex context in the Muslim mind. The use of *fitna* would bring up a sense of revolt against the true leader, a sense of fear of what the discord can create to the fabric of the *ummah*, and a revulsion to the actions taken by the *fitna*'s instigators. A commonly referred group usually associated with *fitna* are the Kharijites who rebelled against and assassinated Ali before continuing a campaign of violence against the rest of the Muslim societies.

²⁵⁵ Van Dijk, "Ideology and Discourse," 176.

²⁵⁶ See Taha Hussein, *Al-Fitna al-Kubra 1: Uthman [The Great Sedition 1: Uthman]* (Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif bi Masr, 1968). Also, by the same author, see *Al-Fitna al-Kubra 2: Ali wa Banuh [The Great Sedition 2: Ali and His Sons]* (Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif bi Masr, 1966). More so, see Hichem Djait, *La Grande Discorde: Religion et politique dans l'Islam des origines [The Great Sedition: Religion and Politics in Early Islam]* (Paris: NRF, 1989).

In the context of Wahhabi expansion between the 18th and 20th centuries, for example, the Grand Mufti of Mecca, Shaykh al-Islam Ahmad Zanyi Dahlan (1816-1866) wrote a book called *Fitnat al-Wahhabiya [The Wahhabi Fitna]*²⁵⁷ where he launched a polemic attack against the Wahhabi sect and accused them of wandering off the true path. He called the founder malevolent²⁵⁸ and accused the followers of the movement of creating dissent in the ranks of Muslims, comparing them to the Kharijites.²⁵⁹ He summoned the word *fitna* as way to invoke a sense of repulsion in the Muslim psyche towards the Wahhabis and amass popular support against their expansionist campaign.

2.3.2 Welfare (Maslaha) and Advice (Nasiha)

Conversely, a word that invokes unity and goodness to the ummah is *maslaha*, which translates to expediency and interest, but can also be used as agency. The word was highlighted in Wahhabi clerics' speeches and theories whenever a group holds an argument that runs counter to the official stance of the Saudi ruler. In tandem with *maslaha*, the word *nasiha* (advice) is usually noted beforehand. For whenever some advice is given, it is supposed to be given in the form of providing advice to the leader and not merely to criticize his actions.

In the Western political context, *nasiha* would be substituted by the word criticism; however, since the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia does not espouse to the views of democracy nor is

²⁵⁷ Ahmad Zayni Dahlan, *Fitnat al-Wahhabiya [The Wahhabi Fitna]* (Istanbul: Isik Kitabevi, 1978).

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 19.

the process of criticism ingrained within its legislative body (as in the form of a parliamentary process, for example), the dual words *maslaha* and *nasiha* provide both the Saudi leaders and Wahhabi clerics with a process to *criticize* the Saudi leaders' actions without breaking the taboo of criticism.

Furthermore, it is important to note that to provide *nasiha* for the good (*maslaha*) of society and the ruler, one must do so in private. This is a crucial point; voicing one's opinion in public is frowned upon in the Saudi-Wahhabi political universe. When it comes to advice, especially one that could hold negative connotations, it must be given in private to ensure the respectability of the King's position and to save his face in case the advice did indeed highlight a fault in the King's actions.

The repercussions, for example, from *Mu'thakart al-Nasiha* (*Advice Note* or *Advice Memo*) is a powerful example of what happens when Wahhabi clerics chose to provide advice to the Saudi king in public instead of in private. It was a controversial note written by many Wahhabi ulama and Saudi intellectual to the Saudi King requesting changes to the norms of the Kingdom. The Memo received widespread support and criticism, specifically because it was put forth through the public sphere instead of sending it directly to the King in private.²⁶⁰

Arguably, one can state that both Shia and Sunni ulama and clergy have, historically, abdicated political power, with the notable exception of Ayatollah Khomeini. The ulama are content with their role of overseeing and advising the political elite instead. In another sense, this thesis underscores the fact that Wahhabi ulama strive for and are satisfied with indirect rule.

²⁶⁰ Mouline, *The Clerics of Islam*, 247-248.

2.3.3 Enjoining Good and Forbidding Wrong (al-amr bil ma'aruf wal nahi 'an al-munkar (ABM))

The precept of enjoining good and forbidding wrong is expressed in multiple locations in the Quran.²⁶¹ In verse 3:104, the Quran states that “Let there be among you a community calling to the good, enjoining right, and forbidding wrong,”²⁶² while in verse 3:10 it states that “You are the best community brought forth unto mankind, enjoining right, forbidding wrong, and believing in God.”²⁶³ Lastly, in verse 9:71, the Quran states that “But the believing men and believing women are protectors of one another, enjoining right and forbidding wrong,”²⁶⁴

More so, the Prophet of Islam was quoted espousing the duty of Muslims to strive to do good and, specifically, stop the spread of evil. He is noted to have said: “Whoever amongst you sees an evil, he must change it with his hand; if he is unable to do so, then with his tongue; and if he is unable to do so, then with his heart; and that is the weakest form of Faith.”²⁶⁵ This quote usually goes in tandem with one of the above mentioned Quranic quotes to re-enforce the sense of duty upon group intending to take action. Which brings up the question of authority.

Taken at face value, the Quranic verse and the Hadith are intended to espouse a sense of diligence on Muslims to do good. However, on an individual level it is limited to advice

²⁶¹ Michael Cook, *Forbidding Wrong in Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 3.

²⁶² Nasr, *The Study Quran*, 159.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, 161.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 525.

²⁶⁵ Abi al-Hasan Muslim bin al-Hajjaj bin Muslim al-Qushyari al-Nisaburi, *Sahih Muslim*, ed. Raid bin Sabri ibn Abi 'Alfah (Riyadh: Dar al-Ha'dara lil Nash wal Tawz'i, 2015), 49.

(nasiha) and governed by a specific set of actions a Muslim can take. That is why the Prophetic Hadith provided cascading levels of permissibility depending on the ability of the Muslim in question.

However, to have an official status to enforce the rules of the Quranic verses and the hadith, there needs to be a form of government that authorizes the use of force to administer the enjoining of good and forbidding of wrong. For example, Ibn Taymiyya in his book *Al-Hisba fi al-Islam [Public Duties in Islam]* sets out the process by which the Hisba branch of the government would function under the rule of Islamic law.²⁶⁶ He noted that one of the most important principles for running the government on the rules of enjoining good and forbidding evil (ABM) would be justice.²⁶⁷ He even goes as far as saying that God will support a just yet unbelieving (infidel) state, while He will not support a pious country that is unjust.²⁶⁸ More so, Ibn Taymiyya stressed that there must also be an authority in place to ensure the execution of enjoining good and forbidding wrong.²⁶⁹ However, Michael Cook noted that Ibn Taymiyya's definition can be widened to include "the scholars, the political and military grandees, and the elders of every community; it is their duty to forbid wrong to those of the common people who are subject to them."²⁷⁰ As can be noted in this quote, the explanation provided by Cook of Ibn Taymiyya's definition allows for other power brokers within society to participate in ABM.

Ibn Taymiyya went further by defining the role of the *muhtasib* (the employee of al-Hisba), where he stated that the muhtasib's role was to promote virtue and prevent vice, except

²⁶⁶ Ibn Taymiyya, *Al-Hisba fi al-Islam*.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 7.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 9.

²⁷⁰ Cook, *Forbidding Wrong in Islam*, 69.

for items and roles pertaining to rulers, judges, and diwan employees (government officials attached to the ruler).²⁷¹ He even insisted on the executive powers of al-Hisba, stating that God restrains with the rule of a sultan what cannot be restrained by the Quran.²⁷² That is, the muhtasib is an extension of the executive power and that if they need to use violence to limit corruption, so be it.²⁷³

During the 19th and 20th centuries, there has been two significant groups that institutionalized the role of the enjoining of good and the prevention of wrong (ABM; also, another way of describing this group in the Sunni world has been through the use of the term the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice).²⁷⁴ On the one hand, there is the Hisba committee of Daesh who are given the role of enforcing the rules of Islam as per their creed;²⁷⁵ with draconian measures usually taken on local participants who do not adhere to the rule of law.²⁷⁶ That group derives its laws from Hanbalism and from the writings of Ibn Taymiyya and Wahhabi clerics.²⁷⁷

On the other hand, there is the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's Committee Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong.²⁷⁸ It is an official department of the government of the KSA, and it had enjoyed substantial power ever since the creation of the Saudi nation-state in 1932.

²⁷¹ Ibn Taymiyya, *Al-Hisba fi al-Islam*, 16.

²⁷² Ibn Taymiyya, *Al-Hisba fi al-Islam*, 45.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, 46.

²⁷⁴ Mouline, *The Clerics of Islam*, 203.

²⁷⁵ Abdel Bari Atwan, *Islamic State: The Digital Caliphate* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015), 138-140.

²⁷⁶ Patrick Cockburn, *The Rise of Islamic State: ISIS and The New Sunni Revolution* (New York: Verso, 2015), 50-51.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 108-109.

²⁷⁸ Cook, *Forbidding Wrong in Islam*, 126.

However, the committee has its origin before the establishment of the Kingdom - in the form of *Al-mutawwu'* (the volunteer) who played a key role the institutionalizing the role of the al-Hisba.²⁷⁹ As was noted above, al-Hisba is considered a crucial factor in spreading good in society, which ensures the spread of the institutionalized ideology in the state. Nabil Mouline noted that since 1902, the Saudi Emirate's (not yet KSA) expansion went "hand in hand with the reestablishment of Hisba as a tool for homogenizing and dominating a public sphere structured by representation."²⁸⁰ Furthermore, those same volunteers were also part of al-Ikhwan (the Brotherhood) army of Ibn Saud, ensuring sharia measures were enforced with utmost brutality, and with the complete backing of the ulama.²⁸¹

It is important to note that Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab did not give the role of al-Hisba or al-mutawwu' much of an importance in his works. Both Michael Cook and Mouline draw attention to this point.²⁸² However, Mouline postulated that the reason Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab did not refer to the role of al-Hisba, al-Mutawwa' or the creation of a committee to oversee such an important role was because the role of enjoining good and forbidding wrong should only take place "*within* the framework of the Islamic community. Yet the doctrine preached by [Muhammad] Ibn Abd al-Wahhab sought not to reform the practices and mores of local populations in the framework of an existing system, but to 'convert' them to genuine monotheism. Once this crucial step had been taken, the duty of promoting virtue and preventing vice would once again come into force."²⁸³ (Italics in original).

²⁷⁹ Mouline, *The Clerics of Islam*, 206.

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

²⁸¹ Ibid., 206-7.

²⁸² Michael Cook, *Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islamic Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 169.

²⁸³ Mouline, *The Clerics of Islam*, 205.

The key concepts identified above taken in their historical contexts will help explain how the WPJD evolved to deal with the same concepts but in various times and within different contexts. For example, as this thesis examines how the WPJD evolved to deal with the 1979 Meccan Rebellion, it will highlight how both the Wahhabi state ulama and Juhayman al-Utaybi made use of the concepts of al-Hisba, muhtasib, and the enjoining of virtue and the prevention of vice in their call to arms against one another, for Juhayman himself created Al-Jama'a al-Salafiyya al-Muhtasiba (JSM, the Muhtasiba Salafi Group),²⁸⁴ blessed by no one other than Ibn Baz himself.²⁸⁵

²⁸⁴ Ibid., 211.

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

Chapter 3: The Politics of Wahhabism

In this chapter, the reader will be taken on a grand tour of the major political events that affected the Wahhabi movement, starting with the creator of the movement, moving through the first two Saudi states, and culminating with the first two Grand Muftis of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

3.1 Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1792): Wahhabism, the House of Saud, and the Arabian Desert

Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1792), who was born in the remote city of Uyayna in Najd (modern day Riyadh, Saudi Arabia), is considered the founding father of Wahhabism,²⁸⁶ with the movement owing its namesake to him. He came from a family of ulama and spent the first part of his life travelling the Muslim world to gain knowledge of the different Muslim jurisprudence schools of thought.²⁸⁷ He returned, years later, to spread his unique form of religious views based on a literal interpretation of the Qur'an to derive Shariah rulings.

Literalist schools of thought had existed in Islam, just as they did in other religions; however, many had failed to amass such large-scale followings as Wahhabism. "Calling into question the religious and political legitimacy of the empire's role over Arab provinces and Sunni Muslims, the Wahhabi movement was far more than a fundamentalist sect focused on the

²⁸⁶ Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab, *Kitab al-Tawhid*, 5-6.

²⁸⁷ Cook, "On the Origins of Wahhabism," 193-196.

denunciation of ‘un-Islamic’ practices.”²⁸⁸ Wahhabism was especially uncompromising in its doctrine; it was based on an existential fear promulgated by Ibn Taymiyya who dreaded that his theological system was in constant threat of annihilation from the Mongols and from the Shia.²⁸⁹

Fast forward to the eighteenth century, the Mongols were no longer a force of any significance, and the Shia in Arabia were controlled and subjugated by the Ottoman Empire as second-class citizens.²⁹⁰ Nevertheless, Ibn Taymiyya’s alarmist ideology continued in other forms, still directed towards the Shia, but it also took on the form of anti-Ottomanism.

It was the use of this religious authority to poke holes into the legitimacy of the Ottoman caliphate^{291 292} that gave Abd al-Wahhab an unprecedented stroke of hope. Abd al-Wahhab’s understanding of monotheism was exceptionally strict:

He considered most of the professed Muslims of his day to be polytheists who should be fought till they accepted Islam. The first Wahhabi state (1158-1233/1745-1818) was the product of the fusion of this radical vision with the political fortunes of the Al Sa’ud, until then the petty chiefs of the Najdi oasis of Dir’iyya.²⁹³

²⁸⁸ Emine O. Evered, “Rereading Ottoman Accounts of Wahhabism as Alternative Narratives: Ahmed Cevdet Pasha’s Historical Survey of the Movement,” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 32, no. 3 (2012): 623.

²⁸⁹ Charles Allen, *God’s Terrorists: The Wahhabi Cult and the Hidden Roots of Modern Jihad* (Cambridge: Da Capo Press, 2006), 46-47.

²⁹⁰ Evered, “Rereading Ottoman Accounts of Wahhabism as Alternative Narratives,” 626.

²⁹¹ DeLong-Bas, *Wahhabi Islam*, 247.

²⁹² The Turkish Caliph was arguably the undisputed Sunni ruler from North Africa all the way to modern day Iraq.

²⁹³ Cook, “On the Origins of Wahhabism,” 191.

These views did not go unnoticed. Understandably, Shia scholars condemned them since the Wahhabis aimed to ostracize the Shia.²⁹⁴ Many Sunni scholars condemned Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab as well; however, it seems that their opposition came to light only after the star of the Wahhabi forces had been eclipsed.²⁹⁵ This confusion within the Sunni ulama ranks was exploited by Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab to rally massive support for his cause and strike into the heart of the Sunni theological body.²⁹⁶

The historiography of the influence of other schools of thought on Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab's political philosophy and theology has been subject to extreme censorship, both from the Sunni world and the Wahhabi scholarship body.²⁹⁷ This, in turn, has generated much speculation as to who influenced this scholar's religious dogma. However, from reviewing Wahhabi strategy and grand strategy one can derive the socio-political factors that affected his worldview and helped pave the way for the success of his movement.

The Bedouin lifestyle in Arabia differed significantly from the sedentary and urban lifestyles of the rest of the Ottoman population. The harsh environment and the lack of governmental and institutional parameters gave the inhabitants of Arabia a semi-autonomous political order under which *ghazu* (raids), and chieftain-tribal alliances thrived; the rule of law was the rule of the tribe. Additionally, the concept of Jahiliya (state of ignorance of the true tenets of Islam) was rampant in the Arabian Desert,²⁹⁸ something which Muhammad bin Abd al-

²⁹⁴ Muhammed Al-Hussein Kashif Al-Ghita, *Al-Abaqat al-Anbariya fi al-Tabaqat al-Ja'afariyya: Tarikh Al-Marja'iyah al-Diniyyah fi al-Qarnayn al-Thamin 'Ashar wa al-Tasi'l Ashar al-Miladiyyen* [The Fragrant Amber in the Ja'afari Levels: The History of the Religious Marja'iyah in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries A.D.] (Beirut: Baysan lil Nashr wa Al-Tawizi', 1998), 108.

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

²⁹⁶ DeLong-Bas, *Wahhabi Islam*, 247.

²⁹⁷ Cook, "On the Origins of Wahhabism," 197.

²⁹⁸ Korshon, *Al-Uthmaniyun*, 24.

Wahhab and other scholars in the region tried to remedy by returning the Islamic community back to the true teachings of Islam. To those scholars, the Najd area of Arabia, combined with the tough Bedouin lifestyle, created a suitable environment for the rise of Wahhabism.²⁹⁹ To many, Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab personified “the most unrelenting theological reaction to the rituals and beliefs deemed un-Islamic [religiously innovative].”³⁰⁰

With this theological worldview, Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab went about calling most Muslims heretics,³⁰¹ even though he did not possess the qualifications of a *mujtahid* (a Muslim scholar with the authority to interpret shariah rulings).³⁰² He even went ahead and asserted that the ulama of Mecca and Medina lacked knowledge of the true teachings of Islam; ulama that collaborated with corrupt local administrators, and who failed to protect Islam and Muslims.³⁰³

More so, the Wahhabi movement diametrically opposed the Ottoman political system.³⁰⁴ “What emerged locally in Najd as the puritanical Wahhabi brotherhood thus developed quickly into a political movement that aspired to challenge not only neighbouring Arab provinces but also the sovereignty of the Ottoman Empire.”³⁰⁵

²⁹⁹ Ibid.

³⁰⁰ BiroI Baskan and Steven Wright, “Seeds of Change: Comparing State-Religion Relations in Qatar and Saudi Arabia,” *Arab Studies Quarterly* 33, no.2 (Spring 2011): 101.

³⁰¹ Hasan bin Farhan al-Maliki, *Da’iya wa Laysa Nabiyyan: Qira’a Naqdiya li Ma’t’hab al-Sheikh Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab fil Takfeer [An Advocate and Not a Prophet: A Critical Reading of Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab’s Sect in Excommunication]* (London: Muassasat al-Wasat lil Thaqafa wal ‘Ilam, 2003),97-122.

³⁰² Cook, “On the Origins of Wahhabism,” 15.

³⁰³ Evered, “Rereading Ottoman Accounts of Wahhabism as Alternative Narratives,” 625.

³⁰⁴ Ibid.

³⁰⁵ Ibid.

Against this backdrop, the question to be asked is how can an individual challenge the political and religious authority while succeeding at propagating his school of thought on such a wide scale? According to Birol and Wright, the House of Saud provided Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab with the necessary alliance to achieve his goals. For Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab,

he found not only a protector, but also a strong military ally in the personality of Muhammad ibn al-Saud, a local ruler of Al Dir'iyah [in Najd]. This alliance was forged strong by an exchange of oath and a marriage between Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's daughter and Ibn al-Saud's son, Abd al-Aziz. In Al-Saud, Abd al-Wahhab found a sword to implement his views and eradicate rituals and beliefs he deemed un-Islamic. He could preach and train students according to his own understanding of Islam. In Abd al-Wahhab, Al-Saud found a religious banner ... calling for the re-proselytizing of the whole Arabian Peninsula, under which hitherto fragmented Arab tribes could unite.³⁰⁶

This alliance created a two-tier system that made the issuance of fatwas and their execution unblemished and, more importantly, unquestionable. Allegiance was sworn to the al-Saud emir, who represented the political leadership, while Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab became *Sheikh ul-Islam* (the highest religious authority) of the Saudi Emirate.³⁰⁷ Additionally,

³⁰⁶ Baskan and Wright, "Seeds of Change," 102-103.

³⁰⁷ Allen, *God's Terrorists*, 52.

this alliance integrated the ruling family's religion and politics into one governing body, which gave the Saudis the power to influence and to control the religious classes.³⁰⁸

Even though the religious foundations of Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab and his alliance with the Al-Saud ruling family constituted a major part of the success of the movement in rallying the support needed to fight the Ottoman Empire, the political and cultural aspects of the Arabian Desert played a significant role as well.

Najd's remoteness and economically insignificant landscape offered little value to conquerors, forging a society of chiefs and tribal warlords independent from the empires of the day.³⁰⁹ Consequently, the concept of the survival of the fittest played its natural course in the region, with tribes becoming more assertive in their ghazu and in their formation of confederations³¹⁰ that were tested regularly in this harsh environment. The long-lasting blood ties and blood feuds polarized chieftains and tribal alliances. Interestingly enough, the Al-Saud was considered a weak tribe;³¹¹ it was only through the use of religion (Wahhabism) that they became powerful and were able to forge strong and diverse tribal confederations.³¹² Tribalism was the political unifying force among Bedouins,³¹³ and the Wahhabi-Saudi state positioned itself squarely within that system, evolving both the judicial and executive powers to serve the heads of state, until all powers were unified in the person of the son of the Al-Saud founder, Abd al-Aziz ibn Muhammad ibn Saud (1720-1803).³¹⁴ This unification of titles and roles allowed Abd al-Aziz and his progeny to go on extensive military campaigns, culminating in

³⁰⁸ Baskan and Wright, "Seeds of Change," 102-103.

³⁰⁹ DeLong-Bas, *Wahhabi Islam*, 7.

³¹⁰ Korshon, *Al-Uthmaniyun*, 12.

³¹¹ *Ibid.*

³¹² *Ibid.*

³¹³ *Ibid.*, 24.

³¹⁴ DeLong-Bas, *Wahhabi Islam*, 245.

atrocities like the sacking of the holy Shia city of Karbala in 1802 and the sacking of the Prophet of Islam's tomb in 1804.³¹⁵ Moreover, culturally speaking, having one family rule a tribal coalition for centuries was not out of the ordinary.³¹⁶ This combination of authority of politics and of religion only solidified the tribal power and its grip over the hearts and minds of the Bedouins.

Alliances, or what can be called a Bedouin commonwealth, were not bound to the Bedouin tribal system alone. A practical relationship between Bedouins and sedentary clans was built on protection from ghazu and gaining access to markets and grazing fields.³¹⁷ “[A] sedentary clan claimed an affiliation or connection with a powerful Beduin (sic) tribe of the nearby desert to protect its rural territory from tribal raids; the Beduin (sic) tribe ... confirmed the claimed affiliation or connection because this gave it ready access to the grazing lands and markets of the sedentary area.”³¹⁸ Moreover, intermarriage between tribes was not a common practice; Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab broke that mould and asserted the need for more intermarriage between the tribes.³¹⁹ These cultural norms helped forge new alliances between tribes from different regions and helped solidify the creation of the pan-tribal Bedouin commonwealth. Before the arrival of Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab on the scene, Ibn Saud saw his weak confederacy coming apart due to intra-tribal wars and economic stagnation,³²⁰ especially from the nearby al-Ahsa (Eastern Arabia) and al-Hijaz (Western Arabia). Muhammad

³¹⁵ Baskan and Wright, “Seeds of Change,” 102-103.

³¹⁶ Korshon, *Al-Uthmaniyun*, 25.

³¹⁷ Salibi, “Middle Eastern Parallels,” 71.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*

³¹⁹ Allen, *God's Terrorists*, 53-54.

³²⁰ Youssef H Aboul-Enein, *Militant Islamist Ideology: Understanding the Global Threat* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2010), 112.

bin Abd al-Wahhab's message allowed for new alliances to be forged and breathed a new life in the dying Al-Saud confederacy.

The creation of this Wahhabi tribal confederacy was conditional upon three pledges,³²¹ instituted by Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab and Ibn Saud. Firstly, all tribes would be economically and militarily protected; secondly, intermarriage within the tribes and with other tribal factions would assure blood ties and, in turn, assure a wide geographical support system; and, thirdly, those tribes that did not participate in the confederation were declared apostate and would be subjected to extinction through collective warfare from the confederacy. Those promises, and the strong relationship forged by the alliance, allowed the first Saudi state to last for more than 70 years (1744-1818).³²²

The inter-tribal warfare gave the Wahhabis the opportunity to hone their fighting skills, especially in asymmetrical warfare, yet within a technologically limited environment. As an Ottoman official, Cevdet Pasha, noted centuries ago, *bedeviyet* (Bedouin culture) and *medeniyet* (urban culture) held different views to technology and warfare. He stated that the "Bedouin[s] were initially superior to urbanites at war"³²³ due to their expertise in war fighting. However, only through technological innovation did the "urbanites [become] superior to Bedouins."³²⁴

³²¹ Ibid.

³²² Al-Rasheed, "Durable and Non-Durable Dynasties," 149.

³²³ Evered, "Rereading Ottoman Accounts of Wahhabism as Alternative Narratives," 624.

³²⁴ Ibid.

3.1.1 Political Theology

Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab's alliance with the Al-Saud family in Najd put in motion the wheels of the change in the region and introduced a new form of political Islam to the world stage. Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab's compendium of texts is essential for discourse analysis in two ways: firstly, the analysis of his writing in the context of his politico-historical backdrop helps explain the Wahhabi and Saudi strategy of state making, especially from the point of view of Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab and from that of the founders of the First Saudi state. Furthermore, many of the rulings and decisions put forth by Mohammed bin Abd al-Wahhab continue to breathe life into the decision framework of Saudi statesmen and Wahhabi ulama.

To fully understand Abd al-Wahhab's thought processes and impact, this dissertation highlights two of his most significant books: *Kitab al-Tawhid*³²⁵ and *Kitab al-Jihad*,³²⁶ both of which can be identified as political theology references. Those two books provide an exposition of the foundational theory of what it means to be a true Muslim (*Kitab al-Tawhid*) and how to interact and treat those who are the same or different from the followers of the true path (*Kitab al-Jihad*). Future Wahhabi and Saudi leaders were able to justify their actions through the utilization of these two books (and, of course, the rest of the compendium of Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab's books). What is of interest here is to analyse the elasticity of these texts: how the material was molded to justify actions that is contradictory or in opposition to one another? Text elasticity highlights what can be referred to as the vagueness of the text – that is, the

³²⁵ Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab, *Kitab al-Tawhid*.

³²⁶ Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab, "Kitab al-Jihad," in *Mu'allafat al-Shaykh al-Imam Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab: Al-Fiqh*, vol. 2 (Riyadh: Jamiat al-Imam Muhammad bin Saud al-Islamiyah, 1881).

generalized language used in the text that allows readers to interpret it to fit their own contextual environment without the need to sacrifice their beliefs or ethical positions

3.1.2 Jihad and the Instrumentalization of Tribal Warfare (Ghazu)

Ghazu's legitimacy in Arabia, before and after Islam, was a controversial issue - both as a tool to subjugate other tribes and a way to gain wealth. However, Muhammed bin Abd al-Wahhab arguably put an end to this dispute. He stressed that the imam was the person in charge of sanctioning raids (*ghazu*), and that the emir was the person responsible for the conduct of those raids.³²⁷ Consequently, he also ensured that the identification of *kafirs* (unbelievers) was done in accordance with very strict and narrow interpretation of the shariah; simply put, those who did not adhere to the Wahhabi form of Islam were deemed unbelievers and their money, women, children, and land were to become the just property of the Wahhabi state.³²⁸ Some authors were more moderate when it came to the sanctioning of *ghazu*,³²⁹ however, Muhammed bin Abd al-Wahhab's own book, *Kitab al-Tawhid*, has no citations whatsoever on how to defend Wahhabi Islam through non-violent means.³³⁰

This carte blanche of unlimited war was even sanctioned against Muslims on their way to the yearly Mecca and Medina pilgrimages.³³¹ This looting and continuous raiding on pilgrims and sedentary tribes, not to mention the many attacks on crucial economic centres, negatively

³²⁷ DeLong-Bas, *Wahhabi Islam*, 211.

³²⁸ Allen, *God's Terrorists*, 56.

³²⁹ DeLong-Bas, *Wahhabi Islam*, 203-217.

³³⁰ Allen, *God's Terrorists*, 55.

³³¹ Korshon, *Al-Uthmaniyun*, 25.

reflected on the reputation of the Ottoman caliphate. The Sultan was supposed to be the protector of Muslims and, if Muslims were being constantly attacked on their way to and from the most holy sites, the legitimacy of that caliph would become questionable. This was all part of a calculated Wahhabi campaign to de-legitimize the Ottoman caliphate's claims to the throne.³³²

The concept of raids, though, was not used purely to terrorize enemies; it was used to annihilate potential power houses in the region. Tribes that did stand in the way of the Wahhabi movement were invaded and massacred, as was the case with the al-Ahsa and al-Qatif tribes of Eastern Arabia, which were almost completely wiped out after a peace treaty was signed between the Baghdad governor and Ibn Saud in 1799.^{333 334}

3.1.3 Asymmetric Warfare

Author James Wynbrandt provided a summary of the Wahhabi *modus operandi*, which underlines the genius of the just-in-time recruitment of men and their participation in military action while, at the same time, providing the participants with alternatives in case they were not able to partake in a raid or a battle. He wrote:

Despite the continuous battling that characterized the Wahhabi expansion, its forces commanded only a few hundred full-time soldiers. However, all men between ages 16

³³² Evered, "Rereading Ottoman Accounts of Wahhabism as Alternative Narratives," 625, n. 12.

³³³ They were massacred to set an example for any other tribe that thought of aligning itself with the Ottoman Empire against them, which was the case with the tribes of that region before 1799.

³³⁴ Korshon, *Al-Uthmaniyun*, 58.

and 60 were eligible for military service. When planning a campaign, Abd al-Aziz sent word to each village and tribe as to the number of men needed, and where and when to meet (sic). The men were typically drawn from areas near where the raids were to be staged. Anyone called up could send a substitute in his place, releasing many men of means from compulsory service. The troops supplied their own arms and food, as well as feed for their animals, though cavalry animals were provided fodder. Campaigns usually lasted less than a month, and the emir of Diriya (sic) was responsible for a portion of the army's provisioning for any raids lasting longer [than anticipated] ... [They] attacked only when resistance was weak, relying on intimidation rather than force for many of their victories.³³⁵

Furthermore, the Wahhabi leadership made sure that their "followers were allowed to keep a major portion of what they plundered from other Muslims, a significant incentive in the movement's rapid spread among the Bedouins."³³⁶ Conversely, if a tribe failed to participate in a military action, the blood relationship with the confederation would be severed.³³⁷

Additionally, if one is to compare the Ottomans' massive standing army, which drained local resources (both in manpower and in wealth), the Wahhabi model allowed for flexibility in recruitment and in the ability for tribes to manage their own resources as per the circumstances of the day.

The Wahhabis, being Bedouin in nature, utilized the expertise of their men to strike the peripheries of the Ottoman Empire, focusing on economic nerve centres to amass wealth and control of strategic supply lines. Only when they became militarily powerful and were able to

³³⁵ James Wynbrandt, *A Brief History of Saudi Arabia* (New York: Facts On File, 2004), 130.

³³⁶ Evered, "Rereading Ottoman Accounts of Wahhabism as Alternative Narratives," 626.

³³⁷ DeLong-Bas, *Wahhabi Islam*, 202.

interconnect their supply lines effectively throughout the Arabian Desert did they strike against larger cities, taking them by storm and always defeating the military force entrenched in them, all the while massacring the inhabitants as a show of defiance both to the Ottoman sultan and to make an example of whomever dared to resist their call of purity.

The military campaign of the Wahhabis was calculated and conducted in deliberate piecemeal steps. To start, the Wahhabis attacked the East and North of Arabia, areas which were heavily populated by Shia tribes and were economically vibrant.³³⁸ Attacking such groups that were of no big concern to the Arabian tribes and the Ottoman Empire, the Wahhabis were able to polish their fighting skills, amass wealth, and get a head start on their vicious public relations campaign by massacring those pockets of infidel tribes.³³⁹ The Eastern campaigns provided the Wahhabis with economic support, while the Western one allowed them to secure their newfound state.³⁴⁰

Case in point was al-Ahsa, a central town in Eastern Arabia, that was known for its vibrant economy and dynamic trade location,³⁴¹ was one of the first to be sacked. Later, on 21 April 1802, the Wahhabis sacked the Shia holy city of Karbala during the Tenth of Muharram (known as *Ashura*), one of Shia Islam's holiest days. This raid allowed the Wahhabis to deal a major blow³⁴² to the overall Shia and Muslim populations by massacring thousands of pilgrims and mourners and, at the same time, loot the shrine of Imam Hussein (the Third Shia Imam),

³³⁸ Korshon, *Al-Uthmaniyun*, 49.

³³⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁰ Al-Rasheed, "Durable and Non-Durable Dynasties," 149.

³⁴¹ Evered, "Rereading Ottoman Accounts of Wahhabism as Alternative Narratives," 627.

³⁴² Algar, *Wahhabism*, 81.

which contained priceless artifacts and copious quantities of money and gold. This was subsequently used by the Wahhabis to further fund their military plans.³⁴³ As Evered explained:

[the leaders] of the movement first directed their expansion toward religiously and economically significant areas of Arabia, where the driving forces behind the Wahhabi expansion was to control choke points to Mecca and Medina. Afraid of Ottoman retaliations, the Wahhabis did not attack Mecca and Medina at first but expanded toward the Gulf [Arabia's Eastern region]. Once they were strong enough economically and militarily, they turned to Hijaz [Arabia's Western region].³⁴⁴

If, however, the Wahhabis had attacked the Western cities first, they would have received a significantly swifter response from the Ottomans, since al-Hijaz was considered Islam's holiest geographical area, in addition to being in close proximity to seaports in the regions. In addition, the logistic supply lines of the Wahhabis were weak and ineffective at the start of their campaigns, and it took substantial wealth to buy-off the tribes in the neighbouring areas. As they became stronger and more agile in their cross-desert manoeuvres, the Wahhabis initiated several raids on Muslim pilgrims in al-Hijaz - again, to amass more wealth and to weaken the resolve and faith people had in the power of the Sultan to protect them.³⁴⁵ The raids on the pilgrims also played a role like economic sanctions: it reduced the revenue available to the governors of the area,³⁴⁶ which helped further weaken those cities' military capacities.

³⁴³ Evered, "Rereading Ottoman Accounts of Wahhabism as Alternative Narratives," 628.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 626.

³⁴⁵ Korshon, *Al-Uthmaniyun*, 51.

³⁴⁶ Evered, "Rereading Ottoman Accounts of Wahhabism as Alternative Narratives," 626.

As they went ahead with their military campaigns, the Wahhabis introduced new ways to further increase their wealth: those who resisted were put to the sword; however, those who converted to their brand of Islam were ordered to pay a conversion tax,³⁴⁷ a practice that did not exist before in Islam. As such, the taxation system allowed a continuous supply of cash flow to sustain their campaigns and to satisfy the tribal confederacy's thirst for booty. Proselytizing was used both as a vehicle to recruit more soldiers and to amass wealth.

Interestingly enough, the Saudi state had no problem trading with European powers.³⁴⁸ Horse trading constituted a source of income for the state as they traded with different European naval outpost in the Persian Gulf. This trade posts also helped maintain points of contact with those new and upcoming international power players –contacts that helped the Wahhabis foster support from the British Empire and carve their state of Saudi Arabia.³⁴⁹

To further diversify their sources of income, the Wahhabis also enslaved sedentary farmers and used them to access money and food.³⁵⁰ Many of those farmers were left to their own fate by the regional Ottoman viceroys, making them easy prey for Wahhabi forces or abusive local governors. For the Ottoman Sultan in Istanbul, all that mattered to him was receiving tax payments on time.

Lastly, the Wahhabi forces worked together with local city and village leaders to facilitate the surrender of their towns without any fighting.³⁵¹ They brilliantly used the carrot

³⁴⁷ Korshon, *Al-Uthmaniyun*, 78.

³⁴⁸ Elizabeth Sirriyeh, "Wahhabis, Unbelievers and the Problems of Exclusivism," *Bulletin of the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies* 16, no. 2 (1989): 124 and 128.

³⁴⁹ For more information of this period, please see T. E. Lawrence's *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*.

³⁵⁰ Korshon, *Al-Uthmaniyun*, 27.

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 81-82.

and stick technique with those governors: either the annihilation of their forces and inhabitants, or the partaking in great riches of this world and the next. This practice allowed the Wahhabi to take over many towns with minimum loss to their forces.

3.1.4 Salafism in the Eyes of Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab

As was indicated in the section above, Ibn Taymiyya's works remained dormant throughout the Ottoman Empire. It was not until the rise of Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab and his alliance with the Al-Saud family that interest in Ibn Taymiyya's and, by extension, the Wahhabi movement's leader's writings was revived.

Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab's political theology can be considered an offshoot from Ibn Taymiyya the same way Ahmed bin Hanbal and Ibn Taymiyya were off shoots from the Sunni schools of thought and the Hanbali creed, respectively. Each of these three clerics brought forth a new way of approaching leadership, rule of law, war, and jihad that set them off-course from their predecessors' ways.

Ibn Hanbal created his own Sunni school of jurisprudence and was reprimanded and tortured for his views and opposition to the Abbasid government. Ibn Taymiyya was considered a rebel thinker by his Hanbali colleagues and the support he gained for his views was very minimal during his lifetime.

Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab brought forth a new creed. However, he took the "call" beyond its intellectual space – he helped create the first Saudi State, the Emirate of Dir'iyah,

which lasted from 1744 until its destruction on the hands of Ismail Pasha 1818. Muhammad bin Abd-Wahhab's world view and political theories is further analysed. And this, in turn, can be summarized in a single word: *tawhid*, which translates to both monotheism and unity.

This word *tawhid*, to which the Wahhabis (al-Muwahhidun) assumed their identity as they went about conquering Arabia, reflected a very deep contextual narrative that had been overlooked in literature. Even though Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab set the pace for what he considered to be the true path to monotheism in his book *Kitab al-Tawhid*,³⁵² one can sense the double meaning used in relation to the word unity. For the Arabic word *tawhid* can also mean to unify – a concept of huge importance to the ulama and the political class. More so, its antonym, disunity, or chaos (*fitna*), holds an inversely negative connotation to the Wahhabis. It is through the need to unify and avoid disunity and conflict (and *fitna*) that WPJD evolved to ensure the continuous stability of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Kitab al-Tawhid and *Kitab al-Jihad*³⁵³ are the two pillars on which Mohammed bin Abd al-Wahhab built his call for the reform of Islam – for he saw himself as the reformer and the corrector of the wrong traits that had accumulated in Muslim daily practices. Both his books, in addition to his fatwas, meant to correct the process by which Muslims conducted their religious duties and thoughts about their beliefs.

Opposition to Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab was stern from the start. His father and brother opposed his views. His brother, Sulayman, authored books to refute his brother's claims

³⁵² Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, *Kitab al-Tawhid [The Book of Monotheism]* (Riyadh: King Saud University, Handwritten manuscript, 1883).

