A Theoretical Introduction to Contemporary Salafism

Jakob Guhl

Senior Advisor and Contributing Editor: Rashad Ali

As part of ISD's Gen Z & The Digital Salafi Ecosystem project, this theoretical briefing seeks to contextualise ISD's research into the online Salafi ecosystem within the key political debates and terminological considerations that permeate current conceptualisations of Salafism. The paper outlines the limitations of established typologies which categorise Salafi adherents using terms such as quietists, activists and jihadists, and instead highlights an increasingly interdependent spectrum of ideological influence.

Introduction

Salafism, a reformist branch of Sunni Islam that aspires to return to the faith practised by the prophet Mohammed and his earliest followers, is growing across Europe and North America.[1] In Germany alone, the number of Salafi adherents has doubled over the past five years.[2] What is often described as a strictly regimented worldview has proven highly attractive to young people as an emerging youth counterculture, with its black-and-white value system, strong group identity and profound contrast with establishment Islamic orthodoxy. Meanwhile, Salafi content dominates the online marketplace of religious ideas. Salafi sites hold a near-monopoly on search results around religious keywords,[3] Salafi videos dominate search queries for religious content on YouTube,[4] and on Twitter sectarian clerics with followers in the millions are among the most influential thought-leader accounts globally.[5]

Despite the long-standing recognition that the majority of Salafis do not advocate political violence, Salafism is still predominantly viewed by governments through a narrow security lens. In particular, since 9/11 and the rise of al-Qaeda and later ISIS as global terrorist organisations, substantial attention has been paid to transnational Salafi-jihadism and its claim to Salafi theological underpinnings. There is a growing recognition that grasping Salafism is key to understanding and tackling the challenge of violent Islamist extremism. However, there has also been a concern of oversimplifying the relationship between Salafi beliefs and violent radicalisation, reflecting the fact that the vast majority of Salafi adherents globally are not affiliated to a political movement and non-violent.

This briefing seeks to contextualise ISD's research into the online Salafi ecosystem within the key political debates and terminological considerations that permeate current conceptualisations of Salafism. It outlines the limitations of established typologies which categorise Salafi adherents using terms such as quietists, activists and jihadists. Based on a series of case studies that challenge neat distinctions between different strands of Salafism, this briefing argues that, because of this fluidity, responses to Salafism need to take into account key drivers beyond the specific manifestations of Salafi practice and beliefs driving different subsets of the movement, such as environmental factors and geopolitical interests.

Definitional Debates

To understand the policy context, it is crucial to grasp the conceptual debate raging around Salafism. Generally speaking, Salafism is a current within Sunni Islam which stakes it claims to authority on its desire to return to the practices of the first three generations of Muslims (the salaf or 'ancestors') who lived during and immediately after the prophet Mohammed. In their attempt to emulate the practices of these first three pious generations of Muslims as closely as possible, Salafis adopt a puritanical interpretation of Islamic scripture (especially on theological matters), believing this to be a complete and sufficient guide for the lives of all Muslims. The scholar Shiraz Maher describes Salafism as a movement that 'believes in progress through regression, where the perfect life is realized by reviving the Islam of the first three generations' within the global Muslim ummah (community). [6]

The sections that follow will first outline how Salafis view themselves and what ideas set them apart from other schools of Islam before presenting the ways in which other strands within Sunni Islam (critically) assess Salafism.

Self-conception and ideas of Salafis

Salafis generally view their strain of faith not as one interpretation of Islam among many but as the one true interpretation of the religion.[7] This certainty and exclusiveness arguably makes them hostile to intra-Islamic pluralism and prone to reject those who follow different interpretations as un-Islamic. For example, Salafis reject certain traditions associated with established Islamic schools of thought (madhāhib), and strive for Islam to be 'cleansed' of innovation, perceived heresies and the influence of non-Islamic thought as accretions to the perfect prophetic model. [8] Some Salafis such as al-Albānī go as far as to say that instead of following scholars and schools of jurisprudence, believers should directly access what Salafis view as the sole authoritative sources of Islam, the Quran and the example of the prophet Mohammed and his companions as recorded in authentic hadith. [9] The theological meaning of these texts is not to be understood metaphorically, symbolically or as context-dependent. Through such a reading, Salafis argue that Islam can be purified of religious 'innovation'.[10]

