

# Introduction

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Salafism had not attracted much attention before 9/11, except for the classical period<sup>1</sup> or early modern period.<sup>2</sup> In academia, “fundamentalism” had been a topic of research and interest since the assassination of Sadat in 1981, but very few scholars studied Salafism,<sup>3</sup> let alone as a global phenomenon, with the exception of Gilles Kepel or Reinhard Schulze.<sup>4</sup> Others who have studied modern Islam on a global scale, such as Olivier Roy, have analysed it as part of neo-fundamentalism, lumping it together with other movements such as Hizb ut-Tahrir.<sup>5</sup> Salafism or Wahhabism was studied mostly in Saudi Arabia as part of its history.<sup>6</sup> The same can be said of Pakistan, where the Ahl-e Hadith and

<sup>1</sup> See for example, Michael Cook, *Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islamic Thought*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000; Henri Laoust, *Le traité de droit public d'ibn Taymiyya: Traduction annotée de la Siyasa Shar'iyya*, Damascus: Institut Français de Damas, 1948; and his, *Le profession du foi d'ibn Taymiyya: Texte, traduction et commentaire de la wasatiyya*, Paris: Geuthner, 1986.

<sup>2</sup> See for instance, John Voll, 'Foundations for Renewal and Reform', in John L. Esposito (ed.), *The Oxford History of Islam*, Oxford University Press, 1999, pp. 509–47; and Daniel Brown, *Rethinking Tradition in Modern Thought*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

<sup>3</sup> Bernard Haykal, *Revival and Reform in Islam: The Legacy of Muhammad al-Shawkani*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

<sup>4</sup> Gilles Kepel, *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2002; Reinhard Schulze, *Islamischer Internationalismus im 20 Jahrhundert: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Islamischer Weltliga*, Leiden: Brill, 1990.

<sup>5</sup> Olivier Roy, *Globalised Islam: The Search for a New Ummah*, London: Hurst & Co, 2002.

<sup>6</sup> Guido Steinberg, *Religion und Staat in Saudi-Arabien: Die wahhabitischen Gelehrten, 1902–1953*, Würzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2002; David Commins, *The Wahhabi Mission and Saudi*

Deoband are active.<sup>7</sup> When Salafism spread to Europe in the 1990s, it attracted some academic attention, but research on Salafism has been very localised or very general in scope and was mostly related to radicalisation.<sup>8</sup> Much of the research was carried out by anthropologists, and the relations with the global movement remained unclear. This changed after 9/11. A lot has been said and written about Salafism and Wahhabism, but much of this has been through the prism of “security studies”<sup>9</sup> or books that play on the popular view that equates Wahhabism with violence. More neutral academic studies have only more recently challenged the major assumptions about Salafism.<sup>10</sup>

This volume intends to contribute to the debate on Salafism by addressing some of the salient questions that have emerged concerning this phenomenon:

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*Arabia*, London: I.B.Tauris, 2006; Madawi Al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002; Mamoun Fandi, *Saudi Arabia and the Politics of Dissent*, New York: Palgrave, 2001; Joshua Teitelbaum, *Holier than Thou: Saudi Arabia's Islamic Opposition*, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2000; Natana J. Delong-Bas, *Wahhabi Islam: From Revival and Reform to Global Jihad*, London: I.B.Tauris, 2004.

<sup>7</sup> Barbara Daly Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband, 1860–1900*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition; for the modern, radicalized Deobandis see: Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: The Story of the Afghan Warlords*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2000.

<sup>8</sup> For France see, Samir Amghar, ‘Les salafistes français: une nouvelle aristocratie religieuse’, *Maghreb-Machrek*, no. 185 (2005), pp. 13–31; for Great Britain, see for instance, Jonathan Birt, ‘Wahhabism in the United Kingdom: Manifestations and Reactions’, in M. Al-Rasheed (ed.) *Transnational Connections and the Arab Gulf*, London: Hurst, 2005, pp. 168–84; for the Netherlands, Frank Buijs, et. al., *Strijders van eigen bodem: Radicale en democratische moslims in Nederland*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006, and Martijn de Koning, *Zoeken naar een zuivere islam. Geloofsbeleving en identiteitsvorming van jonge Marokkaans-Nederlandse moslims*, Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2007; for Europe, see Samir Amghar, ‘Salafism and Radicalisation of Young European Muslims’, in Samir Amghar, Amel Boubekeur, Michael Emerson (eds) *European Islam: Challenges for Public Policy and Society*, Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies, 2007, pp. 38–51; for Indonesia, see Noorhaidi Hasan, *Laskar Jihad: Islam, Militancy, and the Quest for Identity in Post-New-Order Indonesia*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, 2006.

<sup>9</sup> For good analyses of the global jihad, see Thomas Hegghammer, ‘Global Jihadism after the Iraq War’, *Middle East Journal*, vol. 60, no. 1 (2006), pp. 11–32, and Brynjar Lia, *Architect of Global Jihad: The Life of Al Qaeda Strategist Abu Mus'ab al-Suri*, London: Hurst, 2007.