³⁵³ Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab, "Kitab al-Jihad."

of what constitute the true and right path to Islam, with one specifically called *Al-Sawa'iq al-Ilahiyya fi al-Radd 'ala al-Wahhabiya* [*The Burning Lightning Bolts in Response to The Wahhabis*] that was aimed at his brother and his supporters.

Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab intellectual journey formulated his theories in two phases: firstly, he travelled across the Muslim world, where he was exposed to other sects of Islam. He saw how those Muslims practiced their religion, which he considered both wrong and innovative. Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab and the Wahhabi ulama used the word *bid'a* to describe the “deviant” actions of the Muslim community. The word *bid'a* translates to innovation or perversion. It is an essential word in Wahhabi terminology and one that would be used by future political and religious clerics as part of their narrative to exclude the actions of their rivals or to excommunicate anyone not deemed fit to follow their policies. Secondly, Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab developed his said theories by considering his alliance with the Al-Saud and starting a campaign of liberating Arabia from their wrongful path and creed.

Al-Durar al-Saniya fi al-Ajwiba al-Najdiya [*The Sublime Pearls in Answer to the Najdian Questions*] is the most well-known and referenced compendium that contains the majority of Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab's writings,³⁵⁴ in addition to most of the writings all the Saudi and Wahhabi leaders during the First, Second, and Third Saudi states and up to the time of Ibn Baz, the Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia. *Al-Durar* was considered at such high esteem that Ibn Baz made it part of the daily teaching curriculum he taught during his reign as Grand Mufti of the KSA.³⁵⁵

³⁵⁴ Al-Maliki, *Da'iya wa Laysa Nabiyyan*, 97.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 97, n. 2.

Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab's cited works in *al-Durar* contains myriad examples of what can be considered extreme *takfir* (excommunication), with some scholars equating to a form of *ghulw* (extreme exaggeration and adulation).³⁵⁶ Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab, in some instances, attacked his opponents in the most extreme way, giving ample justification to assault all opposers and move into their territories. For example, he assailed the whole body of Najd's ulama and indicated that they were in fact polytheists, justifying killing them if needed.³⁵⁷ Conversely, Hasan bin Farhan al-Maliki noted in his analysis of the works of the ulama of Najd during the life of Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab that most of the Najd ulama were highly knowledgeable of the shariah and that there has been no proof of them performing even *bida'*, let alone being polytheists.³⁵⁸

One can also note how Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab's political theory evolved to excommunicate entire sects in wholesale. In other words, he not only excommunicated the leaders and clerics of a group, but the laymen as well. This was a process of marrying narrative with war strategy – a form of symbiotic relationship between Al-Saud and the Wahhabi ulama in formulating and executing their strategies. For example, Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab excommunicated the whole Shia sect,³⁵⁹ opening the way for the First Saudi State to expand to al-Ahsa in Eastern Saudi Arabia and from there, conduct raids on the Shia cities of Iraq, culminating in the sack of Karbala in 1802 – areas of many economic riches.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 97-122.

³⁵⁷ Abd al-Rahman bin Muhammad bin Qasim al-'Asimi al-Najdi, *Al-Durar al-Saniya fi al-Ajwiba al-Najdiya [The Sublime Pearls in Answer to the Najdian Questions]*, vol. 10, *Hukum al-Murtad [The Rule of the Apostate]* ((n. p.), 1996), 51 and Al-Najdi, *Al-Durar*, vol. 1, *Al-A'qaid [The Creed]* ((n. p.), 1996), 57.

³⁵⁸ Al-Maliki, *Da'iya wa Laysa Nabiyyan*, 98-99.

³⁵⁹ Al-Najdi, *Al-Durar*, vol. 10, *Hukum al-Murtad*, 369.

Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab also used the same strategy to wage war against specific tribes and populations where the Saudi State was planning to expand and needed the necessary religious backing to marginalize all enemies. For example, he employed the concept of takfir on whole segments of society without even specifying whom he is actually excommunicating. As was noted earlier, he simply indicated that anyone that asks for a blessing from a tree was following in the footsteps of his or her predecessors (i.e., they are disbelievers).³⁶⁰ It is important here to note the way the discourse is put forth: Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab does not say “I excommunicate such and such person;” instead, he cited a hadith associated with the Prophet and leaves it to the reader to make the connection. In this specific case of *Kitab al-Tawhid*, Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab was directing his arrows against a well-known practice by the tribes of central Arabia where they used to visit trees associated with holy men. Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab gave himself and his associates the liberty and the flexibility to indicate who should be labelled with this un-Islamic act, opening the way to wage war against many tribes.

In other times, Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab excommunicated the Bedouins.³⁶¹ This might come as a surprise to many, since the Wahhabi creed and the Saudi state is usually associated with Bedouin culture and way of life. However, as Madawi al-Rasheed had noted, the Saudi state is actually vehemently anti-tribal and anti-Bedouin.³⁶² She noted that since the Saudi tribe has been considerably smaller than the rest of the tribes in Saudi Arabia, the Saudi-Wahhabi strategy aimed to weaken the power of tribes and integrate tribal identity into the

³⁶⁰ See Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab, *Kitab al-Tawhid*, 26-27.

³⁶¹ Al-Najdi, *Al-Durar*, vol. 9, *Al-Qism al-Thani Min: Kitab al-Jihad*, 237-239; and al-Maliki, *Da'iya wa Laysa Nabiyyan*, 103.

³⁶² Al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia*, 25, 48, 55-57, 67-68.

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.³⁶³ Furthermore, it is important to highlight the process of creating a supra-tribal association between the public and the Kingdom, where all the citizens are now the members of the tribe of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Such a narrative (identity politics) superimposed on a religious association (Wahhabi creed) is what gives the Saudi State the stability to maintain rule and order – more so than any other state in the region. This evolution of narrative building by Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab and the KSA's Wahhabi clerics helped the state itself evolve by shaping the country's identity.

This dissertation focuses on this theme of the evolution of the WPJD in the context of how the Saudi and Wahhabi leaders reacted to domestic, regional and world events in their speeches and fatwas. This control and evolution of the narrative to suit the needs of the state is one reason why Saudi Arabia had survived longer than any other Westphalian state in Post-WW1 Middle East. On this matter, Adham Saouli noted that the reason for the KSA's survival (what he calls achieving a high score in state survivability) was because:

- the state has power over the religious institutions which, consequently, has power over the interpretation and narrative fed to the population;
- the state maintains domestic dominance; and
- the state reinforces external neutralization which allows for the activation and resetting of identities.³⁶⁴

³⁶³ Ibid.

³⁶⁴ Adham Saouli, *The Arab State: Dilemmas of Late Formation* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 68.

3.2 Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab's Agenda: To Create a Mulk (Kingship)

One can understand from Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab's writings that his goal was not merely centred on proselytizing the people of Najd and the Arabian Peninsula. Indeed, Ibn Hanbal, Ibn Taymiyya and other clerics linked with the Hanbali movement strived hard to proselytize Muslims to their point of view; however, their efforts never culminated in the creation of a political system. It was Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab who acted upon and put into motion the theories of his intellectual predecessors, creating a government based on their political views. Historically, there has been many adherents to Hanbalism; however, it was Muhammad bin Abd Al-Wahhab who galvanized the theories of Hanbalism and, by extension, put Ibn Taymiyya's theories of governance into tangible results.

Such a feat is not simple to overlook – there is almost five centuries between Ibn Taymiyya and Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab. This dissertation asserts that Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab's success was because of his understanding and use of Arabia's tribal code, and his uncompromising thinking to achieve his true goal: the creation of an independent state.

It is then important to underline a critical point here: Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab's goal was teleologically and ultimately political, not religious. In his writings he stressed the need to guide people to the right path, where he took Ibn Taymiyya's *Al-'Aqeeda al-Wasatiyya* (*The Middle Creed*) and applied it in practice. Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab goes into detail, and in an inquisitory way, on whom he deemed was on the right path. This approach put him under scrutiny from the rest of the Muslim world since Islam looked at matters of the heart as one belonging to the realm of personal faith reserved to God alone. Muhammad bin Abd al-

Wahhab's puritans were a reminiscent of the Zahiri (the external/exoteric) movement, an approach rarely used at his time.

The Zahiri sect was quite common during the Ayyubid period of Islam in Egypt (1171-1260), Ibn Hazm's Cordova (994-1064), and Almohads of Northern Africa (1147-1248). It was championed by political and military leaders such as Saladin and by religious leaders such as Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, the disciple of Ibn Taymiyya. For the Zahiris, the Quran and the Hadith of the Prophet were to be taken literally and at face value. Simply put, what you see is what you get. Sometimes, the Zahiris have been associated with the Hanbali school of thought through the writings of Ibn Taymiyya and al-Jawziyya. One can even say that it was the natural progression for Hanbalism to lead to Zahiri tendencies due to two epistemic approaches: firstly, the disregard of *aql* (reason) as an independent source tool to understand the Quran and the Hadith and, secondly, the avoidance of *batini* (esoteric) exegesis of the Quran and the Hadith.

This disregard of reason was not specific to the Hanbali school for thought. Instead, it is a continuation of the Sunni jurisprudence school of thought based on Ashariism. Ashariism gives *naql* (Hadith) primary place when it comes to understanding the word of God and does not adhere to the use of reason to discern what God means.

As for esoteric exegesis, it is rarely sought under the four Sunni schools of thought and, when it comes to the Hanbali school, the search for the esoteric meaning of the word of God is prohibited. Instead, the word of God or the Prophet of Islam is to be taken at face value and trying to "lift the veil" is frowned upon. This approach to a dearth of Sunni Sufi schools of thought or *tariqah* (Sufi Way) within the Hanbali and Wahhabi schools.

This emphasis on the exoteric aspect of Islam and the interpretation of the Quran and the Hadith (instead on the esoteric or rationalist approaches) gave Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab a remarkable advantage vis-à-vis other Islamic schools of thought. The fact that the rule of law was exactly what the written word says it is, with no space given to *tawil* (understood broadly as hermeneutics), allowed Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab to issue fatwas with little margin for counterpoints from his opponents. What he says (which is what the Quran and the Hadith says) is the law – with no if or buts; this resonated well with the Bedouins of Arabia.

It is interesting to note that even though the Wahhabi ulama were able to break free from the strict adherence to exoteric jurisprudence, it was only permitted within the context of what the Grand Mufti considered just. This is indeed part of the process by which the Wahhabi evolution of jihadi doctrine took place; for even when *tawil* was allowed, it was only within the limited circle of Wahhabi Grand Mufti's circle of influence. In other words, The Grand Mufti was the only alim that can apply *tawil* to the text. By extension, the Wahhabi ulama could apply *tawil* to the text as well, but only in accordance with the historical and political contexts of their times and in support of the KSA. To borrow from a military analogy, one can say that the Grand Mufti set the left and right of arcs for his ulama, within which they can then interpret texts and issue fatwas, allowing for full control of what can be or cannot be said in support of the state.

Understanding the politico-religious marriage of convenience between Al-Saud and Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab is vital to understand how Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab made use of the historical and political contexts of his time. If one compares Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab to Ibn Hanbal, one can ascertain that Ibn Hanbal, even though he was “more puritan” and exoteric than the rest of the three Sunni schools of thought, he did not get involved

in any marriage of convenience or alliance with the ruling power. On the contrary, he was persecuted and ostracised during the Inquisition,

Ibn Taymiyya took the relationship with the ruling power farther than his predecessor Ibn Hanbal. He participated in warfare against the Mongols and Tatars, and he did partner with the ruling power. He was admired for his fight against the Mongols, but he had an insignificant following when it came to his religious views. He was, as was previously shown, imprisoned for them many times over.

It was Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab revolutionary political action that allowed him to enact his religious views successfully and helped create the first Wahhabi state based on the teaching of Ibn Hanbal and Ibn Taymiyya. And that is the missing link usually overlooked when one approached the evolution of Wahhabi political and jihad doctrines (WPJD). WPJD was approached from a purely religious point of view while the actions of Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab and the later Grand Muftis and ulamas of Wahhabism in the KSA had a grand-strategic approach which manifested itself in their doctrines and fatwas. The evolution of WPJD was about the preservation and expansion of political power and not adhering blindly to religious ideology.

With Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab and the later Wahhabi ulama, the evolution of the WPJD has always been political in nature, aimed at sustaining the Wahhabi-Saudi states, shrouded in political nomenclature. It is because of the pragmatic approach to domestic, regional, and international political contexts that the Wahhabi doctrine was able to survive both

as a state-led religion and a creed – achieving a more solid man-state-war relationship than any of the previous Hanbali to Taymiyyaist ulama were able to realise.³⁶⁵

3.3 Wahhabi Muftis: Muhammad bin Ibrahim Al al-Sheikh (1893-1969) (Grand Mufti: 1953-1969)

Arguably, Muhammad bin Ibrahim Al al-Sheikh³⁶⁶ was the most influential religious and political figure since the creation of the KSA, following only the founder of the KSA himself, Ibn Saud. He was the first Grand Mufti of the KSA and was responsible for the routinization and institutionalization of the Wahhabi creed in the KSA.³⁶⁷ Ibn Ibrahim's role and significant contribution to the evolution of WPJD was crucial, not only to the diffusion and total control of Wahhabism in the KSA (and beyond) but, also, he played a decisive role in aiding Ibn Saud to take full control of Saudi Arabia and achieve legitimacy as the Imam of the nascent kingdom.

Ibn Ibrahim adapted the concepts of *al wala and bara* (loyalty and disavowal) in relation to Ibn Saud (and the Saudi ruling family), clearly delineating where one would fall if they chose not to support the Imam of the KSA. More so, Ibn Ibrahim and his very influential

³⁶⁵ Man being the Saudi and Wahhabi leaders and ulama, state being the KSA, and war is the WPJD. This trinity is the secret for the success of the Wahhabi-Saudi political and religious power paradigm over the past two centuries.

³⁶⁶ Al al-Sheikh is a reference to the "tribe" of al-Sheikh, the Sheikh being Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab. Al al-Sheikh indicates that the person is a descendant of Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab.

³⁶⁷ Mouline, *The Clerics of Islam*, 119-145.

circle of Wahhabi clerics played a vital role in saving the King of Saudi Arabia from his biggest challenge against the civil war started by none other than the Kings' loyal army, the Ikhwan.

Additionally, Ibn Ibrahim helped shape the religious institutions' evolution of WPJD and political response to foreign powers' intervention and aid to Ibn Saud and the Saudi state against its enemies. In other words, WPJD evolved into a new stage where Wahhabi Muslims were able to justify, religiously, the political and military aide received from non-Muslims against Muslims. Most notable, of course, was Ibn Saud's alliance with the British Empire against Sunni Muslim tribes in the region, most important of which were the Al-Rashid and Al-Sharif.³⁶⁸

Lastly, Ibn Ibrahim created the Office of the Grand Ulama,³⁶⁹ arguably the most important and most influential religious and political body in Saudi Arabia after the position of the King himself. Ibn Ibrahim was the first Grand Mufti and the head of the Office of the Grand Ulama of Saudi Arabia, a role that has been held by only two more persons after him in the history of the KSA. The role of the Grand Mufti and the head of the of the Office of the Grand Ulama helped shape religious policy in support of the state of Saudi Arabia, playing a role that is religious in nature, but political in essence.

³⁶⁸ Joseph Kostiner, *The Making of Saudi Arabia 1916-1936: From Chieftaincy to Monarchical State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 13-35, 49, 67, 69-70.

³⁶⁹ Mouline, *The Clerics of Islam*, 149.

3.3.1 Contexts

The domestic, regional, and international events surrounding the time Ibn Ibrahim were as tremulous as they were during the time of Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab. Ibn Ibrahim stood by the young king during his struggle to unify Saudi Arabia under the banner of Al-Saud and the creed of Wahhabism. He stood by his king as did his predecessor Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab did during the fight against his many opponents in the region of Najd and Hijaz, and he stood by his king all throughout the troubles that were inflicted upon the Third Saudi State – be it from internal or external enemies.

Ibn Ibrahim was born into a family of religious clerics. He was revered by the Wahhabi ulama and, as importantly, by the nascent King-to-be Ibn Saud. It was even shared, anecdotally, that Ibn Saud would sweat from head to toe out of fear and reverence of the sheikh whenever he passed him on a street.³⁷⁰ The impression the Grand Mufti had on the founder of Ibn Saud was not unimportant. Ibn Saud, a genuine adherent to the Wahhabi creed, respected the views of the Wahhabi ulama, with Ibn Ibrahim taking the apex spot.

However, one of the major overt differences that brought forth a new set of problems to Ibn Ibrahim and pushed the Wahhabi ulama to adapt their politico-religious thinking at that time was the support from the superpower of the time - the British Empire. A crucial point to underline here is that the British Empire was not only important in helping the Saudi-Wahhabi alliance in defeating the strongest tribes of Arabia (Al-Rasheed and Al-Sharif Hussein), but also

³⁷⁰ Al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia*, 59-60.

in defeating the single most important existential threat to the Saudi-Wahhabis: the Ottoman Empire.

However, British support to Ibn Saud and Ibn Ibrahim was not provided right away. The Saudi and Wahhabi leaders had to fight viciously and strategically to get it, which highlights both leaders' pragmatism in their path to state-building, which was political in the first order and only afterwards, religious in nature.

3.3.2 The Creation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (1932 Onwards)

The most significant event in the history of any group of people is when they can create a state that represents their identity and creed. For the Wahhabi ulama and Saudi tribe, this was the creation of the Third Saudi-Wahhabi State – the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1932 under the leadership of Ibn Saud. Even though the First Saudi-Wahhabi state chiselled Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab's name in the pages of history and put the Al-Saud tribe on the map, while the Second Saudi-Wahhabi state struggled with internal strife and constant warfare, it was the Third State that cemented the role of Wahhabism as a local, regional, and international ideology. The Wahhabi ulama played a critical position in the creation and the maintenance of the Westphalian state, and the research reflects their crucial role in this process.

Ibn Ibrahim, as the highest Wahhabi alim at the time of the creation of the KSA, had the responsibility of justifying the actions of Ibn Saud and his Wahhabi supporters during the struggle for the soul of the KSA. Ibn Ibrahim had to support Ibn Saud against his enemies in a way reminiscent of older times, as was the case with fighting the Ottomans during the epoch of

the First Saudi State or struggling against the Al-Rasheed during the Second Saudi State. Ibn Ibrahim had to also justify supporting and fighting under the banner of a Christian Western power (the British Empire) against the Ottoman Caliph and fellow Muslims. Interestingly, Ibn Baz, the next Mufti in line, will face a similar conundrum regarding housing and supporting US forces against Saddam in 1990-1991.

3.3.3 International/Regional Context: Rebellion Against the Ottomans and the Alliance with the British Empire (Early Twentieth Century)

On an international and a regional level, Ibn Ibrahim, as the prime Wahhabi alim, had to manage several events that affected the creation and development of the nascent state. However, two major events placed Saudi Arabia on a path against one global power and as an ally of another.

First, there was the rebellion against the Ottoman Caliph. The Ottoman Caliph was considered by most Sunni powers as the representative of the Prophet and, therefore, it was the duty of all Muslims to declare their allegiance to him. Any rebellion against the Ottoman Caliph was seen as a rebellion against the leader of Islam. However, this was not the first time that the Saudi-Wahhabis rebelled against him. During the time of the First Saudi State, the Wahhabi ulama authorised the rebellion against the Ottomans, and this was done by none other than the creator of the movement Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab.

However, what Ibn Ibrahim had to manage was far more complex than what his great-great-grandfather had to deal with: Ibn Ibrahim had to validate Ibn Saud's alliance with Western

powers against the Ottoman Empire. Such a move was in defiance to the Muslim ummah's sentiments at the time. More so, Ibn Ibrahim had to justify support an imperial force seen as an invader by many Muslim scholars. Ibn Ibrahim and his king had to tread carefully on how to justify a religious fatwa against a Muslim power and in support of a Christian one.

Supporting the British Empire in its endeavour in the Middle East was not only a matter of fighting an old enemy. The Saudi-Wahhabi Emirate at the time had to fend off regional threats and contenders to the Arabian thrones, mainly by Sharif Hussein, who was also a close ally to the British and the West. It was Sharif Hussein and his sons that were credited with instigating the Arab Rebellion against the Ottoman, culminating in the fall of the Levant into the hands of the British and French forces.

Furthermore, the Arab and Muslim population was embroiled in a fight against the imperial Western powers, and any support to the Western forces was seen by Muslims as a non-Islamic action. Muslim throughout the Middle East struggled against the invading forces, and rebellions throughout the region were taken up by Sunnis and Shias alike. For example, there was Algerian resistance movement against the French in the west, and the 1920 Shia Revolution in the east, with many others in the Levant and Northern Africa that were consuming the region.

Additionally, support to Western powers presented Ibn Ibrahim with a major local conundrum – fierce opposition from the militant Wahhabi wing, the Ikhwan. The Ikhwan came to pose a military, a political and a religious threat to Al-Saud and to the Wahhabi institution writ large. The Ikhwan saw the King and his Wahhabi cronies as becoming too soft or, in the words of Ibn Khaldun, too sedentary.³⁷¹ They were concerned that the alliances and the limits

³⁷¹ Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddimat*, 148-157

imposed by the King and the Wahhabi ulama on the Wahhabi creed and on their expansionist plan will demise both the religion of the Wahhabis, and eradicate the territorial gains they sacrificed themselves for in the service of the King.

Ibn Ibrahim and his supporting ulama had to take extreme measures to deal with the Ikhwan, passing on fatwas and decrees allowing the King to fight them and exterminating them in the Battle of Sabila in 1929. In this instance, the political pragmatism of the Wahhabi ulama was exemplified when they were able to change views and fatwas in support of the political sovereign, and not their fellow ultra-conservative brethren. The Ikhwan were determined to continue their ghazu or jihad (depending on who you ask) against the Sharif Hussein and his sons, by encroaching on their territories in Jordan (called Transjordan then) and Iraq (called the Hashemite Kingdom of Iraq at the time). However, Ibn Saud and the Wahhabi ulama, headed by Ibn Ibrahim, understood the power dynamics governing the region and that Britain and France were the true powerbrokers in the region. By extension, Ibn Saud and Ibn Ibrahim understood that the survivability of the Emirate and, later, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, is only possible through the appeasement of and by paying homage to the British Crown (and the US afterwards).

This pragmatist approaches by Al-Saud and Al al-Sheikh, where politics trumps religion, aptly demonstrated how the WPJD evolved during the time of the Third Saudi State. During the First Saudi State, the WPJD was cemented in a dogmatic world view driving the Al-Saud and Al al-Sheikh to put religion before politics, fighting the Ottomans and their Egyptian allies until the eradication of their Emirate in Dir'iyah in 1818. This change in the attitude of Al-Saud and Al al-Sheikh, however, demonstrated how religion came to serve politics and not

vice versa. The Wahhabi ulamas' goal is not the creed, but the preservation of the Saudi nation state. That is a crucial WPJD evolutionary step.

3.3.4 International/Regional Context: Countering Communism during the Cold War

In parallel with the creation of the new Westphalian nation-state system in the Middle East, the West itself was embroiled with a larger threat: the spread of Communism and the rise of the USSR, ever since the seminal Cable X highlighting the expansionist motives of the USSR around the world.³⁷²

In the KSA, the rulers found themselves in an unambiguous situation, much in contrast to their Arab and Muslim neighbouring states who tried to utilise Communism as part of their national struggle for self determination against imperialism. For the Saudi rulers and the Wahhabi ulama, Communism was an atheist ideology that must be resisted. If this resistance falls in tandem with what the British and the US saw as part of their grand strategy, it could also help their case by having stronger international powers on their side. The communist-cum-nationalist movements in the Arab world were seen as a threat to Saudi Arabia, Wahhabism, and the Arab monarchies of the Persian Gulf in general. Also, many of the Gulf states did not gain independence from British mandate until the 1960s and 1970s, making the decision more in line with the powers to be in the region.

³⁷² See George Keenan, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," *Foreign Affairs* 25 (July 1947): 566.

Additionally, communist, socialist, and nationalist movements in the region were vehemently anti-monarchy. For example, Gamal Abd al-Nasser brought down the Monarchy in Egypt (which extended back to the time of Muhammad Ali Pasha) through the Free Officers' movement, while Abd al-Kareem Qassim brought down the Monarchy in Iraq (which was ruled by the great-grandson of Sharif Hussein of Mecca). Colonel Qaddafi brought an end to al-Senusi monarchy in Libya, and vehemently anti-monarchy independent movement and parties were sprawling all over the region in places like Lebanon, Syria, and the Gulf. Understanding how the region was undergoing massive changes, changes directed at the monarchs of the region which were seen by some anti-colonial movements as regimes propped up by the West, the Saudi religious and political leadership did not hesitate in siding with the West to counter the Communist threat.

More so, the Saudi and Wahhabi support reached its apex when the USSR invaded Afghanistan in 1979, bringing into full force the religious and financial might of the KSA to the world jihad scene. Although Ibn Ibrahim died before the invasion, his replacement, Sheikh Ibn Baz ensured the continuous support to and validation of jihad operation in Afghanistan continued until the defeat of the USSR. However, ever the strategist, Ibn Baz ensured that jihadi operation was conducted under the blessing and full direction of the KSA,³⁷³ institutionalising the process of WPJD in the KSA and abroad.

³⁷³ Abd al-Aziz ibn Abd Allah Ibn Baz, "Al-Jihad fi Afghanistan [The Jihad in Afghanistan]," The Official Site of Sheikh Ibn Baz, accessed November 23, 2021, <https://binbaz.org.sa/fatwas/7022/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%AF-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%81%D8%BA%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%A7%D9%86-%D9%88%D8%B3%D8%A8%D9%84-%D8%AF%D8%B9%D9%85%D9%87>.

3.3.5 Regional Context: Al-Sharif Hussein and the Expansion of the Al-Saud in Arabia

Sharif Hussein of Mecca and the Al-Rasheed tribe were considered two existential threats to the Al-Saud rule and the Wahhabi creed. The Al-Rasheed tribe controlled the Najd, al-Ahsa (Eastern Province), and their environs. They were also most instrumental in the defeat of the Wahhabis and the annihilation of the Second Saudi State.³⁷⁴

Fast forward to the early twentieth century, the Saudi-Wahhabi saw the Al-Rasheed's influence expand to include a strong alliance with another existential threat: the Ottoman Empire. For Ibn Saud and Ibn Ibrahim, the situation was dire. Not only did the Saudi Ikhwan and the tribal alliance launch a total war against the Al-Rasheed, but Ibn Saud also led the attack on the Al-Rasheed ruler and killed their Emir in a raid on his home.³⁷⁵

Additionally, the Saudi state had to deal with a different type of an existential threat: the Sharif Hussein and his sons. Militarily, Sharif Hussein and his progeny were strong, but not strong enough to threaten the power base of Al-Saud in Najd. Conversely, Sharif Hussein was not interested in Najd or even al-Ahsa; instead, his focus was on securing Mecca, Medina, and the Hijaz for himself, while his sons were occupied with securing Syria, Iraq, and Transjordan.

The real threat to Ibn Saud and the Wahhabis, however, was the relationship between Sharif Hussein and the British Empire. Ibn Saud wanted to be Britain's strong man in the region; to replace the Sharif as the ruler of all of Arabia. Ibn Saud and the Wahhabi ulama not only understood the changing nature of the world order due to WWI and the onset of the

³⁷⁴ Al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia*, 22-29 and 33-36.

³⁷⁵ Al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia*, 8.

Westphalian system in the Middle East, but they also had the foresight to read the tea leaves and make correct assumptions on which empire will have the final say in the region.

Ibn Saud took the advice of the Bahraini rulers, where they urged him to side with the British Empire to defeat the Ottoman Empire and secure his state in Arabia.³⁷⁶ Also, Ibn Saud and the Wahhabi understood that there was a limit to their expansionist dreams – Bahrain and Kuwait correctly advised Ibn Saud and his Ikhwan to scrap their plan of invading the Arab Emirates (later to become the United Arab Emirates) in return for a political deal (or alliance) with the British Empire.³⁷⁷

Ibn Saud and the Wahhabi ulama not only held true to their agreements with the British vis-à-vis the United Arab Emirates, but they adjusted their religious doctrine to respect their integrity and sovereignty. The Wahhabi ulama issued takfir fatwas in response to the actions of the Ikhwan against Iraq, Kuwait, and Jordan.³⁷⁸ The Ikhwan, who were considered the military backbone of the Saudi state and the most zealous of the Wahhabis, were cut-off, hunted down, and executed by the Saudi forces and Wahhabi ulama because of their insubordination to the King's agreements with the British. The fatwas of Ibn Ibrahim and his supporting body of ulama underlines the fluidity by which Wahhabi doctrine can be altered to fit the need of the politics, trumping the precepts of the religion. A similar resurgence in neo-Ikhwani thought took place in the 1970s during the reign of the Grand Mufti Ibn Baz – a resurgence that led the 1979 Meccan siege. Ibn Baz also issued a fatwa excommunicating the neo-Ikhwan and helped annihilate the group due to their threatening actions to the Saudi Crown and the state, even though

³⁷⁶ Sayyed Muhammad Ibrahim, *Tarikh al-Mamlaka al-Arabiya al-S'udiya [History of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia]* (Riyadh: Maktabat al-Riyadh al-Haditha, 1980), 180.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 199-204.

³⁷⁸ Al-Najdi, *Al-Durar*, vol. 9, *Al-Qism al-Thani Min: Kitab al-Jihad, wa Awwal Kitab Hukum al Murtad*, 183-187.

“[t]he founding members of the JSM [Al-Jama’ a al-Salafiyya al-Muhtasiba] developed personal contacts with these scholars and considered Ibn Baz their shaykh.”³⁷⁹

As for the two most holy sites to the Muslims, Ibn Saud and Ibn Ibrahim were adamant in pursuing and conquering them at all costs. Again, it important to note here the pragmatism and strategic genius of Ibn Saud and his Wahhabi ulama in play. Although the Sharif Hussein’s family were in alliance with the British Empire, not all members of the Sharif’s family were treated equally by the British. This was evident in the distinct types of support the British Empire furnished Sharif Hussein in his defence of the Hijaz, in comparison to his sons in Iraq and Transjordan. Ibn Saud knew that Sharif Hussein has fallen out of favour with the British, while his sons in Jordan and Iraq were not.³⁸⁰ This crucial understanding of who is in and who is out allowed Ibn Saud to pursue a strong and relentless military campaign against Mecca and Medina, garnering the full support of the Wahhabi ulama for that purpose.

The unfolding of events against the Sharif cannot paint a better picture of this cold pragmatism: the Saudis and Wahhabi pursued and conquered land belonging to the Sharif in Mecca and Medina while, at the same time, did not allow any operations against the Sharifs in Iraq or Jordan. This confusing multi-tiered approach to strategic campaigning is what impressed the British and,³⁸¹ by consequence, led to separating the loyal from the disloyal subjects of Ibn

³⁷⁹ Thomas Hegghammer and Stephane Lacroix, *The Meccan Rebellion: The Story of Juhayman al-‘Utaybi Revisited* (Bristol: Amal Press, 2011), 8.

³⁸⁰ Gary Troeller, *The Birth of Saudi Arabia: Britain and the Rise of the House of Sa’ud* (London: Frank Cass, 1976), 75-83; 84-89; 98-101; and 107-117. Also see Joseph Kostiner, *The Making of Saudi Arabia 1916-1936: From Chieftaincy to Monarchical State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 158-160; 162; 165; and 177.

³⁸¹ Troeller, *The Birth of Saudi Arabia*, 91-99.

Saud's and Ibn Ibrahim's version of Wahhabism. The annihilation of the Ikhwan speaks volume to this point.

Another important conflict to note was the war between the KSA and the Kingdom of Yemen in 1934, during which the KSA conquered a substantial amount of land from the latter.³⁸² Ibn Saud, dubbed the Napoleon of Arabia,³⁸³ was able to use modern technology and weapons to defeat his Yemenite rivals and expand the KSA into its present state. As the newly born KSA expanded in the region, conflict arose with the Idrisid-controlled Yemen, leading to an inevitable conflict between the two states.

What is important to note here is that Ibn Saud and the Wahhabi ruler understood when and where to apply force. For the Wahhabis, the Idrisid Emirate did not have the backing of the British Empire as did the Sharifs in Jordan and Iraq, leading to the full annexation of Asir (Yemenite territory) into the KSA. Furthermore, Ibn Saud and the Wahhabis knew when to strike, taking advantage of the internal disputes between the rulers of Yemen.

³⁸² Peter Sluglett and Andrew Currie, *Atlas of Islamic History* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 66-67.

³⁸³ P. W. Wilson, "A Desert Napoleon Marches in Arabia; Ibn Saud, Seeking a Vast Kingdom, Uses Modern Weapons in His War for Islam," *The New York Times*, May 13, 1934, <https://www.nytimes.com/1934/05/13/archives/a-desert-napoleon-marches-in-arabia-ibn-saud-seeking-a-vast-kingdom.html>.

3.3.6 Regional Context: Yemen War/Expansion into Yemen (1962-1970)

At the start of the 1950s, the Saudi rulers and the Wahhabi clerics had another existential threat on their hands in the form of Arab Nationalism. When Gamal Abd al-Nasser and his Free Officers overthrew the Khedivate Kingdom of Egypt, that event inspired similar movements around the Arab world and created a domino effect that affected all the Arab nations.

Arab nationalist movements had three goals: expelling the foreign powers from Arab land; replacing foreign-supported governments with Arab nationalist ones; and, unifying Arab countries under one banner – secular Republican Pan Arabism.³⁸⁴ For Saudi Arabia and the Arab Monarchies of the Persian Gulf monarchies, the ideology of Arab nationalism clashed head on with their own system of government. Abd al-Nasser and, by extension, all Arab nationalist movements and leaders were deemed a threat to the KSA and, consequently, a threat to Wahhabism.

Ibn Ibrahim and his disciple Ibn Baz played a crucial role in the demise of Arab nationalism. The war against Arab nationalism manifested itself in different forms: from ideological clashes (and takfir) to full-on proxy war in Yemen. Ibn Ibrahim and the Wahhabi ulama vehemently opposed Arab Nationalism and fully supported Islamic fundamental movements in the region as a mean to reduce the charisma of Arab nationalist leaders; they worked strenuously to garner support to Islamic fundamental movements that opposed “secular”

³⁸⁴ Bahgat Korany and Ali E. Hillal Dessouki, eds., *The Foreign Policies of Arab States: The Challenge of Globalization* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2010), 48; and, Adeed Dawisha, *Arab Nationalism in the Twentieth Century: From Triumph to Despair* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2003), 1-13.

Arab nationalism. Arab nationalism was painted as a socialist, left-wing movement that opposed Islam and strove to introduce secular ideas into the Muslim world.

The mantle for the defence of Islam was taken on by all Saudi kings, with the Wahhabi clerics in full support of the monarch. Support to Islamic movements was continuous throughout the lifetime of all Saudi rulers; however, it reached its apex during the reign of King Faysal. Due to the pressure exerted on all Islamic movements in the Arab world, King Faisal opened the doors of the KSA wide to all political emigres. And none found an open arm and a *raison d'être* to continue their Jihad against the secular Arab state governments' more than the Muslim Brotherhood.

King Faysal used the intellectual and professional skills of the Egyptian expatriates to build his educational system and, more importantly, to indoctrinate and strengthen the Muslim Brotherhood in their fight against Abd al-Nasser. The Wahhabi ulama issued fatwas forbidding Muslims from adopting the ideology of Arab nationalism and those of socialist and communist leanings.³⁸⁵ They also helped influence and nudge the Muslim Brotherhood's ideology to accept and support the Saudi monarch;³⁸⁶ which was not too hard to do. The Muslim Brotherhood and any Islamic-inclined movement were considered counter-revolutionary (i.e., anti-state) by the Egyptian Nasserites and the United Arab Republic leaders of Syria and Egypt.³⁸⁷ This historical context, which petted nationalist and communist against Islamists and Wahhabis strongly

³⁸⁵ Abd al-Aziz ibn Abd Allah Ibn Baz, Muhammad bin Saleh al-Uthaymeen, Abd Allah bin Abd al-Rahman al-Jibreen and Salih bin Fawzan al-Fawzan, *Al-Fatawi al-Shar'iya fil Masail al-'Asriya min Fatwai Ualama al-Balad al-Haram [The Legal Fatwas Regarding Modern Questions from The Fatwas of The Sacred Land]*, ed. Khalid bin Abd al-Rahman al-Juraysi (Riyadh: Muassasat al-Juraysi lil Tawi'l wal 'Ilan, 1999), 753-754.

³⁸⁶ John Calvert, *Sayyid Qutb and the Origins of Radical Islamism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 238.

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 237-239.

influenced the world view of the Saudi kings and the Wahhabi ulama. One must understand that at the time of the Arab Free Officers, talk about revolutions were rampant throughout the Middle East and monarchs saw these anti-Monarchist movements as an existential threat, as the case of the Iranian revolution of 1979 has shown.³⁸⁸

The animosity between the Muslim Brotherhood and Abd al-Nasser reached its climax when Gamal Abd Al-Nasser executed Sayyid Qutb in 1966, the godfather of the Muslim Brotherhood and Salafi-Jihadi movements worldwide.³⁸⁹ Qutb was vehemently anti-secular and his views on the West were coloured by his negative experience living in the US, leading him to publish his first book there where he underlined justice in Islam vis-a-vis the west.³⁹⁰ His anti-Western and anti-secular ideas became the basis of anti-Western movements' ideology after his death and until today.

Delving quickly into the reasons behind the Nasserite-Qutbist challenges, one recalls that Qutb was executed on charges to overthrow the government of Gamal Abd al-Nasser and most of the trial's evidence was taken from his magus opus *Fi 'Thilal al-Quran (In the Shadows of the Quran)*. Qutb and, more importantly, his followers, were seen as an existential threat by the Egyptian government, leading to a country-wide ban on his books and Muslim Brotherhood's activities.³⁹¹ His execution meant to send a message to any future encroachment by Islamic and fundamental movements in Egypt wanting to disrupt the order de jour.³⁹² It

³⁸⁸ The Shahs of Iran had cordial relations with the Gulf monarchs. It was only after the Iranian Revolution of 1979 did sectarian language surface in the political and religious narratives of the Gulf states.

³⁸⁹ Calvert, *Sayyid Qutb and the Origins of Radical Islamism*, 263.