Salafis' strict understanding of tawhid (the oneness of God) in particular differentiates their beliefs from those of other (Sunni) Muslim groups. For Salafis, tawhid includes the oneness of God as the sustainer (tawhīd ar-rubūbīya), the oneness of worship (tawhīd al-ulūhīya) and the oneness in God's names and attributes (tawhīd al-asmā wa--ifāt). The stationing of American troops on the Arabian Peninsula during First Gulf War in the early 1990's led to an intra-Salafi debate between quietist and Islamist Salafis concerning the question whether tawhīd al-hākimiyya (God's sovereignty and rule) should be added as an additional category of tawhid or if it is subsumed under oneness of worship.[11]

While the concept of tawhid is of course central to Islam in general, the distinction of three types of tawhid and their religious and political implications are specific to Salafism.[12] For example, Salafis' belief in the oneness of veneration leads them to be particularly hostile to groups they accuse of worshipping saints or imams, such as followers of Shiism and Sufism.[13]

While critics and scholars often view Salafism as a modern and relatively recent phenomenon originating in the 18th century or even later, Salafis themselves would argue that their tradition can be traced back to the origins of Islam, and has been expressed by scholars throughout Islamic history.[14] The most highly regarded classical scholar among Salafis is the 14th century Hanbali jurist Ibn Taymiyya, who was influenced by living through the Mongol invasion of the Levant. Apart from the Shia, Ibn Taymiyya also criticised the Ash'ari and Maturidi schools of Sunni Islam that were highly influential at the time.[15]

Critics of Salafism, however, would dispute whether Ibn Taymiyya's thought founded an intellectual movement that was a precursor to today's Salafi movement. While Ibn Taymiyya was seen as a significant scholar, his influence on the Hanbali tradition has been contested, with some even describing it as 'modest' beyond a small circle of his students (such as Ibn Qaiyim who is also widely cited among contemporary Salafis).[16] In addition, it has been argued that Salafis' interpretation of Ibn Taymiyya's work is highly selective.[17] Nevertheless, Ibn Taymiyya's desire to strengthen the ummah by purifying their religious beliefs and practices, and returning to an uncorrupted, authentic form of Islam, is shared by Salafis today. Other aspects of his work are argued to have influenced violent extremist strands of Salafism, such as his fatwas pronouncing takfir against the imperial Mongol rulers, thereby justifying violent resistance against them as obligatory. While the Mongol rulers had nominally adopted Islam, Ibn Taymiyyah believed they were trying to create and rule by a hybrid version of Islam that included 'errant' religious influences and elements of Mongol legal code.[18]

Salafism and Wahhabism

In terms of its doctrine, Salafism is closely related to Wahhabism, the strand of Islam which originated in what is now Saudi Arabia, based on the works of Muhammad Bin 'Abd al-Wahhab (1703–1792). For the purpose of this research, ISD analysed both Salafi and Wahabi communities, as al-Wahhab's ideas have had a significant influence on the development of contemporary Salafism.[19]

Al-Wahhab's views on tawhid in particular have been influential in the formation of contemporary Salafism. He interpreted Ibn Taymiyya's concept of the tawhid of worship in a highly active way, demanding that Muslims' deeds reflect their belief in the oneness of God. Un-Islamic practices, under which al-Wahhab included a wide range of behaviours such as the veneration of saints or graves, could constitute a form of idolatry (shirk). This can be seen as an extreme form of intolerance of other Muslims' beliefs and practices.[20]

Nevertheless, despite their appreciation for these scholars, Salafis do not conceive of Ibn Taymiyya or al-Wahhab as infallible. On the contrary, a key aim of Salafi thought is to reject intermediaries between themselves and God, including established schools of jurisprudence and saints.

Whether or not Salafis would self-describe as such may depend on the social and political context. According to fieldwork by Käsehage with Salafi preachers and their followers In Germany, the term 'Salafi' was used by German believers as a self-description until 2011.[21] Käsehage argues that the shift away from this self-description may in part be due to the classification of Salafis as 'hostile to the constitution' by the German domestic intelligence services. Because the group has been labelled as extremist, self-identified Salafis could be subject to legal consequences or repressive measures from the authorities.[22] Additionally, due to the negative media coverage in the context of Islamist radicalisation, and the common view of Salafism as inherently extremist, the German Salafis interviewed by Käsehage also viewed the term as 'stigmatising', with some of the interviewees describing how they had nearly lost their jobs after having been identified as Salafi.[23]

How do other strands within Sunni Islam view Salafism?

