CORDOBA RESEARCH PAPERS

The Salafiscape in the wake of the 'Arab spring'

Second Edition - October 2017

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Cordoba Foundation of Geneva
FONDATION CORDOUE DE GENÈVE – مؤسسة قرطبة بجنيف

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THE SALAFISCAPE IN THE WAKE OF THE 'ARAB SPRING'

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1. Introduction

Salafism is one of the many Islamic notions that are often misunderstood and misused, such as *Jihād*, *Sharī'a*, *Fatwā*, *Khilāfa*, etc. Apart from a limited number of learned circles and academics, the mainstream media and political discourse, often in the West but sometimes even in the Muslim world, make the shortcut: Salafism = Wahhābism = Fundamentalism = Extremism = Takfīrism = Jihādism = Terrorism. In fact, these terms are often used interchangeably. This obviously mixes distinct categories related to schools of thought, attitudes and behaviours.

Moreover, Salafism is by-and-large understood in an undifferentiated way. It is considered as one single monolithic entity, despite its non-homogeneity and the wide diversity within the Salafi current. This ignores, for instance, the substantial differences between Salafi movements, organisations and groups in their:

(1) Conception of and approach to power, how they view the relation between the governor and the governed and how they consider political participation;

(2) Attitude towards (non)violence, and;

(3) Relation to 'the other', be it the closer or the more distant one, particularly the West.

In recent years, the diversity of the Salafi current has even increased, because of the changes that occurred in North Africa and West Asia (NAWA) since 2011.

The inaccurate use of terms and the undifferentiated approach in the study of Salafism lead inevitably to false results and wrong conclusions and may end up in unuseful policies. The indiscriminate attitude towards the wide range of Salafi movements is an obstacle to developing a healthy and peaceful relationship with all those in this current who are willing to do so.

All Islamic schools evolve with time and differentiate. The Muslim Brotherhood (MB) are today divided into leftists and rightists, nationalists and internationalists. The Sufis are grouped into mystics and those engaged socially and politically[1]. Salafism is no exception and the Salafi movements can be sorted in categories and sub-categories according to various parameters of interest.

A number of authors dedicate their research work to Salafism, including Omayma Abdel-Latif,[2] Samir Amghar,[3] Laurent Bonnefoy[4], Hrair Dekmejian,[5] Sebastian Elischer[6], Bernard Haykel,[7] Thomas Hegghammer,[8] Stéphane Lacroix[9], Roel Meijer,[10] Ahmad Moussalli,[11] Basheer Nafi,[12] Zoltan Pall,[13] Barry Rubin,[14] Abdoulaye Sounaye[15], Din Wahid,[16] Quintan Wiktorowicz,[17] among others, and some of them have attempted to elucidate typologies of Salafism.

This contribution aims to show that such typologies are not static but change in time with the evolution of social and political contexts, and that no typology can fully grasp the complexity of the Salafi field. It proposes an alternative typology, based on how Salafis view and approach cultural, economic, political and military power, and gives a number of policy recommendations on how to deal constructively with Salafism.

2. Definition

Salafism originates from the Arabic root *Salaf*, meaning the predecessors. In Islamic terminology, *as-Salaf as-Sālih* (the righteous predecessors) refers to the first Islamic community, and specifically to the first three generations of Muslims: *as-Sahāba* (the companions of the Prophet), *at-Tabi'ūn* (the successors), and *Tabi'ū at-Tabi'īn* (the successors of the successors). This definition of the righteous predecessors is derived from a saying of the Prophet: "The best of you are my *qarn* (epoch, generation), then the following one, then the next one."[18] Salafism therefore commends following the interpretation of the Islamic foundational sources (Qur'ān and Sunna) made by the righteous predecessors, taken as models and sources of inspiration.

Salafism is a quest for pristine authentic Islam and an endeavour to purify the Islamic creed from 'non-Islamic' influences, and to clean the practices of worship spoiled by the accumulation over time of 'heretical innovations' (*bid'a*). This attitude is based on the belief that the Islamic religion was completed before the death of the Prophet, one of the last Qur'ānic verses revealed reads: "Today I have perfected your religion",[19] and that nothing can be added, removed or changed. The quest for authentic Islam requires the return to the religious roots and the original unaltered sources of Islam.

It is worth noting at this point that the reference to *as-Salaf as-Sālih* does not mean the rejection of modernity, particularly in its Western

version, notably science and technology, social and political organization, human rights, etc. It is against innovation in matters of religious creed and practices. Salafism may be construed as a form of orthodoxy, i.e. conforming to the original doctrines of religion and adopting traditional, conservative views in matters of theology.

Salafism may be considered as an Islamic radicalism similar to Christian radicalism which is defined by American theologian Ched Myers as the "re-orientation towards the root truths of Christian discipleship through personal reflection and action"[20]. This view is supported by David Galston, Academic Director at Westar Institute, who considers that "the history of Christian radicalism is the history of theologians or theological movements attempting to get back to the root of the gospel despite and often against the institutional tradition of the church."[21]

3. The periodic rise of Salafism

Salafism may be understood as a response to a threat (internal and/or external) to the Islamic creed, in which people want to reconnect with their roots, seek refuge in their original values, and regain their religious identities. Table 1 shows a few historical moments when a threat was perceived in Islamic history, and when the Salafis became more visible, and their discourse more audible.

The notion of *as-Salaf as-Sālih* was referred to at an early stage. It was firstly used by the end of the second century of Hijra (8th—9th century CE), by a number of Muslim scholars, particularly Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, who opposed the methodology of the Mu'tazilah school and, in general, speculative philosophy (*'Ilm al-Kalām*) acquired by Muslims in contact with Greek and Persian civilizations. This first manifestation of the reference to *as-Salaf as-Sālih* was also due to the perceived danger of the proliferation of schools of fiqh (hanafi, maliki, shafi'i, hanbali, ja'fari, zaydi, dhahiri, ibadhi), still followed by millions of Muslims all around the world, which was viewed as a threat to the unity of the Muslim community. In fact, the profusion of opinions did not reflect oppositional differences but rather differences based on diversity, since the intellectual effort (*ijtihād*) of interpreting Islamic guiding principles leads necessarily to different opinions and rulings that are not always contradictory to each other. Caliph Omar established a golden rule: "ijtihād does not invalidate ijtihād".

Table 1: Salafi manifestations throughout Islamic history

Rise of Salafism		Perceived threat	
Era	*Among the famous leader(s)*	*Internal*	*External*
8th – 9th century	Ahmad ibn Hanbal (780–855)	Mu'tazilah school / Proliferation of fiqh schools	Greek and Persian philosophy
11th – 12th century	Abu Bakr at-Turtushi (1059–1126)	Shi'a Fatimids	Crusades
13th – 14th century	Ibn Taymiyyah (1263–1328), Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (1292–1350)	Various non-orthodox schools of thought	Mongol invasion
18th century	Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703–1792)	Widespread innovations in creed and manifestation of signs of polytheism	Declining corrupt Ottoman Empire
19th – 20th century	Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani (1838–1897), Muḥammad 'Abduh (1849–1905), Muhammad Rashid Rida (1865–1935), Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938), Abdelhamid Ben Badis (1889–1940), Mohamed Tahar Ben Achour (1879–1973), Hassan al-Banna (1906–1949), Allal El Fassi (1910–1974), etc.	Lethargy / underdevelopment of Muslim societies	Western imperialism / colonialism / domination
20th – 21st century	Abdul Aziz bin Abdullah bin Baz (1910–1999), Muhammad ibn al-Uthaymeen (1925–2001), Rabee' al-Madkhali (1931-), Muqbil al-Wadi'i (1933-2001), etc.	Arab Secularism, Iranian expansionism	Western neo imperialism / neo colonialism / domination, aggressive globalisation

It is worth mentioning that the founders of the main schools of *fiqh* lived well after the death of the Prophet (570–632), as shown in Table 2. Zayd Ibn Ali, born 63 years after the death of the Prophet, was the grandson of Husayn ibn Alī, himself grandson of the Prophet (4-5 generations), while Ahmad Ibn Hanbal was born 148 years after the death of the Prophet.