³⁹⁰ Sayyid Qutb, *Al-'Adala al-Ijtima'iyah fil Islam [Social Justice in Islam]* (Beirut: Dar al-Shuruq, 1995).

³⁹¹ Calvert, *Sayyid Qutb and the Origins of Radical Islamism*, 192-193.

³⁹² *Ibid.*, 263-264.

would not be until decades later when al-Jihad/Islamic Jihad assassinated Egyptian President Anwar al-Sadat in 1981, mainly for his role in the peace accord with Israel. Both Muhammad Abd al-Salam Faraj and Khalid Islambuli were influenced by Qutb's Milestones. Faraj was considered a leader in the propagation of Salafi thought in Egypt, thanks to his *The Neglected Duty* book. It is also important to note that Ayman al-Zawahiri was a sub-commander in Faraj's Islamic Jihad, rising later to lead al-Qaeda after the death of Osama bin Laden.

For Saudi Arabia and the Wahhabi ulama, they had another confrontation with Abd al-Nasser – one that eventually led to the weakening of the Egyptian military and lead to its defeat in the Six-Day war in 1967.³⁹³ Saudi Arabia and Egypt participated in a very costly war in Yemen that led to the death of hundred of thousands of Yemeni and Egyptian troops. This was the War of 1962-1970, also known as the Yemen Civil War or the North Yemen Civil War.

The War broke out in 1962 between the forces of the Yemeni Mutawakkalite Kingdom and the forces of the Yemen Arab Republic. The spark started in a manner trying to mimic the Free Officers movement where Abdallah al-Sallal conducted a coup d'état against the Yemeni King Imam Muhammad al-Badr, a Zaydi Imam. For the Saudis, Yemen was a southern neighbour where they shared a long and complicated border, with many of the Saudi Arabian southern provinces' population composed of Yemenites, as in the case of Asir, for example. More so, politically, the KSA regime saw the involvement of the UAR forces in the war in Yemen as a threat that was part of a domino effect that was engulfing the region. Arab nationalist coups were taking place all over the Arab world and Yemen was another state that had fallen into the hands of Gamal Abd al-Nasser. This closing of the noose around the neck of

³⁹³ Ferriss, *Nasser's Gamble* 289-290.

the Saudi monarch only made the involvement of the Wahhabis in the Yemeni cause more inevitable.

Context helps explain why some actions that might seem paradoxical take place.

Wahhabism is vehemently anti-Shia. Zaydism, being a branch from the Shia sect, made it a natural enemy of the Wahhabis. Treatises from Ibn Taymiyya, Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab, Ibn Ibrahim and Ibn Baz and most of the Wahhabi ulama rarely distinguishes between the different sub-sects of Shia, and they usually lump all branches of Shiism under one banner: the Rafidah (literally means the rejectors, i.e., the rejectors of the Sunnah).³⁹⁴

However, the Saudi state and the Wahhabi ulama stood by and supported the Zaydi Shia in their war against the Republican rebels in the early 1960s, only to prove once again the pragmatic nature of the Wahhabi ulama. Wahhabi rhetoric, which is fervently anti-Shia, adapted during the 1960s Yemen war to support and aid Zaydis in their attempt to hold to power. More importantly, the Wahhabis saw the war as a quagmire for Abd al-Nasser and used it to weaken his forces in a major way, limiting his overreach and cut-off any future meddling in the area, and by severely hurting the Egyptian (UAR) Army. The Israelis were able to deliver the final blow to the Egyptian and Syrian (UAR) military by annihilating their Air Force capabilities in the Six-Day War in 1967. The pragmatism of Saudi and Wahhabi leaders in dealing with the Arab Nationalist threat, and by supporting a historical enemy of the faith (the Zaydis/Shia), only underlines the pragmatic capability of the Wahhabi mind to think beyond religious dogma in support of strategic goals. On the ground, Abd al-Nasser's military prowess and political

³⁹⁴ Although the name itself was given by the Zaydis to the rest of the Shia because of their rejection of the Imamate of Zayd, whom the Zaydis took as their namesake. Wahhabi, Salafi and Takfiri movements used the name as a blanket statement to call all Shia, including the Zaydis, and it is used a prerogative form towards them.

influence was weakened while Saudi Arabia maintained its political vigorousness, taking over the mantle of the leader of the Muslim ummah, especially during the reign of King Faysal.

3.3.7 Local Context: Faysal Dethrones King Saud (1964)

At home, Ibn Ibrahim had to deal with one of the most important challenges to the KSA and the Wahhabi creed - the support of one Saudi prince's claim for the throne over another. In Islam, the idea of the rightful heir or Imam had been a matter of great controversy leading, firstly, to the split in the Muslim ummah between Shia and Sunnis and, afterwards, within the Muslim sects themselves.

For the Hanbalites in general, and the Wahhabis in particular, one must zealously support the ruler and consider allegiance to him to be a matter of faith. Ibn Taymiyya specifically noted that religion and life cannot be sustained without the power of command.³⁹⁵ What Ibn Taymiyya was trying to emphasize here was the importance of support to the ruler, in that those who do not do so are on par with the same polytheists before the coming of Islam; that is, it is not Islamic to not support one's ruler, opening the door wide open for excommunicating of those who protest the rule of the leader.

It must be understood, then, that for Ibn Ibrahim to support Faysal in his move to remove King Saud from power was a major deviation from the Wahhabi creed. Ibn Ibrahim and the Wahhabi ulama not only had to dethrone the Saudi King, the legitimate ruler, but they also

³⁹⁵ Ibn Taymiyya, *Al-Siyasa al-Shar'iyya fi Islah al-Ra'l wal Ra'iya*, 137-138.

had to support a brother from the same family by religiously decreeing the move as just; and they did. Ibn Ibrahim's and the Wahhabi ulama's backing of Faysal against Ibn Saud was decreed Islamically valid,³⁹⁶ Saud was declared not fit to rule, and the king must be removed from power to allow Faysal to become the leader of the faithful.

The Wahhabi ulamas' support to Faysal and the removal of the rightful heir to the KSA from power proves the point that for the Wahhabi ulama politics is the main factor in the evolution of the Wahhabi doctrine and that religion plays a supporting role to politics, not vice versa. Wahhabi ideology serves the state, ensuring the viability of the ruler and the integrity of the state.

3.4 Wahhabi Muftis: Abd al-Aziz ibn Baz (Ibn Baz) (1910-1999) (Grand Mufti: 1993-1999)

Ibn Baz (1910-1999) is one of the most prominent Wahhabi, Sunni, and Muslim ulama in the 20th Century, rivaled only by his master Ibn Ibrahim. Ibn Baz, who was the first and only Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia who was not from the family lineage of Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab – Al al-Sheikh. He is also one of the most controversial sheikhs in the history of the Kingdom,³⁹⁷ and his reign as Grand Mufti was filled with events that rocked the KSA and the region. When the Saudi monarch decided to reinstall the position of the Grand Mufti (the

³⁹⁶ Alexander Bligh, "The Saudi Religious Elite (ULAMA) as Participant in the political System of the kingdom," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 17, 1 (1985): 39.

³⁹⁷ Abdullah, *Al Ulama wal Arsh*, 113.

position was abolished from 1969-1993), Ibn Baz was selected for the top job, even though his influence as a shadow Grand Mufti after the death of Ibrahim was not hidden to anyone.³⁹⁸

3.4.1 International Context: USSR Invasion of Afghanistan (1979-1989)

One of the most important roles Ibn Baz played in supporting the cause of Wahhabi Islam, not to mention to exponentially expand the movement's global footprint, was his support for the Afghan war effort during the USSR's invasion and occupation of Afghanistan from 1979-1989. It was Ibn Baz's fatwas, in tandem with the rest of the Wahhabi ulamas, that helped create an influx of Mujahideen to fight in Afghanistan and to setup one of the most proliferate fighter networks worldwide.

The Soviet-Afghan War, which lasted from December 1979 until February 1989, was a bloody conflict between different elements of mujahideen groups and the USSR. It started with the Saur Revolution in 1978 when pro-communist elements from the Afghan military conducted a coup d'état against President Daoud Khan,³⁹⁹ executing him and his family in the Presidential Palace. Nur Muhammad Taraki, who was closely aligned with the USSR, became President of Afghanistan,⁴⁰⁰ yet he was soon assassinated by his arguably pro-US rival Hafizullah Amin. Amin's rise to power, and his pro-US and Western agenda triggered the USSR's invasion into Afghanistan and his demise.

³⁹⁸ Ibid., 113-114.

³⁹⁹ The pro-USSR members of the coup referred to the event as a revolution of the people.

⁴⁰⁰ He was also referred to as the Secretary General of People's Democratic Party.

The Mujahideen constituted the largest resistance group to the USSR and, as the Cold War was raging on between the US and the USSR, the US and Western support to the Mujahideen became part of the West's grand strategy to fight the Communist camp. As for Saudi Arabia's involvement in the Afghan jihad campaign, it was driven by two factors: firstly, the communist regime was seen as both a usurper and an invading force of a Muslim land, while Communism was considered by the Wahhabi ulama as an atheist philosophy diametrically opposed to Islam. Secondly, Saudi Arabia was an ally of the West and, more importantly, a close ally of the US; hence, Saudi Arabia saw itself in a position needing to support its ally while, at the same time, opposing a threat deemed a threat to their own ideology, and to fill the gap left behind by the overthrow of the Policeman of the Gulf, the Shah of Iran Mohammad Reza Pahlavi.

Saudi Arabia worked closely with Pakistan by setting-up recruitment centres all along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, with recruits arriving from all over the Islamic world to participate in the call for jihad against the communists. And no one played a vital role as Ibn Baz. On many occasions he stressed the duty of Muslims to participate physically and through monetary donations in the war against the "Communist oppressors"⁴⁰¹ He also urged the Muslim world to unite in their fight against the foreign non-Muslim invader, citing the necessity to muster all one's power to fulfil this holy mission.⁴⁰²

⁴⁰¹ Abd al-Aziz ibn Abd Allah Ibn Baz, "Al-Jihad fi Afghanistan [The Jihad in Afghanistan]," The Official Site of Sheikh Ibn Baz, accessed November 23, 2021, <https://binbaz.org.sa/fatwas/7022/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%AF-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%81%D8%BA%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%A7%D9%86-%D9%88%D8%B3%D8%A8%D9%84-%D8%AF%D8%B9%D9%85%D9%87>.

⁴⁰² Ibid.

Ibn Baz and the Wahhabi ulama played one of the most important roles in the defeat of the USSR in Afghanistan, second only to the military support the US supposedly provided to the Afghan Mujahideen in the form of advanced military equipment, notably the Stinger rocket system to take down Soviet planes and helicopters.⁴⁰³ Asked about the rise of terrorist networks in the follow-up of the USSR's exit from Afghanistan, Zbigniew Brzezinski noted that it was worth the price for the US to have the Taliban and Islamic fundamentalists rise to power, since it was because of the mujahedeen's effort that the USSR not only lost in Afghanistan, but lost the Cold War in total.⁴⁰⁴ The Soviet-Afghan War truly underlined how important and profitable the Wahhabi ulamas' role as recruiters in the bipolar tug-of-war that riddled the twentieth century.

3.4.2 Regional Context: Iraq-Iran War (1980-1988)

During the time of the Soviet-Afghan War, another brutal war was underway closer home: the Iran-Iraq War, which lasted from 1980 until 1988, claiming the lives of over one million casualties from both sides.⁴⁰⁵ The war started when Iraqi President Saddam Hussein attacked Iran to nullify the 1975 Algerian Accord which set the boundaries of Shatt al-Arab/Arvand Rud between Iraq and Iran. However, with the coming of Ayatollah Khomeini to

⁴⁰³ Gregory Feifer, *The Great Gamble: The Soviet War in Afghanistan* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2009), 209-212.

⁴⁰⁴ David N. Gibbs, "Afghanistan: The Soviet Invasion in Retrospect," *International Politics* 37, no. 2, (2000): 242.

⁴⁰⁵ Pierre Razoux, *The Iran-Iraq War*, trans. Nicholas Elliott (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2015), 569.

power, and the fall of Iran into post-revolution chaos due to internal civil strife, Saddam wanted to take Iran by surprise and gain as much land as possible, attacking under the many pretexts: border dispute, border clashes, and support to Arab rebels in Ahvaz.

For the Wahhabis, the Shia were considered heretics and attacking them was considered fair game since they were seen as a deviation from the true path. Interestingly enough, though, Iran itself was never considered a threat: neither during the First Saudi State, nor during the Second Saudi State. Furthermore, neither Iran nor its Shia population were considered a threat to the Third Saudi State (KSA) or the Wahhabi faith; that is, not until the Islamic Revolution brought Khomeini to power in 1979. The reason for that was Saudi Arabia had considered the Iranian Revolution leaders' rhetoric a menace to their seat of power – both to Al-Saud and the Wahhabi ulama. More importantly, the Islamic Revolution toppled the most powerful king in the region – Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi – who was an ally of the West, a friend of Saudi Arabia, and bulwark against communist and nationalist movements in the region.

As for the Iranian revolution's ulama, their rhetoric was perceived inflammatory from the beginning, both by Wahhabi ulama and the monarchs of the Middle East. On separate occasions Khomeini and many of his ulama issued speeches condemning the despotic nature of the Arab monarchs of the Persian Gulf, stressing the need to topple pro-imperialistic regimes in the region. Furthermore, the Saudi and the rest of the Gulf monarchs became evermore concerned with the rhetoric of Khomeini to export the revolution throughout the Muslim world. For the KSA, this was a clear threat to their sovereignty, to which Saddam was also paying close attention.

The Wahhabi ulamas' attack on the new powers in Iran was not hard to muster. Being a Shia state made the job easy and the material to initiate the attack readily available. Wahhabism

has considered Shiism a deviant form of Islam and, historically, Wahhabis have attacked Shias and sacked their holy places.⁴⁰⁶ The Wahhabis and Saudis attacked the Shia of Eastern Saudi Arabia and the Shia of Iraq in Karbala at various phases of the three Saudi states. It was only when Ibn Saud secured his kingdom in the early twentieth century that he reduced the intensity of these attacks. Ibn Saud and his Wahhabi ulama, led by Ibn Ibrahim, understood the need to create a stable state in the new Westphalian system in the Middle East, and that meant he had to secure his realm and not antagonize his neighbours, especially those protected by his new ally – the British Empire.

The attacks on the Shia community within the Kingdom was such a nuisance to Ibn Saud that one of his main problems with the Ikhwan centered on their demand to continue to subjugate the Shia communities in the Eastern provinces.⁴⁰⁷ However, Ibn Saud and Ibn Ibrahim, both representing the Wahhabi ideology par excellence, adapted their WPJD to fit the strategy based on the context of world affairs at that time and understood that an attack on the Shia at the time will not serve the purpose of creating a credible Wahhabi kingdom. Instead, they chose restraint and, furthermore, attacked and annihilated the Ikhwan movement since they saw their narrow-minded views as detrimental to the political goals of the Wahhabi state. On a purely ideological level, one can even say that the Ikhwan were following the principles of Wahhabi doctrine genuinely.

However, the evolution of the WPJD took another turn with the rise to power of the Islamic revolutionaries in Iran. Now, the issue became one which threatens the national security of the state and, by consequence, the WPJD revealed its anti-Shia rhetoric once more. Ibn Baz

⁴⁰⁶ Algar, *Wahhabism*, 24.

⁴⁰⁷ Barbara Bray and Michael Darlow, *Ibn Saud: The Desert Warrior Who Created the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia* (New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2012), 321-322.

and the majority of his ulama initiated attacks undermining the Iranian government by attacking its leaders' ideology.⁴⁰⁸ Takfir of the Shia became the norm, and Ibn Baz initiated a series of attacks that undermined Shia authorities everywhere by underlying the un-Islamic nature of the Shia faith.⁴⁰⁹

Politically, it was important for the Saudis to push Saddam in his war against Iran. Having Saddam defend the Eastern Gate of the Arabs, the Saudis and the rest of the Persian Gulf Arab monarchs found in Saddam a tool to reduce the powers of both Iran and Iraq. Saddam was a rising star in Arab nationalism circles, and his total control of Iraq and the Ba'athist movement (rivaling the Syrian Ba'athist party) allowed him to expand the anti-Persian rhetoric and direct it completely against Iran (the Majus/Zoroastrians).

The Ba'ath party of Iraq (and its allies from the Arab nationalists) had a vehemently anti-Iranian agenda from the start. Khairallah Talfah, Saddam's maternal uncle and father-in-law, for example, authored a book condemning the creation of Persians (in addition to Jews and houseflies) as an abomination, questions why God would create such useless creatures.⁴¹⁰ Talfah was the intellectual godfather of Saddam,⁴¹¹ and his influence on Saddam's (and the Ba'ath Party's) anti-Iranian views cannot be underestimated.

⁴⁰⁸ Abd al-Aziz ibn Abd Allah Ibn Baz, "Al-Jihad fi Afghanistan [The Jihad in Afghanistan]," The Official Site of Sheikh Ibn Baz, accessed November 24, 2021, <https://binbaz.org.sa/fatwas/3129/%D8%A7%D8%B5%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%81-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D9%8A%D8%B9%D8%A9-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%83%D9%85-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%87%D9%85>.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁴¹⁰ See Khairallah Talfah's book *Three Whom God Should Not Have Created: The Persians, The Jews, and The Flies*.

⁴¹¹ Said K. Aburish, *Saddam Hussein: The Politics of Revenge* (London, Bloomsbury, 2000), 23, 26, 33-34, 127.

As for anti-Shia and anti-Iranian activities in Iraq, it started before the Ba'athist came to power. President Abd al-Salam Arif was a self-confessed Sunni sectarian,⁴¹² and he was part of the Arab nationalist movement that was both anti-Qassimist and anti-Ba'athist. After Arif's assassination, his brother Abd al-Rahman Arif came to power, who was soon deposed by the Baathists, lead by Ahmad Hasan al-Bakr in 1968.

With the Ba'athists coming to power, anti-Shia and anti-Iranian reached unprecedented levels. Iraqis of Iranian descent (those who the government claimed to have great-grandparents residing in Iran) were forcibly removed out of Iraq en masse. The government of Iraq used horrific measures to rid Iraq of Iranian-descendant Iraqi, leaving thousands of families stranded on minefields between Iran and Iraq or separating parents from children through on-the-spot deportation.⁴¹³

It is important to note that following on the heels of the Iranian Islamic revolution, similar movements in the Middle East aspired to overthrow their own regimes. And no movement had a profound effect on the internal politics of Iraq and in resisting the Ba'athists as the Da'wa movement did in Iraq. Led by Ayatollah Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr, the Da'wa party participated in both political and militant resistance against the Ba'athists, leading to a series of mass executions and deportations of Iraqi Shias that continued until the fall of Saddam in 2003. The extreme measure taken by Al-Bakr and Saddam lead to the eventual annihilation or deportation of the majority of the Da'wa leadership and rank-and-file.

⁴¹² Hani Al-Fkaiki, *Awkar al-Hazima: Tajrubati fi Hizb al-Ba'ath al-Iraqi [Dens of Defeat: My Experience in the Iraqi Baath Party]* (London: Riad El-Rayyes Books Ltd, 1993), 273 and 280-281.

⁴¹³ Aburish, *Saddam Hussein*, 122 and 185.

Retrospectively, al-Da'wa Party did pose an existential threat⁴¹⁴ to Saddam and his party since Shia constitute most of the state's population. In addition, al-Sadr was intricately connected with the Iranian leadership through the Najaf Hawza in which al-Sadr and Khomeini studied and taught. Al-Sadr even wrote a prolegomenon to the Iranian Constitution considering the Islamic Revolution.⁴¹⁵ This close connection to the Iranian leadership and the fact that al-Da'wa was the most popular and effective resistance movement against the Ba'ath Party and its leadership lead Saddam to eventually torture and execute al-Sadr and his sister Bint al-Huda.

Saddam, hence, not only saw his opportunity to invade Iran as a move to inflict utmost damage on an enemy that can cause tribulation to his rule, but he also saw it as an opportunity to attack a weak enemy and gain major concessions which would make him a rising star in the eyes of Arabs and Muslims.

Saddam used anti-Persian rhetoric to attack Iran. He relied on historical battles, such as the Battle of al-Qadisiya circa 636, which was one of the first major battles between Muslim Arabs and Sassanides Persians, to invoke the collective imaginations of historical nostalgia against the Iranians. In his campaign, Saddam found ample support from his Wahhabi neighbours. Fatwas and decrees from Ibn Baz and the rest of the Wahhabi ulama focused on the Persian Iranians as an extension of the pre-Islamic empire that wanted to expand and take over

⁴¹⁴ Saddam saw the Shia more of an existential threat after the 1991 Shia Uprising, leading him to become so obsessed with annihilating any Shia threat immediately and brutally, blinding him to more important and real threat. When the US forces invaded Iraq in 2003, the US military noticed that Saddam's forces were placed around Shia towns in fear of an uprising instead of being placed in tactical positions to stop the US' advance. Saddam even kept bridges in southern Iraq intact (a strategic blunder) in case he needed to pull back his forces to stomp down any uprisings in and around Baghdad. See chapter on Objective Peach in Jim Lacey and Williamson Murray, *Moment of Battle: The Twenty Clashes that Changed the World* (New York: Random House Publishing Group, 2013).

⁴¹⁵ Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr, *Lam'ha Tamhidiyya 'an Mash'r'u Disto'or al-Jumhuriyya al-Islamiyya [An Introductory Overview of the Iranian Republic's Constitution]* (Beirut: Dar al-Ta'aruf lil Ma'tbo'at, 1979).

Muslim Arab land.⁴¹⁶ The fact that it was Iraq that invaded Iran went unmentioned; instead, the focus was on the dooming threat Iran posed to the Arabs at the Eastern Gate (using similar language as Ibn Taymiyya in describing the Mongols), and how Khomeini's policies were meant to shake the security of the Arab states.⁴¹⁷

From a religious point of view, it was not hard to attack Iran. Being an adherent of the Islamic Shia faith, Ibn Baz and the Wahhabis had no qualms with attacking a group they considered outside the Muslim faith.⁴¹⁸ By relying on Ibn Taymiyya's and Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab's writings, Ibn Baz did not have to look hard to find justifications to excommunicate the Shia and justify an attack on them as being Islamically feasible. However, it is how the Wahhabis evolved their WPJD to attack a Muslim country whom their patrons had a close relationship just a few years ago is what of interest here. Iran was demonized not because of Shi'ism per se; they were demonized by being painted as an esoteric group (Batinis) bent on destroying Islam and Muslim states from the inside.⁴¹⁹ The new label of Batinis underlined the threat Iranians and Persians posed for Islam and the Arabs. They were considered an extension of the pre-Islamic empires that vied to conquer the Arab world and destroy the nascent religion of Islam.

⁴¹⁶ Abd al-Aziz ibn Abd Allah Ibn Baz, "Al-Jihad fi Afghanistan [The Jihad in Afghanistan]," The Official Site of Sheikh Ibn Baz, accessed November 24, 2021, <https://binbaz.org.sa/fatwas/3129/%D8%A7%D8%B5%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%81-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D9%8A%D8%B9%D8%A9-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%83%D9%85-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%87%D9%85>.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid.

⁴¹⁹ Abd al-Aziz ibn Abd Allah Ibn Baz, "Asnaf al-Shia wal Hukm Alayhum [Types of Shia and their Rulings]," The Official Site of Sheikh Ibn Baz, accessed February 8, 2022, <https://binbaz.org.sa/fatwas/3129/%D8%A7%D8%B5%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%81-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D9%8A%D8%B9%D8%A9-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%83%D9%85-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%87%D9%85>.

Defence of the faith for the Wahhabi, here, was used as a tool to rally Muslim and Arab opinion against Iran during the Iran-Iraq war. Many of this same type of rhetoric was later used during the Shia Uprising of 1991 against Saddam,⁴²⁰ and during the rise of Shia to the seat of power post-2003.⁴²¹ Even though it was the same people adhering to the same sect, Iran going from a Pahlavi-ruled nation to a Khomeinist one highlighted how the Wahhabi ulama were able to cater a new sectarianist speech to fit the need of the Saudi leaders.

More so, the Saudi leadership did not hold back their overt support to Saddam in his war against Iran, even though he overtly declared his secular Republican Arab nationalist ideology. The KSA and the rest of the Persian Gulf Arab countries opened their war chest wide and supported Saddam in many ways. The Gulf states gave Saddam over \$100 billion in monetary support for his effort against Iran.⁴²² This type of support was part of a strategy setup to bleed Iran to submission. “King Fahad reportedly told Saddam: ‘You provide the rijal (men) and we’ll provide the riyal [Saudi Riyal].’”⁴²³

In addition, the creation of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in 1981 was another political tool setup to unify the Persian Gulf Arab states’ strategy in the Persian Gulf War. Overtly, the GCC’s objectives were to coordinate economic and monetary exchange. However,

⁴²⁰ See Hindi Muhammad Al-Shareef, *Jo’thoor al-Bala’a fi Harb al-Khaleej [The Roots of Affliction in the Gulf War]* (Np: Matab’i Dar al-Sha’ab, 1991).

⁴²¹ Al-Qaeda and Al-Qaeda fil Iraq (Zarqawi’s arm) issued numerous pamphlets and books declaring the Shia as infidels and Majoos (Zoroastrians), leading to widespread attacks on the Shia population in the Muslim world.

⁴²² Geoff Simons, *Iraq: From Sumer to Saddam* (London, Macmillan, 1994), 309.

⁴²³ Neil Patrick, ed., *Saudi Arabia Foreign Policy: Conflict and Cooperation* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2018), 132.

the underlining reason was to ensure Khomeini's ideas do not spread in the region and to secure the Gulf region.⁴²⁴

3.4.3 Regional Context: The Gulf War, Iraq's Invasion of Kuwait, and Foreign Troops on KSA's Land (1990-1991)

An opposite scenario presented itself to the Wahhabi clergy when President Saddam Hussein's invaded Kuwait on 2 August 1990. For Ibn Baz, it was one of the most challenging crises in his lifetime and whose repercussions spanned decades to come. Saddam did indeed pose a threat to the KSA in the form of territorial encroachment, where he invaded a northern Saudi town. However, the real threat to the Wahhabi Saudi state did not emerge until later when King Fahad agreed for US and allied troops to place their troops in the KSA as a forward operating base (FOB) to liberate Kuwait. King Fahad's agreement to the US request was so fast that the ulama were left scrambling for an ad hoc justification after the fact.⁴²⁵

This agreement to foreign, Christian, and Western troops setting up military bases on Muslim land was considered a major transgression by many Wahhabi ulama.⁴²⁶ In Wahhabi

⁴²⁴ Riad Najib El-Rayyes, *Riyah al-Khaleej: Bidayat Majlis al-Ta'awun wal Sira'a al-Arabi-al-Irani 1980-1990 [Gulf Winds: The Beginnings of Gulf Cooperative Council (1980-1991)]* (Beirut: Riad El-Rayyes Book, 2012), 41.

⁴²⁵ George H. Bush noted in his memoirs that King Fahad agreed to invite US/allied troops to Saudi Arabia within two days of the US President's request. See George Bush, *All the Best, George Bush: My Life in Letters* (New York: Touchstone, 1999), 476-477.

⁴²⁶ The Wahhabi ulama in Saudi Arabia issued an open letter to the King, which was later known as the al-Sahwa Declaration.

literature, it has been clear throughout all their books that non-Muslims must be expelled from the Arabian Peninsula, as per a well-known Prophetic Hadith. According to Wahhabi history, all the infidels were expelled by the Prophet and his Caliphs and, therefore, the presence of those foreign forces in the holy land was a clear infraction to the Prophet's orders.

This dire situation evolved into what was called al-Sahwa al-Islamiyya (The Islamic Awakening), which was led by well known Wahhabi ulama such as Hasan al-Hawali and Salam al-Ouda. Al-Hawali was a veteran of the Afghan War against the Soviets and had close association with Osama bin Laden, while al-Ouda was a prominent figure in Wahhabi circles, being a close student to Ibn Baz, al-Uthaymeen, and Abdallah bin Abd al-Rahman bin Jibreen, all first rank Wahhabi ulama. Adherents of the Sahwa movements started to distribute cassettes condemning the Saudi authorities for allowing foreign troops on Saudi land and asking for reform, which evolved into Lajnat al-Difa'a 'an al-Huquq al-Shar'iya (the Committee for the Defence of Legitimate Rights (CDRL)) – a committee that labelled the Saudi government as both illegitimate and un-Islamic.⁴²⁷

It is in this quandary that Ibn Baz found himself struggling to both legitimize the actions of the Saudi monarch and to fend off the attacks by the dissident groups that were growing in number – especially since many of them were well-known students of his and other highly prominent Wahhabi ulama.

In Wahhabi and Hanbali literature, *uli al amr* (those in position of rule and authority) require utmost loyalty by their subjects. One must follow orders and not question the motives of

⁴²⁷ Gilles Keppel, *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam*, trans. Anthony F. Roberts (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002), 215.

their leaders, even if they might seem to be wrong because, firstly, questioning their authority leads to fitna (chaos and civil strife) which eventually leads to bloodshed and injustice; and, secondly, even if the ruler is wrong, the fact that they attempted to act upon a premise they thought was correct still makes them just in the eyes of God. In both cases, Prophetic Hadiths was used as the basis of justification, legitimizing all actions of leaders for the greater good of Muslims and Islam.

However, in the Hanbali and Wahhabi creeds, there is a loophole when it comes to advising *uli al amr*. Jurists are allowed to provide advice to the ruler on one condition: it must be respectful, and it must be discreet.⁴²⁸ Ibn Baz was able to circumvent the problem by relying on different interpretation of what *nasiha* means and, in turn, sideline a strong and an effective opposition to the King. This move can be taken into consideration as King Fahad's re-established the position of the Mufti in 1993 after almost a quarter of a century of its abolishment, to "restore some verticality within the religious establishment."⁴²⁹ In other words, the King brought back the process of institutionalized control by placing his trusted cleric at the top of the religious pyramid.

Politically, too, King Fahad was acutely aware of the crisis he had at hand. He had agreed quickly to President Bush's request to place troops on Saudi land, which put him and Ibn Baz in a tough position trying to deal with the blowback from the ulama. With the rise of the CDLR, King Fahad had to deal with a different kind of problem: constitutional reform. The

⁴²⁸ Ibn Ibrahim, vol. 12, *Al-Hudud*, 182-183; and, Al-Najdi, *Al-Durar*, vol. 9, *Al-Qism al-Thani Min: Kitab al-Jihad, wa Awwal Kitab Hukum al Murtad*, 149.

⁴²⁹ Mouline, *The Clerics of Islam*, 249.

CDLR, in addition to several other prominent ulama and opposition figures, pressed the King to institute a reform to the Saudi constitution by giving more rights to the Saudi people.

King Fahad acted upon the demands for reform while, at the same time, turning the screws on the dissidents.⁴³⁰ The leaders were arrested, and the state used the 1995 Riyadh bombings to alienate the movements.⁴³¹ While on the constitutional front, King Fahad issued a decree in 1992 to revive the governing system of the Kingdom, providing more rights and freedoms to the individual Saudi.⁴³²

3.4.4 Local Context: King Faysal's Assassination (1975)

At the centre of power, Ibn Baz and the Wahhabi ulama had to deal with one of the most controversial and violent events in the history of the Saudi royal family. On 25 March 1975, King Faysal was assassinated by his nephew Prince Faisal bin Musaid. The shock of the King's assassination was compounded by the fact that he was assassinated by a member of the Saudi family. Faisal bin Musaid was the son of Faysal's half-brother Musaid bin Abd al-Aziz.

According to investigations conducted to unearth the cause of the assassination, the common narrative points to the fact that the motive behind Faisal bin Musaid's action was to

⁴³⁰ Keppel, *Jihad*, 216-217.

⁴³¹ *Ibid.*, 217.

⁴³² Fahd bin Abd al-Aziz Al-Saud, "King Fahd's Speech on the issuance of the Basic Law of Governance," accessed November 12, 2021, https://web.archive.org/web/20120528031657/http://www.saudiembassy.net/about/country-information/laws/King_Fahd_Speech.aspx; and, "The Basic Law of Governance," accessed November 12, 2021. https://web.archive.org/web/20140323165604/http://www.saudiembassy.net/about/country-information/laws/The_Basic_Law_Of_Governance.aspx.

avenge the death of his brother who was shot dead by Saudi forces when he tried to break into a Saudi TV station in protest of the government's liberal policies.⁴³³ Faisal's brother Khalid bin Musaid and the rest of the protestors were part of a neo-Ikhwan/neo-conservative movement that saw King Faysal's policies of allowing the proliferation of TV and radio stations, in addition to other technological advances, as a move away from the true creed.⁴³⁴ Faisal bin Musaid himself was not known to be religious; it was reported that he held many parties and consumed drugs and alcohol during his time of studies in the US.⁴³⁵ It was only an action of revenge for his brother that prompted his revenge.⁴³⁶

For Ibn Baz and the Wahhabi ulama, the assassination was a clear violation of everything that was holy in their creed when it comes to total submission to the ruler. King Faysal was the head of the Wahhabi "Church" and an attack on him is an attack on the Wahhabi creed and the Islamic faith.

Finding justification to condemn the assassin was not hard to muster. The state always deals with all assassinations of heads of state swiftly. Instead, the challenge for Ibn Baz and the Wahhabi strata were the events leading to the assassination itself; namely, the killing of Faisal bin Musaid's brother who was part of an ultra-conservative neo-Ikhwan group. Those young Saudi men saw King Faysal as a liberal King who was becoming more Westernized and, by association, was making Saudi Arabia less Islamic, as in normalising technological innovations and the schooling of girls.⁴³⁷ These type of protests, which later would metamorphosize into

⁴³³ Associated Press, *The Journal (Meriden, Connecticut)*, "Prince Faisal in 1971: Reported Killer of Faisal Knew Drugs, Radicals," March 26, 1975.

⁴³⁴ Al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia*, 120 and 137-138.

⁴³⁵ Associated Press, "Prince Faisal in 1971."

⁴³⁶ Al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia*, 137-138.

⁴³⁷ *Ibid.*, 120.

Juhayman al-'Utaybi and his group taking over the Ka'aba in what was to be known as the Siege of Mecca, were the type of threats that the Wahhabi ulama had to deal with swiftly and conclusively. What the ultra-conservative protestors were calling for was not merely a challenge to the King's actions and policies; it was a shot across the bow against the most sacred figure of the Saudi-Wahhabi entity encapsulated in the figure of the King himself. More worrisome was the fact that those men believed in the message and by consequence of their actions,

In US politics, there is a saying that goes: "It's the economy, stupid!"⁴³⁸ where the emphasis on winning US Presidential elections always falls squarely on local economic factors instead of world events. A common example of this is when George H. W. Bush lost his second term presidential campaign to Bill Clinton. Even though President Bush was able to swiftly liberate Kuwait and take control of the Panama situation, he still lost to Clinton because the US economy fell into a lull during his reign, and Clinton campaigned on the message to revive the US economy.

The same can be said of Saudi-Wahhabi politics. For King Faysal fought multiple regional threats to the Saudi state and the Wahhabi faith – Yemen War against Nationalist Yemenites and Gamal Abd al-Nasser, opening the doors of Saudi Arabia to Salafi and Muslim Brotherhood expats from Egypt and the rest of the Arab world, and supporting President Anwar al-Sadat in his 1973 war against Israel by pressuring OPEC and raising oil prices. Yet, it was his "liberal" policies inside the Kingdom that led to his demise: allowing for reform in the educational system and expanding the media spectrum, as an example, unleashed wide protests and, eventually, his assassination. Ibn Baz and the Wahhabi ulama, though, were not unaware of

⁴³⁸ Supposedly a sound bite attributed to James Carville during the Bush-Clinton Presidential Campaign.

the crisis brewing within the rank-and-file of the Saudi populace. And this pressure led to the events of the 1979 Siege of Mecca.

3.4.5 Local Context: 1979 Meccan Rebellion

Nothing had shaken the Saudi state and put the Wahhabi ulama in a negative limelight as did the events of the 1979 Siege of Mecca by a messianic group led by Juhayman al-'Utaybi and his neo-Mutawa'a group. The challenges Ibn Baz faced in dealing with the crisis was the most intense in his career up to that point of time. One can even dare say it was more challenging to him than the assassination of King Faysal four years earlier.

The Ka'aba and the Grand Mosque of Mecca are considered the holiest of holies for Muslims. That area is labelled as al-Haram, which translates to "the forbidden place," since it is forbidden to fight or shed blood in or around that area. On the first day of the Islamic calendar of the year 1400 Hijri, which corresponded to 20 November 1979, Juhayman al-'Utaybi and a number of his followers took over the Grand Mosque in Mecca and declared that Juhayman's brother-in-law, Mohammad Abdallah al-Qahtani, was the awaited Mahdi and saviour of the Muslim Ummah.

Juhayman's group challenged King Khalid and the rule of the Al-Saud family by rebelling and taking over the most sacred of sites to Muslims. Their action was a rally call to their fellow Muslims to rise against this illegitimate dynasty and to pledge allegiance to the

risen Mahdi.⁴³⁹ They also noted that the Saudi ruler have plunged the Kingdom into a state of Westernization that was leading the nation to lose its Islamic identity.⁴⁴⁰ To bring about positive Islamic change, the House of Al-Saud must be taken down and replaced by the rule of al-Qahtani – the Mahdi.⁴⁴¹

The problem Ibn Baz faced in dealing with this messianic group was two folds: firstly, they have occupied a place of worship that is the holiest of holies and, to defeat this group, the use of force was necessary. Secondly, Juhayman was from a prominent Saudi family. His father fought with the founder Ibn Saud as an Ikhwan warrior, while Juhayman was married to a princess and was one of Ibn Baz's top students.⁴⁴² This put Ibn Baz in a very peculiar position, since he was seen as the mentor of this rebel and, by consequence, he had a personal stake in the matter.

Juhayman and the rest of his messianic group considered themselves the followers of the true path of Wahhabism. They were neo-conservatives who saw their society losing its way to Western innovations. They were neo-Ikhwan in the sense that they wanted to revive the past warrior-Wahhabi culture of the Ikhwan and held to the belief that al-Qahtani was the Mehdi who will revive the nation and the Muslim ummah by setting it on the right path.⁴⁴³ The movement's principles in resisting the Saudi monarchy would have future repercussion by inspiring anti-Saudi Jihadi movements worldwide.⁴⁴⁴

⁴³⁹ Hegghammer and Lacroix, *The Meccan Rebellion*, 17-18.

⁴⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 16-17.

⁴⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 17-18.