A wide range of Sunni Muslims have distanced themselves from Salafism, and not only criticise violent elements within the movement, but also question its theological premises and stances, which is to be expected from competing theologies given the schismatic nature of Salafi dawah. One of the key points among the diverse criticisms relates to Salafis' claim that they represent the one true and authentic, uncorrupted version of the faith. Both historically and in the present day, Wahhabis and Salafis have been criticised for their excessive tendency to declare other Muslims to be non-believers.[24] Therefore, Salafis are often compared to the zealous historic sect the Kharijites.[25]

The German scholar and intelligence analyst Hazim Fouad distinguishes between three prominent currents of intra-Sunni critique of Salafism: traditionalist, Sufi and modernist (as Fouad notes, these are ideal types with significant overlap between traditionalism and Sufism in particular).[26] According to Fouad, traditionalists from the Egyptian al-Azhar University, and also from the Deobandi school that originated in Indian sub-continent, criticise Salafis for their lack of theological qualifications and refusal to draw on an established methodology of interpretation. Their reliance on a direct approach to scripture and isolated hadith, while failing to take into account and compare the existing opinions of Islamic scholars over the centuries, is seen as vacuous. Additionally, traditionalists believe that Salafis are overly focused on declaring practices impermissible.[27]

Fouad highlights that Sufis have often sought to defend their beliefs and practices from Salafi attacks, frequently citing positive assessments of Sufism by scholars whom traditionalists or even those who Salafis view as authorities. Less defensively, Sufis have also attacked Salafis for anthropomorphism (which is widely viewed as a heresy within Islam) with regard to their literalist interpretation of God's attributes (e.g. God's face, eyes and hands). Quietist scholars in Saudi Arabia have also been criticised by Sufis for their institutional connection to the Saudi state.[28] Lastly, Fouad argues that while some Islamic modernists are also critical of traditional Islamic thought and jurisprudence, they seek to reconcile timeless Islamic truths with modern values such as democracy, human rights and rationalism. In contrast, many Salafis believe that these conflict with their interpretation of Islam.[29] Unlike the more theological arguments of traditionalists and Sufis, modernists primarily criticise Salafis for their intolerance, regressive values, and potential to cause social harm and even inspire violence. Other modernist critics of Salafism, however, believe Islamic traditions need to be strengthened. For those scholars, it is problematic when laypeople without formal education in Islamic theology try to interpret the authoritative sources of Islam by themselves. Additionally, these modernists criticise Salafism for its hostility towards the pluralism inherent within Islamic tradition. It should be noted that Salafis in turn heavily criticise both modernists who are critical of traditionalist Islam, such as Islām Buḥairī, and modernists who wish to strengthen Islamic traditions, such as Austrian theology professor Mouhanad Khorchide (who was declared a non-believer by the German Salafi Pierre Vogel) or the American 'post-Salafi' Yasir Qadhi (who is viewed as traitor by some Salafis).[30]

Strands of Salafism

Existing typologies of Salafism

While Salafis are relatively united in terms of their core theological beliefs, the ways in which their theology shapes their approaches to politics are considerably more diverse.[31] Salafism includes a 'variety of interpretations under its umbrella', and several scholars loosely divide adherents into various subcategories according to their preferred approach to politics.[32]

According to an influential typology by Quintan Wiktorowicz, based on fieldwork among Jordanian Salafis, the movement can be subdivided into three strands: purists, politicos and jihadists.

It is claimed that purist Salafis (also often referred to as quietists) reject political activism, instead looking to 'nonviolent methods of propagation, purification, and education'.[33] Many quietist Salafis preach against the consequences of excommunicating incumbent rulers because they believe it will lead to chaos and great discord (fitna). It is also claimed they reject political rebellion for the same reasons.

Political Salafis are actively engaged in transforming society according to their ideological ideas and to implement a Salafi interpretation of Islamic law.[34] An activist or political vision of Salafism frames Islam as the foundation of the state, and sharia law as its legal foundation, making politics and religion inseparable. This vision of Islam as a social framework, political ideology and system of government can be pursued through gradualist or revolutionary political action.

Meanwhile, jihadist-Salafis take this theocratic vision to its violent conclusion, framing a violent interpretation of jihad (struggle) as the means to realise their political ambition.[35]

However, a range of scholars have voiced criticism of, or suggested additions to, Wiktorowicz's model. They have either argued that additional strands should be added to the purist/politico/jihadist typology, that the strands are not as distinct in reality as the model suggests, or that the terminology used by Wiktorowicz is misleading.