Table 2: Main Islamic schools of *fiqh*

Fiqh School	Named after Scholar	Scholar's life span AH	Scholar's life span CE
Ibādhi	Abdullāh Ibn Ibādh Al-Tamimi	d. 86	d. 708
Zaydi	Zayd Ibn 'Alī	76—122	695—740
Hanafi	Nu'mān Abū Hanīfah	80—148	699—767
Ja'fari	Ja'far Al-Sādiq	83—148	702—765
Māliki	Mālik Ibn Anas	93—179	711—795
Shafi'i	Muhammad Al-Shafi'i	150—204	767—820
Hanbali	Ahmad Ibn Hanbal	164—241	780—855
Dhāhiri	Dawūd Al-Dhāhiri	201—270	816—884

In the 11th–12th century, a number of scholars in Egypt and the Levant, fought the Isma'ili ideology of the Fatimid (Shi'a) dynasty, considered heretical, as well as their alleged cooperation with the Christian Crusaders in order to weaken their common enemy, the Seljuk Empire (Sunni).

In the 13th–14th century, Ibn Taymiyyah, considered by some historians of religion as the spiritual father of modern Salafism, and his students, confronted the Mongol invasion of the Levant and Iraq, and the increasing influence of a number of non-orthodox schools of thought, mainly speculative and theological philosophy.

In the 18th century Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhāb, the founder of Wahhabism, confronted the spreading of what he considered heretical innovations (in the creed and the practice of worship), and signs and manifestations of polytheism (e.g. visiting the shrines of saints). The early Wahhabis also opposed the declining Ottoman Empire, considered by some of them as apostate since it interrupted the application of Islamic law.

In the late 19th and the first half of the 20th century, a reformist movement was initiated by Jamāl ad-Din al-Afghāni and spread all over the Muslim world, which at that time was subject to Western imperialism and colonialism. Western aggression was facilitated by the lethargy and underdevelopment of Muslim societies that showed what Algerian philosopher Malek Bennabi called 'colonisability', i.e. the vulnerability to being colonized. This reformist movement was led by a number of prominent scholars in Asia and Africa.

At the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century, a movement in the Arab Peninsula, led by several scholars, opposed the perceived threat of secularism spread by Arab leftist movements in the 1970s. They also opposed the perceived Iranian expansionism and the 'exportation' of the 1979 revolution, as well as the perceived Western neo-imperialism, neo-colonialism and domination, and aggressive globalisation.

The anti-Shi'a attitude of the Salafis, mentioned in the context of the Fatimid dynasty in the 11th century and in the context of the 20th century Iranian revolution, is due to the Shi'a-Sunni divide, which is deeply rooted in the Islamic history. It is related to the Big Fitna that occurred in the first decades after the death of the Prophet, i.e. the political conflicts between companions of the Prophet which caused deadly violence within the early Muslim community and led to the emergence of the Sunni, Shī'a, Khawārij schools of political thought. The tensions between these schools still lead to episodic outbreaks of violence, when exacerbated by political and socioeconomic factors. Anti-Shi'ism is one of the major issues that unite Sunni Salafis from all sides, and vice-versa. Moreover, the Sunni/Shi'a line of tension is currently – and will be in coming years and decades – the main source of violence in the Arab and Muslim world, with the emergence of more and more armed groups and militias in the Sunni and Shi'a conflicting parties: Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Sub-Saharan Africa, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, etc.

All the above-mentioned movements have in common the fact that their leaders and followers stated that they comply with the way *as-Salaf as-Sālih* interpreted the Qur'ān and the Sunna and practised them in their daily life. They all claimed or were qualified as being reformist. However, the scholars and leaders of these movements can be categorized in two broad groups that exist to this day:

(1) *Muqallidūn* (imitators), who stick to the strict reproduction of opinions and rulings made by *as-Salaf as-Sālih* and their application in a context that is different from that in which they were pronounced;

(2) *Mujaddidūn* (revivalists), who are in favour of a reinterpretation of the Islamic foundational texts, based on the methodology of *as-Salaf as-Sālih*, to re-read them in the light of the new place and time contexts.

The scholars of the latter group are also called *Usūliyūn* (fundamentalists) because of their focus more on the fundamental principles (*usūl*) of fiqh than on particular specific rulings (*ahkām* or *fatāwa*), that can be derived anywhere, anytime from the *usūl*, through the process of *ijtihād* (effort of interpretation, projection and extrapolation). Obviously, the term fundamentalism has a meaning in an Arab/Muslim context different from what is understood in a Christian context or when it is used in the West to depict a category of Muslims.

4. Salafism within the overall Islamic Sunni landscape

Given the definition of Salafism above, it can be said that every Sunni, and even every Muslim[1] is a Salafi, and, a fortiori, every Islamic movement is Salafi. In fact, the review of the literature of the various movements shows that they all share the reference to the *as-Salaf as-Sālih* at least in matters of Islamic dogma.

Islamic religion (*dīn*) encompasses a wide scope, covering: (1) the creed or doctrine (*aqīda*) defining the faith and setting the system of beliefs; (2) the way of conduct (*sharī'a*) regulating worship (*'ibādāt*), common practices (*'ādāt*), dealings (*mu'āmalāt*) and penal provisions (*jināyāt*); and (3) ethics (*akhlāq*) addressing matters of morality. However, each Islamic movement focuses on one or a couple of aspects[2] related to the 'creed-conduct-ethics' system of Islamic values, as shown in Table 3.

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[1] One could also speak of Salafism in the Shi'a school whre the righteous predecessors are a small selection of the companions of the Prophet and their successors, notably the chain of Imams. Similar to what will be seen concerning the Sunni Salafis, there are two categories of Shiite: those who withdraw from politics, waiting for the return of the last Imam, and those who are involved in politics, after the reform of Imam Khomeini, who introduced in the 1970s the concept of *Wilayat al-Faqih* (Guardianship of the Jurist), which allows the Muslim scholar to get involved in politics.