⁴⁴² *Ibid.*, 12-16.

⁴⁴³ *Ibid.*, 16-18.

⁴⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 28-30.

During Ibn Baz's time, the power of the Committee for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice (Hay'at al-amr bil ma'arouf wal nahy 'an al-munkar), also known as the Islamic religious police, was expanded to ensure that Saudi society was adhering to the articles of faith of Islam. The department was a form of a Hisba entity, with the authority to fine or arrest any transgressor. It was a modern-day enactment of the muhtasib forces that were used in medieval Islam, with a much more expanded authority beyond the marketplace and into the social activities of the population, a form of a totalitarianism.

Juhayman and his neo-Ikhwan saw themselves as a neo-muhtasib force that truly reflected the doctrine of Islam, and not a watered-down version of the modern-day Committee for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice.⁴⁴⁵ They saw themselves as both judge, jury, and executioner of what true Islam should be, and to save the faith, they had to start with the state itself, i.e., Al-Saud.

To complicate matters, a year earlier Khomeini had revolted against the Policeman of the Gulf, Shah Pahlavi, and was able to bring forth an Islamic government in its place. For the neo-Ikhwan, Khomeini and the rest of his clergy were Shia and, hence, were considered apostates and infidels. However, the events of the 1979 Iranian Revolution did raise many alarms for the Saudi leadership in that they were extremely weary and cautious of the effects such actions could have in the region and, more importantly, in Saudi Arabia.⁴⁴⁶ Shah Pahlavi was one of the most powerful figures in the Middle East and the fact that exiled ulama living in Iraq and in France could overthrow him meant that lesser leaders in the region were also vulnerable to be overthrown.

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid., 7-12.

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid., 19.

Within these regional changes taking place all around him, and with the local events at home reaching a critical stage, Ibn Baz had to move swiftly to condemn the actions of Juhayman and issue a fatwa to take out the militants at the Grand Mosque. For Ibn Baz had to defend the state from those who question the legitimacy of the Saud family and to defend himself and his loyalty from criticism since it was his star student that led the rebellion.

Ibn Baz and the rest of the Wahhabi ulamas issued a fatwa declaring Juhayman and the rest of neo-Ikhwan as apostates – their views were considered un-Islamic, and their actions had led to bloodshed in the holiest place for Muslims.⁴⁴⁷ These fatwas served two purposes: first, they allowed the Saudi state to enter, capture, and kill all the militants in al-Haram and, secondly, they served as a reminder for anyone thinking of joining the forces of Juhayman that they will be excommunicated, imprisoned, and executed.

Ibn Baz's support to the monarch did not go unnoticed. He was given more control as the high clergyman and the powers of his committees were expanded - as was the case with the influential Committee for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice. Ibn Baz's loyalty to the Saudi state paid in spades; for he continued to rise in power until 1993 when King Fahad reinstated him as the Grand Mufti of the Kingdom, after an absence of almost a quarter of a century.

⁴⁴⁷ Abd al-Aziz ibn Abd Allah Ibn Baz, "Ta'leeq Hawl Hadith al-Masjid al-Haram 'Am 1400H [Comment About the Holy Mosque Event 1979], The Official Site of Sheikh Ibn Baz, accessed November 27, 2021, <https://binbaz.org.sa/articles/101/%D8%AA%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%82-%D8%AD%D9%88%D9%84-%D8%AD%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%AB-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D8%AC%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%85-%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%85-1400%D9%87%D9%80>.

Chapter 4: The Alim and the Ruler – Building the State

4.1 Leadership and Jihad: A Concept through History

Chapter three explained the political framework, which is important to understand the multitude of international, regional, and local contexts' linkages in the development of WPJD. This chapter examines how each of the three Saudi states came in to being, with a focus on the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and an in-depth analysis of its first Grand Mufti.

However, beforehand, one needs to review the concept of leadership and jihad historically and in relation to Wahhabism to understand how the religious establishment legitimized and supported the Saudi state. This chapters starts by exploring the works of prominent Muslim scholars, that of Imam al-Nawawi and Ibn Taymiyya. Afterwards, the thesis explores how the WPJD evolved during the First and Second Wahhabi states, and how the Saudi and Wahhabi leaders adapted to their changing environments. The last section will receive the lion's share by exploring one of the most important and prominent Wahhabi thinkers of all time: Muhammad bin Ibrahim Al al-Sheikh (Ibn Ibrahim) who was essential in developing and superimposing the WPJD onto the Third Saudi State.

4.1.1 Al-Nawawi (1233-1277)

Yihya bin Sharaf al-Deen al-Nawawi was a Sunni Shafi'i Imam (1233-1277),⁴⁴⁸ known for his *Forty Hadith* book in which he provided an exegesis of Prophet Muhammad's hadith. In his biographical sketch, his student Ala'a al-Deen ibn al-Attar noted that al-Nawawi was known for his ability to advise kings without any fear, where he used to apply the rule of *al-Amr bil Ma'aruf wal nahi 'an al munkar* (ABM) on kings and participated in jihad, never worrying what his enemies might think of him.⁴⁴⁹

What of interest here is al-Nawawi's insistence on the importance of performing ABM as a duty, in addition to the action of advising rulers without criticizing them, seems to have been one of the main highlights of his life, as noted by his students. This passivist position towards one's own king was what Ibn Ibrahim and Ibn Baz, in addition to other Wahhabi ulama, had highlighted in their discussion of how one advised their king and performed ABM. Al-Nawawi's position vis-à-vis leadership was a central recurring point which Wahhabi clerics kept relying on in their justification of full allegiance to the leader, making him a trademark in Wahhabi literature, even though al-Nawawi himself was a Shafi'i thinker. Al-Nawawi's sections on the submission to the ruler and what he defined a just ruler is a concept⁴⁵⁰ that Wahhabi ulama keep returning to as part of their evolution of the WPJD process, as the research below demonstrates.

⁴⁴⁸ Al-Nawawi, *Fatawi al-Imam al-Nawawi*, 3.

⁴⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁴⁵⁰ See Abu Zakariya Yahya ibn Sharaf al-Nawawi, *Riya'd al-Saliheen Min Kalam Sayyid al-Mursaleen [The Meadows of The Righteous from The Sayings of The Master of The Messengers]*, ed. Maher Yasin al-Fihl (Beirut: Dar Ibn Katheer, 2007), 213-219.

4.1.2 Ibn Taymiyya (1263-1328)

Ibn Taymiyya is a central figure for all Wahhabi thinkers and Saudi leaders. When it comes to servitude to the leader, Ibn Taymiyya was uncompromising. He noted in his book *Al Minhaj [The Methodology]* that having a ruler is always better than not having one; and that even having an unjust ruler is better than not having anyone.⁴⁵¹ He considered the position of the leader of such high importance that he even went on to note that having a despotic leader such as Yazid or al-Hajjaj was far more better for the Muslim nation than having no leader at all.⁴⁵² At the same time, Ibn Taymiyya quoted the Fourth Rashidun Caliphate Imam Ali, who sits diametrically in opposition to Yazid and al-Hajjaj for many Muslims, by quoting Ali saying a similar statement in which he supposedly said that having an unjust ruler is better for the ummah.⁴⁵³ This comprehensive view, one arguably can state, was only made to strengthen his point of view.

Delving more into the ruler-ruled relationship, i.e., the way a ruler should lead and how his followers must submit to his command, Ibn Taymiyya noted in his *Al-Siyasa al Shari'iah fi Islah al Ra'i wal Ra'iyah* that people and armies are to follow their leaders on all rulings, follow their lead on how and when they conduct attacks (ghazu) and agree to whatever way they chose

⁴⁵¹ Al-Najdi, *Al-Durar*, vol. 9, *Al-Qism al-Thani Min: Kitab al-Jihad, wa Awwal Kitab Hukum al Murtad [The Second Part of: The Jihad Book, and The Beginning of Book of the Rule of The Apostate]*, 159-160.

⁴⁵² Yazid ibn Muawiya was an Umayyad caliphate who was known for his massacre of Imam Hussein bin Ali and his family in the well-known Battle of Karbala in 680. Al-Hajjaj bin Yusuf al-Thaqafi was an Umayyad military commander and governor known for his many atrocities against various Muslim communities that opposed the Umayyad rule.

⁴⁵³ Al-Najdi, *Al-Durar*, vol. 9, *Al-Qism al-Thani Min: Kitab al-Jihad, wa Awwal Kitab Hukum al Murtad*, 160.

to divide the war's booty.⁴⁵⁴ Furthermore, he added in the same book that humans can only achieve what is good for them through unity, and that this highest goodness can only be sought through AMB which, in turn, can only be achieved by force, through an emir, and under a emirate (country).⁴⁵⁵ What Ibn Taymiyya was focusing on here was a theme that runs throughout the WPJD: unity can only be achieved through fidelity to a leader and active jihad and proselytizing is the only way to spread the truth and secure the realm of the Muslim community.

4.1.3 Mohammed bin Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1792)

Fast forward to Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab and the rise of Wahhabism, one notes that he developed the ideas of Hanbalite and Sunni clerics by focusing on the path set by his predecessor Ibn Taymiyya. Ibn Taymiyya's work directly influenced the writings and political philosophy of Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab, aiding him in the establishment of the First Saudi-Wahhabi state. To achieve the goal of creating an emirate, Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab needed to make sure that the Wahhabi faithful fully supported the Saudi leaders. He noted that according to all Sunni sects, whomever takes over a country has the right to fully preside over it, making the right to submit to the leader a tenet of the faith.⁴⁵⁶ He emphasized

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid., 189. Also, in the original source, see Ahmad ibn Abd al-Halim Ibn Taymiyya, *Al-Siyasa al-Shar'iyya fi Islah al-Ra'l wal Ra'ya [The Religious Law Government in Mending the Ruler and the Ruled]* (Beirut: Dar al-Kotob al-Ilmiyah, 2015), 8-9.

⁴⁵⁵ Al-Najdi, *Al-Durar*, vol. 9, *Al-Qism al-Thani Min: Kitab al-Jihad, wa Awwal Kitab Hukum al Murtad*, 191-192. Also, in the original source, Ibn Taymiyya, *Al-Siyasa al-Shar'iyya fi Islah al-Ra'l wal Ra'ya*, 137-138.

⁴⁵⁶ Al-Najdi, *Al-Durar*, vol. 9, *Al-Qism al-Thani Min: Kitab al-Jihad, wa Awwal Kitab Hukum al Murtad*, 5.

that whoever did not follow these rules would subject the nation to bloodshed.⁴⁵⁷ He underscored the significant fact that Muslims, since before the time of Ahmed bin Hanbal have not agreed on a sole leader.⁴⁵⁸ It is clear to see here how Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab highlighted the significant event in the lifetime of Muslims where the Al-Saud are to be treated as the true heirs of Islamic Caliphate.

Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab went on to say that whomever the leader might be at the time, one must defer to them, even if “he was a black man from Habasha.”⁴⁵⁹ In his *Kitab Usul al-Iman* (The Foundations of Faith) book he emphasized that one cannot even have negative notions towards the leaders and that the people must follow him in good time and bad – defying any of his order would be constituted a forbidden act.⁴⁶⁰ One also finds in *Al-Durar al Saniya*, the most important encyclopedic primary source of the Wahhabi faith and the Saudi sect, Ibn Hanbal was noted to have said that “if there are two people on Earth, one of them must be the leader,”⁴⁶¹ signifying the need to have a leader at all times to ensure God’s message is spread and his shadows is always cast upon his people.

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid., 5.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid., 6.

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid., 134-135. Also see Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab, *Kitab Usul al-Iman [The Principles of Faith Book]* (Riyadh: Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Dawah and Guidance, 2000), 158.

⁴⁶¹ Al-Najdi, *Al-Durar*, vol. 9, *Al-Qism al-Thani Min: Kitab al-Jihad, wa Awwal Kitab Hukum al Murtad*, 162.

4.1.4 Wahhabism and Leadership: The Absolute Primacy of Order over Justice

Moving from the leaders of the sect to the concepts through which the Wahhabi ulama view the world, one can identify a significant amount of work has been dedicated by the Wahhabi ulama to the topic of how one could criticize a leader. Al-Nawawi instituted that a leader could be criticized; however, it must be in the form of a *nasiha* or advice. Abd al-Aziz bin Abd a-Rahman al Faysal, a well-known Wahhabi thinker,⁴⁶² noted that if a leader does indeed act in an unacceptable manner, he must be advised gently and secretly.⁴⁶³

For him, he added that when it comes to the Al-Saud family and Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab, not only are they the true leaders and Imams of the Muslim people, but they are the continuation of the first three venerated Caliphs (Rashidun Caliphs).⁴⁶⁴ As a tangential note, it is very interesting to note here that all Muslim clerics and the Muslim writ large always refer to the four Rashidun Caliphs together and almost never three at a time. The reason, here, that al-Faysal emphasized only the first three was because they were known for their military expansionist campaigns, while the fourth Caliph (Ali) was known to have put an end to them. Al-Faysal does not keep his agenda hidden, though. For he noted that the honour of conquering Mecca can only go to the true leader of Muslims, and in this case, this only goes to King Ibn Saud.⁴⁶⁵

⁴⁶² *Ibid.*, 149.

⁴⁶³ *Ibid.*, 151.

⁴⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 154.

⁴⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

4.1.5 Wahhabism and ABM

With loyalty to the ruler comes a second requirement from the subjects, a point that was briefly explored above with al-Nawawi - ABM. As this thesis had shown above,⁴⁶⁶ ABM fits within the Sunni and the Hanbalite schools; however, with Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab and the Wahhabi doctrinarians, ABM goes steps further by ensuring the Wahhabi adherent became activists - to the point of associating ABM itself with jihad and war. Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab emphasized that one must have a clear understanding of ABM and the delicate interaction between the enjoinder of good and the prevention of evil, in addition to being patient with the pain that is associated with carrying the mantle of this delicate mission.⁴⁶⁷

Applying ABM in real life though requires certain parameters to be set in place to differentiate friend from foe. And since ABM was a similitude with jihad, Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab categorized the enemies of the faith and that of the state into four categories. Muslims must fight those people at every opportunity possible:⁴⁶⁸

1. Those who recognized the truthfulness of monotheism (tawhid) and still chose not to follow it.
2. Those who recognized the truthfulness of monotheism and pretend to follow it.
This group is worst than the first one since they are conniving in their actions.

⁴⁶⁶ See Section 2.3.3 above.

⁴⁶⁷ Al-Najdi, *Al-Durar*, vol. 9, *Al-Qism al-Thani Min: Kitab al-Jihad, wa Awwal Kitab Hukum al Murtad*, 150.

⁴⁶⁸ Al-Najdi, *Al-Durar*, vol. 11, *Al-Qism al-Awwal min Kitab Mukhtasarat al-Rudud [The First Part of The Abbreviations of Replies]*, 317-319.

3. Those who recognized monotheism but chose to say on the side of polytheists.
This group are considered disbelievers.
4. The citizens of a disbeliever state who chose to stay in that country because they did not want to leave it out of affinity. This group is clustered with the unbelieving state.

This emphasis on who is the legitimate leader, the duty of jihad, and the role of ABM in the lives of the faithful was a matter that was not merely left in the hands of the Wahhabi ulama. Saudi leaders used the same rhetoric throughout the epochs of the three Saudi-Wahhabi states to underscore those same points; most importantly, to rally support from the Muslim community and to justify the expansion of the state itself. This thesis will now turn to the case studies by examining the first of the Saudi state which was established in the time of the founder of Wahhabism: Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab.

4.1.6 First Saudi State (1744-1818)

The story of Wahhabism started with its leader Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab. Out of his ideology a movement was born that carried his namesake. However, the practical application of the concepts of Wahhabism came to life with the creation of the First Saudi-Wahhabi state.

During the First Saudi Emirate, Abd al-Aziz bin Mohammed bin Saud (1720-1803) was asked if the leader of the community can be from a non-Quraysh tribe. He replied that it is preferable for the leader to be from Quraysh; but, if such a person cannot be found, then he must get the allegiance and support of the ulama to become a leader.⁴⁶⁹ Here one finds the kernel of the alliance between the Saudi and Wahhabi ulama in which legitimacy to rule was provided by the Wahhabi ulama themselves, creating a self-correcting echo chamber where the Al-Saud leader supports the Wahhabi ulama in their spread of their message, while the ulama support the political state that gives allows them to pursue their religious goals.

Abd al-Aziz's son, Saud (1748-1814),⁴⁷⁰ used the same rhetoric when addressing his subjects. In a letter he sent to his emirs and ABM mutawa'as (ABM police personnel), he insisted on implementing the principles of ABM thoroughly and in all regions. He noted when it came to ensuring the rule of law, those who do repent must do so by following the three rules of repentance: "stop the ill action, feel remorse, and strive not to return to it."⁴⁷¹ The importance of ABM here is clear – it is a primary duty expected by the leader from all his emirs and staff, a duty that cannot be neglected and cannot be ignored. Throughout the analysis of all Saudi and Wahhabi leaders, this is a recurring point, for it is through the ideological tools of ABM and jihad that the political and religious leadership was able to control all emirs and ulama strata. By following the WPJD, Wahhabi and tribal prowess was always on the ready to serve the state.

Saud, for example, in a letter to the people of Dir'iyah declared that religion is only set straight through jihad and ABM.⁴⁷² To be a Muslim, he declared, you must go beyond the

⁴⁶⁹ Al-Najdi, *Al-Durar*, vol. 9, *Al-Qism al-Thani Min: Kitab al-Jihad, wa Awwal Kitab Hukum al Murtad*, 6.

⁴⁷⁰ Al-Najdi, *Al-Durar*, vol. 14, *Kitab al-Nasai'h [The Book of Advice]*, 19-25.

⁴⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁴⁷² *Ibid.*, 45-47.

normal duties performed by the rest of Muslims: you must be ready to sacrifice yourself for the creed and always be vigilant in your actions by performing ABM throughout your community.⁴⁷³ He noted in his letter that the people of Dir'iyah had ignored these duties and paid them no heed; he therefore sent them the aforementioned letter to chastise them by insisting that they return to the right path by following through with his advice.⁴⁷⁴

The last ruler of the First Saudi-Wahhabi state, Abdullah bin Saud (died 1819), followed his father's modus operandi. In a letter to his subjects he abhorred how ABM was ignored by many of his subjects and emphasized the need to restore this action.⁴⁷⁵ Sending a warning to his emirs who pretended to be following the true religion (i.e. Wahhabism), he chastised them that to be a true followers of the creed, one must remember that it can only be done through ABM.⁴⁷⁶ Again, one notices here that there was a sense of elitism in the thinking of Saudi and Wahhabi leaders. For to be Muslim was not enough to grant you access to the kingdom of God in heaven and earth; you must have alliance to the true leader (Al-Saud), follow the true creed (set by the Wahhabi ulama) and perform your duties fully (jihad and ABM). This full political and religious syllabus is the theme that continues to run through throughout the reign of all Saudi and Wahhabi leaders' theories, a point that will be highlighted in respect to each leader and cleric below.

⁴⁷³ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid., 52-55.

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid.

4.1.7 Second Saudi State (1824-1891)

During the Second Saudi State, it can be observed that the same theme of emphasizing the role of jihad and ABM as a duty of Muslims. However, because of the nature of the struggle at the time, which was tribal and set against the powerful tribe of Al-Rasheed that controlled large parts of central Arabia, the need to identify the righteous leader was evermore important in the Saudi and Wahhabi rhetoric. The Saudi emirate and the Wahhabi ulama emphasized the necessity to recognize one's true leader to achieve salvation in this life and the next. Rhetoric played a necessary role here to compensate for the Saudi military weakness.

Abd Allah bin Abd al-Latif, one of the most important Wahhabi ulama at that time, proclaimed that a Muslim who cannot tell the difference between the righteous leader and that of an unbeliever state was a confused person who neither understood their creed nor the meaning of religion.⁴⁷⁷ What Abd al-Latif was emphasizing was that knowing and following the command of your political leader equated to your own understanding of your religion, and that the two aspects are taken together as one, not as an either/or scenario.

This is a powerful statement and one that follows through from Ibn Taymiyya's emphasis of knowing one's own leader and following them as test of their own faith. What Abd al-Latif did was he evolved the concept of loyalty to the sovereign by making it action-oriented. Faith is no longer passive here; it is an active process by which the subject openly declares loyalty to the leader and follows them in their campaign to spread the message of the true creed.

⁴⁷⁷ Al-Najdi, *Al-Durar*, vol. 10, *Al-Qism al-Akheer min Kitab al Murtad [The Last Part of The Apostate Book]*, 429.

This fatwa, and similar ones by Wahhabi clerics allowed the Saudi leaders to mass public support in their campaigns of expansion throughout history.

During the war with the Al-Rasheed confederacy and their tribes, Abd al-Latif went further by stating that Al-Rasheed were unbelievers set on fighting the monotheist people (i.e., the Wahhabis) and that Muslims must fight them to ensure the sustainability of their creed.⁴⁷⁸ Al-Rasheed and their cronies were kafirs using kafirs to fight the people of the true religion.⁴⁷⁹ Fighting them and defeating them became a duty that fell under the essence of one's belief and creed.

This theme of who is the true leader and the duty to follow them is a central aspect of the WPJD. It changed and evolved depending on the historical context and the type of enemy they faced. As one delves into the political acumen of each of the Wahhabi muftis of the Kingdom of Saudi State, one can analyse the concepts of political leadership and duty to the sovereign, emphasizing how the Wahhabi jihad doctrine evolved to accommodate and support the Saudi leader in their struggle against diverse types of enemies. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia provides the best-case study of how the state and the religious ulama interacted, with the latter ensuring the viability and stability of the first. It is therefore of the utmost importance to analyse each of the KSA's Muftis to understand the role they played in power dynamics of the Westphalian state.

⁴⁷⁸ Al-Najdi, *Al-Durar*, vol. 9, *Al-Qism al-Thani Min: Kitab al-Jihad, wa Awwal Kitab Hukum al Murtad*, 83

⁴⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

4.2 The First Wahhabi Mufti: Muhammad bin Ibrahim Al al-Sheikh (1893-1969)

4.2.1 Introduction

Muhammad bin Ibrahim Al al-Sheikh's support to Ibn Saud and his role in the creation of the Third Saudi state cannot be overstated. He stood by his monarch during his struggle to create the nascent kingdom of Saudi Arabia and played a leading role in the institutionalization of Wahhabi power throughout the kingdom. He did indeed create and occupy the first Grand Mufti chair; however, it was his political acumen and bureaucratic genius⁴⁸⁰ that allowed him to cement the role of Wahhabi ulama in the Kingdom.

As the thesis highlights later in this chapter, Ibn Ibrahim's life was filled with a series of key events that helped Al-Saud hold to power and enabled the Wahhabi creed to proliferate throughout the Saudi state hors concours. Nonetheless, one must delve into Ibn Ibrahim's process of hermeneutics to better understand how he used fatwas and proclamations to exert his agenda on the political reality of his time.

It is interesting to note that Ibn Ibrahim was considered the caliph of Wahhabi ulama since his youth,⁴⁸¹ and was recommended as such to King Ibn Saud.⁴⁸² One can say this hierography was post-facto, but it still highlights the holy status the ulama receive by their

⁴⁸⁰ Mouline

⁴⁸¹ Al-Najdi, *Al-Durar*, vol. 16, *Al-Qism al-Thani Min al-Bayan al-Wa'dhi'h, wa Trajim Ashab Tilka al-Rasail wal Ajwiba [The Second Part of the Clear Statements, and the Biographies of the Authors of those Letters and Responses]*, 475.

⁴⁸² Ibn Ibrahim bin Abd al-Latif Al al-Sheikh, Muhammad, vol. 1, *Al-Aqa'id [The Creeds]* (Mecca: Ma'tba'at al-Hukuma bi Mecca, 1979), 11.

followers, how their followers treat them as unerring commanders, and that their views were infallible commands.

Ibn Ibrahim taught the works of Ibn Taymiyya and Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab daily after every single prayer.⁴⁸³ Throughout his career, he relied completely on the works of Ibn Taymiyya and Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab, in addition to various other Hanbali authors. This consistency of references underlines the importance of those two thinkers on Ibn Ibrahim's Wahhabi Political and Jihad Doctrines (WPJD) and how he considered them to be the cornerstone of his own teaching and as the foundation of learning of his students. He even made it a requirement for his students to memorize the books and would not move on to the next lesson until his students proved to him they were able to recite the work of those thinkers.⁴⁸⁴ Also, Ibn Ibrahim would not allow his students to digress outside the subject matter, ensuring the focus and absorption of the material on hand was focused completely on the works of the Wahhabi thinkers.⁴⁸⁵ More importantly, he made certain that the views of others were not discussed – views that he considered polytheist,⁴⁸⁶ thereby creating a dogmatic fence to protect the views of his students and followers, keeping the narrative purely Wahhabi in nature. This approach helped reduce narrative-comparison with other schools of thoughts and ensured everyone towed the line of Wahhabism. In turn, Ibn Ibrahim ensured future jurists and clerics followed the accepted Wahhabi thought process which consequently safeguarded a line of ulama and muftis in support of the Saudi powerhouse.

⁴⁸³ Ibid., 12-13.

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid., 13.

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid., 14.

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid.

Ibn Ibrahim participated in the state's fatwa process, first in collaboration with Sheikh Sa'ad bin Atiq until the death of the latter,⁴⁸⁷ after which, Ibn Ibrahim consulted no one else. This led to him creating Dar al Ifta (Fatwa House) in 1954, which he headed until his death.⁴⁸⁸ His full control of the fatwa process and authority allowed him to take full control of how the WPJD evolved and served the political purpose of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, this full control allowed him to control what was being said and how, hence controlling both the exegetic process of interpreting the text and when and how fatwas were issued to the public.

Ibn Ibrahim role transformed with the state itself. He was an alim, but also a judge (*qadi*), where he was able to pass judgements on the affairs of the state and how the state organized itself from the time of its conception onwards. More importantly, as the KSA expanded and settled as a Westphalian state in the new Middle East, his role also metamorphosized into that of a leader, where he was given authority over multiple provinces and areas in Saudi Arabia.⁴⁸⁹ The transformation of his role from a religious leader to a political one underlines the process of how religious leadership itself was transformed to a political one in Saudi Arabia – the Wahhabi alim was not just some religious leader giving classes and issuing fatwas from a mosque. He was a vibrant player in the political scene of Saudi Arabia who holds a crucial role in building this Westphalian state and help integrate it into the world governing system.

Ibn Ibrahim's sons held important positions, ensuring the control and continuity of their father's dogmatic worldview. Abd al-Aziz, for example, was the head of the Committee for the

⁴⁸⁷ Al-Najdi, *Al-Durar*, vol. 16, *Al-Qism al-Thani Min al-Bayan al-Wa'dhi'h, wa Trajim Ashab tilka al-Rasail wal Ajwiba*, 474-475.

⁴⁸⁸ Ibn Ibrahim, vol. 1, *Al-Aqa'id*, 19.

⁴⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 20.

Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice,⁴⁹⁰ an immensely powerful institution that implements the rules and regulations of the Mufti. It was the executive committee of the ABM ideals. His other son, Ibrahim, was the Minister of Justice,⁴⁹¹ a particularly important and crucial role in the state.

More so, his own students later became muftis themselves, as was the case with Ibn Baz, or held exceedingly high positions within the state both as political and religious figures. Some of those students were notables such as the Judge of Riyadh Su'ud bin Rushud and the very well-known Wahhabi alim Abd Allah bin Abd al-Rahman bin Jibreen. Additionally, many of his students held high positions as judges throughout the Kingdom, as jurists who sat on the Council of Verdicts, in addition to members of the royal family members.⁴⁹²

A critical point to note here is that Ibn Ibrahim did not author many books – the absolute majority were a collection of fatwas that spanned all areas of Muslim life. The same applies to his successor Ibn Baz. If you compare Ibn Baz's and Ibn Ibrahim's literary production to the rest of the Shia and Sunni ulama, one finds a great gap in Wahhabi ulamas' academic output. The fact that Ibn Ibrahim did not produce many books outside his fatwa collection, though, did not go unnoticed by his followers. In the introduction to the collection of his fatwa collection, the editor noted that Ibn Ibrahim spent all his time between teaching and supporting the community that he did not have any time to draft books.⁴⁹³ Ibn Baz, however, did write a few short monographs that lead to controversies in his lifetime. The next Mufti, Abd al-Azizi bin Abd Allah bin Muhammad Al al-Sheikh went back to sticking to fatwas and decrees only,

⁴⁹⁰ Ibid., 21.

⁴⁹¹ Ibid.

⁴⁹² Ibid., 21-22.

⁴⁹³ Ibid., 22.

rarely posting decrees or monographs beyond the fatwa circle. These fatwas and his role in helping the community were more than one would have wished from Ibn Ibrahim, according to his disciples,⁴⁹⁴ for within them is all what is needed to support the state and ensure the viability of the Wahhabi creed.

The dissertation notes the similar process used by Ibn Baz, where he had also focused his efforts on running the institutions for which he was responsible, in addition to supporting the monarchs during their many crises, leaving his literary contribution limited to fatwas and decrees. This specific literary contribution within the Wahhabi circle, one can say, started with Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab, for his books were simply a collection of Hadith for the purpose of supporting his fatwa. This approach of fatwas and decrees collections allowed the Wahhabi ulama and the Saudi statemen to take their pick from a vast number of items to fit a specific end, whether it was religious or political. This instrumentalist approach to exegesis is what empowered the Wahhabi ulama to evolve their WPJD theories, with relative ease, in accordance with the context they were facing.

4.2.2 On Leadership

Ibn Ibrahim spent decades writing and explaining the roles and responsibilities of what constituted a legitimate leader. His writings were crucial, since he was the first Wahhabi alim that rose to the role of the Grand Mufti of the Kingdom of Saudi, and he was the first Wahhabi

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid

alim that sat on top of the Wahhabi religious pyramid during the creation of the first Westphalian Saudi-Wahhabi state in the region.

The KSA, under the leadership of Ibn Saud, struggled against several powerful enemies and allied with several powerful regional and international powers to achieve sovereignty. Ibn Saud, the first king of Saudi Arabia, possessed unparalleled political and military acumen that helped him take control of what is now modern Saudi Arabia. However, to do so he needed the support of the Wahhabi ulama to make his mission come to fruition. Specifically, he needed the legitimacy to declare himself the king of the most sacred land in the Muslim world while, at the same time, de-legitimize his opponents who ruled the area for centuries before him. This is where the genius of the Wahhabi ulama came into play. They supported their Saudi leaders by ensuring the WPJD evolved in accordance with the needs of the leader and to ensure the survivability of the state.

Leadership for Ibn Ibrahim was a central aspect of the creed. The leader and the followers have a sacred bond, and it was illegitimate not to follow the Imam (Ibn Saud was given the title of Imam in addition to that of King).⁴⁹⁵ For Ibn Ibrahim, loyalty to the monarch was so important and the act of submission was so uncompromising that even if the leader performed misdeeds and was unjust, his subjects must continue to be loyal to him.⁴⁹⁶ The only exception to the rule was if the leader came out publicly and explicitly declared himself to be an unbeliever; it is only then that the public had the right to refuse to follow him.⁴⁹⁷ This logic followed Mohammed bin Abd al-Wahhab's own thinking, for he had similarly noted that

⁴⁹⁵ Ibn Ibrahim bin Abd al-Latif Al al-Sheikh, Muhammad, vol. 12, *Al-Hudud – Al-Qa'da' [Limits – Jurisprudence]* (Mecca: Ma'tba'at al-Hukuma bi Mecca, 1979), 169.

⁴⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 169

⁴⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

precedence of Imamate or leadership goes to the person who knew the Quran, did not cheat, and who performed jihad.⁴⁹⁸

4.2.3 How to be a Leader

Ibn Ibrahim was more explicit in setting the rules of who can and who cannot be a leader. According to him, the potential leader must be able to do the job from a mental point of view.⁴⁹⁹ This is a point of capability, based on the person's intelligence and decorum. What really mattered, though, was the issue of wilayat or allegiance.⁵⁰⁰ For Ibn Ibrahim, the leader must be able to perform three actions to make him worthy of the allegiance of Muslims: first, he must protect the religion of Islam; second, he must protect Muslim lives, money, and women; and, last, he must make Muslims follow the shariah.⁵⁰¹ To abdicate the ruler, there was only one rule according to Ibn Ibrahim, and that is if the ruler is too tired to rule (with no exact definition of what being tired really means), then the next in line would be the person who is the least impious of all the other candidates.⁵⁰²

The rules, as one can see, are simple and straightforward. Ibn Ibrahim's rules of leadership emphasized the need for allegiance as the foundation of ruling. That is why, according to Ibn Ibrahim, the people must obey the leader, for disobedience hits at the heart of

⁴⁹⁸ Al-Najdi, *Al-Durar*, vol. 4, *Al-Qism al-Awwal Min Kitab al-'Ibadat [The First Section of The Book of Worship]*, 404.

⁴⁹⁹ Ibn Ibrahim, vol. 12, *Al-Hudud*, 179-180.

⁵⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰¹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰² *Ibid.*, 180

leadership and can turn unleash chaos throughout the state, throwing the nation into a Hobbesian nightmare.

4.2.4 Relationship with the Leader

The allegiance between the political leadership and the religious one is obvious for any scholar of the Saudi-Wahhabi state history. It started with Al-Saud and Mohammed bin Abd al-Wahhab (Al al-Sheikh), and it continues to this present day. What the Wahhabi ulama did was they canonized this sacred link into a law that ensured the interoperability of both systems, and the interdependence of both.

In a letter to one of the Saudi judges, Ibn Ibrahim explained the decorum of how judges must interact with their emirs. He said that an emir was chosen for his role to do good for the people and he must be supported in his actions to ensure the proliferation of this good deed.⁵⁰³ The judge's job was to advise the emir and help him during his term as a leader and must not nitpick on all of the emir's action;⁵⁰⁴ instead, the judge should give the emir space to practice his authority as the leader of the people. Lastly, if indeed the judge sees reason to criticize the emir, he must do so in the form of advice, and in secret, avoiding any public confrontation.⁵⁰⁵ More so, the judge must appear to follow the lead of the emir in public;⁵⁰⁶ that way the emir is not challenged, and his authority stays intact in the eyes of the public.

⁵⁰³ Ibn Ibrahim, vol. 12, *Al-Hudud*, 182-183.

⁵⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

4.2.5 Concept of Justice

The problem of advice and confrontation between the political leadership and the religious one did not go unnoticed by Ibn Ibrahim. He understood that emotions can run high, and confrontation was imminent if points of disagreement did indeed come up. And they usually did, for it is a matter of difference of points of views and thirst of power that can lead to the sparks of civil strife and power struggle.

That is why he linked the concept of allegiance with the concept of justice. However, he did not leave the matter of interpreting justice to the public or even other ulama; he clearly defined them all. Ibn Ibrahim linked the concept of justice with power. A just leader, for Ibn Ibrahim, was the leader that took over his role using power (*bil quwaa*).⁵⁰⁷ One can emphasize here that this concept took its root from Ibn Taymiyya. Ibn Ibrahim goes on to say that even if the leader is immoral, he is still to be followed and respected, since he employed power and he must be accepted as is.⁵⁰⁸ This again highlights the extreme dislike Wahhabis and Ibn Taymiyya's followers have towards chaos or fitna,⁵⁰⁹ for they see civil war and struggle for leadership can only lead to the destruction of the state and, by extension, the destruction of the Muslim community. Taking into consideration the historical context in which Ibn Ibrahim was trying to help build the first modern Saudi-Wahhabi state, one can come to the realization that the context in which Wahhabi thinkers opposed any form of internal struggle that can indeed lead to the downfall of the nascent nation-state.

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid., 178.

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁹ See sections 2.3.1 and 3.2.1 above.

To really make sure his fatwas were not misunderstood or left to any form of misinterpretations beyond their supposed intended meaning, Ibn Ibrahim stressed that “whatever the leader says is considered just.”⁵¹⁰ That the only people who dare ask or demand a just leader as their Imam were the “Shia losers, since they emphasize infallibility in the leader,”⁵¹¹ a point that should be dismissed in its entirety since, according to Ibn Ibrahim, the Shia were not considered part of the right creed. More so, Ibn Ibrahim noted that Sunnis do not excommunicate their leaders even if they did indeed act unjustly or if these actions were sinful deeds of the highest order.⁵¹² As long as the state continues to be a Muslim state then the leader cannot be unseated.⁵¹³

It is important to note here the status of order and fidelity to the leader in ensuring the viability of the state. Ibn Ibrahim was aware of the many claims to the seat of power of the Saudi throne by other tribes and by other states; that is why he went to great lengths to ensure the survivability of the state by ensuring the survivability of the leader. Later, the paper examines how this concept evolved to serve another purpose in the evolution of WPJD - during the time of President Saddam Hussein’s invasion of Kuwait in 1990.

⁵¹⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹¹ Ibid.

⁵¹² Ibid.

⁵¹³ Ibid.

4.2.6 Jihad

With leadership and state affairs comes the need to defend and expand one's realm. For Ibn Ibrahim, jihad was a key activity in the lives of Muslims;⁵¹⁴ however, jihad was not an ad hoc action than can be performed by anyone, anytime, as per their own set of criteria and interpretations. Jihad, for Ibn Ibrahim, always tied in with the actions and decrees of the ruler.⁵¹⁵ If, according to Ibn Ibrahim, the leader declares jihad, everyone must obey the call to fight.⁵¹⁶ It is an unnegotiable command to his subjects.

As the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was taking shape, Ibn Saud and the Wahhabi ulama naturally needed soldiers to defend and expand the emerging state. However, the absolute majority of the Kingdom's enemies were Muslims, which made recruitment trickier.⁵¹⁷ Looking back at Ibn Hanbal's and Ibn Taymiyya's times, there were indeed several Muslim enemies that had to be subjugated; however, most enemies were either Tatars, Mongols, Christians, Zoroastrians, or polytheists. Ibn Saud's enemies, however, were Muslims and, more so, his allies were Christians - the British Empire and the US later. It is for this reason that one finds Ibn Ibrahim pivoting his rhetoric of jihad to one that emphasises total loyalty to the ruler and offensive in nature. He noted that all the Muslim scholars are in full agreement that Muslims have the duty to fight,⁵¹⁸ that now was the time for jihad, and that the time for avoiding the

⁵¹⁴ Ibn Ibrahim bin Abd al-Latif Al al-Sheikh, Muhammad, vol. 6, *Al-Hajj – Al-Amr bil Ma'aruf – Al-Jihad [The Hajj – The Enjoining of Good – The Jihad]* (Mecca: Ma'tba'at al-Hukuma bi Mecca, 1979), 195-230.