In his study of Salafi-jihadist thought, Shiraz Maher conceptualises Salafis' political preferences along two dimensions: one is their preferred method for affecting change; the other is their attitude towards the state and the international order. In terms of methods for change, Maher distinguishes between quietism (avoiding public dissent), activism and violence. The attitude towards the state, on the other hand, may manifest itself in attempts to advise, challenge or outright reject state power or the international order. This two-dimensional model allows for key distinctions to be made within violent Salafi groups between violent-challengers with limited aims (e.g. Islamist militant groups fighting Assad in Syria after previously seeking to effect change through activism) and violent rejectionists seeking to overhaul existing power structures or even the wider international order (e.g. al-Qaeda and ISIS).[36]

The same debate certainly seems to be taking place in Germany, with scholars divided on how to expand on Wiktorowicz's model. While both Dantschke and Käsehage have argued that the dividing line between quietists and political Salafis is relatively clear, both view the line between political and jihadist Salafis as blurred. For example, Dantschke separates political Salafis into a larger non-violent component and a smaller section that legitimises violence without actively taking part in it.[37] Wiedl, by contrast, draws a stricter distinction between political and jihadist Salafis in Germany.[38] Hummel has argued for the introduction of an additional category that divides Salafi-jihadists into takfiris and non-takfiris.[39]

Others have argued that while such categorisations might provide a useful conceptual framework, in reality, there are no neat subdivisions, and there is a consequent need to understand the dynamic relationships between these categories. Wagemakers, for example, has traced the influence of quietist thinking on the Jordanian ideologue Mohammed al-Maqdisi, despite the fact that al-Maqdisi has been classified as one of the key figures in the ideology of Salafi-jihadism.[40]

Lastly, some scholars have contested the accuracy of the labels used by Wiktorowicz to describe the different strands of Salafism. For instance, Wiedl does not accept that quietists are truly apolitical, unless one employs a very narrow definition of politics.[41] Similar points have been raised by Olidort, who argues that while some quietists (such as the Madkhali Salafis) argue for strict obedience to rulers and abstention from politics, many supposed quietists do in fact take political stances and legitimise Salafi participation in politics.[42]

Overlaps and movement between different strands

The previous section discussed how Salafi strands are often divided into different subgroups. The disagreements and divergences between the typologies of different scholars show that drawing neat dividing lines between different strands, such as loyal or quietest, Islamist and violent jihadist Salafism, is not always easy, neither at an ideational nor theological level. Clerics or their followers might merge ideas from different strands of Salafism into their worldview. As mentioned above, it has been argued that the influential Salafi-jihadist scholar al-Maqdisi can perhaps be best described as a 'quietist jihadi'.[43]

More importantly, however, breaking down Salafism into different strands may lead to the false assumption that specific and distinct behaviours and consequences can be easily identified from these typologies.
As the following case studies seek to demonstrate, environmental and geopolitical forces, as well as the specific influence exerted by the Saudi government through its loyal scholarly class can all have significant impacts on Salafi approaches to political participation and (violent) activism. In addition to the specific ideological convictions of certain Salafi subgroups, these forces shape the behaviour of different strands of Salafism, at times in counter-intuitive ways.

Loyalist jihadists

Quietist Salafism is often thought of not just as apolitical, but also non-violent. Within quietist Salafism, Madkhalis (after the Saudi Sheikh Rabee al-Madkhali who is considered to be the most authoritative scholar by his followers) are regarded as the most apolitical subgroup. Madkhalism has been spread widely across many Arabic-speaking countries, in part due to funding from Saudi religious charities.[44]

Rather than merely quietist, it is more helpful to view Madkhalis as loyal to the (Saudi) state. The acquiescence of the group's followers to the Saudi monarchy and its geopolitical interests can at times shift their outlook away from apolitical and non-violent behaviour. While Madkhalis are opposed to rebellion and violence within Saudi Arabia and its allied countries, they may be mobilised to fight in armed conflicts on behalf of Saudi interests in the wider region. The participation of Madkhali groups in the Libyan civil war following the fall of the Gaddafi regime in 2011 is a case in point. Initially, most of al-Madkhali's Libyan followers adhered to his 2011 fatwa opposing the uprising by either staying neutral or supporting the regime. They did not participate in Libya's post-Gaddafi elections as they reject democracy on religious grounds.[45] However, Madkhalis became influential within armed groups and security forces during the ensuing fighting between the UN-backed Government of National Accord (GNA), based in Tripoli, and Khalifa Haftar's Interim Government, based in eastern Libya (and not internationally recognised).