[2] Although the focus on one aspect is quite normal due to differences in natural personal inclinations and skills, the Muslim is recommended to attempt addressing all aspects. Imam Muhammad Al-Shafi'i (767—820) in one of his poems said: "Be a faqih and a Sufi at the same time, this is my advice to you. The former being austere with a harsh heart, the latter being

Table 3: Focus areas for various Islamic currents

Islamic Movement	Focus
Salafis	Creed (*aqīda*)
Muslim Brotherhood	All-inclusiveness and organisation (*shumūliya wa tandhīm*)
Jamā'at at-Tablīgh (Community for predication)	Invitation to God (*da'wa*)
Hizb at-Tahrīr (Liberation Party)	Unity of the Muslim Community under one political authority (*khilāfa*)
Sufis	Purification and education (*tazkiya wa tarbiya*)

Consider for instance the Muslim Brotherhood. In his Letter to the fifth Congress of the movement, the founder Hassan al-Banna described the Muslim Brotherhood as a "comprehensive reformist project" that is simultaneously "a Salafi call, a Sunni order, a Sufi reality, a political institution, a sports league, a scientific and cultural association, an economic corporation and a social idea."[22] He highlighted in many instances the comprehensiveness and all-inclusiveness of the Islamic religion that covers all aspects of life. Concerning the Salafi attribute of the Muslim Brotherhood, Hasan al-Banna explained it by the fact that "they call to the return of Islam to its pure sources: Qur'ān and Sunna".[23] It is worth noting that Hasan al-Banna was influenced by 19th century Muslim reformists such as Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani, Muḥammad 'Abduh and Muhammad Rashid Rida, as well as 18th century reformist Muhammad Ibn Abd Al-Wahhāb. It is legitimate to ask whether the naming of the movement *Ikhwān* (Brotherhood) is inspired by the early 1900 Ikhwān, a trained armed force used by the Saudis to spread Wahhābism in the Arabian Peninsula and beyond[1].

Another example is Hizb at-Tahrīr, founded in 1953 by Palestinian Muhammad Taqi ad-Din an-Nabhani (1909–1977). This political party focuses on the concept of khilāfa of the Prophet, which is the

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فقيهًا وصوفيًا فكن ليسَ واحدًا * فَإِني وَحَقّ اللَّهِ إِيَّاكَ أَنْصَحُ / فذلك قاس، لم يذق قلبه تقى * وهذا جهولٌ،) ignorant."
(كيف ذو الجهل يصلحُ؟ Imam Al-Shafi'i obviously meant the corrpted forms of Fiqh and Sufism.

[1] Wahhābi Ikhwān reached Sinaï in Egypt; they were known as *Ikhwān man Taa' Allah* (إخوان من طاع الله), literally meaning the 'Brotherhood of God Obedients'. In the neighbouring Ismaïlia city where Imam Hassan Al-Banna was a teacher and founded the Muslim Brotherhood in 1928, people were aware of the Wahhābi *Ikhwān* who expanded and then were crushed with the help of British occupied Egypt.

succession in leading the *umma* and refers to the political function of the Caliph (*khalīfa*). But yearning for *khilāfa* is shared by almost all Muslims. There is a general belief among Muslims that the *khilāfa* will be re-established once again, based on a prediction of the Prophet who said: "Prophethood will remain in you for as long as God decides for it to remain and then God will remove it when He decides to remove it. After prophethood, there will be a *khilāfa* on the style of prophethood and it will exist for as long as God decides for it to exist, then He will remove it when He decides to remove it. Then there will be a kingdom in which people will face trials and tribulations and it will continue to exist for as long as God decides for it to exist. Then He will remove it, when He decides to remove it. After this, there will be an oppressive kingdom and it will continue to exist for as long as God decides for it to exist. Then He will remove it, when He decides to remove it. Then there will once again be a *khilāfa* on the style of prophethood."[24] Therefore, the question posed by all Islamic movements is not '*khilāfa* or no *khilāfa*?', but when and how to achieve it: sudden or gradual, central State, Confederation of States, an empowered Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), or another format. Each movement has its answer, and these vary over a wide range from the one given by the Muslim Brotherhood or Hizb at-Tahrīr, which is sometimes described as a utopian, non-violent movement, to that prescribed and attempted by ISIS in 2014.

In the last fifteen years, a new current was born, with a focus on rights and freedoms. It may be named neo-Salafis or (politically) Liberal Salafis. It has leading figures in most Arab countries. These new Muslim intellectual and political elites, freed from the tutelage of traditional schools, take advantage of their experience and draw lessons from both their successes and their failures. They attempt to elaborate an alternative Islamic political theory, rooted in the fundamental sources of the Islamic tradition and expressed in contemporary language. They base their intellectual contribution and their political action on the themes of freedom and rights and that is why they have won the esteem of large segments of Arab societies.

5. Salafi categorisation

As already mentioned in the introduction, mainstream media and political discourse often mixes categories of distinct nature such as

schools related to Scholars and types related to thoughts, attitudes and behaviours. For instance, Wahhābism (a Salafi school) is confused with Jihādism (a Salafi type). In this section, these two systems of categorization are considered separately. Moreover, the geographic scope of Salafism is addressed.

5.1. Salafi categorisation

Table 4 shows eight Salafi schools and gives for each of them the reference scholar. They all share a few general characteristics, but also show fundamental differences. There is wide diversity even within the same school. That is why the school categorization cannot be used as an operative and effective typology.

Table 4: Main Salafi schools

School	Reference Scholar(s)
Wahābism	Saudi Arabian Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb (1703–1792)
Bādīsism	Algerian Abdelhamid ben Badis (1889–1940)
Bannaïsm	Egyptian Hassan al-Banna (1906–1949)
Qutbism	Egyptian Qutb brothers: Sayyid (1906–1966) and Muhammad (1919–2014)
Albānism	Albanian Muhammad al-Albāni (1914–1999)
Jāmism or Madkhalism	Ethiopian Mohammad al Jāmi (1930–1995)
	Saudi Arabian Rabī' al-Madkhali (1931–)
Wādi'ism or Yemenism	Yemeni Muqbil al-Wādi'i (1933-2001)
Surūrism	Syrian Muhammad Surūr (1938–2016)

By order of the date of birth of the reference scholar

A few words about the eight schools:

Wahābism is the oldest and has influenced to a certain degree all the others. It has evolved over time so that now it covers various types of Salafis.

Bādīsism is the reference school for Algerian home grown Salafism (in opposition to Salafism imported from Saudi Arabia). However, Shaikh Abdelhamid ben Badis who studied in the Hijāz was influenced by the thought of Muhammad Ibn Abd Al-Wahhāb.

Bannaïsm is the traditional Muslim Brotherhood school. It is considered here because, as mentioned earlier on, Hasan al-Banna considered the movement he founded as 'a Salafi call' and was influenced by the thought of Ibn Abdelwahhab, and because the founders of two other Salafi schools (Qutb brothers and Muhammad Surūr) were former members of the Muslim Brotherhood.

Qutbism is a school considered as the merging of Egyptian Sayyid Qutb's thought and Saudi Arabian Wahābism, which led to a jihādi-type of Salafism whose leaders are not exclusively from the Arabian Peninsula (e.g. Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, Osama bin Laden, Ayman az-Zawahiri).

Qutbism may also refer to the merging of Egyptian Muhammad Qutb's thought and Saudi Arabian Wahābism, and is in this case analogical to Surūrism, a school considered as the encounter of Muhammad Surūr's thought (Muslim Brotherhood background) and Saudi Arabian Wahābism, which led to the Sahwa in Saudi Arabia. Among the leading figures of Saudi Arabian Sahwa are Safar Al-Hawali, Salman al-Ouda, Nasir Al-Omar and Ayidh Al-Qarni. Surūrism/Qutbism is also present in the Levant and North Africa.