⁵¹⁵ Ibid.

⁵¹⁶ Ibid., 204-206.

⁵¹⁷ The Ottoman Empire, the Al-Rashid confederacy, the Sharif Hussein and his sons, the Yemeni states, and the Gulf states.

⁵¹⁸ Ibn Ibrahim, vol. 6, *Al-Hajj – Al-Amr bil Ma'aruf – Al-Jihad*, 200-201.

enemy and forgiving them was only applicable during the first phase of Islam.⁵¹⁹ Ibn Ibrahim took the extra step to dispel any disputes on the matter of jihad being a defensive action. He wrote that self defence was only allowed in the beginning of the Islamic mission and that now it was time for jihad, that Muslims might fight all enemies, continuously, until they convert to Islam.⁵²⁰

By taking the extra step to enshrine his views in the model of the Westphalian nation-state system he found himself in, one can trace how Ibn Ibrahim's language changed in comparison to those of his predecessors. Ibn Taymiyya and other Muslim scholars did discuss the tensions between the land of Islam (dar al Islam) and land of war (dar al Harb); however, the language was always couched in questions of faith. Ibn Ibrahim, though, was now dealing with internal uprisings, as was the case with the Ikhwan, and nation-states, as was the case with Yemen, Transjordan, Iraq, Kuwait, and the other newly formed states surrounding Saudi Arabia. It is for this reason that he emphasized the role the leader played in declaring jihad and that jihad was not a matter of state affairs, not personal ijtiḥād by any individual Muslim. In other terms, he institutionalized the process of jihad and limited the process to the state alone.

For example, Ibn Ibrahim declared that a country is to be considered an enemy state if the public and their leader did nothing to stop the spread of unbelief within their borders.⁵²¹ Unbelievers, Ibn Ibrahim noted, were fought based on their level of unbelief and not whether they have declared war on the Kingdom.⁵²² What Ibn Ibrahim meant here is that an action by an enemy force was not the parameter to judge if and when to attack them; instead, it is the essence

⁵¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 198.

⁵²⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵²¹ *Ibid.*, 197.

⁵²² *Ibid.*, 199.

of the state that makes them good or evil. This declaration moved jihad from a defensive posture to an offensive one, where the reigns fell in the hand of the leader, and the role of Muslims was that of fidelity and loyalty to the monarch. And just to make the action less disputable and clearer for all, Ibn Ibrahim considered that jihad is a *fardh kifaya* (collective duty or communal obligation),⁵²³ which meant that Muslims must follow the orders of their leader by participating in the fight until all the ranks have been filled.

Ibn Ibrahim also paid attention to the role of perception and media in directing and shaping public opinion. He was cognizant of what was being said on the public sphere; that was why he regularly directed the Ministry of Broadcasting and Media on what to say and how to say it.⁵²⁴

Additionally, Ibn Ibrahim advised the citizens of the KSA on who was considered an enemy of the state. According to him, the unbelievers were divided as follows (from the worst to least terrible):⁵²⁵

- Converts from Islam: they must be fought;
- Polytheists: they are given the option to either convert to Islam or die; and,
- Arab Christians and Jews: they are given the option to either convert to Islam or pay the jizyah (non-conversion to Islam tax). However, if they do choose to pay the non-conversion tax, they must still leave the Arabian Peninsula.⁵²⁶

⁵²³ Ibid., 199.

⁵²⁴ Ibid., 195-197.

⁵²⁵ Ibid., 201.

⁵²⁶ Ibid., 230-231.

Regarding the last point, this thesis analysed how the Wahhabi ulama under the leadership of Ibn Baz adapted their concept of WPJD and eventually allowed US and Western (i.e., Christian) troops to setup military bases to fight Saddam during the 1991 Gulf War. This was a very problematic episode for Ibn Baz, a move that led to the rise of the Awakening Movement (al-Sahwa) and caused Osama bin Laden and his al-Qaeda network to eventually lead a war campaign against the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Further explanation will be provided in Chapter 5 below, where it will be shown how Ibn Baz had to develop the WPJD in opposition to the views of past Wahhabi cleric to allow for non-Muslim troops to operate in the KSA. The great-grandson of Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab, Suleyman bin Abd Allah bin Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab,⁵²⁷ for example was noticeably clear on the matter. He proclaimed that Muslims cannot have an alliance with Jews or Christians,⁵²⁸ a point of contention that continue to haunt Wahhabi ulama up to this day.

For other entities within the Saudi realm, though, Ibn Ibrahim was clear on how to handle them. For example, Ibn Ibrahim had declared that for the Shia to live amongst the Saudi state and not be attacked, they must give allegiance (*baya'ah*) to the state and are to be instructed not to practice their belief in public.⁵²⁹ This law is still in effect, and having it stay put as is shows that the Wahhabi ulama and the Saudi state would evolve their WPJD only if it was politically viable to do so. And since the Shia of Saudi Arabia were not strong politically to be of any threat to the state, the WPJD aspect of dealing with them did not evolve significantly.

⁵²⁷ Al-Najdi, *Al-Durar*, vol. 8, *Al-Qism al-Awwal Min Kitab al-Jihad [The First Part of the Jihad Book]*, 121.

⁵²⁸ *Ibid.*, 127.

⁵²⁹ Ibn Ibrahim, vol. 6, *Al-Hajj – Al-Amr bil Ma'aruf – Al-Jihad*, 202. Also see Al-Najdi, *Al-Durar*, vol. 7, *Min Kitab al-Waqf ila Nihayat al-'Iqar*, 387 and 390.

For example, Ibn Ibrahim described the Shia in the derogatory term *Rafidah* every time he referred to them or provided a fatwa about them. He also expanded the term *Rafidah* to specifically indicate that it was the Twelver Imamis to whom he referred.⁵³⁰ For Ibn Ibrahim, he considered them *zanadiqah* (heretics)⁵³¹ and ordered his followers to look into the actions and beliefs of the Shia with a fine toothcomb to discern their beliefs.⁵³² Furthermore, he pleaded with his followers to “hit them with an iron fist,”⁵³³ and to punish them in the toughest ways possible, pleading his followers to kill them if they can.⁵³⁴

More drastically, in a letter to Prince Faysal, he demanded the prince to execute a Shia scholar al-Khunaizi for a book the latter wrote on Muslim historical figures.⁵³⁵ Here, for example, one can detect that even though Ibn Ibrahim detested the Shia, he was content with them living amongst the border of Saudi Arabia if they did not publicly reveal their faith. However, in this case of that Shia author, Ibn Ibrahim wanted to bring down the full might of the law on him because he saw in the author’s action a transgression that was detrimental to the national security of the state. Eventually, the author was not executed, but his books were banned from circulation. This episode shows the flexibility by which Ibn Ibrahim was able to advance his religious fatwas as per the political contexts of the day.

The Shia of Saudi Arabia being one of the weakest groups in the kingdom did not have a major affect on the Wahhabi political or religious order.⁵³⁶ As for those who did choose to rise

⁵³⁰ Ibn Ibrahim, vol. 1, *Al-Aqa'id*, 250, 1.

⁵³¹ *Ibid.*, 249.

⁵³² *Ibid.*, 250.

⁵³³ *Ibid.*, 250.

⁵³⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵³⁵ *Ibid.*, 250-251.

⁵³⁶ Graham Fuller, *The Arab Shi'a: The Forgotten Muslims* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 179-201.

against the House of Saud, the Wahhabis labeled them as Kharijites and usurpers, a very negative connotation that gives the state a *carte blanche* to bring on its full military might to fight them.⁵³⁷

4.2.7 Views on WPJD

4.2.7.1 WPJD and Welfare (Maslaha)

To better understand the evolution of the WPJD, a closer examination must take place of the events that triggered changes to concepts and sub concepts considered fundamental to the Wahhabi leadership. For the WPJD is not a natural evolution for itself and by itself. Contrary to the natural evolution of religious doctrine, the Wahhabi ulama evolved the WPJD not because of religious triggers; instead, as was noted in the hypothesis, it was done to accommodate political contextual events that caused the change in the religious doctrine.

The idea of common good or welfare (*maslaha*) holds a crucial spot for the Wahhabi ulama in the creation and maintaining of power. As a rule, any action in the benefit of the state and the creed is considered a *maslaha*, while any action to the contrary must be stopped and fought.

⁵³⁷ Ibn Ibrahim, vol. 12, *Al-Hudud*.

In one instance, for example, Ibn Ibrahim was asked on how to deal with non-Muslims, for which he replied that they must be shown the least amount of respect.⁵³⁸ According to him, one must try hard not to accommodate non-Muslims, going to the length of even not shaking their hands or replying to their niceties.⁵³⁹ However, Ibn Ibrahim noted in the same fatwa that if there was a benefit from befriending a non-Muslim, then one can even go as far as congratulating them on their holy days and celebrations.⁵⁴⁰

Ibn Ibrahim understood that treatment of others must be a fluid, pragmatic action, and he issued his proclamation in accordance with this view. In one instance, for example, he blessed President Dwight Eisenhower's action to open the Islamic Centre in Washington and asked his followers to even "honour that kafir [unbeliever],"⁵⁴¹ for he noted that befriending him as an ally would be beneficial for Muslims.⁵⁴²

Ibn Ibrahim was also cognizant of what type of media can benefit the Wahhabi creed and pushed his followers to spread the word of those who help spread the word. In one instance he approved the teaching of Abd Allah Azzam's books,⁵⁴³ for he saw them as helping the cause of spreading the Salafi belief.

Closer to home, Ibn Ibrahim took part in drastic measures, adjusting his own laws to accommodate the Al-Saud leadership and, as he saw it, help the country stabilize and avoid chaos and civil strife. He personally signed the fatwa to remove King Saud and install his

⁵³⁸ Ibn Ibrahim, vol. 6, *Al-Hajj – Al-Amr bil Ma'aruf – Al-Jihad*, 253.

⁵³⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁴¹ Ibid., 252.

⁵⁴² Ibid.

⁵⁴³ Ibn Ibrahim bin Abd al-Latif Al al-Sheikh, Muhammad, vol. 13, *Al-Qisma – Ma'arif Mutanawwi'a [Allocation – Various Knowledge]* (Mecca: Ma'tba'at al-Hukuma bi Mecca, 1979), .120.

brother Faysal to avoid any possibility of weakening the state.⁵⁴⁴ In the public fatwa posted on the official country's newspaper, *Um al-Qura*, Ibn Ibrahim and many Wahhabi ulama signed the fatwa to remove King Saud and install Faysal. In the Royal signatories' section there is a list that contains the names of all the significant princes who with the sole exception of Prince Faysal, a move, it seemed, to reduce any possibility of friction from having his name appear in the declaration.

4.2.7.2 WPJD and ABM

According to Wahhabi doctrinal foundations, ABM is one of the most important activities a Muslim can do, on par with jihad. For Ibn Ibrahim, he considered it the greatest foundation of Islam.⁵⁴⁵ He held it in such a high regard that he noted that he, and previous ulama before him, would advise Muslims to emigrate out of their countries if they cannot fulfill this obligation.⁵⁴⁶ In other words, if the state does neither supports nor allows its citizens to perform ABM, then the duty of those Muslim citizens was to leave that state and go to another where they can perform this sacred duty.

⁵⁴⁴ Royal Decree, "Faysal Yumaris Sultat Jalalat al-Malik fi Hu'durihi wa Ghiyabih: Ijma'a al-Ulama wal Usra al-Malika 'ala an Tuna't bi Sumuwih Jami'i al-Salhiyat li Tasreef Shu'un al-Dawla [Faisal Executes the Authorities of His Highness the King in his Presence and Absence: Consensus of the Ulama and the Ruling Family to Invest his Highness with all the Powers to Execute the State's Affairs]," *Um al-Qura*, April 3, 1964, 1.

⁵⁴⁵ Al-Najdi, *Al-Durar*, vol. 15, *Al-Qism al-Awwal Min al-Bayan al-Wa'dih wa Anbal al-Nasaih 'An Irtikab al-Fa'daih* [The First Part of the Clear Declaration and The Most Noble of Advice from Committing Scandals], 15.

⁵⁴⁶ Al-Najdi, *Al-Durar*, vol. 8, *Al-Qism al-Awwal Min Kitab al-Jihad*, 276.

4.2.7.3 WPJD and al-Hisba

Even though the ABM duties must be performed by all Muslims, the Hisba institution is the kernel of this activity.⁵⁴⁷ The Hisba members have the right to police all the activities of the public to ensure they are following the law and the duties of Islam. They have the right to question anyone at anytime, and the group itself evolved to a government ministry due to the efforts of Ibn Ibrahim. This group's power grew so much in later decades that for some Saudi citizens they were seen as religious police with immense power and very minimum oversight. Ibn Ibrahim himself had to deal with the public's dissatisfaction with the Hisba, or more commonly known as Mutawa'a, coming to their defence many times over throughout his career.

Ibn Ibrahim set specific parameters regarding the type of people who can become part of the Hisba outfit. Regarding the individual characteristics, he noted that the Hisba employees must possess intellectual acumen, organizational prowess, harsh execution capabilities, and administrative understanding of the law.⁵⁴⁸ The institution itself would be divided into a leader or wali, judicial body, executives, and an oversight body.⁵⁴⁹ Beyond these limited set of parameters, Ibn Ibrahim does not go into further details on the administrative or organizational relationship within the group.

However, Ibn Ibrahim was clear on the power scope of the Hisba. For him, they constituted the conscious of society and without them the creed would be lost. The Al-Saud kings had sent letters to their emirs and subjects enjoining them to ensure the full

⁵⁴⁷ Ibn Ibrahim, vol. 6, *Al-Hajj – Al-Amr bil Ma'aruf – Al-Jihad*, 167-194.

⁵⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 174.

⁵⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 174-175

implementation of ABM, which officially was performed by the Hisba. Ibn Ibrahim, though, went beyond any previous leader or alim, by spelling out the groups power and infallibility.

For example, in a letter to the Head of Judiciary in the Western Province, he chastised the head judge by telling him that he shall not doubt the actions of the Hisba, since its members possessed the highest level of ethics in society.⁵⁵⁰ More so, Ibn Ibrahim did not even allow anyone to challenge the Hisba and that the government cannot accept a lawsuit against al-Hisba, since they represent the moral police.⁵⁵¹

In another case, Ibn Ibrahim requested the help of the King and the Crown Prince to get personally involved in a case where an Hisba member was assaulted while conducting his duty.⁵⁵² In another case, he wrote a letter to the Emir of Riyadh stating that even if the Hisba employee chose to drop a case of an assault against himself or herself, the state must prosecute the assault on the Hisba employee.⁵⁵³ Involving the King, the Crown Prince, and princes on matters that is usually dealt with on a police department level only highlights the value and importance Ibn Ibrahim held for his Hisba personnel. They are, one can say, an extension of his ideology, playing the role of the enforcer on a state-wide level.

⁵⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 179-180.

⁵⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 392-393.

⁵⁵² *Ibid.*, 182.

⁵⁵³ *Ibid.*

4.2.7.4 WPJD and Loyalty and Disavowal (Al Wala wal Bara)

As the Kingdom evolved and expanded, so did the laws governing the political parameters of what was accepted and forbidden. The concept of loyalty and disavowal (*al Wala wal Bara*) is another important religious concept for the Wahhabi clerics, and it holds a significant role in their political theory. In simple terms, the concept asks Muslims to be loyal to those people (and ideas) that are pleasing to God, while Muslims must disavow and disassociate with anything that displeases Him. The concept came to prominence through the writings of Ibn Taymiyya in his *Kitab al Iman*,⁵⁵⁴ and became a Wahhabi political norm after the rise of Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab and the creation of the First Saudi state.⁵⁵⁵

For Ibn Ibrahim, the concept of loyalty and disavowal took on both political and economic roles. As the Saudi Kingdom expanded both geographically and economically, the Wahhabi ulama had to set parameters of who are to be considered allies, especially due to the changing nature of the region and the world writ large.

Ibn Ibrahim was adamant in disavowing any form of respectful interaction with non-Muslims; however, he adapted his thinking based on the benefits and rewards from such types of interactions.⁵⁵⁶ He saw the need to ally his country with powerful empires, advocating for his followers to befriend and even honour the leaders of allied countries, countries that he considered infidel and fall under the banner of those that must be fought.

⁵⁵⁴ Ibn Taymiyya, *Kitab al Iman*, 14; and Ibn Taymiyya, *Kitab al Furqan*, 53.

⁵⁵⁵ Al-Najdi, *Al-Durar*, vol. 7, *Min Kitab al-Waqf ila Nihayat al-'Iqrar [From The Endowment Book to the End of The Recognition]*, 309; Al-Najdi, *Al-Durar*, vol. 1, *Al-A'qaid*, 28; and, Al-Najdi, *Al-Durar*, vol. 2, *Al-Tawhid [Monotheism]*, 325.

⁵⁵⁶ Ibn Ibrahim, vol. 6, *Al-Hajj – Al-Amr bil Ma'aruf – Al-Jihad*, 251-264.

Additionally, he had to deal with the influx of several types of peoples from different faiths and backgrounds that were visiting Saudi Arabia due to the enormous increase in development in all types of economic, military, and infrastructural levels. As was the rule with the Wahhabi creed, non-Muslims were not allowed to enter Mecca or the Hijaz area.⁵⁵⁷ If they did have graves on any of these lands, they must be emptied immediately.⁵⁵⁸ However, one can detect a change in the tone of the Mufti regarding business visitation to the Kingdom. In one fatwa, Ibn Ibrahim allowed non-believers to visit the Hijaz area for business; however, he did try to limit the time spent and set the timeframe to a maximum of three days.⁵⁵⁹ Ibn Ibrahim goes on quoting the well-known Sunni scholar Ibn Qayyim, saying that he had a decree supporting the opening of businesses in the Muslim holy land, based on a fatwa issued by the Second Rashidun Caliphate Omar. Hence giving legitimacy to this change in modus operandi.

Later, Ibn Ibrahim noted that Christian engineers were even allowed to enter the Prophet's Tomb Mosque (al-Masjid al-Nabawi), a drastic shift from the line of thought followed by his predecessors.⁵⁶⁰ More so, Ibn Ibrahim goes on justifying the applicability of using non-Muslims to help build Muslim cities, again referring to previous fatwas by Ibn Qayyim. Many of these fatwas were included as part of a reply to the Secretary-General of the World Muslim League to broadcast this change to whole Muslim world.⁵⁶¹

⁵⁵⁷ Ibid., 254-256.

⁵⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁰ Ibid., 256-258.

⁵⁶¹ Ibid., 258-262.

4.2.7.5 WPJD and the Monopolization of the Narrative

The micro-management type of control over aspects that might seem too simple to be handled by the Mufti of the Kingdom might seem immature and unnecessary. One would think that someone at the level of a Mufti who had the ear of the King should be concentrating on strategy and big picture events. However, action that are deemed too tactical sometime play a larger role in how the Muslim community accepts the leadership of Saudi Arabia and the Wahhabi ulama and sets the stage towards a more comprehensive control of the WPJD and how it feeds into the Saudi Arabian political strategy. This is a key point to which the paper will return to when examining the lives of Ibn Ibrahim and Ibn Baz, and their agendas in establishing, miniating, and reviving the Saudi state. As Mouline had noted, this middling into what seem like minute items was really a manifestation of the Wahhabi ulamas' monopoly over sacred texts,⁵⁶² making sure they were the ones who set the tone of what is acceptable and not acceptable on the world stage. This can also be seen as way for the Wahhabi ulama to purify the Hanbali creed, transforming it into a purely Wahhabi one. With a larger strategic scope, the Wahhabi ulama can then move into influencing the whole Sunni sect and the Muslim faith; a significant manoeuvre that underlines how the Muftis of Saudi Arabia and the ulama of Wahhabism were able to transcend the Saudi state to take part in shaping the Muslim world's political events.

⁵⁶² Mouline, *The Clerics of Islam*, 95.

4.2.8 Ibn Ibrahim and the Birth of the KSA

The creation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Third Saudi-Wahhabi State, is the most significant event in the history of Wahhabism. It is the first Westphalian Wahhabi state in history and, until now, the most stable state that had ever existed that expounded the ideals of Ibn Taymiyya and Mohammad bin Abd al-Wahhab. One can also add that the state went from a subservient Sunni sub-sect to a leading proponent of Hanbalism in modern history, reaching unprecedented global influence on the whole Muslim world.

What some researchers called the emergence of contemporary nation-state in the Middle East played a significant effect on the role and implementation of jihad doctrine in local, regional, and international politics.⁵⁶³ Muslim states that exposed Islamic doctrines had to evolve their jihad doctrines considering the global emergence of the modern nation-state, and Saudi Arabia had to adapt quickly to the changing nature of politics and warfare.

In a series of declaration to the Muslim people, Ibn Ibrahim and Muhammad bin Abd al-Latif noted the significance of the Saudi state for the Muslim people and stressed the importance of allegiance to the Al-Saud as a matter that went beyond politics and into the realm of faith and victory of Islam.⁵⁶⁴ The two sheikhs noted that the Muslim people were falling into a state of polytheism and were in loss to their identity as Muslims, until Mohammed bin Abd al-Wahhab and his supporters, mainly the Al-Saud clan, came along and saved the Muslims from

⁵⁶³ See Ali G. Dizboni, *Islam and War: The Disparity Between the Technological-Normative Evolution of Modern War and the Doctrine of Jihad* (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2011).

⁵⁶⁴ Al-Najdi, *Al-Durar*, vol. 14, *Kitab al-Nasai'h*, 408-414.

the abyss they were in.⁵⁶⁵ The struggle was necessary to save the Muslims from this confused state of affairs, for they had no true Muslim state to call their own. However, God helped the Al-Saud in their struggle until they rose to power and were able “to unite the people of Islam and Iman [faith].”⁵⁶⁶ It is because of their efforts Muslims have a state that reflects the identity of Islam. However, Ibn Ibrahim and Muhammad bin Abd al-Latif warned that to protect Islam and to continue to be a strong Muslim nation, it was necessary to unite under the leadership of Al-Saud. For him, it was non-negotiable and must not be disputed, since disputing the role and actions of a leader was despised and abhorred by a substantial number of Muslim scholars, mainly: Ibn Hanbal, al-Nawawi, Ibn Taymiyya, and Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab. To drive the point home on the necessity of unity, Ibn Ibrahim and Abd al-Latif quoted a story relayed by Ibn Hanbal of how the Muslim people of Cyprus who lost all their power and status because they were divided upon themselves, going from a conquering nation to a weak one, insignificant and forgotten.⁵⁶⁷

Ibn Ibrahim, in another letter to the Muslim people, pointed out that the duty of Muslims should be focused on ABM activities instead of thinking about the ruler and whether his actions were just or not.⁵⁶⁸ What Ibn Ibrahim was emphasizing here was the need for the citizens to focus their support on making the state stronger by performing the ABM duties and, by extension, flesh out any opponents by labelling them as unfaithful. Criticism of the monarch became equivalent to criticism of the faith. This was a leap in Muslim political philosophy, since in Islam servitude and obedience was reserved to God alone.

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid., 409-410.

⁵⁶⁶ Al-Najdi, *Al-Durar*, vol. 14, *Kitab al-Nasai’h*, 410.

⁵⁶⁷ Ibid., 412-413.

⁵⁶⁸ Ibid., 414-419.

As for the relationship between the Wahhabi creed and the Saudi state, a high level Wahhabi sheikh, Abdallah bin Muhammad bin Hamid, wrote to Crown Prince Faysal noting that religion and kingship are like brothers; they aid each other and get stronger through that mutual relationship.⁵⁶⁹ Ibn Hamid noted, significantly, that in the Muslim world today, “there are no kings of Islam left that can support Islam, except for this blessed family [Al-Saud] who protected Islam and raised the banner of tawhid [monotheism].”⁵⁷⁰ What the Al-Saud household had done, according to this Wahhabi alim, was not only establish a nation-state that reflected true Islam, but they were the only political entity that left that can do the job of ensuring the viability of the creed. Ibn Hamid then returns to the main point raised earlier by Ibn Ibrahim by emphasising the role of al-Hisba as an oversight body ready to identify anyone in opposition to the state and its leader. In his letter to Faysal, Ibn Hamid said that the mutawa’a were even more aware of the shariah than the police force itself, and that they must continue to do their work of monitoring society.⁵⁷¹ Here, Ibn Hamid was returning to the significant role of the Hisba and raising their status above that of the of the police, an effort that signified the political integration of the religious police in the state’s apparatus and, more importantly, in the mind of the nation’s leaders.

⁵⁶⁹ Al-Najdi, *Al-Durar*, vol. 15, *Al-Qism al-Awwal Min al-Bayan al-Wa’dih wa Anbal al-Nasaih ‘An Irtikab al-Fa’daih*, 27-33.

⁵⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁵⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 32.

4.2.9 The Ikhwan Rebellion (1927-1930)

With every state comes a military power that helps tips the balance towards its leader and defends the nation from all its enemies. For the Saudis, it was the Ikhwan army that supported and helped the nation achieve victory against its adversaries. The Ikhwan army was made up from sedentarized Bedouins,⁵⁷² faithful followers of the Wahhabi creed and loyal subject to the Saudi leadership.

As the Saudi nation started to take shape, however, a clash erupted between Ibn Saud and the Ikhwan leaders that centred on the extent by which Ibn Saud would expand his empire. The clash itself highlighted the strategic acumen of Ibn Saud and how he understood the nature of the local, regional, and international spheres' linkages on his own kingdom. The Ikhwan wanted to expand the territories of Saudi Arabia into Kuwait, Jordan, and Iraq. For them, Kuwait was part of the Shimmar tribe territory and must be included as part of Saudi Arabia, going as far as considering the Kuwaitis non-Muslims and demanding to wage jihad against them.⁵⁷³ While Iraq and Jordan, on the other hand, were seen by the Ikhwan as remnants of the Sharif Hussein's empire and scores must be settled to fully annihilate the Sherifian dynasty once and for all.⁵⁷⁴ However, this was where the strategic acumen of Ibn Saud and the Wahhabi ulama come into play.

⁵⁷² Mouline, *The Clerics of Islam*, 99.

⁵⁷³ Kostiner, *The Making of Saudi Arabia 1916-1936*, 114 and 77-100.

⁵⁷⁴ For Ibn Saud's views, see Kostiner, *The Making of Saudi Arabia*, 65-66, 69, 79, 87, 91-92, 94, and 97-99. For the Ikhwan's view, see Kostiner, *The Making of Saudi Arabia*, 93-95, 97-98, 110, and 130. Also, for a first account of the Ikhwan raids on the Iraqi and Jordanian frontiers, see John Bagot Glubb, *War in the Desert: An R. A. F. Frontier Campaign* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1960).

Ibn Saud saw in the continuing attacks on neighbouring states undermined his image as a political leader, what Mouline referred to as the transition from a warrior to a diplomat.⁵⁷⁵ Ibn Saud and the Wahhabi ulama understood that the time of offensive jihad against neighbouring enemies had ended. It was time for another type of weapon – diplomacy. More so, Ibn Saud understood with whom his neighbours were aligning with, and he wanted to be part of that alliance. He saw the potential and the power of the new layout in the Middle East. That was why he offered to sign a truce with the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait,⁵⁷⁶ understanding the significant they played for the British Empire’s position in the region. Ibn Saud understood the change of nature with the Sherifian dynasty. Kings Abdallah and Faisal of Transjordan and Iraq, respectively, were neither their father Sharif Hussein, nor a continuation of his policies in the region in relation to Al-Saud and the Wahhabis. Ibn Saud grasped the need to shift Wahhabi strategy from one that relied on the sword to one that was adaptable to the changing nature of the players. He immediately set on signing alliances with both Kings, which gained him significant land at the expense of Iraq.⁵⁷⁷ With Mecca and Medina under his control, Ibn Saud unintentionally won the alliance of the Indian Muslims and, by extension, the support for the Indian Imperial Office that supported a British Alliance with Ibn Saud, to the protest of Sir Percy Cox and the rest of the Middle Eastern British Imperial officers.⁵⁷⁸

At the same, the Wahhabi state was acutely aware of the risk the Ikhwan army posed to the fragile set of alliances in the region. The Saudis were warned by the British that the menace of the Wahhabis was not acceptable and that Ibn Saud must take measures to curb the Ikhwan’s

⁵⁷⁵ Mouline, *The Clerics of Islam*, 102.

⁵⁷⁶ Troeller, *The Birth of Saudi Arabia*, 22-23, 25, 36, 39, 51, and 59-60.

⁵⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 232, n19.

⁵⁷⁸ Kostiner, *The Making of Saudi Arabia 1916-1936*, 32.

attacks on its neighbours.⁵⁷⁹ Ibn Saud and his Wahhabi ulama understood the negative political impact the Ikhwan were having on the monarch and set to curtail their attacks, to which the Ikhwan army responded with a full fledged rebellion that culminated after a number of years of bloody conflict in the battle of Sabila in 1929. The remaining foot soldiers were eventually merged with the Saudi National Guard.⁵⁸⁰

Looking at the letters and correspondences of the Wahhabi ulama, it can be said that ulama were able to adapt to the regional and international changes in the region by ostracizing the Ikhwan. More so, the Wahhabi ulamas' attacks on and excommunication of the Ikhwan was clear and uncompromising, for all Saudis to see. In the Ikhwan the Wahhabi ulama saw a group that was adamant on fostering division (fitna) and, more importantly, they were rebelling against the true monarch and guardian of the Wahhabi faith, a clear attack on the sacredness of the Wahhabi state.

In one letter to King Ibn Saud that included the top Wahhabi ulama of the state,⁵⁸¹ the ulama insisted that the King must fight and destroy all the Ikhwan since they have killed Muslims, did not adhere to the sheikhs' advice to stop their ill ways, and used tricks to avoid submitting to the righteous way.⁵⁸² Similarly, in a letter addressed to the Ikhwan underlining the fact that they cannot, religiously, defy the ruler and if any of them do have a problem with the ruler's modus operandi they can either speak directly to the ruler or send him letter in which

⁵⁷⁹ Troeller, *The Birth of Saudi Arabia*, 141.

⁵⁸⁰ David Dean Commins, *The Wahhabi Mission and Saudi Arabia* (I.B. Tauris, 2006), 92.

⁵⁸¹ Sheikhs Muhammad bin Ibrahim, Muhammad bin Abd al Latif, Abd al-Aziz bin Abd al-Latif, Salih bin Abd al-Latif, Omar bin Abd al-Latif, Abd al-Rahman bin Abd al-Latif, Abd Allah al-An'qari, Omar bin Salim.

⁵⁸² Al-Najdi, *Al-Durar*, vol. 9, *Al-Qism al-Thani Min: Kitab al-Jihad*, 348-352.

they could note their problems and request his review.⁵⁸³ One notices here that in both suggestions, discretion was expected, since in both case, the issues would be limited to the King's "eyes only," with no involvement of the public in the matter.

There are also letters from Ibn Ibrahim to the Ikhwan leaders al-Duwaysh and Sultan bin Bijad, where Ibn Ibrahim emphasised to them the rules of *Imamate* (leadership) and Baya'ah (allegiance), in addition to what was expected from them; simply put, Ibn Ibrahim returned to the point of the need to always follow the chosen leader and not to question his motives or plans.⁵⁸⁴ Again, one can note here the dismissal of opinions and the emphasis on unity, a necessary approach by the ulama to stomp any criticism to the King's alliance with the British and refusal to continue his attacks against old enemies in the region.

It is important to note that although the most prominent Wahhabi ulama did write letters and issue fatwas against the Ikhwan, many letters condemning the Ikhwan and urging the King to fight them were written collectively. This strategy was a type of *modus operandi* used by the Wahhabi ulama and the Saudi leaders whenever the threat was dangerous enough that it demanded a unified attack by all the top officials at the same time. It was the same approach taken when Prince Faysal dethroned King Saud, and when the Kingdom had to justify the use of foreign forces to attack Saddam's military in 1990.

⁵⁸³ Ibn Ibrahim, vol. 12, *Al-Hudud*, 170-172; and, Al-Najdi, *Al-Durar*, vol. 7, *Min Kitab al-Waqf ila Nihayat al-'Iqar*, 318-319

⁵⁸⁴ Ibn Ibrahim, vol. 12, *Al-Hudud*, 172, n. 1. Also, Al-Najdi, *Al-Durar*, vol. 7, *Min Kitab al-Waqf ila Nihayat al-'Iqar*, 283-294; 321-323; 327-329; 329-330; and 395.

Going to back to the Ikhwan, one finds another letter written by a large number of Wahhabi ulama⁵⁸⁵ to the Ikhwan leaders⁵⁸⁶ chastising them on their action in planning an uprising against the leader and warning them that such an action is evil.⁵⁸⁷ The Wahhabi ulama absolved themselves from the Ikhwan actions, noting that they did not observe any ill action by the Imam Ibn Saud.⁵⁸⁸ The ulama advised that if indeed the group did note any reason that annulled their servitude to Imam Ibn Saud, then they must, instead, advise him discreetly.⁵⁸⁹ The Wahhabi ulama informed the Ikhwan leaders that their act of rebellion and not serving their King was forbidden, and that the rebels' claim that their way was the way of Muslim ulama was false, since their method would result in civil war and strife (*fitna*).⁵⁹⁰ The ulama added that the Ikhwan leaders did not approach them or the King with their griefs; instead, the Ikhwan leaders self-righteously posed as their own ulama to justify their actions and that that was another forbidden action in Islam.⁵⁹¹ To add more justification to their logic, the Wahhabi ulama then quoted Prophet Muhammad where he had emphasized obeying one's ruler,⁵⁹² and ended their letter by advising the leaders to ask for forgiveness, since they were now deemed tyrants (*tawaghit*)⁵⁹³ and that all their followers were evil people;⁵⁹⁴ that the movement had

⁵⁸⁵ Sa'ad bin Hamad bin Utaiq, Sulyman Sahman, Salih bin Abd al-Aziz, Ab al-Aziz bin Abd al-Latif, Umar bin Abd al-Latif, Abd al-Rahman bin Abd al-Latif, Muhammad bin Ibrahim.

⁵⁸⁶ Faysal al Duwaysh, Sultan bin Bijad, Dha'ar bin Rubaya'an, 'Ayed al-Bahimah, Hindi al-Dhwaybi, Bandar bin Jua'alayn, Abd al-Muhsin bin Jibreen, Qa'adan bin Darweesh, Turki al-'Dhay'dh

⁵⁸⁷ Al-Najdi, *Al-Durar*, vol. 9, *Al-Qism al-Thani Min: Kitab al-Jihad, wa Awwal Kitab Hukum al Murtad*, 183-187.

⁵⁸⁸ Here the King is referred to as Imam for religious emphasis.

⁵⁸⁹ Al-Najdi, *Al-Durar*, vol. 9, *Al-Qism al-Thani Min: Kitab al-Jihad, wa Awwal Kitab Hukum al Murtad*, 183-187.

⁵⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹² *Ibid.*

⁵⁹³ The word *taghut* here is used to emphasize the absolute evil position a wrongful leader would occupy, reflecting the position of Pharaoh as an evil king or leader.

⁵⁹⁴ Al-Najdi, *Al-Durar*, vol. 9, *Al-Qism al-Thani Min: Kitab al-Jihad, wa Awwal Kitab Hukum al Murtad*, 183-187.

transgressed God's limits (*hudud*) and that their only way to make amends is to return to their Imam⁵⁹⁵ and not create division within the ranks of the Saudi state.⁵⁹⁶

The Wahhabi ulama understood that they needed to convince the Muslim people and the Wahhabi followers that the Ikhwan's rebellion against Ibn Saud was an illegitimate religious action. That was why the prominent Wahhabi alim at that time, Abd Allah bin Abd al-Aziz al-'An'qari, visited and spent time with Ikhwan as an envoy of King Ibn Saud to understand their concerns and, more importantly, provide a detailed account of his judgement of this group. He issued a detailed letter addressing the Muslim people about his findings which sealed the group's actions as unjustifiable and un-Islamic. In his address, Al-'An'qari labelled the group as tyrants (*al-fi'at baghiya*).⁵⁹⁷ This particular label was not chosen at random. It represented a terminology reserved to describe the Kharijites in Islam, a group many Muslims considered having the most unjust conducts towards Muslim rulers in Islamic history. Al-'An'qari's use of this label was meant to stir the emotions of Muslims and bring forth historical connotations of extreme negative feelings towards the Ikhwan. Al-'An'qari noted in his speech that "Imam Saud sent me and I saw awful actions by them [the Ikhwan]. I advise all who follow them to return to the truth, and stop dividing Muslims, for there actions brings chaos and destruction to Muslims. Imamate is a right upon Muslims."⁵⁹⁸ One can note here the return to the idea of just leadership or Imamate which al-'An'qari associated with Ibn Saud, adding that straying away from the just Imam leads to chaos and destruction.

⁵⁹⁵ Again, the ulama here are using Imam and not King to emphasize the religious nature of monarch.

⁵⁹⁶ Al-Najdi, *Al-Durar*, vol. 9, *Al-Qism al-Thani Min: Kitab al-Jihad, wa Awwal Kitab Hukum al Murtad*, 183-187.

⁵⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 187-188.

⁵⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

Delving more into the subject of Imamate and linking it to civil peace and order, al-‘An’qari added that “there is no religion unless there is a group [unity], and no group [unity] unless there is an Imam, and no Imamate unless you listen to it and obey it, and disobeying the leader and not adhering to him is one of the main causes of corruption in countries and to its people, and moving away from it [moves one] away from faith and reason.”⁵⁹⁹ This causality chain sums up perfectly the Wahhabi political belief system, where religion and religious duty was linked to allegiance to the leader, and chaos and loss of faith are the end results that awaits nations that do not support their leaders. He then added that when it comes to warfare it cannot be done unless the Imam allows its, and any other action would be deplorable.⁶⁰⁰

Lastly, al-‘An’qari clearly referenced the ideas of prominent Salafi and Sunni thinkers to make his concluding remarks. He quoted a saying related to “the Salafi Imam Ahmed bin Hanbal”⁶⁰¹ and Sheikh Fudayl bin Ayyad, where they had said that if they had one prayer that can be accepted by God, then they would reserve it to pray for the Sultan.⁶⁰² That is, if a Muslim had one prayer that can be accepted by God, he or she must offer it to his leader. For Imamate was a religion by itself and it was through it that you got closer to God.⁶⁰³ Al-‘An’qari then quoted Imam Hasan bin Ali saying that peoples’ lives would be better under a leader even if the leader was sinful and unjust, and that disobeying a leader makes one an unbeliever (kafir),⁶⁰⁴ a significant claim from an Imam revered by both Sunnis and Shias. Al-‘An’qari then ends his letter to the Muslim people by stating that if there was a need to bring up the mistakes

⁵⁹⁹ Ibid., 188.