As both al-Madkhali (from 2018 onwards) and Saudi Arabia have supported Haftar, most Madkhalis fought on the side of his forces, even though some, paradoxically, fought for the pro-GNA militias and became part of the UN-backed government's security forces.[46] While Madkhalis fought on both sides of the conflict, leading to confusion about their ultimate aims, they have avoided directly fighting each other, and at the same time fiercely and consistently fought political Islamists such as the Muslim Brotherhood and Salafi-jihadist groups, as well as liberals and religious minorities.[47] It has been argued that the effect of al-Madkhali's fatwa over the course of the conflict in fact reflects the priority of fighting ideological opponents and challengers to the Saudi state, rather than taking sides in the civil war between the western and eastern authorities in Libya.[48]

Jihadist missionaries

While Salafi-jihadists are defined by their belief in the legitimacy of using violence to further their political goals, they may pragmatically postpone engaging in such activities when offered the opportunity to more effectively spread their ideology through other means. As Aaron Y. Zelin documents in his book about the Salafi-jihadist movement in Tunisia, those espousing overt takfiri-jihadist views may still opt to rely on non-violent and political means of proselytisation to build support for their ideas.[49]

In the context of post-revolutionary Tunisia, the Salafi-jihadist organisation Ansar al-Sharia Tunisia (AST) was able to exploit the civil liberties and freedoms it enjoyed following the fall of the Ben Ali regime, and as a result of the 'light touch' approach of the newly installed ('post-Islamist') Ennahda party government. Given the experiences of repression, arbitrary arrest and torture of many of Ennahda's leaders and activists, the party was hesitant to replicate similar measures against AST. Additionally, in an attempt to break with the Ben Ali regime, the Ennahda government released 1,200 Salafi-jihadists during an amnesty for political prisoners.[50]

Under these circumstances, AST initially opted for a 'dawah-first approach', which meant that the organisation emphasised recruitment, outreach, the propagation of its views and even the provision of social and charitable services across it local chapters. This allowed AST to recruit new followers across Tunisia.

From 2012 onwards, AST increasingly participated in violent protests and attacks on political opponents. After the assassination of two secular politicians was attributed to AST members, Ennahda finally decided to ban the group, and many of its members subsequently joined Salafi-jihadist insurgent groups in Libya, Syria and Iraq.[51] AST's ability to operate relatively openly following the 2011 revolution and mobilise existing Tunisian jihadist networks has been cited as one of the major reasons for the large number of Tunisians (3,000 overall) who joined ISIS in Syria and Iraq.[52]

Quietist parties

As mentioned above, scholars such as Wiedl and Olidort have contested the description of quietists as apolitical.[53] Similarly, this case study highlights the fact that even supposedly apolitical Salafis can be pragmatic about becoming involved in electoral politics. The participation of previously apolitical Salafis in the Egyptian elections through Hizb al-Nour following the downfall of the Mubarak regime illustrates this dynamic.

Hizb al-Nour is a political party formed by members of al-Da'wa Al-Salafiyya ('The Salafi Call'), Egypt's largest Salafi group, after the Egyptian revolution in 2011. Influential figures within Hizb al-Nour had not previously been involved in anti-regime activism and had urged their followers not to attend the Tahrir Square uprisings. One of the key objectives of the party was to ensure the new Egyptian order, and its constitution in particular, would be legitimate from their religious perspective. The party therefore justified its entry into (electoral) politics as an opportunity to facilitate political and constitutional reform in line with a sharia-based social order.[54]

Interestingly, Hizb al-Nour's relationship with the Muslim Brotherhood has been marked by frequent disagreements. In general, Salafis often view the Brotherhood as too innovative and reformist in terms of its creed, jurisprudence and support for democratic governance in multiple countries.[55] In the parliamentary and presidential elections held after 2011, Hizb al-Nour effectively split voters sympathetic to Islamist ideas between itself and the Muslim Brotherhood. It did, however, endorse Brotherhood candidate Mohammed Morsi in the second round of the 2012 elections against Ahmed Shafik, the final prime minister under Mubarak.