It is worth noting that this is not the first time the Saudi regime is challenged by religious leaders. In 1929, it faced an Ikhwān (Brothers) insurrection, although they were allies in the propagation of Wahhābism. Half a century later, it confronted Juhayman al-Otaybi and his group who took over the Grand Mosque in Mecca in 1979.

It is also interesting to note that the Muslim Brotherhood was in turn influenced by Qutbism, which now exists as one of the various currents that make up the movement.

A third observation: the involvement of the Saudi family in the coalition of the 1991 war against Iraq, together with the use of the Arabian Peninsula by the US army as a military base to attack this neighbouring country, led to the radicalisation of both the Surūri/Qutbi and the jihādi schools.

Albānism and Wādi'ism or Yemenism is a scholarly-type of Salafism with a focus on the science of hadith, the reported tradition of the Prophet.

Jāmism or Madkhalism (Rabī' al-Madkhali was a student of Mohammad al-Jāmi) is a State-allied type of Salafism. This school was and is still supported by the Saudi family to overcome the Sahwa school in the early 1990s, when a number of Sahwa scholars positioned themselves against the Saudi policy allowing the American troops to attack Iraq, in the 1991 war, from bases located in the Arabian Peninsula. Jāmi/Madkhali scholars showed their full support to the Saudi decision and verbally and publicly attacked the Sahwa leaders. The leading figures of this school, apart from Mohammad Al Jāmi and Rabī' Al-Madkhali, include Abd Al-Aziz ibn Baz, Muhammad ibn al Uthaymeen and Saleh Al-Fawzan.

5.2. Salafi types

Several researchers working on the Salafi movement have proposed similar typologies based on the three categories presented in Table 5. This trichotomy was popularized in the academic world by Quintan Wiktorowicz who used the 'purists, politicos, jihādis' terms[25].

Table 5: Common tripartite typology of Salafism

Type	Name used in Arabic	Qualifiers used in Western literature (*see authors mentioned in the Introduction*)
1	*Salafiya Ilmiya* (Scholarly Salafism) or *Salafiya Taqlidiya* (Traditional Salafism)	Abstentionist – Apolitical – Fundamentalist – Isolationist – Messianic – Non-political – Non-violent – Pietist – Pious – Predicative – Purist – Puritanical – Quietist – Scientific – Scriptural – Secularist
2	*Salafiya Harakiya* (Activist Salafism) or *Salafiya Wasatiya* (Median Salafism)	Activist – Gradualist – Political – Politico – Reformist
3	*Salafiya Jihādiya* (Jihādi Salafism)	Jihādi – Irredentists – Liberationist – Revolutionary – Violent

Table 6: A Preference-Based Typology of Islamist Activism, proposed by Thomas Hegghammer[26]

Rationale	Goal	Non-violent form		Violent form	
		Manifestation	Examples	Manifestation	Examples
State-oriented	Change the social and political organisation of the State.	Reformism	MB, Saudi Sahwa	Socio-revolutionary activism	GIA, GSPC, EIJ
Nation-oriented	Establish sovereignty of a specific territory perceived as occupied or dominated by non-Muslims.	Nationalism	—	Violent irredentism	Hamas, LeT, Chechen mujahidin, Islamic Army (Iraq)
Umma-oriented	Protect the Islamic nation as a whole from external (non-Muslim) threats.	Pan-Islamism	MWL	Classical | Global Jihādism | Jihādism	Arabs in | al-Qaeda Chechnya | QAP
Morality-oriented	Change Muslims' social conduct in a more conservative and literalist direction.	Pietism	Tabligh, Madkhalis	Vigilantism	Unorganised hisba
Sectarian	Reduce the influence and power of the competing sect (Shi'I or Sunni).	Sectarianism	—	Violent sectarianism	LeJ, Iraqi militias

Abbreviations: MB=Muslim Brotherhood; GIA=*Groupe Islamique Armé*, GSPC=*Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat*; EIJ=Egyptian Islamic Jihad;

LeT=Lashkar-e-Tayyiba; LeJ=Lashkar-e-Janghvi; MWL=Muslim World League; QAP=al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula.

The variants of the tripartite typology[1] were critiqued in recent years by academics such as Thomas Hegghammer in 2009[27] and Zoltan Pall in 2013[28].

For Hegghammer, "all these typologies are problematic, either because they are inconsistent — mixing means (e.g. violence / engagement / separation) and objectives (e.g. national liberation / regime change / increased social conservatism) — or because they are incomplete — omitting prominent forms of Islamist militancy such as sectarian violence."[29] Hegghammer proposed a typology based on five rationales behind Islamic activism and categorized Islamic movements into State-oriented, Nation-oriented, Umma-oriented, Morality-oriented and Sectarian. He identified also two forms of action: non-violent and violent. Hence, he ended up with ten categories as shown in Table 6.

For Pall[30] "Wiktorowicz's classification is too rigid, its distinction between the factions too sharp, and it ignores the theological discourse that motivates these groups". He proposed an alternative typology, based on theology and preference. Pall grouped Salafi movements into two main categories and four sub-categories, as shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Typology of Salafis proposed by Zoltan Pall[31].
Table based on a summary by Din Wahid[32]

Category		Sub-category	
Purists	Unconditionally loyal to the ruler	Rejectionists	Repudiate engagement with political practices and only focus on da'wa activities
		Politically-oriented	View that to a certain degree involvement in politics is possible. Want to change daily life so that it accords with religious doctrines
Harakis	Object to absolute submission to the ruler	Politicos	Support political engagement in order to change the community. Aim to change more, including international relations
		Jihādis	Advocate the use of violence in removing the government

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[1] It is worth mentioning that this tripartite typology could also be applied to other religious currents and traditions (Christian, Buddhist, etc.).

5.2. Salafi scope

The typology proposed by Hegghammer has the advantage of considering the scope of the Salafi movements, particularly the geographic scope, which is determined by the relation of the movements to the umma. The umma is a key concept in Islamic culture. It is not the nation in the modern political sense of the term, but rather a value-based community. Islam came to move the Arab society from tribalism to the sense of belonging to the umma that transcends borders, races and languages and that accommodates all the specific aspects of local cultures, as long as they are not in contradiction with the primary Islamic values. It is the consciousness of belonging to the umma that explains the proximity felt between an African, a European, an Arab and a South Asian Muslim.

Salafis, and Muslims in general, divide into those who consider the umma as a starting point, a lived reality to build upon, and those who view it as a target to reach, a reality to edify in the long term, once the Islamic community is re-empowered at the local level. This led to the differentiation of the Salafi movements into Globalists (*Al-Alamiyūn*) and Territorialists (*Al-Qutriyūn*), and this is true for the three broad categories presented above: scholarly, political activists and jihādists, leading to six categories as shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Six Salafi categories based on a tripartite typology and a bipartite scope

Type ↓ Scope →	Globalists	Territorialists
Traditional	1	2
Political activists	3	4
Jihādists	5	6

In Algeria for instance, the six categories are present:

1) The Algerian Madkhalists influenced by Saudi scholars;

2) The Bādīsists influenced the thought of the Algerian scholar sheikh Ben Bādīs;

3) The Algerian Surūrists (a small current within the Islamic Salvation Front) or the Muslim Brotherhood Hamas/Hams party;

4) The Algerianist current within the Islamic Salvation Front or the Muslim Brotherhood Ennahda party;

5) Armed individuals/groups with a global scope who fought in Afghanistan, Bosnia, Chechnya, Iraq, and who are fighting in Syria and the Sahel;

6) Armed individuals/groups focusing on Algeria and fighting the Algerian military regime.