⁶⁰⁰ Ibid., 190.

⁶⁰¹ Ibid., 192-193.

⁶⁰² Ibid.

⁶⁰³ Ibid., 192.

⁶⁰⁴ Ibid., 192-193.

of a leader, one must do so according to the Salafi way: gently and discreetly.⁶⁰⁵ Here, again, discretion was brought to the forefront of public relations, where a leader's points of views and actions were to be handled with utmost care to avoid any friction with the public opinion. Moreover, Al-'An'qari pre-empts anyone that might try and counter the King's actions by using ABM to justify their actions. For al-'An'qari, one cannot apply ABM onto the King, since it would cause great strife to the religion and the world.⁶⁰⁶ Even though ABM is a sacred action, an exception is made towards the leader.

On the other side of the fight, the Ikhwan leaders saw their own rebellion as a religious duty. They saw their move away from King Saud and his cronies as an emigration from a tyrant king and that their actions were justifiable since they only wanted to preserve their religion. The Ikhwan's stance was eventually brought up by the Saudi public to Ibn Ibrahim, his father, in addition to other prominent Wahhabi leaders such as sheikhs Sulyaman bin Sahman and Salih bin Abd Al-Aziz. The Ikhwan's emigration echoed the first Muslim emigration from Mecca to Habasha (present day Ethiopia). Ibn Ibrahim and his group had to reply with the harshest measures, for in the Ikhwan leaders' reasoning there was an explicit tone in the tyrannical nature of King Saud and the Saudi state.⁶⁰⁷ In their reply, the Wahhabi sheikhs explicitly stated that "there is no doubt about their *kufir* (Ikhwan leaders' disbelief) and *riddah* (rejection of Islam) because they sided with the enemies of God and his Prophet and seek their allegiance. [The Ikhwan leaders'] mixed between migrating from Muslim land with that of joining the enemies of the sect and religion, their excommunication of Muslims, and their content with the killing of Muslims and the taking away of their money."⁶⁰⁸ It became clear that when the

⁶⁰⁵ Ibid., 193.

⁶⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁷ Ibid., 209-211.

⁶⁰⁸ Ibid., 209.

Ikhwan leaders attacked the Saudi King, Ibn Ibrahim and the Wahhabi ulama did not hold back in their counterargument. They plainly stated that the Ikhwan leaders were kafirs and rejectors of the principles of Islam, making everything they say or do unacceptable, and paving the way for their excommunication and future annihilation. The ulama then gave a quote from Ibn Taymiyya's *al-Ikhtiyarat* book, where the author gave a fatwa stating that whomever joins the Tatar became a *murtad* (rejector of Islam) and, consequently, his life and money became free to the taking, where they can be slaughtered at will.⁶⁰⁹ Ibn Ibrahim and the sheikhs then rhetorically asked the Saudi public to imagine, then, what would become of someone who believes in the edicts of the polytheists in addition to joining their forces.⁶¹⁰ Here the Wahhabi sheikhs were posing questions merely to guide the Saudi citizen to the obvious conclusion that those Ikhwan leaders were worse off than the Muslims who joined the invading Tatars, and that whatever befalls them should go beyond what Ibn Taymiyya saw fit.

Ibn Ibrahim and the rest of the Wahhabi ulama understood the need to divide and conquer the Ikhwan forces. They closed the door of mercy on the leaders, as the letters above had shown. However, they kept the door open for their followers to repent, understating that those are trained warriors that can be reinstated into Ibn Saud's forces and protect the realm. King Ibn Saud did inquire with Ibn Ibrahim and his ulama about the status of repenting Ikhwan rebels,⁶¹¹ to which the ulama simply stated that if the rebels did indeed repent, then their action must be accepted with the condition that the rebels do indeed "stop the sin, show remorse to what has been done, and have the determination not to return to the sin again."⁶¹² Indeed, keeping the door open to return to the open arms of the King was an excellent move to break the

⁶⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁶¹⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹¹ Ibid., 200-201.

⁶¹² Ibid., 201.

Ikhwan forces and allow the Saudi forces to regain some of its strength. The Ikhwan warriors were not all bunched as infidels as their leaders were. Instead, many of them were portrayed as disillusioned Muslims who did not know right from wrong, and that they should be accepted back into the nation,⁶¹³ a move that helped further weaken the Ikhwan rebellion.

4.2.10 WPJD and the Right to Declare Jihad

The troubles with the Ikhwan highlighted the problem of power diffusion in the state. The Ikhwan took it upon themselves to declare jihad against the King, and tribalism played a role in the recruitment of troops for their cause. The Wahhabi ulama understood these problems and moved on to rectify them. They proposed more powers to the king and simply noted that no one can issue a jihad decree other than the king.⁶¹⁴ By doing so they pulled the rug from under any future rebellion and centralized the executive power of warfare under the King of Saudi Arabia. They then set to move away from the curse of tribalism.⁶¹⁵ The Wahhabi ulama issued a letter to the Saudi Minister of Interior noting that tribes no longer can deal with disputes independently; instead, state courts are to handle all monetary disputes and any matter brought forth by the Hisba.⁶¹⁶ What the ulama did was they completely removed the power of traditional dispute-solving measures used by tribes for centuries and gave them all to the state. The government would now handle all monetary, cultural, political, and religious matters. The

⁶¹³ Ibid., 206-208.

⁶¹⁴ Mouline, *The Clerics of Islam*, 101 and 104.

⁶¹⁵ Ibn Ibrahim, vol. 12, *Al-Hudud*, 290-291.

⁶¹⁶ Ibid., 282-284.

Wahhabi ulama completely emasculated the tribes, giving the state complete power over all matters of daily Saudi life.

To justify their move of total tribal power reduction, Ibn Ibrahim sent a letter to the Minister of Interior beforehand noting that tribal leaders are ignorant of Islamic laws and that they cannot rule according to the Islamic Shariah.⁶¹⁷ More so, they noted that tribalism as a way of life cannot be justified under Islam; for those who fight for *asabiyya* (tribalism) die the death of *Jahiliya* (pre-Islamic ignorance).⁶¹⁸ In other words, modern-day tribes were compared to the infidel tribes that fought the Prophet of Islam. This link to Jahiliya was extremely important because it not only superimposed un-Islamic beliefs to those that claim tribal affiliation, but also implicitly casted the Saudi King as a prophet that revived God's religion and brought together the infidel tribes of Arabia back to the true path of Islam. The ulama fully empowered the Saudi state and, for the first time in the history of central Arabia, undermined the power of tribes completely.

Reducing tribal powers, though, was not the only power move with which the Wahhabi ulama had to deal with. To fully transform the Saudi Kingdom from a tribal confederacy into an Islamic Westphalian state, they had to justify the Islamic nature of the state by denying other forms of government and oppose all forms of positive laws. Saudi Arabia was part of the historical transformation that was taking the Middle East by a storm – the creation of the new borders of the Westphalian nation-states.

⁶¹⁷ Ibid., 291-292.

⁶¹⁸ Al-Najdi, *Al-Durar*, vol. 9, *Al-Qism al-Thani Min: Kitab al-Jihad, wa Awwal Kitab Hukum al Murtad*, 160.

For the Wahhabi ulama, any form of republic is forbidden, and by extension, the position of the president was also prohibited.⁶¹⁹ Republics and other forms of democratic states were based on the idea of voting for the best person for the job. However, Ibn Ibrahim considered the act of voting itself *haram* (forbidden), since he saw the need to have the right person occupying the appropriate position; however, that was not possible through voting since when people vote, they do so to satisfy their own needs,⁶²⁰ and not to fulfil a higher purpose or truth. People, according to Ibn Ibrahim, are not equal mentally;⁶²¹ that is, they differ in their intellectual capacity and cannot understand issues equally. Hence, when Prophet Muhammad did consult his followers, he did not consult them on issues of religion but on issues of war and deception.⁶²² What Ibn Ibrahim was emphasizing here is the inability of laymen to grasp certain ideas, and that issues of leadership and religion must completely be restricted to the elite of Wahhabi ulama and the Al-Saud progeny. Restricting the circle even more, Ibn Ibrahim noted that when it comes to the subject of jihad and warfare, only the Wahhabi ulama were considered experts on the matter and, consequently, were the only persons that must be consulted.⁶²³

As for those who opposed the Saudi form of government and say it was a form of *wahshiyah* (savagery), Ibn Ibrahim noted that those were affected by the ideas of the Kharijites, Mutazilites, and the West.⁶²⁴ Ibn Ibrahim understood that great changes to the systems of governments were engulfing the region and he wanted to get ahead of the criticism by attacking the foundation of opposing movements. He was asked about the backwardness of the Saudi form of government, to which he replied that the fault was not with the Saudi government, but

⁶¹⁹ Ibn Ibrahim, vol. 12, *Al-Hudud*, 173.

⁶²⁰ *Ibid.*, 174.

⁶²¹ *Ibid.*, 175.

⁶²² *Ibid.*

⁶²³ *Ibid.*, 175, n. 1.

⁶²⁴ *Ibid.*, 173.

with the opposition's own logic. For Ibn Ibrahim, it was the newly designed forms of governments that were in clear contrast with true Islam, for he considered them violent opposers (Kharijites), intellectually deviant (Mutazilites), or foreign (the West).

4.2.11 Positive Laws

As was noted above, Ibn Ibrahim and the Wahhabi ulama considered any form of government that did not rely on the shariah was an unacceptable form of government. The Kingdom only ruled according to Islamic shariah; all positive laws (civil or secular), though, were forbidden.⁶²⁵ In a public article, Ibn Ibrahim noted that laws created by the human mind cannot compete with that of God's,⁶²⁶ since one cannot compare the human mind to His. While in another article Ibn Ibrahim, Ibn Baz, and other prominent ulama stressed that positive laws were one of the worst actions one can impose on the state.⁶²⁷ The Wahhabi ulama understood that introducing positive laws could ultimately reduce their power; hence, they moved publicly to defend what they saw as their right to institute and interpret the law of the state.

This interpretation of laws and their applicability was not limited to the realms of politics and family relationship. For example, in a letter to the Minister of Commerce and Industry, Ibn Ibrahim warned him that relying on experts to create laws in his area meant

⁶²⁵ Ibid., 247-248.

⁶²⁶ Ibid., 284-291

⁶²⁷ Ibid., 256-260.

nothing in the eyes of Islam and Muslims, and that he must rely solely on the ulama for these types of tasks.⁶²⁸

The Wahhabi ulama also got involved in the minuscule aspects of law throughout the Kingdom, since they saw any outlet for the introduction of the idea of lawmaking sans ulama as an existential threat to their powers to influence the state and the laws governing the Kingdom. This aspect is highlighted, for example, in a letter from Ibn Ibrahim to the President the Office of the Prime Minister's Diwan reprimanding the Management Office for buying positivist law books from the US, Switzerland, and the UK.⁶²⁹ Ibn Ibrahim did not mince his words, nor did he couch his intent in hyperboles; instead, he clearly stated that this action of introducing foreign law books was an encroachment on the powers of the jurists and the biggest transgression on the powers of the ulama.⁶³⁰

Ibn Ibrahim considered positive laws as an idol (*taghut*), for it transgresses its limits and gets involved in the laws of Islamic shariah.⁶³¹ Ibn Ibrahim did not hold back in his criticism, for he compared the introduction of positive laws as equivalent to the made-up laws used by the Tatars and the Mongols of Genghis Khan.⁶³² One can see here how Ibn Ibrahim used references to bring out strong emotions from the public about the roles of foreign laws and lawmakers in the state. Since he saw any form of encroachment as a direct threat to his rule and the Wahhabi ulama's role in the creation and the ruling of the Kingdom. For Ibn Ibrahim, the

⁶²⁸ Ibid., 260-263.

⁶²⁹ Ibid., 294-295.

⁶³⁰ Ibid.

⁶³¹ Al-Najdi, *Al-Durar*, vol. 16, *Al-Qism al-Thani Min al-Bayan al-Wa'dhi'h, wa Trajim Ashab tilka al-Rasail wal Ajwiba*, 209.

⁶³² Ibid., 211. Also see *Rayat al-Islam* magazine dated 20 Dec 1960.

judiciary must always be independent, i.e., controlled by him and his ulama and not by any of the emirs or the royal family.⁶³³

Furthermore, Ibn Ibrahim saw the need to apply the same concept to other Muslim countries, for he saw his power and those of his ulama extending beyond the boundaries of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. For example, in a letter to the people of Senegal in 1961, he directed them to rely solely on the Islamic shariah as the basis of their laws and to “fight Jewish and Zionist influence” to achieve shariah rule, jihad, and ABM.⁶³⁴

Lawmaking was not the only issue on Ibn Ibrahim’s mind. He was also worried about criticism of the lawmaking body, i.e., the ulama themselves. On 14 September 1955 he sent a letter as the President of the Judges to King Ibn Saud informing him that the Office of Injustice must be shut down.⁶³⁵ The office was introduced to allow the public to come to the King with any complaints or grievances against any of the ulamas’ rulings. However, Ibn Ibrahim saw in the office a threat to the spirit of the ulama and decided that such an office allowed the public to challenge the power of the Wahhabi ulama, which he deemed unacceptable.⁶³⁶ What Ibn Ibrahim did was he raised the status of the Wahhabi ulama to that of the King, for he denied anyone the ability to criticize the work of the ulama and put an end to any possible public criticism, following the same path he and his ulama paved for the King himself earlier on.

⁶³³ Ibn Ibrahim, vol. 12, *Al-Hudud*, 273.

⁶³⁴ *Ibid.*, 275-279

⁶³⁵ *Ibid.*, 295-297.

⁶³⁶ *Ibid.*

4.2.12 The Qadi's Characteristics

Understanding that the judge (*qadi*) was the person responsible for the creation and passing of laws, Ibn Ibrahim and the Wahhabi ulama instituted a set of rules to identify potential judges.⁶³⁷ For it is the judge who represents the essence of the Wahhabi creed through his judgements on all matters of life and the state.

Ibn Ibrahim had a clear set of rules of who can become a judge.⁶³⁸ Firstly, they must be Muslim (which has specific sub-definitions, as will be further explained below). Secondly, they must not be impious. Thirdly, the judge must be just. Ibn Ibrahim then went on to identify two groups of people who were not allowed to become judges. First, they cannot be of the Zaydis faith and,⁶³⁹ secondly, they cannot be Shia, since they are unjust and impious people.⁶⁴⁰ Furthermore, Ibn Ibrahim gave additional restrictions regarding the Shia, where he ordered that they would not be even allowed to have a separate court to deal with their disputes since the Shia do not follow Islamic laws and, consequently, they must submit to the Islamic sharia courts of the country,⁶⁴¹ that is, the Wahhabi system of justice.

As for the matter of lawyers, Ibn Ibrahim saw no need for them, citing that only the accuser and defendant were sufficient to stand in front of the sharia judge.⁶⁴² However, with further reflection, one can understand that what Ibn Ibrahim was doing was limiting the circle of who can and cannot challenge the laws put forth by the Wahhabi ulama. Having a lawyers

⁶³⁷ Ibid., 319.

⁶³⁸ Ibid.

⁶³⁹ Ibid., 323-324.

⁶⁴⁰ Ibid., 319-323.

⁶⁴¹ Ibid., 272.

⁶⁴² Ibid., 297-300.

defend the defendant meant that the lawyer must challenge the ulamas' fatwas. This type of action was seen by Ibn Ibrahim and the Wahhabi ulama as a transgression by the laypeople into the working of the state and the religion, which can only lead to diluting the power of the ulama.

Ibn Ibrahim understood the significance of courts and the role they could potentially play in reducing the power of his allies. It is for this reason he provided detailed instructions to government officials on how to organize administrative work within the Justice Department.⁶⁴³ He could not just keep this matter to the whims of administrators and public servants, for the details would influence the bigger picture with time.

4.2.13 Public Opinion

Ibn Ibrahim, however, did not limit his power control at the gates of the Justice Department. On one hand, he understood the role the media played in forming opinion and how, on the other hand, preachers can also have an impact on the how the public reacts to their ulamas.

That is why, for example, he asked for the Crown Prince's support to help him control the state's newspapers.⁶⁴⁴ For he understood the power of the written word and, instead of condemning it as an innovation, as did the Ottoman Sultans for over two centuries,⁶⁴⁵ he used it

⁶⁴³ Ibid., 366-382.

⁶⁴⁴ Ibn Ibrahim, vol. 13, *Al-Qisma – Ma'arif Mutnawwi'a*, 163-164.

⁶⁴⁵ Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson, *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2012), 213-214.

control public opinion and reactions to the religious institute and the ruling elite. He also took the additional step of massaging the public opinion, molding it to his views. In the same letter to the Crown Prince, he asked him for his support to submit articles and Op-eds that reflected the ulamas' views and opinion.⁶⁴⁶

As for controlling the preachers and the messages they diffused, Ibn Ibrahim issued a fatwa stating that foreigners cannot preach or teach unless approved by his office.⁶⁴⁷ Ibn Ibrahim understood the power religious preaching had in inciting fervor on his subjects; it why he made sure his personal office handled the approval of every single preacher in the Kingdom, Furthermore, any preacher that chose to preach must present a list of references to vouch for his views and morality.⁶⁴⁸ Ibn Ibrahim did not only vet the preachers, he made sure they followed a pedagogical chain that were in-line with the approved Wahhabi and state dogma.

Lastly, Ibn Ibrahim gave strict orders that anyone that choses to preach within the Kingdom must never take any of the names of the four Sunni Imams in vain; otherwise, they would be ostracized and denied the right to preach.⁶⁴⁹ Ibn Ibrahim was very aware of how the new Kingdom was viewed by its neighbouring Sunni brethren and wanted gain win world-wide Muslim support for it by staring with the Sunni Muslim ummah. He couched his restrictions in the language of unity and the need to avoid division and chaos within the ranks of the Sunni world.⁶⁵⁰ Ibn Ibrahim was preparing Saudi Arabia for a greater role in the Muslim world – one of dominance and influence.

⁶⁴⁶ Ibn Ibrahim, vol. 13, *Al-Qisma – Ma'arif Mutnawwi'a*, 163-164.

⁶⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 159-161.

⁶⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 161-162.

⁶⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

4.2.14 The World Muslim League: The Globalization of WPJD

Ibn Ibrahim helped further propel Saudi Arabia on the world stage by helping in the creation of and leading the World Muslim League (WML). Ibn Ibrahim saw the WML to unify the Muslim nations under one banner,⁶⁵¹ and a way to propel the Kingdom's status worldwide. He counselled with King Ibn Saud about matters pertaining to the WML and,⁶⁵² more importantly, he saw it as a tool to "get rid of nationalism."⁶⁵³ Through the WML, Saudi Arabia could defeat its rising enemy in the form of Arab nationalism, in addition to unifying the Muslim world under its banner.⁶⁵⁴ Having the WML located in Mecca would give it religious prestige;⁶⁵⁵ however, and more importantly, it would allow the Wahhabi ulama to control and manage the message of the WML in accordance to their own state-centred discourse. This unification of the Muslim people under one banner would serve as a force multiplier,⁶⁵⁶ especially when it comes to the ability to spread the word about the true creed of Islam,⁶⁵⁷ manage how preaching can be executed worldwide,⁶⁵⁸ and "fight conspiracies trying to rip up the ummah [Muslim world]."⁶⁵⁹ Ibn Ibrahim and the Wahhabi ulama saw in the creation and managing of the WML a vehicle that would allow them to reach an audience in all four corners of the world. A true political machine in the service of the ulama and the King.

⁶⁵¹ Ibid., 188.

⁶⁵² Ibid.

⁶⁵³ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁴ Ibid., 189.

⁶⁵⁵ Ibid., 188.

⁶⁵⁶ Ibid., 189.

⁶⁵⁷ Ibid., 191.

⁶⁵⁸ Ibid., 192-193.

⁶⁵⁹ Ibid., 193.

Ibn Ibrahim's vision for the WML can be demonstrated in his speeches. For example, in a speech to the League's members in Mecca, he was clear in noting that membership in the WML would be open to the ulama alone.⁶⁶⁰ Setting this limitation, as he did domestically with regards to the appointment of judges, Ibn Ibrahim restricted those who could influence the trajectory of the WML. He also noted in the same speech that Islam was both a religion and a rule, or as he specifically put it: "a sword and a book,"⁶⁶¹ only through which Muslims can gain power.⁶⁶² And this power must rest squarely in the hands of the ulama he deemed worthy of the task of running the state and its laws.

Ibn Ibrahim also understood the need to have the Muslim world focus on the events affecting the Muslim world and unify the Muslim states against many of the currents sweeping the area such as communism, nationalism, and imperialism. He saw in these movements a threat to the Saudi rule, and he used the WML to focus on the enemies he saw most threatening to his creed.

In the WML opening speech, Ibn Ibrahim identified the main threat to Muslims as the denial of Muslim countries their right to rule through shariah, and the introduction of non-Islamic laws to replace them.⁶⁶³ As was noted above in Ibn Ibrahim's fight against the introduction of positive laws in Saudi Arabia, he now took the fight worldwide. Ibn Ibrahim understood that denying the enemy a foothold within the state is not enough; the fight must be taken to each country to deny the enemy the strategic advantage of attacking from abroad. To do so, he not only identified the enemies of Islam as atheists,⁶⁶⁴ but also warned that the enemy

⁶⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 195.

⁶⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 197.

⁶⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶⁶³ *Ibid.*, 198.

⁶⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

was using Muslims to fight Muslims.⁶⁶⁵ He understood that the message should not be limited to non-Muslim foreign entities. Instead, he used the threat to help empower Muslim movements to flesh out the enemies within their own borders. He also understood the power tribalism and nationalism had on Muslim nations, especially since the whole region was undergoing immense changes to its social fabric through the institutionalization of the Westphalian nation-state system in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. On that front, he had this to say: “Brothers, the unity of Islam is stronger than any other union; stronger than familial unity, stronger than national unity, stronger than racial unity.”⁶⁶⁶

Lastly, in another speech to the WML in 1963,⁶⁶⁷ Ibn Ibrahim focused his attention on the enemy within. He identified two types of enemies which the Muslim ulama must focus on: firstly, those who are in a direct war against Muslims and, secondly, Muslims who are secretly trying to destroy Islam.⁶⁶⁸ Ibn Ibrahim did not dabble too long in trying to explain the first enemy; however, regarding the second type, he was very vicious in his attack. He identified those Muslims as worse than “the frenja [the West],”⁶⁶⁹ and called upon the Muslims nations to unify and declare jihad against them.⁶⁷⁰ This attack must be understood within the context of the time, for it was a period when many anti-monarchy movements were on the rise, such as Arab nationalism, the Free Offices’ movements, and communism. Ibn Ibrahim saw many powerful monarchist nations such as Egypt fall to these movements, and many were faltering on the brink of civil unrest. He understood that the threat was real to the House of Saud; hence, he used the

⁶⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁷ Ibid., 199.

⁶⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁰ Ibid.

WML to rally the Muslim ulama to his cause and fight the rise of these movements, trying to defeat them before they defeated him.

Ibn Ibrahim was a Wahhabi thinker of the highest caliber. He held the position of the first Mufti of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and held numerous religious and political positions throughout his lifetime. He helped King Ibn Saud secure the realm by rallying the Wahhabi ulama and the Saudi public to his side and fought the enemies of the states furiously and continuously. He helped establish alliances worldwide and fought the rise of many ideological movements around the world, all in the hope of securing the position of Wahhabism on the world stage and the protection of the nascent state of Saudi Arabia. He was successful in his efforts, and he helped produce high quality Wahhabi students and thinkers that were able to follow him, carry the mantle of Wahhabism, and defend the real of the Kingdom. And there was no better person for the task than his top student and the next Mufti of Saudi Arabia: Sheikh Abd al-Aziz bin Baz.

Chapter 5: The Alim and the Ruler – Securing the State

5.1 Wahhabi Muftis: Abd al-Aziz ibn Baz (Ibn Baz) (1910-1999)

5.1.1 Intro

Ibn Baz was the natural successor to Ibn Ibrahim. He was a brilliant Wahhabi thinker who led the country through tumultuous times and helped a series of Saudi kings secure their territory by fending off internal and external enemies through the power of his words. Ibn Baz took on as the official Mufti of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1993 all the way to his death in 1999, the position itself having been abolished from the time of the death of Ibn Ibrahim in 1969 until 1999.⁶⁷¹

Even though the official position of the Mufti was non-existent for three decades, Ibn Baz and his ulama remained in control of the religious narrative and controlled its link to the political arena. As this chapter will uncover, Ibn Baz provided advice and fatwas on all the major political events surrounding the state, whether they were internal strife or external struggles. This thesis will also show how Ibn Baz was crucial in fending off all attacks against the state and in ensuring that the Al-Saud grip on power, and the Wahhabi ulamas' role as partners in that power, never faltered or challenged.

⁶⁷¹ Abd al-Aziz ibn Abd Allah Ibn Baz, *Maqalat al-Allamah al-Sheikh Abd al-Aziz bin Baz fi Majallat al-Wai'l al-Islami* [The Scholar Sheikh Abd al-Aziz bin Baz's Essays in the Islamic Consciousness Magazine], ed. Faisal Yousif al-Ali (Kuwait: Al-Wai'l al-Islami, 2010), 9.

5.1.2 Allegiance to the Leader

As with the rest of Wahhabi and Hanbalite ulama, Ibn Baz saw loyalty to the leader as an important principle that must be followed by every Muslim.⁶⁷² More so, he saw the need to follow orders whether one agreed to it or not as a reflection of genuine Muslim character,⁶⁷³ where one follows orders without any protest. Protesting a law put forth by the ruler, according to Ibn Baz, was considered a sin,⁶⁷⁴ for he considered any form of protest went against the Salafi

⁶⁷² Abd al-Aziz ibn Abd Allah Ibn Baz, “226 Min: Bab Wujub Ta’at Wulat al-Umur fi Ghayr Ma’siyatin wa Tahreem Ta’athim fil Ma’siyah [226 From: Chapter on Obligation to Obey Leaders in Non-Sinful Matters and Prohibition to Obey them in Sinful Matters],” The Official Site of Sheikh Ibn Baz, accessed December 1, 2021, <https://binbaz.org.sa/audios/2549/226-%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%A8-%D9%88%D8%AC%D9%88%D8%A8-%D8%B7%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%A9-%D9%88%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%88%D8%B1-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%BA%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%B5%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%88%D8%AA%D8%AD%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%85-%D8%B7%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%AA%D9%87%D9%85-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%B5%D9%8A%D8%A9>.

⁶⁷³ Abd al-Aziz ibn Abd Allah Ibn Baz, “227 Min Hadith: ‘Alayk al-Sama’ wal ‘Ta’a fi Usrik wa Yusrik [227 From the Saying: You Must Listen and Obey in Your Hardship and Ease],” The Official Site of Sheikh Ibn Baz, accessed December 1, 2021. <https://binbaz.org.sa/audios/2550/227-%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%AD%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%AB-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%83-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%85%D8%B9-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B7%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%A9-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%B9%D8%B3%D8%B1%D9%83-%D9%88%D9%8A%D8%B3%D8%B1%D9%83>.

⁶⁷⁴ Abd al-Aziz ibn Abd Allah Ibn Baz, “Hukum al-Khuruj ‘ala al-Anzima al-‘Ama alati Ya’da’aha wali al-Amr [Rule on the Deviation from the General Laws that were Instituted by the Ruler],” The Official Site of Sheikh Ibn Baz, accessed December 1, 2021, <https://binbaz.org.sa/fatwas/2118/%D8%AD%D9%83%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AE%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%AC-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%B8%D9%85%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%8A-%D9%8A%D8%B6%D8%B9%D9%87%D8%A7-%D9%88%D9%84%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%B1>.

creed and, therefore, it was forbidden.⁶⁷⁵ The rules of government were to be set strictly by the ruler and the ulama.⁶⁷⁶

Ibn Baz was asked once what conditions allowed the Muslim ummah to remove its ruler, to which he replied that there were two conditions for doing so: firstly, the ruler must have sinned publicly and, secondly, removing the ruler would not cause harm and strife to the state.⁶⁷⁷ It is significant to note here that the concept of chaos and fitna surfaced again in the writing of Ibn Baz as it did in the writings of Ibn Ibrahim. In Wahhabi Political and Jihad Doctrines (WPJD) and political nomenclature, a nation-state is always treated as if it exists in a Hobbesian world, where the rule of the jungle would surface, and chaos and strife would overtake a country, if struggle takes place within the state.

⁶⁷⁵ Abd al-Aziz ibn Abd Allah Ibn Baz, "Hal min Manhaj al-Salaf Naqd al-Wula Fawq al-Manabir [Is it the Way of the Predecessors to Criticize the Leader from the Pulpits]," The Official Site of Sheikh Ibn Baz, accessed December 1, 2021, <https://binbaz.org.sa/fatwas/2123/%D9%87%D9%84-%D9%85%D9%86-%D9%85%D9%86%D9%87%D8%AC-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%84%D9%81-%D9%86%D9%82%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%88%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%A9-%D9%85%D9%86-%D9%81%D9%88%D9%82-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%A8%D8%B1>.

⁶⁷⁶ Abd al-Aziz ibn Abd Allah Ibn Baz, "Salahiyat Wali al-Amr allati Yatakhithha li Islah al-Ummah [The Ruler's Capacities that He Takes to Reform the Nation]," The Official Site of Sheikh Ibn Baz, accessed October 2, 2021, <https://binbaz.org.sa/fatwas/26393/%D8%B5%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AD%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D9%88%D9%84%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%8A-%D9%8A%D8%AA%D8%AE%D8%B0%D9%87%D8%A7-%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B5%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AD-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%A9>.

⁶⁷⁷ Ibn Baz, Abd al-Aziz ibn Abd Allah. "Hal al-Khuruj ala al-Hakim Yubih Qatl 'A'awanih wa Kul Man Ya'mal fi Hukumith? [Does Rebelling Against the Ruler Permit the Killing All His Associates and Everyone Who Works in the Government?]," The Official Site of Sheikh Ibn Baz, accessed December 1, 2021, <https://binbaz.org.sa/fatwas/2109/%D9%87%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AE%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%AC-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%A7%D9%83%D9%85-%D9%8A%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%AD-%D9%82%D8%AA%D9%84-%D8%A7%D8%B9%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%87-%D9%88%D9%83%D9%84-%D9%85%D9%86-%D9%8A%D8%B9%D9%85%D9%84-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%AD%D9%83%D9%88%D9%85%D8%AA%D9%87>.

For the Hanbalite and Wahhabi ulama, as was noted in Chapter Two, not having a leader, or contesting the rule of a sovereign would lead to chaos and confusion, which could result in bloodshed and the breakup of the Muslim ummah. It is therefore adamant on each Muslim to keep the state from faltering and, to do so, one must stay loyal to the leader and serve them under all types of circumstances. For Ibn Baz, rebellion only brings evil on its people.⁶⁷⁸ Loyalty must always be to the sovereign,⁶⁷⁹ and any form of violence to oust a leader is strictly prohibited.⁶⁸⁰

However, Ibn Baz did provide a loophole to remove a leader, a point that was not explicitly mentioned by his predecessor, showing an interesting adaptation of the WPJD to accommodate events that were affecting the region and the Muslim world at the time. Ibn Baz noted that the only way to remove a Muslim head of state was if one can find a stronger state to

⁶⁷⁸ Abd al-Aziz ibn Abd Allah Ibn Baz, “Kayfa al-Ta’amul ma’a al-Hukkam Ala’theen la Yahkumun bi Shara’a Allah wa Yewaloon A’dauh [How to Deal with the Leaders That Do Not Follow Alla’s Law and Ally with His Enemies],” The Official Site of Sheikh Ibn Baz, accessed December 1, 2021, <https://binbaz.org.sa/fatwas/3236/%D9%83%D9%8A%D9%81%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%84-%D9%85%D8%B9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%83%D8%A7%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B0%D9%8A%D9%86-%D9%84%D8%A7-%D9%8A%D8%AD%D9%83%D9%85%D9%88%D9%86-%D8%A8%D8%B4%D8%B1%D8%B9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D9%87-%D9%88%D9%8A%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%88%D9%86-%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%A1%D9%87>.

⁶⁷⁹ Abd al-Aziz ibn Abd Allah Ibn Baz, “Hukum I’ta’ al-Baya’a lighyer Wali al-Amr [Rule on Giving Allegiance to Someone Other than the Ruler],” The Official Site of Sheikh Ibn Baz, accessed December 1, 2021, <https://binbaz.org.sa/fatwas/17994/%D8%AD%D9%83%D9%85-%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%B7%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%B9%D8%A9-%D9%84%D8%BA%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D9%88%D9%84%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%B1>.

⁶⁸⁰ Abd al-Aziz ibn Abd Allah Ibn Baz, “Al-Tariq al-Sahih li Iqamat Shara’ Allah fil Ar’d [The Right Way to Institute Allah’s Law On Earth],” The Official Site of Sheikh Ibn Baz, accessed December 1, 2021, <https://binbaz.org.sa/fatwas/2664/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B7%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%82-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B5%D8%AD%D9%8A%D8%AD-%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%A9-%D8%B4%D8%B1%D8%B9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D9%87-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%B6>.

support the opposing party, making the rebellion quick to avoid fitna and bloodshed.⁶⁸¹ This was a very interesting point of view, for Ibn Baz will use it later to justify the use of Western forces to force Saddam Hussein out of Iraq. Ibn Baz, though, also made sure to keep the door of rebellion fully shut by citing that advise was the main way to change a leader's actions; anything else would be considered equivalent to the way of the Kharijites and Mutazilites.⁶⁸²

Here one finds that Ibn Baz used the Muslim bogeyman, the Kharijites, to repel his followers from the idea of rebellion, equating the action of rebellion to the most hated and despised group of Muslims in history. He also mentioned the Mutazilites, a Muslim group with loose association with the Shia sect and one that was known for their reliance on rationalist debates to justify their actions and beliefs. What Ibn Baz was doing here was closing the door on exegesis by noting that one must not even try to use their intellect to justify or question their leaders; instead, one must rely on the wisdom of their ulama and leaders.

Even the idea of proposing oneself as a leader or asking to be considered for leadership was forbidden.⁶⁸³ What Ibn Baz did was that he basically took Ibn Taymiyya's idea of accepting

⁶⁸¹ Abd al-Aziz ibn Abd Allah Ibn Baz, "Mata Yajooz al-Khuruuj 'ala man Yahkum bi Ghayr ma Anzal Allah [When Is It Allowed to Rebel Against Who Does Not Rule According to What Allah Prohibits]," The Official Site of Sheikh Ibn Baz, accessed December 1, 2021, <https://binbaz.org.sa/fatwas/2681/%D9%85%D8%AA%D9%89-%D9%8A%D8%AC%D9%88%D8%B2-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AE%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%AC-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89-%D9%85%D9%86-%D9%8A%D8%AD%D9%83%D9%85-%D8%A8%D8%BA%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D9%85%D8%A7-%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%B2%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D9%87>.

⁶⁸² Abd al-Aziz ibn Abd Allah Ibn Baz, "Ma Kayfiyat al-Nasiha lil Imam al-'Dhalim?[How to Advise a Tyrant Ruler?]," The Official Site of Sheikh Ibn Baz, accessed December 1, 2021, <https://binbaz.org.sa/fatwas/31372/%D9%85%D8%A7-%D9%83%D9%8A%D9%81%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%86%D8%B5%D9%8A%D8%AD%D8%A9-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B8%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85>.

⁶⁸³ Abd al-Aziz ibn Abd Allah Ibn Baz, "229 Min: Bab al-Nahi 'An Sual al-Imara [229 From: Chapter on Forbidding the Question to Rule]," The Official Site of Sheikh Ibn Baz, accessed December 1, 2021, <https://binbaz.org.sa/audios/2552/229-%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%A8->

the status quo of whomever was the leader and applied it. By forbidding competition for the position of leader, Ibn Baz ensured the leader remained in power and unchallenged. As this thesis examines Ibn Baz's development of WPJD during the many crucial events the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia went through, one can understand why Ibn Baz and his Wahhabi ulama insisted on respecting the kingship of Al-Saud and how that played in securing their grip on power while many other neighbouring states were undergoing fundamental changes to their systems of power, as was in the case with the Shia ulama in Iran, where they had a direct claim to power through the concept of Vilayat-e Faqih (Guardianship of the Islamic Jurist).

5.1.3 Views on WPJD

Ibn Baz considered jihad to be the greatest deed a Muslim can do to get close to God. He considered it a collective duty (*fardh kifaya*); i.e., the Muslim community must participate in jihad until the need was considered fulfilled by the leader.⁶⁸⁴ However, if the leader of the state demanded that all Muslims must partake in jihad, then it was the duty of all Muslims to obey his call for war.⁶⁸⁵ Ibn Baz held the duty for jihad at such a high esteem that he noted that the reason Muslims were weak and their enemies have control over them was because they neglected this duty and, instead, focused on other worldly matters such as trade or agriculture.⁶⁸⁶

%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%86%D9%87%D9%8A-%D8%B9%D9%86-%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A9.

⁶⁸⁴ Ibid., 57.

⁶⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁶ Ibid., 71.

On the issue of jihad, Ibn Baz divided it into two types: requested jihad (*jihad 'alab*) and defensive jihad (*jihad difa'a*).⁶⁸⁷ The first took place when a leader or an alim requested the support of Muslim to fend of an attack at another country, while the other took place when the nation must defend itself against an enemy at its border. Ibn Baz would invoke the first form of jihad during the Afghan-Soviet War, while he would invoke the second type of jihad to help liberate Kuwait from Saddam Hussein's forces. Ibn Baz, though, considered both forms of jihad as a form of proselytizing,⁶⁸⁸ for he saw in fighting for Islam, the Muslim warrior will also help spread the word about the true creed.

Additionally, Ibn Baz was more supportive of offensive forms of jihad, affected by the events of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the need to export Wahhabi creed worldwide. Ibn Baz highlighted the need to fight disbelievers and polytheists until they either converted to Islam or paid the non-conversion tax (*jizyah*).⁶⁸⁹ He also noted that the fact many consider jihad as a defensive measure was a misnomer; instead, it was an offensive action.⁶⁹⁰ Unbelievers must be attacked in their own countries, both to subjugate them and to increase Muslim territories.⁶⁹¹ Furthermore, he pushed for the need to train mujahideen in all forms of weapons to prepare for war,⁶⁹² again taking a more offensive and preparatory approach to jihad in comparison to his predecessor Ibn Ibrahim.