In the context of the intense political polarisation in Egypt during the years that followed, Hizb al-Nour not only refused to participate in pro-Morsi rallies but by and large aligned itself with the country's secular forces, and supported the military coup that brought Abdul Fattah al-Sisi to power. Despite the killing of hundreds of Muslim Brotherhood supporters during the August 2013 Rabaa massacre, the Hizb al-Nour party has stood by the military.[56] Paradoxically, the party's discouragement of rebellion (including against un-Islamic rulers) and its rejection of democracy led these Egyptian Salafis to support the reintroduction of (largely) secular military dictatorship over an Islamist-led government.

Implications

This theoretical briefing has sought to outline the current arguments about defining the contested term 'Salafism'. Salafism is a current within Sunni Islam which advocates a return to the practices of the first three generations of Muslims who lived immediately after the prophet Mohammed, and its adherents attempt to emulate those figures as closely as possible. Salafis therefore oppose what they perceive as un-Islamic religious 'innovations'. As Salafis tend to view their reading as the one true interpretation of their faith, they are hostile to both traditional and liberal schools of Islam, and minority sects. This opposition to intra-Islamic pluralism makes them prone to excommunicate those who adhere to strains of Islam that diverge from their own. This has led to a diverse range of intra-Sunni voices criticising not just Salafism's exclusivism, but also its theological premises, approach to scholarship, illiberal views and violent manifestations.

This briefing has outlined some of the limitations of existing typologies of Salafism, instead arguing that there is an interdependent spectrum of ideological influences. While it may be pragmatic to use some variation of the quietist-politico-jihadist typology, this should not be taken to imply the existence of neat dividing lines between different strands that result in distinct behaviours and consequences which can be easily predicted using these categories. Instead, environmental factors and geopolitics are key drivers beyond ideology in shaping the behaviour of different strands of Salafism, at times in counter-intuitive ways.

The influences of these factors can have a major impact on the assessment of the risk or even threat represented by different strands of Salafism. We conclude that, as a general rule, Salafi-jihadists are inherently supportive of violence, which is predetermined by their ideological outlook, even though they may at times pragmatically postpone using violence when other means of spreading their ideology are available. Salafi Islamists, on the other hand, are highly responsive to environmental factors, and tactical in selecting the appropriate means of achieving their political objectives. Lastly, quietists' reliance on religious guidance from the scholarly class loyal to the Saudi state means that their political and ideological positions and approaches are heavily shaped by state policies and geopolitical interests, principally those of Saudi Arabia. It is therefore crucial that our policy responses to Salafism recognise the fluidity of the movement and the complex web of influences and key drivers, instead of relying on overly static understandings of different strands of Salafism.

Endnotes

1 Ganley, E. (2015) 'An austere brand of Islam is on the rise in Europe', Business Insider, 21 June. Available online at: https://www.businessinsider.com/an-austere-brand-of-islam-is-on-the-rise-in-europe-2015-6

2 Burack, C. (2018) 'Number of Salafists in Germany has doubled in past five years', DW, 4 April. Available online at: https://www.dw.com/en/number-of-salafists-in-germany-has-doubled-in-past-five-years/a-43243111

3 Mubaraz, A. (2016) A War of Keywords. Tony Blair Institute. Available online at: https://institute.global/sites/default/files/inline-files/IGC_War%20of%20Keywords_23.08.17_0.pdf

4 Baaken, T., Hartwig, F. & Meyer, M. (2019) Modus Insight: Die Peripherie des Extremismus auf YouTube. Modus Zad. Available online at: https://modus-zad.de/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/modus_insight_Die_Peripherie_Des_Extremismus_auf_YouTube2020.pdf

5 El Karoui, H. (2018) The Islamist Factory" Institut Montaigne, September. Available online at: https://www.institutmontaigne.org/en/publications/islamist-factory

6 Maher, S. (2016) Salafi-Jihadism: The History of an Idea (London: Penguin Random House), p. 207.

7 Said, B.T. & Fouad, H. (eds) (2014) Salafismus: Auf der Suche nach dem Wahren Islam (Freiburg: Herder).

8 Wagemakers, J. (2016) 'Salafism', Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion. Available online at: https://oxfordre.com/religion/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780199340378.001.0001/acrefore-9780199340378-e-255

9 Brown, J.A.C. (2015) 'Is Islam easy to understand or not?: Salafis, the democratization of interpretation and the need for the Ulema', Journal of Islamic Studies, 26(2): 117–44.