6. Salafism and the various forms of power

One way of understanding and describing the various Salafi groups and entities is to look at their interest in, and approach to, power in its various forms: political (decision-making), military (means of coercion), economic (wealth), and cultural (constituents of identity, religion in particular).[33] Bearing in mind that the Salafi current aims to operate a profound change within Muslim society, it is important to identify which method and tools they wish to use to achieve societal change.

The Salafi current has been primarily concerned with predication towards the Muslims (preaching genuine creed, moral values and virtuous practices) and towards non-Muslims (Call to God). Salafis have therefore been interested in the cultural realm.

However, with time, they have attempted to acquire financial, political and military power in order to achieve an effective and speedy societal transformation. In fact, an evolution of the Salafi current can be traced, moving them from the 'cultural-economic' space to the 'political-military' field.

A simple – but reductionist – description of this evolution is to view it as a CEPM process:

1) Start with cultural power;

2) If (1) is not effective, acquire economic power to back cultural power;

3) If (2) is not effective, acquire political power to back cultural and economic power;

4) If (3) is not effective, acquire military power to back cultural, economic and political power.

However, other considerations determine which type of power is privileged: psychology, skills, influencing school of thought, and most importantly the accessibility of this or that type of power.

Throughout the history of Salafism, anytime there was an opportunity, some Salafis built an alliance with the political-military power (e.g. Wahhabis/Saud family alliance). Sometimes Salafi movements attempted to acquire political power themselves (MB and post 2011 Salafi political parties), economic power (Salafi business community) or military power (e.g. the various Islamic armed groups, from Algerian GIAs to al-Qaeda and ISIS). It is worth mentioning at this point that the Salafi movements resort to military power because either they do not believe in the compliance of politics with Islamic precepts, or they doubt the effectiveness of political action or, more often, they are prevented from acquiring political power and denied access to political participation.

6.1. Salafis and culture

Since its early days, the Salafi movement has chosen to work on the youth (through education) and the adult population (through preaching) in order to reform society.

Education is provided through religious schools, called *madrasa*, *mahdhara*, *kuttab*, or *pesentran* in different Muslim countries. These schools deliver mainly Islamic religious instruction but may teach also other non-religious subjects. Education is also assured by some NGOs, which organise training workshops and operate education camps during school vacations.

Preaching has two distinct targets: Muslim and Non-Muslim communities.

Muslim-oriented preaching uses various tools and spaces such as mosques (sermons of Salafi scholars and opinion leaders), the media

(using the Salafi network of satellite TV channels, websites and social media), and streets and public spaces (through the committees for the enforcement of moral values, such as the Committee for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice in Saudi Arabia).

Non-Muslim-oriented preaching uses mainly NGOs working in the field of da'wa (call to God), which operate in Muslim countries with non-Muslim minorities, or in non-Muslim countries. The NGOs operating in non-Muslim countries often focus on both non-Muslims and Muslim communities living there.

It is worth mentioning that women have an important role in this setting. They are both targets and actors of change, particularly in countries where they are more emancipated like Yemen and Mauritania.

6.2. Salafis and the economy

Salafis are mostly liberals in economic matters, but at the same time, they are very strict in honouring the religious duty of almsgiving, particularly the obligation of *zakāt*. Consequently, they are present both in the production and in the distribution of wealth.

Wealth production: The Salafis have a significant business community throughout all Arab countries, particularly in the Gulf States, working mainly in commerce and finance. Commerce covers anything complying with Islamic law and ethics, including consumer goods, real estate, etc. In finance, they are good at stock exchange operations, or, when not available, simply at street currency exchange.

Wealth distribution: The Salafis have built an impressive network of WGOs (Work of Goodness Organizations), specialized in *'Amal al-Khayr* (work of goodness), any activity that is useful to the creatures of God[34], particularly helping the weak, assisting the needy, and relieving the afflicted (humanitarian action).

6.3. Salafis and politics

A large number of Salafi movements, groups and individuals are involved in politics in one form or another. In order to better differentiate them four concepts should be introduced: party politics, non-party politics, positive politics and negative politics.

Party politics: adhering to democracy, integrating into the party system established in the country and engaging in the electoral process. Participative Salafis engage in party-politics and view democracy as a set of mechanisms for regulating political life (instrumental democracy) compatible with Islamic laws, ethics and political philosophy. Post 2011 Salafi political parties in the Arab world fit within this category.

Non-party politics: working outside the party system and the electoral process. Salafis of this category are divided into three groups: the rejectionists, the resistants and the unpowered.
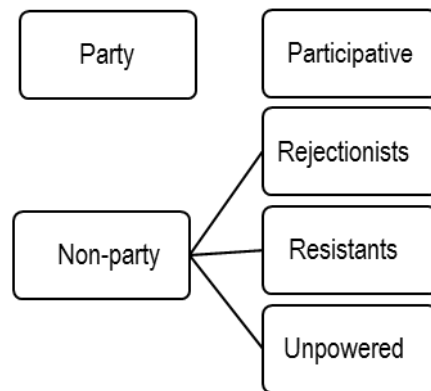
(1) *The Rejectionists*, who reject the party system, the electoral process[1], and democracy in general. They either view democracy as a creed (dogmatic democracy) incompatible with the Islamic creed (sovereignty of the people against the sovereignty of God), or believe that party politics leads to the division of the umma and the dispersion of its forces.

(2) *The Resistants*, who adhere to instrumental democracy and accept the party system and the electoral process, but refuse to participate in a despotic corrupt system and endeavour to change it by non-violent means for the establishment of the rule of law and good governance;

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[1] Some Salafis reject only legislative elections but accept to engage in local elections. For this sub-category of Salafis, there is no harm to compete for the service of local populations, but for them it is anacceptable to join an assembly that legislates, viewed as an exclusively divine function. The Arabic word for legislation (*tashri'*) has the same root as *Shari'a.*

(3) *The Unpowered*, who work outside the party system and the electoral process, simply because they lack the capacity (human, material, skills) to do so, and meanwhile go through an empowerment process.

Those engaged in non-party politics are convinced that other forms of political participation represent a religious duty, notably civic action, expressed in Qur'ānic language as 'enjoining what is right and reprobating what is wrong'. The Qur'ān says: "You are the best umma that ever existed among humanity. You command people to good and prohibit them from evil, and you believe in God."[35] The Prophet said: "If someone of you sees an evil s/he must change it with his/her hand, if not possible then with his/her tongue, if not possible then with his/her heart, and that is the weakest degree of faith."[36] He also said: "If people see evil and do not change it, it is likely that God will reserve for them a collective punishment."[37]

Leaving the apolitical attitude and engaging in politics may lead to positive politics or to negative politics.
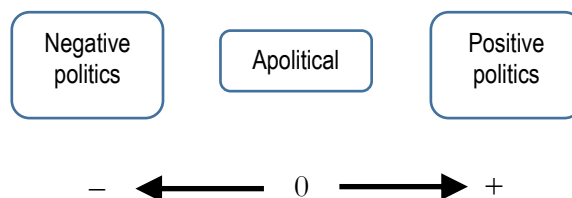
Positive (constructive, inclusive) politics: endeavouring to build a State based on the rule of law and good governance and a society governed by solidarity and the awareness of the common good.