⁶⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁹ Ibid., 72-73.

⁶⁹⁰ Ibid., 75.

⁶⁹¹ Ibid., 74.

⁶⁹² Ibid., 76.

5.1.4 ABM

Ibn Baz's role was less involved in state creation, which was the role of his predecessor Ibn Ibrahim, and more of securing the state as a viable country floating in a sea of chaos and war in the region. For him, the ABM was a method to strengthen the state and there was no better tool than jihad. In his compendium of speeches, fatwas, and writings,⁶⁹³ Ibn Baz views on ABM was positioned within the jihad section of his writings. He saw jihad go hand in glove with ABM, the only difference being the method of execution, not the process.

Ibn Baz understood that there were separate ways to apply ABM. In one example he was asked on how to deal with societal problems, especially when it came to people not following the shariah, to which he replied that one must use kind words and be very aware of the impact language has on people's perception.⁶⁹⁴ More so, he was asked about the ideal way of conducting ABM, since many zealous followers do not follow the right methods instituted by their ulama, to which he underlined that firstly, one must understand the rules and regulations put forth by the ulama in order to be able to debate and discuss matters intelligently; and, secondly, they must use lenient discourse to win hearts and minds. Lastly, he noted the essential role of leading by example.⁶⁹⁵ For Ibn Baz, these rules even apply to the immoral person performing ABM.⁶⁹⁶ What was crucial in his regulations was the role of participating in spreading the message and monitoring others' actions, even if the person who was doing the oversight was a hypocrite. What mattered to Ibn Baz was to have society participate in the

⁶⁹³ Abd al-Aziz ibn Abd Allah Ibn Baz, *Fatawi Noor ala al-Darb [Fatwas of Light on the Path]* (Riyadh: Al-Riasa Al-Amma lil Buhooth Al-'Ilmiyya wal Ifta'a, 2007), vol. 18, *Kitab al Hajj wa Kitab al Jihad*.

⁶⁹⁴ Ibn Baz et al., 905-906.

⁶⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 907-909.

⁶⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 909-910.

process of ABM, for it is through the complete oversight of society that the nation is guided to the right path.

As for those who chose to not participate in ABM, Ibn Baz considered them opposers to the orders of God's will, and he considered them a great danger to society.⁶⁹⁷ For Ibn Baz, ABM was not a matter of choice, but a duty and order that must be followed. Having ABM couched in terms of an individual duty within a collective one, he ensured that the public did his bidding by monitoring themselves, allowing for peer-pressure and mass appeal to control the narrative. By emphasizing active monitoring of the public by the public,⁶⁹⁸ Ibn Baz was able to recruit the entire population in support of the ruler's and the ulamas' policies. Through ABM, Ibn Baz gave a blanket authority to the public to identify and persecute anyone who defied the orders, rules, and regulations of the state, hence ensuring compliance throughout the state with minimum employment of state agencies.

Ibn Baz also tackled the issue of backlash from the public in case an ABM order upsets them. For him, ABM was a sacred action and must be conducted even if it caused negative reactions;⁶⁹⁹ his followers must have patience and never stop working until those doing ill deeds stop their actions.⁷⁰⁰ At the same time, though, Ibn Baz was acutely aware of how actions affect perceptions. In a letter to the head of the Committee of the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice, Ibn Baz advised the head of the Committee to inform his Hisba members to treat people gently and with kindness.⁷⁰¹ Ibn Baz understood the need to enforce rules, but he also understood human psychology and the need to present a favourable image to the public to

⁶⁹⁷ Ibid., 911.

⁶⁹⁸ Ibid., 912.

⁶⁹⁹ Ibid., 923-925.

⁷⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁰¹ Ibid., 921.

attract them to the cause instead of repelling them. At the same time, however, Ibn Baz did not accept anyone criticizing the Committee or the members of the Hisba.⁷⁰² For Ibn Baz, the same rules applied to the Committee as that for the rulers, where criticism was forbidden and, if there was indeed a need to provide advice, it must be done discreetly.

It is important to note here how Ibn Baz emphasized the actions of ABM to the public instead of limiting it to the Hisba, as did his processor Ibn Ibrahim. This change in approach did not come about in a void. What Ibn Baz was doing here was expanding the circle of pro-regime entities beyond a mere group of government officials (*Hisba*) to include the whole wide population. In doing so, Ibn Baz was not only casting a wider net in catching and changing the actions of those who oppose the state's policies, but also diffuse the duties of monitoring and controlling society to include every single member of its citizens. He even went the extra step of decreeing that ABM was a collective duty (*fardh kifaya*), and since the government agencies were not capable of doing the work, others must take on the mantle.⁷⁰³ Ibn Baz, here, shifted the responsibility of ABM onto the public, adding more members to his task force. By doing so, he was automating the process of oversight and control by enlisting the members of the public themselves to do his bidding. For Ibn Baz, ABM was a way for salvation,⁷⁰⁴ a holy task to be

⁷⁰² Abd al-Aziz ibn Abd Allah Ibn Baz, "Al-Radd 'ala Itihamat al-Amereen bil Ma'aruf bil Tashadud [The Response to Accusations that the Enjoinders of Good are Extremists]," The Official Site of Sheikh Ibn Baz, accessed December 1, 2021, <https://binbaz.org.sa/articles/84/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%AF-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%A7%D8%AA%D9%87%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%86-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%81-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%B4%D8%AF%D8%AF>.

⁷⁰³ Al-Najdi, *Al-Durar*, vol. 16, *Al-Qism al-Thani Min al-Bayan al-Wa'thi'h, wa Trajim Ashab tilka al-Rasail wal Ajwiba*, 142.

⁷⁰⁴ Abd al-Aziz ibn Abd Allah Ibn Baz, "Al-Amr bil Ma'aruf wal Nahi 'An al-Munkar Safinat al-Najat lil Mujtama' [The Enjoining of Good and the Forbidding of Evil is the Lifeboat of Society]," The Official Site of Sheikh Ibn Baz, accessed December 1, 2021, <https://binbaz.org.sa/articles/86/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%B1-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%81-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%B4%D8%AF%D8%AF>.

performed by all. In an Orwellian manner, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was able to maintain control over its citizens by homogenising the population to its own ideology by recruiting the population itself to monitor its own self.

5.1.5 Countering Arab Nationalism

Moving from the general rules and laws to specific examples of how Ibn Baz secured the rule of Al-Saud and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, this research will now examine how Ibn Baz countered ideological and political threats to the state; ideologies and political ideas that posed existential threats to the Wahhabi creed and the Saudi political system.

Arab nationalism was a rising force in the Middle East, coming to life as a counter movement to foreign imperialism, and to monarch systems that ruled the area for centuries. The movement culminated in a series of successful coup d'états, starting in Egypt with the Free Officers' Movement (FOM), followed by Abd al-Kareem Qassim's in Iraq, FOM in Syria, and Muammar al-Qaddafi's in Libya.

Ibn Baz's seminal book *Naqd al-Qawmiyya al-Arabia ala 'Daw'a al-Islam wal Waqi'* (*Criticism of Arab Nationalism in Light of Islam and Reality*)⁷⁰⁵ was written in 1961 with the

%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%86%D9%87%D9%8A-%D8%B9%D9%86-
%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%86%D9%83%D8%B1-%D8%B3%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%86%D8%A9-
%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%86%D8%AC%D8%A7%D8%A9-
%D9%84%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AC%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%B9.

⁷⁰⁵ Abd al-Aziz ibn Abd Allah Ibn Baz, *Naqd al-Qawmiyya al-Arabia ala 'Daw'a al-Islam wal Waqi'* [*Criticism of Arab Nationalism in Light of Islam and Reality*] ((n.p.): Al-Maktab al-Islami lil Tiba'a wal Nashr, 1988).

specific purpose of countering the rising tide of Arab nationalism in the region. Ibn Baz authored the book during the time when he was a prominent Wahhabi scholar, yet still under the leadership of the Grand Mufti Ibn Ibrahim. In the book, Ibn Baz provided a very harsh criticism of nationalism and Arab nationalist ideologies, going in length to identify their ideology as one based on non-Islamic values and set to destroy Islam and Muslims communities.⁷⁰⁶ The book received wide acclaim from the Wahhabi circles, nonetheless by the Grand Mufti Ibn Ibrahim. Ibn Ibrahim was so impressed by the book and clearly understood its potential to counter the threat Arab Nationalism posed for the Wahhabi Kingdom that he recommended that the King print and widely distribute it to allow for its benefits to reach all his subjects.⁷⁰⁷

According to Ibn Baz, Arab nationalism was created by Christian Westerners to destroy Islam, the mantle of this movement taken by Arab enemies of Islam to spread the word throughout Muslim land, and that the movement found a following in the ignorant citizens of the region.⁷⁰⁸ Specifically, Ibn Baz underlined his facts to the readers, noting that Arab nationalism was a movement created by Christian Evangelists in Syria to create a wedge and separate Arab Muslims from the Ottomans, an imperialist move to breakup Islam.⁷⁰⁹ It is very interesting to note here how Ibn Baz did not mention his own Wahhabi ulamas' and Saudi leaders' own role in fighting the Ottomans in the Arabian Peninsula. Al-Saud and their Wahhabi ulama had strived for over 200 years to gain independence from their Ottoman masters, losing the first Emirate in 1818 to the Ottoman's viceroy of Egypt, followed by the loss of the Second Saudi Wahhabi Emirate to the Ottoman-backed Al-Rashid tribal alliance. It was not until the

⁷⁰⁶ Ibid., 8.

⁷⁰⁷ Al-Najdi, *Al-Durar*, vol. 16, *Al-Qism al-Thani Min al-Bayan al-Wa'thi'h, wa Trajim Ashab tilka al-Rasail wal Ajwiba*, 148.

⁷⁰⁸ Ibn Baz, *Naqd al-Qawmiyya al-Arabia ala 'Daw'a al-Islam wal Waqi'*, 8.

⁷⁰⁹ Ibid., 10.

twentieth century that the Saudi-Wahhabi alliance was finally able to defeat the Ottomans. However, Ibn Baz in his criticism of Arab nationalism, avoided completely the role the Wahhabi creed and the Saudi tribal confederation played in defeating and expelling the Ottomans out of the Arabian Peninsula. Furthermore, Ibn Baz did not mention how the Saudi-Wahhabi movement allied with Western Christian imperial powers to defeat the Ottomans. Instead, his rhetoric focused solely on the relationship Arab nationalist allegedly had with the West.

Ibn Baz, though, was both cautious of not naming any leader or country in his arguments. He left the criticism open to the reader to make her or his own conclusions. This served him and the KSA well in the sense that by not naming a specific country they can feign ignorance if a state accuses them of spreading discords about them. At the same time, by not naming names, the Kingdom can always reach to an ally with an Arab nationalist party, as it did with Iraq in its war against Iran, without the need to back paddle on any of its arguments to its own people.

Ibn Baz also used his criticism of Arab nationalism to rally non-Arab peoples to his cause. He saw his message as global in nature, and he emphasized throughout his book how non-Arab Muslims strived hard to help Islam and their Arab brethren.⁷¹⁰ This was a well placed strategic move because he was able to counter Arab nationalistic fervor with global inclusiveness under the Wahhabi banner, adding more support and followers from around the globe, a move that would help Saudi Arabia and the Wahhabi ulama in their global fight and recruitment efforts against the Soviets in Afghanistan a decade and a half later.

⁷¹⁰ Ibid., 4-5.

Ibn Baz attacked Arab nationalism by underlying its exclusive approach to Islam and the region. He noted that Arabs were weak throughout history and it was only through their acceptance of Islam that made them the strongest power in the world.⁷¹¹ However, Arab were being tricked by the “lewd ideas”⁷¹² of Arab nationalists, where they pretend to be fighting imperialism while, in reality, the only ideology that can truly fight foreign intervention and unify the people of the Muslim and Arab world was Islam.⁷¹³ For Ibn Baz, if Arab nationalist truly wanted to help Muslims they would have embraced it and followed its rules.⁷¹⁴ Instead, Arab Nationalism was created to sow division between Muslims;⁷¹⁵ It was an ideology created by foreigner to divide and conquer the Muslim and Arab worlds.⁷¹⁶

Ibn Baz brought up in his analysis of Arab nationalism his teacher’s criticism of man-made laws. For Ibn Baz, Arab nationalism was based on positivist laws and the separation of religion and the state.⁷¹⁷ He saw in the movement a rebellion against the shariah, wanting to replace God’s will with a man-made one. Furthermore, he warned against the dangers of falling prey to the ideals of nationalism, for he saw in it the seed in allowing sexual desires to run amok, and for the breakup of family values and the principles of conservatism.⁷¹⁸ At the same time, with the introduction of positivist laws, Ibn Baz warned that society would fall into civil strife, since it will open the door for sectarianism in the Middle East.⁷¹⁹ For Ibn Baz, Arab nationalism did follow a specific religion, yet it allowed for all religions to participate in civil

⁷¹¹ Ibid., 5.

⁷¹² Ibid., 5-6.

⁷¹³ Ibid.

⁷¹⁴ Ibid., 8.

⁷¹⁵ Ibid., 9.

⁷¹⁶ Ibid., 10.

⁷¹⁷ Ibid., 7.

⁷¹⁸ Ibid.

⁷¹⁹ Ibid.

society under its banner; this approach, Ibn Baz noted, would lead to sectarian divisions since all sects would end up competing for a place in society.⁷²⁰ Hence, Ibn Baz considered Arab nationalism the greatest fitna,⁷²¹ a mode of thinking that he deemed *jahili* (pre-Islamic ignorance) set on dividing Muslims into tribes and nations with the ultimate goal of pitting all factions against one another.⁷²²

It is for the reasons above Ibn Baz warned his followers that proselytizing for Arab nationalism was a great sin,⁷²³ and if one chose to follow such ideologies then that would make him an ally of the disbelievers and the atheists in their opposition to Islam.⁷²⁴ What Ibn Baz was doing here was he was not only fighting the ideas of Arab nationalism; instead he was going after the notion of supporting such movements. Ibn Baz, in simple terms, was pre-emptively striking the concept of what can be considered ABM for the sake of Arab nationalism. Saudi Arabia was undergoing significant economic and cultural changes in the 1950s and 1960s, which meant an influx of foreign workers and educators. For Ibn Baz and the Wahhabi ulama, foreigners were a double-edged sword. On one hand they helped build the country and added more potential missionaries to their ranks, warrior-preachers that would go back to their home countries and spread the work about the true creed. On the other hand, those same foreigners brought their own ideas with them, and with the influx of exiled political refugees fleeing Egypt and other Arab countries in the 1950s and 1960s, Ibn Baz and the Wahhabi ulama were concerned about how those exiles would influence the Saudi youth.

⁷²⁰ Ibid.

⁷²¹ Ibid., 12.

⁷²² Ibid., 13.

⁷²³ Ibid., 9.

⁷²⁴ Ibid., 20.

It is for this reason Ibn Baz had emphasized unity in the face of Arab nationalism and, at the same time, emphasized the need to rally around the flag of Islam. In his book, Ibn Baz stressed his argument that Arabs must unite and fight the forces of Arab nationalism by staying true to the religion of Islam and ensure that the only law in place was that of the shariah.⁷²⁵ He added that Muslims must go the distance and perform jihad to defend the shariah; doing so, they would not only defeat their enemies, but go on to rule the Earth, even if their numbers were small and their material wealth was wanting.⁷²⁶ Ibn Baz finally noted that “we must be aware of our enemy and be prepared for them, for this is complete Iman [faith].”⁷²⁷ In countering Arab nationalism, Ibn Baz was able to hit two birds with one stone. Firstly, he was able to weaken the Arab nationalist ideology, an ideology that stood diametrically in opposition to Wahhabism. Secondly, by turning the limelight on Arab nationalism and exposing it as an un-Islamic movement, the Grand Mufti was able to rally the Muslim population to the aide of the KSA, further legitimizing and cementing the power of the Saudi state in the region.

5.1.6 Countering Other Forms of Ideologies

Ibn Baz did not limit his attacks to Arab nationalism alone. He considered all forms of nationalism, socialism and communism as false ideals that must be wiped out.⁷²⁸ He emphasized to his followers that such ideologies as Arabism must be subservient to the rule of Islam and

⁷²⁵ Ibid., 22-23.

⁷²⁶ Ibid.

⁷²⁷ Ibid.

⁷²⁸ Ibn Baz et al., 753-754.

“not a principal to be rallied around.”⁷²⁹ Ibn Baz reinstated the need to be aware of any ideology that comes along that tries to break the unity of Muslims and pull them away from the true creed. He warned that before Islam, Arabs were nothing but dispersed tribes fighting each other and it was only through Islam, not their Arabism, that they were able to unite under a single banner.⁷³⁰ Again, it is significant to note how fitna or civil strife was a point Ibn Baz kept returning to, warning the populace that any other ideology or movement would bring back civil war and chaos to the daily lives of Muslim. What Ibn Baz was also doing here was he indirectly emphasized the need to stick to the central government, for it was only through its leadership that the population could prosper. Fitna, or civil war, awaits those who strive away from the path set by the state.

Ibn Baz also applied the concept of Islamic unity to the Sunni sects themselves, going beyond the political ideologies that were affecting the region. The Middle East had many conflicts involving different sects and political parties, and Ibn Baz was acutely aware of how these conflicts could manifest themselves in the Kingdom. He received many questions asking for his advice on how to deal with sectarian matters. Instead of showing support to his own creed, which amounted to as a minority in comparison to the rest of the Sunni ummah, Ibn Baz approached the matter pragmatically by emphasizing that all Sunni sects were the same and one must not pay attention to sectarian rhetoric.⁷³¹ Muslims should focus on following the shariah and, instead, the sect that opposes the adherence to the shariah was the one that should be considered heterodox.⁷³² What Ibn Baz was doing here was indirectly shining the light on Saudi Arabia, since it was one of the few countries that had fully applied the rule of shariah as its

⁷²⁹ Ibid., 754.

⁷³⁰ Ibid.

⁷³¹ Ibid., 793-794.

⁷³² Ibid., 794.

governmental model, while the other Sunni states were either secular in nature or a hybrid of secularism and shariah. In his approach, Ibn Baz was inviting Sunnis to join him under the Sunni banner yet, indirectly, he was pointing to the true Islamic government represented by the KSA.

Ibn Baz expanded on his idea of Sunni unity in another fatwa, where he noted that even though the Sunni Imams were knowledgeable, one must not follow them blindly.⁷³³ At the same time, though, Ibn Baz warned anyone who thought they can perform *ijtihad* (jurisprudence), since not everyone was capable or has the credentials to do so. Instead, Ibn Baz advised that one must, follow the direction of the scholars who are the only people that have the knowledge to make decisions on such matters.⁷³⁴ He pointed to the need to consult the ulama on all matters pertaining to shariah and that one cannot reason with it on their own. What Ibn Baz was doing was creating a dogmatic fence to ensure only specific ideas were passed to the public, vetted by the Wahhabi ulama, and made to serve the security of the state and the creed. More importantly, he was confronting threats to the state from self-righteous and self-appointed groups, many of which will become a nuisance to the Saudi state in the future.⁷³⁵

To ensure a full control of other sources of ideological influences brought by globalization and interaction with the West, Ibn Baz put forth a series of fatwas to warn against the influence of these ideas on the Muslim nation. Ibn Baz saw in the West an enemy that posed a huge threat to Saudi Arabia, through cultural influence. He specifically referred to the Western cultural influence as “a cultural invasion by using a variety of weapons such as books, media,

⁷³³ Ibid., 803-805.

⁷³⁴ Ibid., 804.

⁷³⁵ Such as al-Qaeda and the Islamic State in Iraq and Sham (ISIS, Daesh), to name a few.

newspapers, and magazines.”⁷³⁶ Ibn Baz considered this a new type of imperialism, using a new type of weapons.⁷³⁷ Therefore, Ibn Baz asked the Muslim nations to be prepared to resist this new imperialist push that was threatening them both from the West and the East.⁷³⁸

Ibn Baz set forth a plan of action to resist what he saw as the onslaught of imperialist attacks on the Kingdom. However, the parameters set by him were general in nature, identifying tools as the threat more than the content, which allowed him and the Wahhabi ulama to exert more influence on the narrative; hence controlling what was said and how it was distributed to the citizens. For example, he identified radios, the television, magazines, and newspapers as new dangerous weapons that were being used to attack the country’s ideology.⁷³⁹ However, he had no issue with the tools themselves; instead, it was the message within them that worried him. By identifying the use of these new weapons as the source of threat, Ibn Baz took full control of the medium,⁷⁴⁰ hence allowing him to control the messages communicated to the population. Ibn Baz understood the power of technology and communication, and he understood the threat they can pose to his power base if they were left unchecked.

Ibn Baz also advocated for control of the intellectual sphere, which was a bold move that allowed him and the Wahhabi ulama to control the development mechanism of ideas in the country. Since universities and colleges are the main incubators of education and one of the

⁷³⁶ Ibid., 1733.

⁷³⁷ Ibid.

⁷³⁸ Ibn Baz, *Maqalat al-Allamah al-Sheikh Abd al-Aziz bin Baz fi Majallat al-Wai’l al-Islami*, 81.

⁷³⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁴⁰ As Marshall McLuhan famously stated. See Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore, *The Medium Is the Message* (Germany: Gingko Press, 2001).

main environments in which ideas are formed and crystallized, one comes to understand Ibn Baz's motive to push for the control of the educational programs in the kingdom.

Ibn Baz lamented the weakening of the link between the education systems and religion.⁷⁴¹ With the onset of secularized educational programs in the Middle East he and the Wahhabi ulama understood the threat to the traditional way of learning. With secular professors and teachers replacing the ulama in the educational arena, the power of those same ulama would weaken substantially. At the same, however, Ibn Baz understood that it was fait accompli that his country will join the rest of the Middle Eastern states in the grand transformation that was sweeping the world, whether it was technological, economic, political, or educational. Hence, he put forth a strategy to manage that change by issuing a call to the government to create universities and colleges, and to stop relying on other nations when it comes to matters of education.⁷⁴² By creating and controlling the medium, the government (and the ulama) were able to control the message.

Ibn Baz also took the extra step of demanding that the state vet the students who chose to study abroad to make sure they have the right qualifications and were ready to proselytize the religious ideology of state abroad.⁷⁴³ What he was doing was setup a process to control the sharing of ideas between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the rest of the world. By selecting who gets exposed to the ideas of the "others," he controlled who can bring the ideas back home and the repercussions of the diffusion of these ideas. With this process, Ibn Baz and the Wahhabi ulama controlled the thoughts of the population and the potentiality of the exchange of

⁷⁴¹ Ibn Baz, *Maqalat al-Allamah al-Sheikh Abd al-Aziz bin Baz fi Majallat al-Wai'l al-Islami*, 82.

⁷⁴² *Ibid.*, 83.

⁷⁴³ *Ibid.*, 84-85.

ideas with the public. More so, by vetting the students and choosing the ones best fit to spread the word about the country's ideology, Ibn Baz was strategically placing his agents throughout the world. By doing so, he was participating in the war of ideas by taking the fight to his enemies' home turf. He saw in the secular education and in the religious groups that sprung all over the world an existential threat not only to the Wahhabi clergy, but to the Al-Saud monarchy itself. It is what Olivier Roy labelled as the class of lay scholars who threatened to take over the religious fatwa process from the official state-led one.⁷⁴⁴

Ibn Baz's approach did not exist in a vacuum. The context that needs to be kept in mind here is that Ibn Baz and the Wahhabi cadre saw themselves surrounded by their enemies and that they had to defend themselves by taking control of the battle for ideas.⁷⁴⁵ He noted that the increased resistance against Muslims and Muslim movements has been on the rise, and that the only way to stop this onslaught was by aiding these movements with all means necessary.⁷⁴⁶ He noted that it was the duty of every Muslim to support them, overtly or covertly, and that these movements must be given all means to spread the truth about the true ideology, in all languages and everywhere in the world.⁷⁴⁷

⁷⁴⁴ Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam*, 28-34.

⁷⁴⁵ One can only look at recent events between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Qatar, for example, where the KSA imposed a set of conditions on the Qatar-based and funded Al-Jazeera news channel as condition to ease tensions between the two countries.

⁷⁴⁶ Ibn Baz, *Maqalat al-Allamah al-Sheikh Abd al-Aziz bin Baz fi Majallat al-Wai'I al-Islami*, 84-85.

⁷⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

5.1.7 The Soviet-Afghan War (1979-1989)

Ibn Baz had to deal with major events that shook the kingdom and the Muslim world. On the world stage, none was as important as his role in helping organize and lead the Wahhabi intellectual fight against the USSR in Afghanistan. The role he and the Wahhabi ulama played benefited the Afghan Mujahideen in their fight against the Soviets and helped the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia make its strategic mark on the world stage, helping in defeating a major enemy of the West and aligning itself with the winning side of Cold War.

As was stated in Chapter Three, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan had a tremendous impact on the Muslim world. The occupation of a Muslim land by a Communist regime galvanized international support and created the Mujahideen networks that still exist today, yet in different forms and ideologies.

Ibn Baz and the Wahhabi ulama did not hold back their support of the Afghan mujahideen. They saw it as a duty to support their Muslim brethren in Afghanistan and they issued numerous fatwas and decrees in support of them. In one instance, Ibn Baz issued a fatwa calling on all Muslim to “save Muslim Afghanistan from the Atheists Oppression.”⁷⁴⁸ In referring to the USSR regime as an atheist oppressor, Ibn Baz was able to issue a carte blanche in his fight against the USSR. The justification or the need to explain why Muslims must partake in an effort that allies them with the West is nowhere to be seen, contrary to what will

⁷⁴⁸ Ibid., 115-120.

be noted later in this paper when Ibn Baz exerted major resources and authored a book on why Muslims must support the West in its fight against Saddam Hussein in 1991.

Regarding the USSR, Ibn Baz saw the Communist invasion of Afghanistan as the first series of attacks by the atheists against the Muslim community. The Communists' end goal in invading Afghanistan was to destroy Islam and Muslims.⁷⁴⁹ Ibn Baz did not discuss the political backdrop of the invasion or the issues behind the series of coups and rebellion that shook the country. Instead, he focused on the existential threat the USSR had on Islam.⁷⁵⁰ The challenge to create a narrative to send fighters to Afghanistan and to collect monetary support for the cause was not as complicated, religiously, as was the case with fighting Saddam in 1990-1991. Even though the Wahhabi ulama were dealing with an invasion of a Muslim country in both cases, the USSR was a communist state, while Saddam was a Muslim leader. Justifying an attack on the first required minimal rhetorical gymnastics from the Wahhabi ulama, while in the second case the issue was so convoluted that the Saudi state had to deal with the ripple effects of its decision to allow the US to setup bases on Saudi land way after the defeat of Saddam and his forces. The KSA, however, had to go on the offensive politically since it saw in Saddam's expansion a threat to its own sovereignty.

Ibn Baz, for example, had to author a full book underlying why the war on Saddam was justified and how a Muslim state can request the aide of a Christian nation against a Muslim

⁷⁴⁹ Abd al-Aziz ibn Abd Allah Ibn Baz, "Anqi'thoo Afhganistan al-Muslima min 'Tughyan al-Malihida [Save the Muslim Afghanistan from the Tyranny of the Atheists]," The Official Site of Sheikh Ibn Baz, accessed December 1, 2021,

<https://binbaz.org.sa/articles/22/%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%82%D8%B0%D9%88%D8%A7-%D8%A7%D9%81%D8%BA%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A9-%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%B7%D8%BA%D9%8A%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AD%D8%AF%D8%A9>

⁷⁵⁰ Ibid.

leader. These intricacies of the book is analysed in depth later in this chapter; however, if one contrasts Ibn Baz's approach in dealing with Saddam with that of the USSR, one can discern that he did not even bother writing many fatwas to rally the Muslims against the USSR. Instead, the task of authoring the book in which the Wahhabi ulama stated their case to fight the USSR was given to another famous Wahhabi scholar: Salih al-Lahaydan.

Al-Lahaydan held numerous posts as a Wahhabi jurist and judge throughout his career in Saudi Arabia. He was a close advisor to the first Mufti of Saudi Arabia, and he held the post of Head of Judiciary in the Kingdom, in addition to being a member of the World Muslim League. His influential book on Communism provided a comprehensive criticism of Communism from a Wahhabi point of view and helped the Saudi government and the Wahhabi ulama in having an intellectual backdrop to their fight against the USSR.⁷⁵¹ In the book, al-Lahaydan provided a critique of the foundations of Communism from the point of view of Wahhabism.

Even though al-Lahaydan did dictate a chapter identifying the need to equip Islam with the ability to criticize and debate other ideologies like Communism,⁷⁵² al-Lahaydan constricted the circle of who can criticize to those who were steeped in Islamic knowledge.⁷⁵³ What the Wahhabi sheikh was striving to establish was limiting the circle of who can criticize or discuss religious and theological matters, bringing the matter of the control of the narrative and its hermeneutics to the Wahhabi ulama. In that regard, al-Lahaydan limited the discussion of

⁷⁵¹ Salih Al-Lahaydan, *Naqd Usul al-Shuyū'a [Criticism of the Foundations of Communism]* (Riyadh: Maktabat al-Haramayn, 1980).

⁷⁵² *Ibid.*, 87-98.

⁷⁵³ *Ibid.*, 89.

political ideology to the ulama and the state, hence allowing him and his cadre to publish book that criticizes other ideologies yet limit who can perform the act of criticizing them.

Al-Lahaydan also authored another book a couple of years later titled *al-Jihad fil Islam: Bayn al-Talab wal Difa'a (The Jihad in Islam: Between the Request and the Defence)*,⁷⁵⁴ where he followed a similar pattern to his book on Communism, in which he presented an history of jihad in Islam and in other religions, followed by the rules and processes for performing Jihad. What al-Lahaydan was doing was providing an additional set of supportive material to the Wahhabi ulama and the Saudi state in its support for the mujahideen in Afghanistan. In that way, the Wahhabi follower and the Saudi citizen received a homogenous set of instructions for their inquiries about the jihad in Afghanistan and, at the same time, showcased the Wahhabi clerics and the Saudi state in a unified front to their constituents.

Even though Ibn Baz did indeed have the support of his fellow ulama, he continued to produce material in support of the Afghan war and in opposition to the Communist threat. He couched his fatwas in existential terminology, noting that the Communist threat was a threat not just in opposition to Islam, but a threat to the whole world and to all religions.⁷⁵⁵ Ibn Baz believed and reflected that belief in his writing about Communism in that it was an anti-religious movement set on destroying all religions and parallely set on destroying the world with its ideology. For Ibn Baz jihad was the only way to stop the Communist threat, placed directly after believing in God and his Prophet Muhammad.⁷⁵⁶

⁷⁵⁴ Salih Al-Lahaydan, *Al-Jihad fil Islam: Bayn al-Talab wal Difa'a [Jihad in Islam: Between Demand and Defence]* (Riyad: Maktabat al-Haramayn, 1986).

⁷⁵⁵ Ibn Baz, *Maqalat al-Allamah al-Sheikh Abd al-Aziz bin Baz fi Majallat al-Wai'l al-Islami*, 116.

⁷⁵⁶ Ibid.

Yet, Ibn Baz did not merely open the gate of Jihad for anyone at anytime. He understood how the use of violence was a power that must be wielded carefully. Hence, he ensured that anyone participating in jihad must adhere to specific rules. For Ibn Baz, jihad can only be declared during three situations.⁷⁵⁷ Firstly, when two armies are in confrontation, the leader could declare jihad as a matter of bolstering the troops.⁷⁵⁸ Secondly, if a Muslim state was under an attack and requested the help of another nation to repel an attack, the supporting state can declare jihad and mobilize its people to fight back the invading enemy.⁷⁵⁹ Lastly, if non-believers occupy a Muslim country, then all Muslims comes to their aide and support them.⁷⁶⁰ Even though all three situations applied to Afghanistan, the third scenario draws on the occupation of a Muslim land and goes beyond the call of help of one state to another; it allowed for full unrestricted support by any Muslim to the occupied state in need.

However, he also understood the need to have oversight over armed troops participating in war. The problem of having anyone train and participate in warfare did not go unnoticed and, to ensure the issue of an armed populace would not create future problems for the state, Ibn Baz applied the same restrictions as he had done with education. He restricted who can participate in jihad based on a state-vetting process, i.e., for anyone to participate in jihad, the individual must get the state's approval beforehand. In this regard, uli al amr (the responsible Wahhabi and Saudi leaders) would have full control of who participated in the Afghan jihad campaign and, also, ensure those participants toed the state's and the ulamas' line of thinking. Here one can

⁷⁵⁷ Ibid., 117-118.

⁷⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁶⁰ Ibid.

discern how the rationality of the fatwa in support of the Saudi foreign policy was in tandem with the US' Cold War strategy.

5.1.8 The Meccan Rebellion (1979)

This unified front between the Wahhabi ulama and the Saudi overlords, though, was soon tested by an event that shook the Kingdom. As was noted in Chapter Three, Juhayman al-Utaybi and members of his al-Jama'a al-Salafiyya al-Muhtasiba (JSM)⁷⁶¹ took over the holy site of Ka'aba in Mecca in December 1979, creating a major crisis for the Saudi government and between the Saudi government and the Wahhabi ulama. Many of the participants of the siege were former students of the Wahhabi jurists and some were even close to Ibn Baz himself.⁷⁶²

The events of the Meccan rebellion tested the alliance between the Saudi state and the Wahhabi ulama more than any other events in the history of the three Saudi states. The siege was in a clear defiance to the rule of Al-Saud and the members of the siege, seeing themselves as neo-Ikhwan, were themselves a product of the Saudi state and Wahhabi religious institutional system. According to Hegghammer and Lacroix, Juhayman was considered the *crème de la crème* of the Saudi youth, combining both tribal and religious fervor of what was considered the model Saudi citizen and Wahhabi followers.⁷⁶³ For the Wahhabi ulama, the actions of JSM were

⁷⁶¹ Ibn Baz added the M in JSM (Al-Jama'a al-Salafiyya al-Muhtasiba); see Hegghammer and Lacroix, *The Meccan Rebellion*, 8.

⁷⁶² *Ibid.*, 7-8.

⁷⁶³ *Ibid.*, 12-18.

a major challenge to their relationship with the monarch and a test of loyalty between the church and state.

Ibn Baz's reaction to the threat to the national security was swift and harsh. He issued a series of fatwas ostracizing the neo-Ikhwan group, considering their motives and actions heterodox to Islam. With the members of the Council of Senior Scholars, he issued a fatwa and a decree in which they stated that the citizens of Saudi Arabia owed their loyalty to the monarch.⁷⁶⁴ However, they did not stop there. They added that even if the King was on the wrong path, his citizens still owed their loyalty to him.⁷⁶⁵ Here one finds that Ibn Baz and the Wahhabi scholars took the concept of allegiance that Ibn Hanbal, Ibn Taymiyya, Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab, and even Ibn Ibrahim to that of complete obedience to the ruler. Ibn Baz evolved the concept by removing the agent of criticism from the individual Saudi citizen. She or he no longer had the right to reflect upon the action of the monarch. Instead, they are to be completely loyal to him on all matters and under all circumstances.

Still, Ibn Baz did draw a line between allegiance and submission. To him, loyalty to the ruler was not equivalent to submission,⁷⁶⁶ as submission was only to God and the root of the

⁷⁶⁴ Ibn Baz, "Ta'leeq Hawl Hadith al-Masjid al-Haram."

⁷⁶⁵ Abd al-Aziz ibn Abd Allah Ibn Baz, "Hal Iqtiraf Ba'd al-Hukkam lil Ma'asi wal Kabair Mujib lil Khuruj 'Alayhim? [Is it Necessary to Rebel Against Rulers Who Committed Immoral Actions and Grievous Sins]," The Official Site of Sheikh Ibn Baz, accessed December 1, 2021, <https://binbaz.org.sa/fatwas/2107/%D9%87%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%82%D8%AA%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%81-%D8%A8%D8%B9%D8%B6-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%83%D8%A7%D9%85-%D9%84%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%B5%D9%8A-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%83%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%89%D8%B1-%D9%85%D9%88%D8%AC%D8%A8-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%AE%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%AC-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%87%D9%85>.

⁷⁶⁶ Abd al-Aziz ibn Abd Allah Ibn Baz, "Hukum Man Yara ina 'Adam al-Kuruj ala al-Hakim bil Quwwa Fikran Inhiyamiyyan [The Ruling Regarding Those Who See that Not Rebelling Against the Ruler With Force As a Defeatist Thought]," The Official Site of Sheikh Ibn Baz, accessed December 1, 2021, <https://binbaz.org.sa/fatwas/2108/%D8%AD%D9%83%D9%85-%D9%85%D9%86->

word Islam (to submit). This subtle distinction shows that he was very tuned to how religious and political narratives can be convoluted and misinterpreted, which could lead to further resistance and problems from those who may object to equating the Saudi monarch with God. By explicitly distinguishing between submission to God and absolute loyalty to the monarch, Ibn Baz refined the concept of fidelity in Wahhabi Islam by further separating Church and state, thereby pushing the Kingdom towards a more Westphalian-type system of government.

Ibn Baz also took the opportunity to launch an attack on the media by calling on Muslims to resist and counter the sinful tool that was wreaking havoc on the Muslim world.⁷⁶⁷ Some media outlets in Kuwait and the Arab world had published some of the letters and manifestos of the JSM,⁷⁶⁸ bringing to light the tension between the Saudi government and elements from the Salafi and Wahhabi movements. Ibn Baz always took the opportunity to exert control on the information medium so that he and the Wahhabi establishment can control the message to the public. He had already, for example, wrote an op-ed in *Rayat al-Islam* newspaper in 1960 warning the population from the negative influence of magazines and newspapers.⁷⁶⁹ He also called on the Muslim population to fight the intrusion of the media on

%D9%8A%D8%B1%D9%89-%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%B9%D8%AF%D9%85-
%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AE%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%AC-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89-
%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%A7%D9%83%D9%85-
%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D9%88%D8%A9-%D9%81%D9%83%D8%B1%D8%A7-
%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%87%D8%B2%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%A7.

⁷⁶⁷ Al-Najdi, *Al-Durar*, vol. 16, *Al-Qism al-Thani Min al-Bayan al-Wa'thi'h, wa Trajim Ashab tilka al-Rasail wal Ajwiba*, 161.

⁷⁶⁸ Such as the leftist leaning newspaper *al-Tali'a* (the Vanguard). See Hegghammer and Lacroix, *The Meccan Rebellion*, 15.