10 Wagemakers, J. (2016) 'Salafism', Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion. Available online at: https://oxfordre.com/religion/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780199340378.001.0001/acrefore-9780199340378-e-255

11 Maher, S. (2016) Salafi-Jihadism: The History of an Idea (London: Penguin Random House), p. 200-206.

12 Wagemakers, J. (2016) 'Salafism', Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion. Available online at: https://oxfordre.com/religion/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780199340378.001.0001/acrefore-9780199340378-e-255

13 Knysh, A. (2007) 'Contextualizing the Salafi–Sufi conflict (from the northern Caucasus to Hadramawt)', Middle Eastern Studies, 43(4): 503–30.

14 Said, B.T. & Fouad, H. (eds) (2014) Salafismus: Auf der Suche nach dem Wahren Islam (Freiburg: Herder).

15 Hoover, J. (2019) Ibn Taymiyya (New York: Simon and Schuster).

16 Melchert, C. (2013) 'The relation of Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya to the Ḥanbalī school of law', in Krawietz, B., Tamer, G. & Melchert, C. (eds) Islamic Theology, Philosophy and Law. (Boston: De Gruyter): 146–161, p. 147.

17 Hoover, J. (2019) Ibn Taymiyya (New York: Simon and Schuster).

18 Hoover, J. (2019) Ibn Taymiyya (New York: Simon and Schuster), pp. 12-18, 30-31. Maher, S. (2016) Salafi-Jihadism: The History of an Idea (London: Penguin Random House), pp. 71–110.

19 Steinberg, G. (2014) 'Saudi-Arabien. Der Salafismus in seinem Mutterland', in Said, B.T. & Fouad, H. (eds) (2014) Salafismus: Auf der Suche nach dem Wahren Islam (Freiburg: Herder): 265–96.

20 Steinberg, G. (2014) 'Saudi-Arabien. Der Salafismus in seinem Mutterland', in Said, B.T. & Fouad, H. (eds) (2014) Salafismus: Auf der Suche nach dem Wahren Islam (Freiburg: Herder): 265–96.

21 Käsehage, N. (2018) Die Gegenwärtige Salafistische Szene in Deutschland: Prediger und Anhänger (Münster: LIT).

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.

24 Barak, M. (2016) The Grozny Conference in Chechnya – Is the Salafi Movement a Rotten Fruit of Sunni Islam?, International Institute for Counter-Terrorism, 9 November. Available online at: https://www.ict.org.il/Article/1808/the-grozny-conference-in-chechnya-is-the-salafi-movement-a-rotten-fruit-of-sunni-islam#gsc.tab=0

25 Hagemann, H-L. (2015) History and Memory: Khārijism in Early Islamic Historiography, thesis (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh).

26 Fouad, H. (2019) Zeitgenössische Muslimische Kritik am Salafismus: Eine Untersuchung Ausgewählter Dokumente, thesis (Kiel: Kiel University).

27 Ibid., pp. 93–181.

28 Ibid., pp. 182–244.

29 A notable exception to this is Salman al-Awdah, who has advocated for democracy and a constitutional monarchy. In 2017, al-Awdah was arrested and is currently awaiting trial for a seemingly benign tweet expressing support for a reconciliation between Saudi Arabia and Qatar in the context of their diplomatic conflict.

30 Ibid., pp. 245–302.

31 Wagemakers, J. (2016) 'Salafism', Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion. Available online at: https://oxfordre.com/religion/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780199340378.001.0001/acrefore-9780199340378-e-255, p. 11; Wiktorowicz, Q. (2006) 'Anatomy of the Salafi movement', Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, 29(3): 208. Available online at: https://doi.org/10.1080/10576100500497004

32 Olsson, S. (2014) 'Proselytizing Islam — problematizing "Salafism"', The Muslim World, 104(1–2): 196. Available online at: https://doi.org/10.1111/muwo.12046

33 Wagemakers, J. (2016) 'Revisiting Wiktorowicz: Categories and defining the branches of Salafism', in ed. Cavatorta, F. & Merone, F. Salafism After the Arab Awakening: Contending with People's Power (Oxford, Oxford University Press), p. 9; Kelvington, M.R. (2019) Global Salafi-Jihadism Ideology: The 'Soft Power' of the Enemy, International Institute for Counter-Terrorism, 25 March 25. Available online at: https://www.ict.org.il/Article/2366/Global_Salafi-Jihadism_Ideology#gsc.tab=0