Negative (destructive, exclusive) politics: participating in a dictatorship and supporting a corrupt political system that is an obstacle to the rule of law and good governance.

It is important to be aware that Salafi movements engaged in negative politics are allied to corrupt, despotic and repressive regimes for two reasons:

(1) They believe that it is a religious duty to obey the ruler even if corrupt and despotic, provided he allows religious practice. Some even consider the obedience to the ruler a matter of creed. They also believe that the ruler should not be criticized publicly, but advised privately;

(2) They have interests and privileges to safeguard.

The following grid shows a few examples of Salafi categories sorted according to the four types of politics: party, non-party, positive and negative.

	Negative	Positive
Non-party	Jamism Madkhalism	Groups and organisations engaged in non-party politics
Party	Egyptian Nour Party	Post 2011 political parties

6.4. Salafis and the military

In order to comprehend Salafis' understanding of military power as a means of societal change, it is useful to introduce a number of concepts such as *bagh'i*, *'udwān*, *fitna*, *qitāl*, *irhāb* and *jihād*, and to address the issue of the recourse to violence in the Islamic tradition.

A) *Bagh'i, 'udwān* and *fitna*

Bagh'i, *'udwān* and *fitna* are the Qur'ānic words for aggression, oppression (tyranny) and religious persecution, respectively; they are absolutely forbidden as stated in the following verses:

Aggression: "Fight in the way of God those who fight you, but do not commit aggression. God does not like the aggressors."[38] "O you who believe! Do not usurp unjustly the wealth of each other, except it be a trade by mutual consent; and do not kill one another. God is most merciful to you. And whoever does that through aggression and injustice, then We will drive him into Hell; and this is easy for God."[39] "Cooperate in goodness and piety and do not cooperate in sin and aggression"[40] In this verse, goodness is associated with piety and aggression with sin.

Oppression: "Tell them [O Muhammad]: 'My Lord has forbidden indecent acts committed in public or in secret, all kinds of sin, unjust oppression; that you associate with God that for which He has given no authority, and that you say things about Him without knowledge'."[41] "God bids you to fairness, *ihsān* and the doing of good to kith and kin, and forbids indecency, evil and oppression. He advises you so that you may be mindful."[42]

Religious persecution: "Religious persecution is worse than killing."[43]

B) *Qitāl*

Islam is a religion of peace but not a pacifist ideology. *Qitāl* (warring) is tolerated in certain circumstances and under certain conditions. The disliked enterprise of war must be:

(a) *strongly justified*; it must aim towards a just end and there are no other means to achieve this end, and;

(b) *highly optimised*; maximum benefit must be achieved with minimum harm; this implies complying with Islamic law and ethics of war, and applying a code of conduct, which enjoins proportionality, avoidance of non-combatants, the banning of non-discriminating weapons, etc.

C) *Irhāb*

In the Arab world the term *irhāb* is used for terrorism. *Irhāb* literally means 'provoking fear' or 'frightening', regardless of the action used to achieve it or the intention behind it. Hence, it does not convey the full meaning of terrorism. Terrorism is about aggression and oppression. To commit a terrorist act is to inflict harm on innocent people, to destroy their property, to abuse their rights; particularly their right to physical integrity and even their right to life, with the aim of provoking fear and inducing a desired behaviour that helps achieve a predefined goal. Terrorism consists therefore in an action (violent, harmful, deadly), committed by an individual, a group or a State, with a given intention. The intention covers an immediate objective (to provoke fear), an intermediate objective (to induce a behaviour) and an ultimate goal (legitimate or not).

Irhāb is also a Qur'ānic word, which, in the following verse, is used with a positive connotation: "Mobilize your force as much as you can, including cavalry, to frighten (*turhibūna*) the enemies of God, your own enemies, and others besides them you may not know but whom God does know. Whatever you spend in the way of God will be fully repaid to you, and you will not be wronged."[44] *Irhāb* is used here in the context of deterrence; it is about defensive attitude and behaviour, contrary to aggression, which is about offensive attitude and behaviour. *Irhāb* in the dissuasive context is achieved by non-harmful means; it aims at discouraging the other side from engaging in an act of aggression. Table 9 gives four situations where *irhāb* is sought as an immediate objective.

In Islam, case 1), aggression, is forbidden; case 3), punitive, is highly disliked, because the Muslim is enjoined to get rid of the spirit of revenge and vengeance and encouraged to forgive; case 4), defensive, is recommended to guarantee peace and avoid war; and case 2), defensive, is allowed under certain conditions (see section B on *qitāl*).

Table 9: Situations where *irhāb* is sought as an immediate objective

	Action	Type	Means	Immediate objective	Intermediate objective	Ultimate goal
1	Aggression	Offensive	Harmful (violent, deadly)	Provoke fear (*irhāb*)	Weaken other's defence	Spoil other's rights
2	Counter aggression	Defensive	Harmful (violent, deadly)	provoke fear (*irhāb*)	Make the other stop an aggression	Recover own or other's rights
3	Counter aggression	Punitive	Harmful (violent, deadly)	provoke fear (*irhāb*)	Make the other regret an aggression	Revenge/ Vengeance
4	Deterrence	Defensive	Non harmful (capacity building)	provoke fear (*irhāb*)	Discourage the other from committing an aggression	Peace & security

From *The Quest for Peace in the Islamic Tradition*[45]

D) *Jihād*

Let us begin by clarifying what jihād is not. *Jihād* is not aggression. Aggression is forbidden in Islam as was seen in the preceding section. *Jihād* is not a 'holy war'. A war cannot be holy and there is neither such a concept as 'holy war' in the Islamic tradition, nor such a thing as a war of religion aiming to convert people to Islam; this is simply because in matters of faith no constraint or coercion is acceptable. "There shall be no compulsion in religion"[46], states the Qur'ān. The Prophet was ordered by God to "say: 'This is the truth from your Lord. Let whosoever will, believe, and whosoever will, disbelieve.'"[47] Even the Crusades were called by Muslims *Hurūb al-Firinja* (the Wars of the Franks), since they were perceived more as wars of occupation than as wars of religion.

Let us now define *jihād* positively. *Jihād* originates from the root verb *jahada*, meaning to make an effort. Two derivative verbs are *jāhada*, meaning to engage in a mutual effort, and *ijtahada*, meaning to exert an (intellectual) effort for a specific goal such as solving a problem, answering a question, passing an exam and so on. From this comes the word *ijtihād*, which refers to interpreting Islamic foundational texts and inferring jurisprudential rules in a specific time and place context.

Jihād may be defined as an effort, of any kind (of the heart, the tongue or the hand) that is permissible, made in the way of God (intention), in order to fight against (goal): (1) all forms of evil inside oneself (greater *jihād*), (2) all forms of injustice outside oneself (smaller *jihād*).