⁷⁶⁹ Al-Najdi, *Al-Durar*, vol. 16, *Al-Qism al-Thani Min al-Bayan al-Wa'thi'h, wa Trajim Ashab tilka al-Rasail wal Ajwiba*, 163.

their religious practices,⁷⁷⁰ citing again the corrupt nature of run-amok media outlets on the morality of the nation.

What is important to note here is that restriction on media activities was seen as a backward move by conservative entities to fight anything new. What is being proposed here is that Ibn Baz's lifelong push to control the media and educational institutions was not solely based on a conservative dislike of science or change. Instead, Ibn Baz and the Wahhabi ulama were pro-science and pro-change if it served to strengthen the religious' institutions and the ruling family's grip on power. That was why Ibn Baz did not ban the radio or the TV, as was the demand of the ultra-conservative JSM, but instead controlled the content and narrative. That way Saudi Arabia moved with the times and presented itself as a modernised society while, at the same time, the political and religious narrative was controlled as per the needs of the ruling class.

5.1.9 The Invasion of Kuwait (1990-1991): An Evolution in the WPJD – The Unjust Ruler

Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990 provided the biggest challenge and, consequently, created the most severe military threat to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in its recent history. The challenge was how to justify the aide of a Christian Western ally to fight a Muslim leader invading another Muslim state. Many Saudis were not on board with this move, leading to civil unrest and the rise of al-Sahwa al-Islamiyya (The Islamic Awakening). The Islamic Awakening

⁷⁷⁰ Ibid., 165.

took the form of country-wide protests by Wahhabi jurists and Saudi intellectuals who opposed the aide of a non-Muslim state to fight a Muslim one, eventually off-shooting into militant opposition groups such as al-Qaeda.

Regarding this crisis, Ibn Baz wrote on of his most lengthy and comprehensive books on a single subject. His book, *Udwan Hakim al-Iraq (The Aggression of the Ruler of Iraq)*⁷⁷¹ dealt, singlehandedly, with the issue of Saddam as an unjust ruler and how one can justify the aide of foreign Christian Western troops to fight a Muslim ruler. For Ibn Baz and the Wahhabi ulama, this was a very delicate issue because Wahhabism and Hanbalism were very in favour of letting rulers rule and not question their methods or motives. More so, requesting the aide of a non-Muslim ally against a Muslim one is unjustifiable. What Ibn Baz and his Wahhabi cadre did was reverse past rulings, evolving WPJD to accommodate and justify this type of alliance with a non-Muslim state against a Muslim one.

Ibn Baz saw Saddam's invasion of Kuwait as a fitna to test Muslims.⁷⁷² What Saddam was doing, in Ibn Baz's eyes, was he was testing the resolve of the Muslim community by making it reflect on itself and question the concept of just rulership by separating the just from the unjust. Ibn Baz saw the actions of Saddam as evil - invading Kuwait and lining up his troops

⁷⁷¹ Abd al-Aziz ibn Abd Allah Ibn Baz, *Udwan Hakim al-Iraq [The Aggression of the Ruler of Iraq]* (Kuwait: Markaz al-Makhtutat wal Turath wal Wathaiq, 1994). Also see Abd al-Aziz ibn Abd Allah Ibn Baz, "Udwan Hakim al-Iraq ala Dawlat al-Kuwait Fitna wa Mihna [The aggression of the Ruler of Iraq on Kuwait an Affliction and a Tribulation]," The Official Site of Sheikh Ibn Baz, accessed December 1, 2021, <https://binbaz.org.sa/discussions/56/%D8%B9%D8%AF%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%AD%D8%A7%D9%83%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%82-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%AF%D9%88%D9%84%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%83%D9%88%D9%8A%D8%AA-%D9%81%D8%AA%D9%86%D8%A9-%D9%88%D9%85%D8%AD%D9%86%D8%A9>.

⁷⁷² Ibn Baz, *Udwan Hakim al-Iraq*, 6.

on the Saudi border.⁷⁷³ Saddam, according to Ibn Baz, was asked to pull out of Kuwait; however, he insisted on occupying the country, leaving Saudi Arabia no choice but to go to war to remove his troops from their neighbour's land.⁷⁷⁴ This act of defiance was considered by the Wahhabi establishment an aggression by an unjust ruler against a Muslim country. It is, therefore, a necessity to declare jihad against Saddam and fight this aggression⁷⁷⁵ by uniting the Muslim community⁷⁷⁶ and by having the patience to go through the trials and tribulations of jihad.⁷⁷⁷

One can note here that Ibn Baz focused his criticism on the person of Saddam Hussein instead of the country of Iraq or the people of Iraq. By switching the attack from a state- to a person-centred one, Ibn Baz was able to isolate Saddam as the unsavoury character in this jurisprudence quagmire. Attacking and excommunicating one person was much more palatable than justifying a war against a whole nation of Muslims. Ibn Baz understood that by evolving the WPJD, he had a stronger footing in garnering support to attack Saddam.

To further strengthen his argument, Ibn Baz noted that this fitna brought forth by Saddam was like the civil war that took place after the killing of the third Rashidun Caliphate Uthman, where the Muslim community became confused between who was on the right path: Ali or Muawiya.⁷⁷⁸ His use of one of the most controversial civil wars in Muslim history was an intended move. He understood the impact this analogy would have on the Muslim community and how controversial events could lead to civil discord and conflict. Ibn Baz highlighted that

⁷⁷³ Ibid., 9.

⁷⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁷⁵ Ibid., 11.

⁷⁷⁶ Ibid., 12-13.

⁷⁷⁷ Ibid., 13.

⁷⁷⁸ Ibid.

the worst civil wars in Islam were the battles of *al-Jamal* (the Camel) and Siffin, the first between Ali and Muawiya, and the latter between Ali and the Kharijites.⁷⁷⁹ Again, Ibn Baz's subtle reference to the Kharijites in relation to Saddam was to correlate the evil position of Saddam. With the events leading to the Battle of al Jamal or the war between Ali and Muawiya, Ibn Baz agreed that such civil wars within the Muslim community must be avoided;⁷⁸⁰ however, by citing the Kharijites, Ibn Baz was clarifying the evil actions of Saddam and that opposing him was not as a confusing position as that of the Muslim leaders. Saddam was an aggressor that must be fought, and jihad must be declared against him,⁷⁸¹ as was previously done against the Kharijites.

Ibn Baz, however, did not stop at the level of analogy. He wanted to make his point clear and dispose of any confusion that might arise from the Kingdom's actions to fight Saddam. In his book, Ibn Baz isolated Saddam's circle as a "non-believing, oppressing, tyrannical group."⁷⁸² More so, Ibn Baz singled out Saddam, declaring "the ruler of Iraq is an atheist Ba'athist, not one of the believers, and not one of the people of belief and truth, but one who follows the beliefs of infidels and delusion ... and hypocrisy."⁷⁸³ For Ibn Baz, Saddam was lost to the unbelievers' side and by asserting him and his government as infidels and unbelievers, he was removing Saddam's right to be a leader - he was an openly atheist tyrant. Ibn Taymiyya, Ibn Hanbal, and even contemporary Wahhabi leaders such as Ibn Ibrahim considered the ruler's right to rule as sacred, where no one has the right to remove him from his position, except in one situation – when the leader publicly does not follow the canons of Islam

⁷⁷⁹ Ibid., 14.

⁷⁸⁰ Ibid., 15.

⁷⁸¹ Ibid., 16.

⁷⁸² Ibid., 18.

⁷⁸³ Ibid.

and acts as an unbeliever. That was why it was crucial for Ibn Baz to underline Saddam's public infidelity to Islam, for it was the only way to remove his legitimacy to hold on to power. Ibn Baz needed the whole Muslim world to know that Saddam and his government were tyrannical and unjust.⁷⁸⁴ Furthermore, using the label of a tyrannical and an unjust group, the Wahhabi establishment was labelling Saddam and the Ba'athist regime as a Kharijites – doubling down on the lost cause of this Iraqi group.

Ibn Baz understood that Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the Arab monarchies of the Persian Gulf countries did not have the manpower or the weapons necessary to defeat Saddam. His keen observation of this fact and his use of this shortcoming to lead the reader to his goal of justifying the use of foreign Western forces was well structured. Ibn Baz said that Saudi Arabia needed to prepare for jihad with weapons, money, and logistical support,⁷⁸⁵ a basic request by any defending state. He also demanded from the Muslim community to be patient with two crises: Saddam's invasion, and the use of Western forces to defeat him.⁷⁸⁶

To explain the crises at hand, Ibn Baz took the reader on a journey explaining the history of the crises. He mentioned how Saudi Arabia had helped Saddam all throughout his reign and, instead, he repaid the Kingdom by attacking her with missiles.⁷⁸⁷ And that was also the case with all the Gulf states who supported Saddam – he attacked them all in way or another which made him an unjust ruler.⁷⁸⁸ Ibn Baz was leading to this crucial point, where Saddam was painted as an unjust head of state. Justice is a crucial characteristic of the Muslim ruler for the

⁷⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁸⁵ Ibid., 17.

⁷⁸⁶ Ibid., 19.

⁷⁸⁷ Ibid., 34.

⁷⁸⁸ Ibid., 35.

Wahhabi and the Hanbalite mindset and, by highlighting this lacking characteristic with Saddam, Ibn Baz was betting on swaying public opinion against his right to rule.

Ibn Baz then started to identify faults with Saddam's logic and action to further disrupt any support he might have with the Saudi population. He started by giving Saddam an ultimatum, saying that he must leave Kuwait first and only afterwards that peace negotiations could start.⁷⁸⁹ The Wahhabi alim pointed out that Saddam was a malicious leader, "attacking the Jews now⁷⁹⁰ to divide the Muslim community."⁷⁹¹ He then questioned Saddam's motives, inquiring why Saddam did not attack Israel before invading Kuwait, for which Ibn Baz had the answer ready: Saddam only attacked Israel because he wanted to get rid of the sanctions on Iraq.⁷⁹² Saddam's attack on Israel was unprecedented in recent history and, even though it was a utter failure, achieving neither its tactical nor its strategic roles, the attack itself did garner some support from the Arab and Muslim streets. Ibn Baz was cognizant how Saddam's attack against Israel posed a strategic threat to the Western-Arab-Muslim alliance against Saddam, and the potential it had on the narrative Saudi Arabia and the Wahhabi ulama were weaving to justify the Western forces' position on Muslim holy lands. That is why painting Saddam as an unjust ruler, a tyrant, a Kharijite, and atheists, and a malicious leader were part of Ibn Baz's strategy to control the narrative in the Arab and Muslim streets, in addition to evolving the WPJD to handle such a quantum leap in warfare and international politics.

Lastly, Ibn Baz ends his book with a prayer that said: "May God send someone from his own soldiers to get rid of him and [bring forth] a new leader that would take care of Iraq."⁷⁹³

⁷⁸⁹ Ibid., 34.

⁷⁹⁰ Ibn Baz is referring to the missiles Saddam launched at Israel during the 1990-1991 Gulf War.

⁷⁹¹ Ibn Baz, *Udwan Hakim al-Iraq*, 35.

⁷⁹² Ibid.

⁷⁹³ Ibid., 36.

What is astonishing about this statement is that Ibn Baz was openly asking for divine intervention to have someone execute a coup d'état against Saddam, totally breaking with Wahhabi norms of support to leadership and sanctioning, probably for the first time, the removal of a Muslim Sunni leader by force. An unprecedented move by an Hanbalite, Wahhabi alim. This prayer was the first open declaration that not only evolved WPJD in the realm of international politics but broke with all previous protocols set forth by Wahhabi thinkers.

5.1.10 The Invasion of Kuwait (1990-1991): An Evolution in the WPJD – Justifying Seeking Support from Non-Muslims

Coupled with the unprecedented evolution in WPJD vis-à-vis the removal of Saddam, Ibn Baz further evolved the WPJD into new and unique territories. This time, he justified the aide of non-Muslim Western forces to setup bases in the holiest land for Muslims and help attack and kills Muslim troops, removing them from neighbouring Kuwait.

In a question posed to Ibn Baz, he justified paying for the use of non-Muslim forces against a Muslim one.⁷⁹⁴ For him, he saw no issue with demanding the help of and paying non-Muslim countries to protect Muslims if in return of this support was the protection of innocent

⁷⁹⁴ Abd al-Aziz ibn Abd Allah Ibn Baz, "Hukum Ba'thil al-Hakim al-Muslim al-Mal li Dawla Ghayr Muslima [Ruling on a Muslim Ruler Giving Money to a Non-Muslim State]," The Official Site of Sheikh Ibn Baz, accessed December 1, 2021, <https://binbaz.org.sa/fatwas/1895/%D8%AD%D9%83%D9%85-%D8%A8%D8%B0%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%A7%D9%83%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%84%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%84-%D9%84%D8%AF%D9%88%D9%84%D8%A9-%D8%BA%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A9>.

Muslims; the threat from the aggressor was seen as a greater evil on the Muslim community.⁷⁹⁵ For Ibn Baz, the Wahhabi ulama, and the Saudi state, the use of Western forces was crucial to protect Saudi land and remove Saddam from Kuwait. Additionally, it was an overly sensitive move that required many justifications since the Muslim community would question foreign Western forces on the holy land.

Ibn Baz, in his book *The Aggression of the Ruler of Iraq*, noted that “it was due to the sheer importance and dangerous state of affairs that the Saudi Arabia was forced to request the aide of foreign troops.”⁷⁹⁶ According to Ibn Baz, it was not the ideal choice for the Saudi government to request the aide of foreign troops; instead, the fault was laid squarely on Saddam, for he had forced the hand of the Saudis to request the help of the Westerners. Couching his fatwa in those terms had a calming effect on the Muslim people, displacing their anger, instead, on Saddam. A brilliant move that Ibn Baz was able to put in motion at the same time as he declared Saddam a tyrant, an atheist, an unjust ruler.⁷⁹⁷

Ibn Baz also made sure that the reader did not have to read between the lines to understand the position Saudi Arabia, and the Gulf states, were put in to deal with Saddam’s forces. On page 20, he said that “the Saudi government [was] forced to, as so are the countries of the Gulf, request the aide of Islamic and foreign forces to repel the unjust [Saddam].”⁷⁹⁸ However, Ibn Baz did not stop there. He took the principles of WPJD to another level, surpassing all past limits. On pages 24 and 25 of the same book, he announced that “there [was] no problem with getting the aide of enemies on our side to achieve victory.”⁷⁹⁹ Although here

⁷⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁹⁶ Ibn Baz, *Udwan Hakim al-Iraq*, 18-19.

⁷⁹⁷ Ibid., 19.

⁷⁹⁸ Ibid., 20.

⁷⁹⁹ Ibid., 24-25.

Ibn Baz came out and called the foreign non-Muslim forces as enemies, he noted, pragmatically, that the aide of those enemies was permissible if it led to victory. He no longer distinguished between friend and foe. For Ibn Baz and the Wahhabi state, WPJD was at the pinnacle of pragmatism – victory is the end goal of the state’s policy. It is not a religious move nor an ideological one.

Adding to his justification, Ibn Baz tied his logic to that of the Council of Senior Scholars. He underlined the Council’s position in his book by stating that it had studied this matter of foreign aide to defeat Saddam and that the ulama found no issue in pursuing the help of other forces to remove Saddam.⁸⁰⁰ The Council and Ibn Baz declared that the matter of foreign aide was indeed great and that only those whom God have guided can understand its significance.⁸⁰¹ Here, Ibn Baz and the Council members tied in the role of the ulama as the only people capable of understating the issue at hand and that, as was underlined over and over again before when it came to matters of understanding the rule of law, it was only the Wahhabi ulama whom were capable of discerning the truth and act upon it.

According to Ibn Baz, what Saudi Arabia did was the right thing.⁸⁰² He agreed that the measures taken by the state might seem confusing, but that was only due to the actions of “this atheist non-believer.”⁸⁰³ Saddam, according to Ibn Baz, pretended to be a Muslim, scheming in his actions and confusing the people with what he was really calling for; however, Ibn Baz reiterated that Saddam was nothing but a liar and a hypocrite, and his action led the ignorant to follow him.⁸⁰⁴ As for those who knew what Saddam was doing, Ibn Baz said they were merely

⁸⁰⁰ Ibid., 25.

⁸⁰¹ Ibid., 25-26.

⁸⁰² Ibid., 26.

⁸⁰³ Ibid.

⁸⁰⁴ Ibid.

on Saddam's payroll.⁸⁰⁵ Hence, cutting the link completely between those who chose to support the un-Islamic actions of Saddam and those who chose to support the Islamic actions of the KSA.

In his speech on the beginning of military operation to liberate Kuwait on 18 January 1991, Ibn Baz declared that the actions taken to defeat Saddam were classified as jihad.⁸⁰⁶ Jihad not only by the Muslim fighters, but by "those who support them."⁸⁰⁷ Ibn Baz shot his last arrow, proclaiming even those who were not Muslim to be Muslim warriors, mujahideen, in their fight against Saddam.⁸⁰⁸ More so, he ordered all Muslims to ask God to support these warriors in their fight "to repel this unjust tyrant, to revoke his machinations, and to ask that his evil actions to be turned upon him."⁸⁰⁹

⁸⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁰⁶ Abd al-Aziz ibn Abd Allah Ibn Baz, "Kalima lil Umum al-Muslimeen lthir Bid' Amaliyat Tahrir al-Kuwait [A Word to All Muslim at the Start of Operations to Liberate Kuwait]," The Official Site of Sheikh Ibn Baz, accessed December 1, 2021, <https://binbaz.org.sa/articles/136/%D9%83%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A9-%D9%84%D8%B9%D9%85%D9%88%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%84%D9%85%D9%8A%D9%86-%D8%A7%D8%AB%D8%B1-%D8%A8%D8%AF%D8%A1-%D8%B9%D9%85%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%AA%D8%AD%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%83%D9%88%D9%8A%D8%AA>.

⁸⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁰⁹ Ibid.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Intro

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has been involved in every major event that had impacted the Middle East, Arab affairs, or the Muslim world. As a powerful Arab and Muslim country, the Saudi leadership, and its Wahhabi ulama have participated in carving the map of the Middle East both politically and religiously, in addition to redefining the nature of how religion and politics interacted and propped one another.

The Wahhabi leadership played an essential role in the creation of all three Saudi states. The alliance between Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab and the Saudi tribe was not the first politico-religious alliance in the region; however, it has been the most enduring in recent history and the most successful in supporting and maintaining the Third Saudi-Wahhabi state – the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Understanding the process by which the Wahhabi leaders adapted their political and jihad doctrines (WPJD) aides in comprehending the process by which religious thought influenced the political one. The relationship between the two was, indeed, complex; however, it was also symbiotic.

6.2 A Return to the Research Question

Our research question centred on how did the Wahhabi political and jihad doctrines (WPJD) evolve to ensure the sustainability of the Saudi state in the post-WWI Westphalian Middle Eastern state system? In other words, how did the Wahhabi state adapt its political and jihad doctrines to survive in the newly created post-WWI Westphalian Middle Eastern state system?

By analyzing the primary source texts while considering the historical, social, and cultural context of each of the main clerics and jurists that had influenced the Wahhabi movement, this research paper was able to reach a comprehensive understanding of how in each epoch and under each cleric the interpretation of texts and the reading of events helped evolve the process by which WPJD was employed to sustain the three Saudi states. Ibn Hanbal and Ibn Taymiyya laid the philosophical foundations for Wahhabism, while Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab gave birth to it. Examining the works of the Wahhabi clerics during the three Saudi-Wahhabi states, while focusing on the Grand Muftis Ibn Ibrahim and Ibn Baz, this thesis identified how the WPJD changed in accordance with the contextual problem of the day. The Wahhabi ulama showed flexibility in adapting to each of the three states' political environments, reformulating their jurisprudence and issuing fatwas and decrees to ensure the government and the state had what it needed to maintain its viability.

6.3 The Hypothesis Examined

As per the findings to answer the research questions above, the paper establishes that the Wahhabi ulama evolved their doctrine in service of the state, and not vice versa. The Wahhabi ulama developed or held steadfast in the face of change depending on the context of the events surrounding them. In many cases, the Wahhabi ulama refused to make changes to arcane laws to accommodate a modern event or an idea. However, they did indeed always adapt the WPJD to ensure the survivability of the state and accommodate the state's interests whether they were domestic, regional, or international in nature. The Wahhabi ulama adapted their doctrine to ensure maximal power was achieved and not, simply put, to ensure the foundations of Wahhabi Islam remained unchanged. The main objective has always been the maintenance of power through the defence of national security and the Al-Saud state. The Al-Saud and the Wahhabi alliance was always a political alliance for the sake of power itself.

6.4 The Contribution of the Dissertation

The paper provided a comprehensive assessment of the evolution of the WPJD during the three Saudi-Wahhabi states to try to understand the process by which Wahhabi ulama reacted to domestic, regional, or international events. It surveyed a variety of cases over two centuries to grasp the methods and processes used by the Wahhabi ulama to create, maintain, or defend the power of the state. Even though the research material was religious in essence, the

thesis has shown how the religious aspect of narrative control and discourse manipulation was used to direct and sanction political ideology in times of peace and war.

The research shows that the body of Wahhabi thinkers is not homogenous, nor should it be treated as such. Instead, the approach identified how, when, and for what purpose did each thinker change his doctrine and, consecutively, how they were able to successfully support different rulers to stabilize and legitimize their rule. The paper looked at distinct phases of Wahhabism, whether it was when Wahhabism was out-of-power or when it was in-power. It then showed how the writings of each cleric was affected by the cultural weight of his surroundings and how each one of them affected their discourse to help his political masters survive the conflict of the day.

As important to the analysis was the author's ability to translate primary sources and bring them to the English language for the first time. A large part of the Saudi-Wahhabi compendium of rulings and narration still exists in its original Arabic language and the translation of the texts was but a humble step on the road of better understanding that body of work.

The dissertation also contributed to the historiography of Wahhabi jihad history and political succession. By analysing what constituted just war and just leadership theory in Islam, this dissertation examined the process by which Wahhabi leaders and jurists formulated and executed their IR and military strategies. The approach helped shed light on how Wahhabi Saudi Arabia utilized the power of its theologians to legitimize control and influence in the region and in the international system. In addition, the research provided original contribution into how various concepts played a role in shaping the Wahhabi way of war. It assessed how Wahhabi ulama, jurists, and leaders adjusted their fatwas to support the state's strategy and

grand strategy (*jus ad bellum*), while examining how those same ulama considered the concept of political power in their formulation of their theories in support of the state. The paper highlighted the differences in how war was conducted (*jus in bello*) by Wahhabi and Sunni states and identify any similarities between the Wahhabi way of war and the Western one.

6.5 Limitations

There were several limitations that hindered the research and forced a reconsideration to the approach of the study of the WPJD. There was the problem of accessing state archives. Due to the nature of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, there was limited access to state archives and official documents mainly because the Saudi government does not have a transparent and an accessible archival system. That is due to the classified and inaccessible nature of all material pertaining to state decisions. That is why the research material was limited on the Wahhabi ulamas' primary source material which was widely accessible to all.

However, these primary sources presented a second set of limitations - the need to translate all the primary source material. This made the task of engaging the text both challenging and rewarding. Having translated the material to English was an original step towards helping the academic world expand into the world of Wahhabi political and jihad literature. The process of translating all the material from Arabic to English did however take its toll on the time management aspect of the dissertation, even though it was an extremely rewarding experience to the author.

6.6 Further Research Opportunities

Research opportunities about Wahhabi political and jihad doctrines (WPJD) are numerous, with many prospects available. The research timeline was limited up to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, which means that the same type of text analysis based on a variety of events can take place with other Wahhabi clerics. The Islamic Awakening movement that sprung after the 1990-1991 Gulf War is a rich subject worth further exploring. The Islamic Awakening movement created a schism between many of the Wahhabi ulamas and pressured the Saudi government to imprison many sheikhs and Saudi intellectuals who were labelled as rebels and opposition to the ruling family. The movement also helped radicalize and alienate a segment of the Saudi population, pushing many to the fringes of the political spectrum and into terrorism, which was the case with Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda. Researching how the movement was created and spread within the Saudi society would help shed light on the cultural change that took place within the Saudi weltanschauung.

Another opportunity is researching the events after the defeat of Saddam Hussein in 1991, where the Ba'athist regime did a volt-face and embraced several religious policies that pushed the Ba'ath party from a secular to a more extremist Islamic rhetoric. Saddam and his Ba'athist cronies set in motion the Faith (*al-Ru'dwan*) campaign to energize nationalist fervor under the banner of religion. Consequently, many Wahhabi preachers moved to Iraq and started a mass campaign to convert Iraqis to the Wahhabi creed. This movement and the process by which the Wahhabi ulama were able to establish a strong foothold in Iraq is a matter of great interest today, since it could help explain how movements like al-Qaeda, Zarqawi's al-Qaeda in Iraq, and Daesh were able to establish their own recruitment process within the Iraqi Ba'athist

circles. More so, research can be conducted to understand how such fringe movements defied the ulamas' authority and questioned their legitimacy as independent muftis of Islam.

Lastly, the research focused solely on male Wahhabi clerics and jurists. That was the situation by which the study was approached, simply because all our subjects in the time-period chosen were men. However, Saudi Arabia is currently undergoing massive changes in its religious, social, political, and cultural spheres. Hence, it would be a great benefit to religious-political studies to understand how the Wahhabi jurist institution and ulama circles are adapting to changes in the social fabric and, as important, how the female population is and will participate reflexively in the evolution of the WPJD itself.

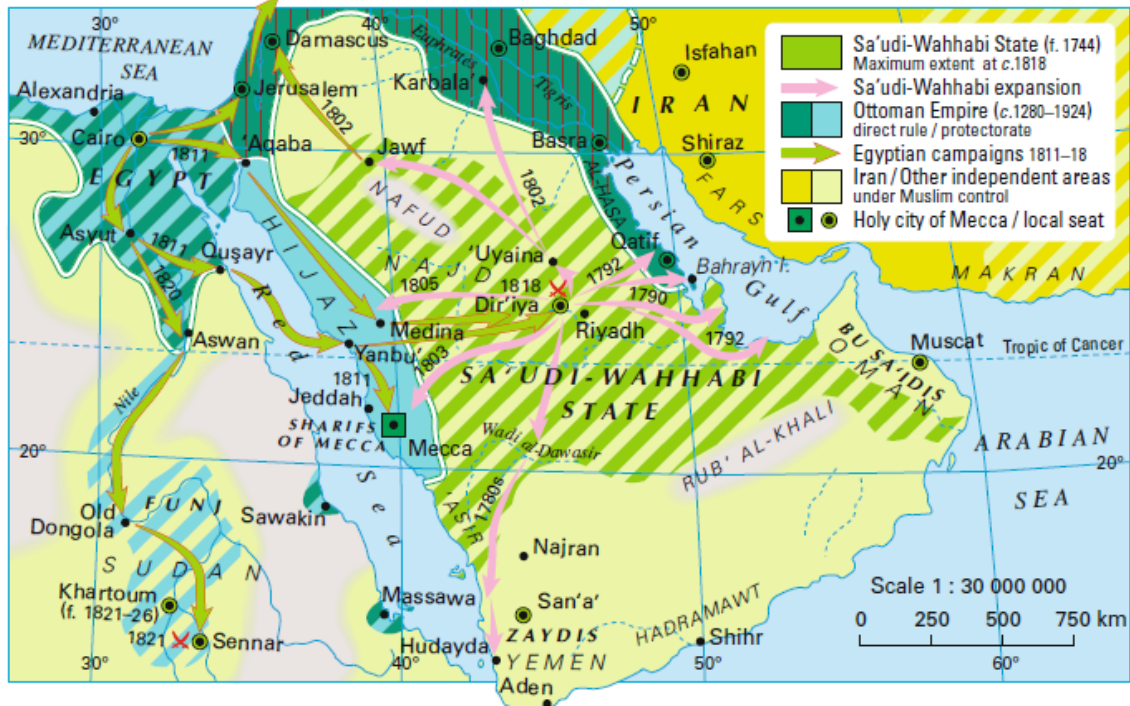
6.7 Closing Remarks

The complexity of this paper's subject leaves the dissertation always wanting – wanting for more data, more analysis, and more time. The study was limited to a set period of time and to a specific number of figures that were essential in explaining the evolution of WPJD during the three Saudi-Wahhabi states, with a focus on the KSA. However, one must admit that the process was humbling, since the ability to objectively assess the views of “the other” must always be handled with utmost care and respect.

This study hopes to contribute to the fields of IR, War Studies, history, and religion. Only through education and arduous work one can cross the chasm of ignorance and hopefully reach a point where one can understand the other and oneself.

Maps

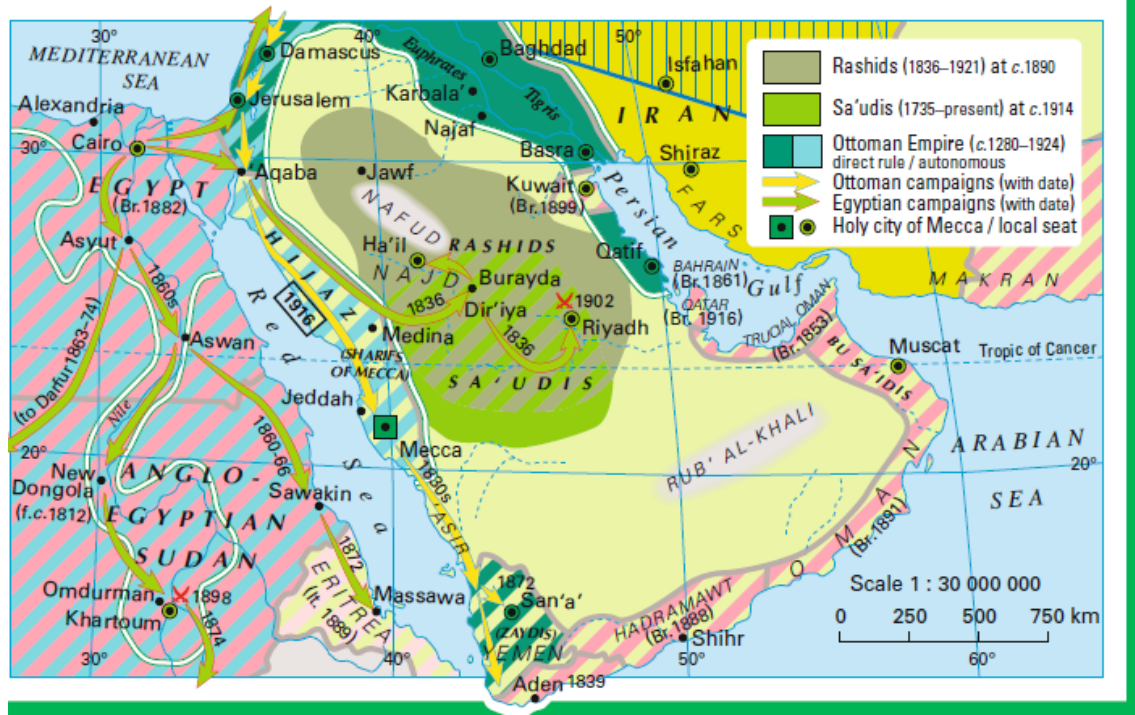
The Arabian Peninsula (at half the main map scale)



Map 1: First Saudi-Wahhabi State⁸¹⁰

⁸¹⁰ Sluglett, Peter and Andrew Currie. *The Arabian Peninsula (at half the main map scale)* [map]. 1:30000000. In: Peter Sluglett and Andrew Currie. *Atlas of Islamic History*. New York: Routledge, 2014. Page 65.

The Arabian Peninsula (at half the main map scale)



Map 2: Second Saudi-Wahhabi State⁸¹¹

⁸¹¹ Sluglett, Peter and Andrew Currie. *The Arabian Peninsula (at half the main map scale)* [map]. 1:30000000. In: Peter Sluglett and Andrew Currie. *Atlas of Islamic History*. New York: Routledge, 2014. Page 67.



Map 3: The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia⁸¹²

⁸¹² Encyclopædia Britannica. Saudi Arabia [map]. "Saudi Arabia." 26 July 1999. <<https://www.britannica.com/place/Saudi-Arabia>> (accessed May 8, 2022).

Pictures



Picture 1: Muhammad bin Ibrahim Al al-Sheikh.⁸¹³

⁸¹³ Unknown. " الشيخ محمد بن ابراهيم ال الشيخ [Al-Sheikh Muhammad bin Ibrahim Al al-Sheikh]." Photograph. N.d. *ElMeezan*. <https://elmeezan.com/%D8%AD%D9%82%D9%8A%D9%82%D8%A9-%D9%82%D8%B5%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%88%D9%8A-%D9%88%D9%86%D9%82%D9%84-%D9%85%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%85-%D8%A5%D8%A8%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%87%D9%8A%D9%85/#.YnfkWnbMLrc> (accessed May 8, 2022).



Picture 2: Abd al-Aziz ibn Baz.⁸¹⁴

⁸¹⁴ Asharq al-Awsat. "The unsubstantiated (sic) fatwa was attributed to the Grand Mufti Sheikh Abdulaziz bin Abdullah al-Sheikh." Photograph. N.d. *Alarabiya News*. <https://english.alarabiya.net/perspective/features/2015/04/10/Saudi-fatwa-allowing-husbands-to-eat-wives-unsubstantiated-> (accessed May 8, 2022).



Picture 3: Village of Laila.⁸¹⁵

⁸¹⁵ Philby, H. St. John. "LAILA, THE CAPITAL OF THE AFLAJ." Photograph. London: Constable and Company Ltd, 1922. From *The Heart of Arabia: A Record of Travel and Exploration*.



Picture 4: Village of Tamra.⁸¹⁶

⁸¹⁶ Philby, H. St. John. "THE VILLAGE OF TAMRA IN WADI DAWASIR." Photograph. London: Constable and Company Ltd, 1922. From *The Heart of Arabia: A Record of Travel and Exploration*.



Picture 5: Riyadh in the Twenty-First Century.⁸¹⁷

⁸¹⁷ Saudi Gazette. "RIYADH." Photograph. June 21, 2020. *Saudi Gazette*.
<https://saudigazette.com.sa/article/594560/SAUDI-ARABIA/Saudi-Arabia-to-apply-reciprocal-treatment-principle-on-imports> (accessed May 9, 2022).

Chronology of Events

570 C.E.	Birth of Prophet Muhammad
622	Prophet Muhammad's Hijra from Mecca to Medina. Considered the beginning of the Islamic Hijri Calendar.
780	Birth of Ahmed bin Hanbal
855	Death of Ahmed bin Hanbal
1233	Birth of al-Nawawi
1263	Birth of Ibn Taymiyya
1277	Death of al-Nawawi
1328	Death of Ibn Taymiyya
1703	Birth of Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab
1744	Creation of the First Saudi state
1792	Death of Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab
1818	End of the First Saudi state
1824	Creation of the Second Saudi state
1891	End of the Second Saudi state
1893	Birth of Muhammad bin Ibrahim Al al-Sheikh
1910	Birth of Abd al-Aziz ibn Baz
1927-1930	The Ikhwan Rebellion
1932	Creation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
1962-1970	Yemen War/KSA expansion of KSA into Yemen
1964	King Faysal dethrones King Saud
1969	Death of Muhammad bin Ibrahim Al al-Sheikh
1975	King Faysal assassinated

1979	Meccan Rebellion by Juhayman al-Utaybi
1979-1989	USSR invasion of Afghanistan; Soviet-Afghan War
1980 – 1988	Iran-Iraq War
1999	Death of Abd al-Aziz ibn Baz
1990-1991	Saddam invades Kuwait

List of Abbreviations

ABM	Al-amr bil ma'aruf wal nahi 'an al-munkar, enjoining good and forbidding wrong
CDRL	Committee for the Defence of Legitimate Rights
FOB	Forward Operating Base
IR	International Relations
IRT	International Relations Theory
ISIL	Islamic State in Iraq and Levant; Daesh
KSA	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
OPEC	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
UAR	United Arab Republic
WML	World Muslim League
WPJD	Wahhabi Political and Jihad Doctrines

Glossary

Al-amr bil ma'aruf wal nahi 'an al-munkar	Enjoining good and forbidding wrong (ABM)
Al-wala wal bara	Loyalty and disavowal
Alim/Ulama	Scholar, singular/plural
Aql	Reason
ARAMCO	Arabian-American Oil Company; changed to the Saudi Arabian Oil Company
Bin/Ibn	Son of
Baghiya	Tyrant
Batin	Esoteric
Baya'ah	Allegiance
Bedeviyyet	Bedouin culture
Dar	Abode; house
Dar al harb	Abode of war
Dar al Islam	Abode of Islam
Difa'a	Defence
Faqih/Fuqaha'a	Religious leader, singular/plural
Fardh	Duty
Farida	Duty
Fatwa	Religious decree
Faw'da	Chaos
Fiqh	Jurisprudence
Firqa	Sect; group
Fitna	Strife

Fur'u	Secondary or tangential
Gha'iba	Hidden; neglected
Ghazu	Raid
Hadith	The saying of Prophet Muhammad
Hakim	Ruler
Halal	Permissible
Haram	Not permissible; forbidden
Hawza	Islamic religious school
Hisba	Public Duty
Ikhwan	Brothers
Ilm al-rijal	Science of the authentication of Hadith sources
Imam	Religious ruler
Iman	Faith
Jahiliya	Pre-Islamic ignorance
Jihad	Struggle
Jizyah	Tax
Kafir	Unbeliever
Khilafa	Caliphate
Madrasah	School
Majus	Zoroastrians
Mantiq	Logic
Masjid	Mosque
Maslaha	Welfare
Mansura	Victorious
Medeniyyet	Urban culture

Minhaj	Methodology
Mulk	Kingship; ownership
Murtad	Rejector of Islam
Mushrik	Polytheist
Mutahawil	Changing
Mu'thakarta	Memo
Mutawwu'	Volunteer
Najiya	Saved
Nasiha	Advice
Ni'dham	Order
Qadi	Judge
Quwaa	Power
Riddah	Rejection
Salaf	Followers of the pious forefathers
Sahwa	Awakening
Shariah	Law; Islamic law
Sheikh	Leader
Sirah	Biography
Taghut	Idol
Takfir	Excommunication
'Talab	Request
Tawhid	Asserting the oneness of God; monotheism
Thabit	Constant
Udwan	Aggression
Ummah	Community

Usul al-din	Principles of faith
Vilayat-e Faqih	Guardianship of the Islamic Jurist
Wahshiyah	Savagery
Wali al amr	Guardian or leader
Zahir	Exoteric
Zanadiqah	Heretics

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