34 Wiktorowicz, Q. (2006) 'Anatomy of the Salafi movement', Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, 29(3): 207–239. Available online at: https://doi.org/10.1080/10576100500497004

35 Kepel, G. (2002) Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam (Harvard, MA: Harvard University Press).

36 Maher, S. (2016) Salafi-Jihadism: The History of an Idea (London: Penguin Random House), pp. 8–13.

37 Dantschke, C. (2014) '„Da habe ich etwas gesehen, was mir einen Sinn gibt." – Was macht Salafismus attraktiv und wie kann man diesem entgegenwirken', in Said, B.T. & Fouad, H. (eds) (2014) Salafismus: Auf der Suche nach dem Wahren Islam (Freiburg: Herder): 474–502.

38 Wiedl, N. (2014) 'Geschichte des Salafismus in Deutschland', in Said, B.T. & Fouad, H. (eds) (2014) Salafismus: Auf der Suche nach dem Wahren Islam (Freiburg: Herder): 411–41.

39 Hummel, K. (2014) 'Salafismus in Deutschland – eine Gefahrenperspektive neu bewertet', Totalitarismus und Demokratie, 11(1): 95–122.

40 Wagemakers, J. (2012) A Quietist Jihadi: The Ideology and Influence of Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press); McCants, W., Brachman, J. & Felter, J. (2006) Militant Ideology Atlas: Executive Report. Military Academy West Point NY Combating Terrorism Center.

41 Wiedl, N. (2012) The Making of a German Salafiyya: The Emergence, Development and Missionary Work of Salafi Movements in Germany. Centre for Studies in Islamism and Radicalisation (CIR), Department of Political Science, Aarhus University, p. 12.

42 Olidort, J. (2015) The Politics of "Quietist" Salafism. Brookings Institution.

43 Wagemakers, J. (2012) A Quietist Jihadi: The Ideology and Influence of Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press); McCants, W., Brachman, J. & Felter, J. (2006) Militant Ideology Atlas: Executive Report. Military Academy West Point NY Combating Terrorism Center.

44 International Crisis Group (2019) Addressing the Rise of Libya's Madkhali Salafists, 25 April. Available online at: https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/north-africa/libya/addressing-rise-libyas-madkhali-salafis

45 Wehrey, F. (2019) 'Salafism and Libya's state collapse: The case of the Madkhalis', in Wehrey, F. & Boukhars, A. (eds) Salafism in the Maghreb: Politics, Piety, and Militancy (Oxford: Oxford University Press), pp. 107–37.

46 Ibid.

47 Salah Ali, A. (2017) 'Libya's warring parties play a dangerous game working with Madkhali Salafists', Atlantic Council, 3 November. Available online at: https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/libya-s-warring-parties-play-a-dangerous-game-working-with-madkhali-salafists/

48 International Crisis Group (2019) Addressing the Rise of Libya's Madkhali Salafists, 25 April. Available online at: https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/north-africa/libya/addressing-rise-libyas-madkhali-salafis

49 Zelin, A.Y. (2020) Your Sons Are at Your Service (New York: Columbia University Press).

50 Ibid.

51 Gartenstein-Ross, D., Moreng, B. & Soucy, K. (2014) 'Raising the stakes: Ansar al-Sharia in Tunisia's shift to jihad', The International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, 5(3): 1–23.

52 Zelin, A.Y. (2021) Tunisia 2021: Ennahda vs. Extremists. Washington Institute, 17 March. Available online at: https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/tunisia-2021-ennahda-vs-extremists

53 Wiedl, N. (2012) The Making of a German Salafiyya: The Emergence, Development and Missionary Work of Salafi Movements in Germany. Centre for Studies in Islamism and Radicalisation (CIR), Department of Political Science, Aarhus University; Olidort, J. (2015) The Politics of "Quietist" Salafism. Brookings Institution.

54 Lacroix, S. (2016) Egypt's Pragmatic Salafis. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

55 Ibid.

56 Human Rights Watch (2014) All According to Plan. The Rab'a Massacre and Mass Killings of Protesters in Egypt, 12 August. Available online at: https://www.hrw.org/report/2014/08/12/all-according-plan-raba-massacre-and-mass-killings-protesters-egypt