Some Muslim scholars distinguish between two types of smaller *jihād*: (1) reactive (*jihad ad-daf'*) to resist an aggression (*'udwān*) or oppression (*bagh'ī*) on one's land and (2) (pro)active (*jihād at-talab*) to lift religious persecution (*fitna*) in another land.

It is worth underlining at this point that jihād is considered by all Muslims a religious obligation, not only by Salafis or some Salafis who are called jihādists.

For the Muslim Brotherhood for instance, *jihād* is symbolized in their banner by the crossed-swords. The Egyptian MB movement practised jihād in Palestine in 1948 against Zionist occupation, in Egypt in the

early 1950s against British occupation. The Iraqi MB practised jihād the last decade against US occupation, and the Palestinian MB are practising jihād against Israeli occupation.

Many Sūfi movements practised jihād too[48]. A few examples:

— The 17-year jihād led by Algerian Emir Abdelkader (from the Qādiri Sufi order) against French occupation in the 19th century;

— The jihād of many African leaders from the Tijāni Sufi order against Western colonialism;

— The jihād led by Libyan Omar Al-Mukhtār from Senūssi Sufi order against Italian occupation;

— The jihād of leaders of the Naqshbandi Sufi order against US occupation of Iraq and against Iranian interventionism in Iraq.

For the Lebanese Shiite movement Hizb Allah, the fight against Israeli occupation is jihād.

Even Secularist revolutionaries in the Muslim world use the concept of *jihād* to mobilize the population. This was the case of part of the Algerian nationalist movement during the war of independence.

Salafi views on the use of violence

From what preceded, it appears that Muslims are allowed to take up arms to defend themselves, and enjoined to defend others' rights, when they are abused by an aggressor, an oppressor or a religious persecutor. In fact, the first time the early Muslims were allowed to take up arms to defend themselves was when the following Qur'ānic verses were revealed: "Permission to fight is given to those against whom war is being wrongfully waged; God has indeed the power to grant them victory. Those who have been expelled from their homes unjustly, only because they said: Our Lord is God. If God did not repel the aggression of some people by means of others, monasteries, churches, synagogues and mosques, wherein the name of God is much invoked, would surely have been demolished."[49]. True believers are described in the Qur'ān as "those who, when *bagh'i* (tyranny and oppression) strikes them, defend themselves"[50], and they are warned not to submit to aggression and

oppression: "Do not incline towards the unjust, for the hellfire will touch you"[51].

All Salafis share the view that Muslims have the right to use violence to oppose foreign aggression and occupation. They diverge however on issues such as who calls for the armed resistance, who should be targeted and where to wage the war.

— One opinion considers that Islamic movements and groups are not allowed to call for jihād; such a decision being a prerogative of the central authority.

— Another opinion considers that in the absence of a legitimate and powerful authority, the responsibility and obligation to fight aggression and occupation must be taken by whoever feels he has the capacity to do it.

— One opinion restricts the target to armed combatants and their civilian commanders (military and political elites) and the battlefield to the occupied territory.

— Another opinion expands the theatre of war to the aggressor's own territory and the target to non-combatants as well (the whole society). The argument is that the political leadership of aggressor countries being elected democratically, their populations must share responsibility for their foreign policy.

Regarding domestic oppression and tyranny, Salafi opinions are more diverse.

— As mentioned earlier, some Salafi movements believe it is a religious duty to obey the ruler even if corrupt and despotic, provided he allows religious practice.

— Other movements consider that domestic oppression and tyranny must be opposed exclusively by non-violent means and that armed action should be limited to facing foreign aggression.

— A third category of Salafi movements adopts another stand and finds it legitimate to use armed action against domestic oppression and tyranny.

The latter category is divided in three groups:

— Those who target the oppressors and tyrants as well as their military and political personnel.

— Those who target the whole society, which, in their view, has accepted to live under an anti-Islamic regime and therefore deserve excommunication (*takfīr*)[1].

— Those who 'export' the fight to the foreign supporters of domestic oppressors, considering this support as an indirect occupation, a hidden aggression, a form of structural violence, and a way to maintain the domination of resources to serve the interests of foreign countries, and leave Muslim countries in misery.

7. An alternative typology

Table 10 gives a typology of Salafi movements, groups and religious leaders, based on the type of power chosen to operate societal change, the type of action, the type of target and the type of tool. It consists of 4 categories, 10 sub-categories, and 17 sub-sub-categories. This typology attempts to cover the Salafi spectrum as broadly as possible, and tries to include as many categories that are omitted in common typologies as possible, particularly those related to economic activity, involving the Salafi business community and Salafi charities, and the Salafi actors engaged in non-party politics and in negative politics. It also offers a finer differentiation within the scholarly and jihādi categories of Salafists.

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[1] The *takfiri* current is made up of two groups: the first one considers society as a community of unbelievers, and therefore chooses to withdraw from it and live in isolated places; the second group engages in violence against society.

Table 10: Salafi typology based on the type of power chosen to operate societal change, the type of action, the type of target and the type of tool

| Category		Sub-category		Sub-sub-category		Examples
Type of **power**	Equivalent in the literature	Type of **action**	Equivalent in the literature	Type of **target / tool**	Equivalent in the literature	
Cultural	*Scholarly*	Education		Schools		Salafi religious schools, education camps
		Preaching	*Predicative*	Mosques		Salafi scholars and preachers
				Media		Salafi satellite channels, Internet site and social media
				Streets	*Vigilantist*	Committees for the enforcement of moral values
				Non-Muslim communities		Da'wa (call to God) NGOs
Economic		Wealth production		Commerce / finance		Salafi business community
		Wealth distribution		Helping the needy		Salafi charities
Political	*Activist*	Positive politics		Party politics	*Reformist*	Most post 2011 Salafi political parties
				Non-party politics		Other Salafi political movements
		Negative politics		Party politics		Egyptian Nour party
				Non-party politics		State-allied Jāmi / Madkhali movements
Military	*Jihādi*	Fight domestic oppression	*Revolutionary*	Targeting political / military elites		Non-takfiri local opposition armed groups
				Targeting society	*Takfīri*	Takfīri opposition local armed groups, Islamic State in Iraq and Syria
		Support domestic oppression		Targeting those who fight domestic oppression		Armed Jāmi / Madkhali groups: pro-Haftar in Eastern Libya and pro-UAE in Southern Yemen
		Fight foreign aggression / occupation	*Irredentist*	Targeting aggressor in occupied territory		Local liberation armed groups, Al Qaeda International ante 9/11
				Targeting aggressor in his own territory		Al Qaeda International post 9/11
		Fight religious persecution of Muslims		Targeting persecutor in his territory		International armed groups operating in countries with Muslim minorities

8. Mind the traps!

When using the categorization proposed in the above table, attention must be paid to the fact that no typology is static, that the categories are not perfectly sealed, that the language used by a category may be misleading, and that there are other categories missing in the table related to pseudo-Salafis.

8.1. Salafism: A current in movement

Salafis may move from one (sub-)category to another, according to national and international contexts. This can be illustrated by the movement between the three categories of Salafism commonly used: 'traditional/scholarly', 'political activist/ median' and 'jihādi'.

1) From the extremes to the median

In 2011, North Africa and West Asia went through a tremendous process of democratization. Several countries removed old corrupt regimes that were preventing the emancipation of their societies, and started a difficult but inevitable political transition that may lead eventually to the rule of law and good governance. This process brought hope and enthusiasm to large segments of society, in particular to both extremes of the Salafi spectrum: the 'traditional/scholarly' and 'jihādi', and some of them moved quickly to the 'political activist/median position' because they saw the virtue of non-violent change and political participation. About twenty Salafi political parties have been founded since 2011, or are in the process of establishment, in Mauritania, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt and Yemen.
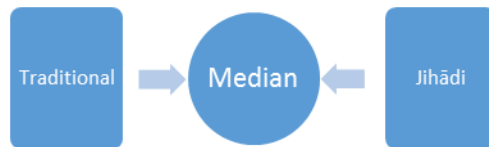
Salafi 'medianisation'

2) From the median to the extremes

Conversely, whenever there is a blow to the democratic process in the Arab/Muslim world (a military intervention for instance), this acts as a centrifuge force that drives some Salafis away from the median participative stand. It either pulls them backward to the traditional posture, validating their belief that politics only lead to division and fitna, or pushes them forward to violent action, validating their belief that politics is ineffective in the Arab/Muslim world.
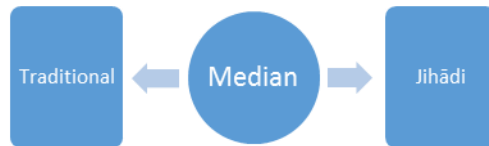
Salafi 'extremisation'

To illustrate the way to repel Salafists from political participation and non-violence, a few examples can be given: The January 1992 military coup d'état in Algeria after the victory of the Islamic Salvation Front in the general elections, the strangulation of Gaza following the victory of Hamas in the 2006 general elections, and the 3rd of July 2013 military intervention in Egypt to oust an elected president and to dissolve an elected parliament.

These unfortunate events, followed by the counterterrorist rhetoric and the 'war on terror' waged unjustly against the victims of military interventionism, led to the birth of Salafi armed groups in Algeria in the 1990s[1], in Gaza in the late 2000s, and in Egypt in recent years. In fact, the interruption of the democratic process in Egypt has put the Salafi parties committed to political participation (not only in Egypt but in the whole region and beyond) under huge pressure from their youth base who consider the coup as an evidence that democracy is only an empty slogan used by the West.

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[1] In 1995, in the midst of the repression that followed the military coup in Algeria, French researcher François Burgat already warned against this process of radicalization of Islamists and published a 'recipe' on how to manufacture a terrorist in his recette du poseur de bombes (Burgat, François. 'La recette du poseur de bombes', *Libération*, 31 October 1995).

The attraction of the Arab youth by ISIS is not unrelated to the recent blow to the democratization process initiated by the 'Arab Spring', notably to the military intervention in Egypt on the 3rd of July 2013.

8.2. Salafism: Multi-category actors

The categories proposed in the previous table are sometimes overlapping. It is common to find Salafi actors involved in more than one activity. Two illustrative examples:

— Combining *da'wa* (calling to God – cultural realm) and *ighātha* (relief – economic realm) work was very common with the Salafi community. This is slowly changing because at the international level, humanitarian work has suffered in the past from setbacks in terms of credibility, caused by too close a linkage with proselytizing and preaching. The Salafi NGOs working in the areas of *da'wa* and *ighātha* attempt to show more and more transparency in their work and to separate completely these two areas at the organizational level (by creating separate sections for each area), and at the field level (time and place of carrying out the projects).

— Combining preaching (cultural realm) and political activity (political realm) is also a challenge for Salafis. Since some movements are newcomers to political participation, they are going slowly through the process of shifting from the preaching discourse to a political discourse without losing their orthodox identity. They are also trying to find ways to draw a clear distinction between the political movement and the parent preaching community.

8.3. Salafism: jihādists' positions vs. needs

The positions and the language adopted by jihādi groups do not necessarily reflect their interests and needs. Their failure to master the political language leads jihādists to formulate their grievances and discontent and express their claims in a more familiar religious language that is rich in vocabulary relating to the issue of fairness. This might induce the perception that these groups operate in the logic of a war of religion, which is not true. In reality, jihādists are mobilized by political issues related mainly to oppression and aggression, even if they use a religious rhetoric.

8.4. Salafism: Genuine or fake?

The Salafi current, particularly the two extremes of the spectrum: The Jāmis/Madkhalis and the jihādists, can easily be infiltrated by national and international intelligence agencies, and this has been the case in the past.

On the one hand, there is a common belief in the Arab world that some Jāmi/Madkhali movements are fabricated by the regimes in their quest for religious legitimation.

On the other hand, the same regimes may resort to infiltration, manipulation and the creation of fake mirror jihādi movements, groups and organizations. Jihādism is about insurgency and modern States have strategies to counter insurgencies (counter-insurgency, COIN, strategy). They create mirror groups to fight the genuine ones. These are covert operations executed by the intelligence apparatus. The other institutions of the State, including a major part of the military, usually ignore all of it. Doing so, these operations have the support of all the society and the elites. The regimes may also resort to these groups in their quest for a 'security legitimation', i.e. to sell themselves as indispensable for national, regional and international security and peace.

The Algerian case is a good example, where the former chief-of-staff and defence minister, Khaled Nezzar, admitted publicly the infiltration of jihādi groups (*Groupes islamiques armés* – GIA), and several dissident officers from the intelligence agency (*Département de Renseignement et de Sécurité* – DRS) described how they were involved in organizing pseudo-Islamic armed groups and engaging in massacres of civilian populations. For more on this see the work of Izel et al.[52], Bedjaoui[53], Samraoui[54] and Souaïdia[55].

A second rationale for the instrumentalization of jihādi movements is to fight indirectly an enemy. In fact, much has been written on the use by the USA/KSA (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) duo of jihādi armed groups to undermine the influence of communism (e.g. in Afghanistan in the 1980s) and Shi'ism (e.g. in Iraq, Syria, Yemen and Lebanon).

A third rationale is to take the control of strategic resources (oil, gas, uranium, and other scarce minerals). A famous adage that appeared in North Africa following the 2013 French 'Serval' military intervention in Mali says: "When Al-Qaeda appears somewhere, look around for oil and uranium".

9. Policy recommendations

For anyone who desires to build a healthy and constructive relationship with the Islamic Salafi current, here are a few guidelines to follow:

— Be aware of the huge diversity among Salafis, and within their scholarly, political activist and jihādist categories.

— Do not adopt an undifferentiated approach to Salafis and do not resort to indiscriminate discourse about them.

— Connect with participative Salafi and assist them to engage fully in politics and to encounter other political currents in society, by providing safe mediation spaces.

— If you are involved in mediation / conflict transformation work, approach the violent Salafi movements and actors, directly or indirectly, to understand their actual interests and needs, do not rely only on their positions, discourse and slogans, or on the appreciation given in intelligence and media reports that may induce a bias.

— Be aware of the existence of pseudo-jihādi groups, used in national and international COIN strategies, and develop the skills to recognise and identify them.

— Do not be, and avoid being perceived as, a support to repressive anti-democratic regimes in the Arab-Muslim region.

— Do not be, and avoid being perceived as, a support to aggression against Muslim populations or occupation of Muslim territories.

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