<sup>10</sup> See Madawi Al-Rasheed, *Contesting the Saudi State: Islamic Voices from a New Generation*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007; Quintan Wiktorowicz, ‘Anatomy of the Salafi Movement’, *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* vol. 29, no. 3 (April-May 2006), pp. 207–39; and Stéphane Lacroix and Thomas Hegghammer, *Saudi Backgrounder: Who are the Islamists?*, International Crisis Group Middle East Report, no. 31, 12 September 2004.

what are the basic tenets of its doctrine, why does it have such an appeal, and what is its relationship with politics and violence? What makes Salafism so difficult to define is its ambiguity and fragmentation. Although it is a movement with clearly defined characteristics, it is not a homogeneous movement but—especially in the modern era—has become a movement with mixed, and recently even contradictory tendencies which have sprung up in different regions. Part 1 of this book addresses the doctrine of Salafism and its major themes, and the transformation it has been subjected to as a result of doctrinal reforms and new applications in the modern era. Although reformism has emerged in different regions of the world, this volume concentrates mainly on the form it has adopted in Saudi Arabia as Wahhabism and the way it has influenced the dissemination of Salafism elsewhere in the world. Part 2 takes up the complex issue of the relations of Salafism with politics and tries to answer such questions as: is Salafism really apolitical and quietist, and if not, how and when does it become activist and exert political influence, and in what way has it been influenced by other more politically oriented Islamist currents such as the Muslim Brotherhood? Part 3 addresses the issue of so-called “Jihadi-Salafism” and its relationship with mainstream Salafism and especially its modern and even modernist character. Part 4 focuses on the transnational character of Salafism and the relationship between its local and global manifestations and the diversity of organisations and networks. Part 5, finally, investigates its appeal and its strong identity-building capacity among youth in different parts of the world.

To cover the complexity of Salafism this book has brought together specialists in the field from different disciplines, including political scientists, historians, Islam specialists, anthropologists and researchers involved in security studies.

## Doctrine

Salafism derives from the term the pious forefathers (*al-salaf al-salih*), the first three generations of Muslims who had first-hand experience of the rise of Islam and are regarded as exemplary for the correct way to live for future Muslims.<sup>11</sup> The golden period is considered to be restricted to the first

<sup>11</sup> Most of the companions of the Prophet had died by 690 CE, most of the second generation, the followers (*tabi'un*) who had obtained their knowledge directly from the first generation, around 750 CE, and the third generation, the followers of the followers (*atba' al-tabi'in*) around 810 CE. Personal communication with professor Harald Motzki.

generation of Muslims or even to the period of the four rightly guided Caliphs (632–661). As Bernard Haykel shows in chapter 1, the name Salafism goes back to the *Ahl al-Hadith* during the Abbasid caliphate, who concentrated on the study of the *hadith* as a means to purge Islam of non-Muslim accretions. As the means to return to the pristine purity of Islam, Salafism preaches a return to the study of the basic sources of Islam, the Qur'an and the *hadith*, and rejects *taqlid*, or the "blind" following of the four canonical law schools (*madhhab/madhahab*) and therefore accepts *ijtihad*, or individual interpretation, albeit along strict lines. In Islam the Qur'an is regarded as the direct word of God, whereas the life of the Prophet Muhammad is seen as the perfect living out of the teachings and values of the Qur'an. Salafism was therefore not only scripturalist but also literalist. Muslims had to behave exactly like the pious forefathers whose deeds and thoughts were found in the sources of the Islam.

Although its doctrinal appeal lies in its clarity and its claim to purity, there are many tensions in Salafism. They are reflected in the doctrines of the important figures who contributed to the formation of Salafism as doctrine, such as Ahmad ibn Hanbal (780–855) and Taqi al-Din ibn Taymiyya (1263–1328), and re-emerge in Wahhabism, the eighteenth-century reform movement in the Najd, in central Arabia. The basic tension derives from the contradiction between expounding a rigorous doctrine of complete submission to God, represented in the doctrine of the Oneness of God (*tawhid*), and the demands this makes on the believer to adhere to this creed. In part this is a political issue. Can the believer implement this fundamental injunction by accepting political power, even if the ruler does not adhere to Islamic law, the *shari'a*, and should the believer in that case concentrate on *tarbiya* (education) and *da'wa* (spreading the faith) in order to create a purified Muslim society? Or should the true believer correct the deviant ruler by verbally upbraiding him or even rising up against him? In other words, is Salafism primarily quietist or activist, and to what degree should it be one of these alternatives?

This was a dilemma which the Salafist revivalist and reformist movement has encountered throughout the ages and which would reoccur in Wahhabism, a pre-modern movement founded by Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab (1703–1792). Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab tried to skirt the dilemma by first concentrating on reforming society. Like his predecessors, Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab believed that Muslims had become ignorant of their religion and lived in a barbaric state of ignorance (*jahiliyya*), which was at the root of Islam's spiritual and political decline since the golden age. The only way to achieve salvation

and retrieve past glory was the re-assertion of absolute monotheism and the belief in the Oneness of God (*tawhid*) as the basis of the Islamic creed (*'aqida*) and a return to the Qur'an and the Sunna. In order to achieve this pristine purity, he condemned the acceptance of intermediaries between man and God, such as the veneration of the tombs of saints, holy trees, astrology and soothsayers. Following classic Salafism, he regarded these practices as giving associates to God (*shirk*), or idolatry and polytheism, the form of religion that prevailed in Mecca before Muhammad started to preach Islam (*jabiliyya*). They were condemned as reprehensible innovations (*bid'a/bida'*). As the creed (*'aqida*) was the central focus of Wahhabism, the faith, or *niyya*, behind a practice or ritual is essential and the act in itself without the proper intention of worshipping God alone (*tawhid*) is regarded as a sin. Only when intention and practice are in agreement can one be regarded as belonging to the saved group (*al-firqa al-najiya*) or the victorious sect (*al-ta'ifa al-mansura*) that can enter paradise. In contrast to the quietist Ibn Hanbal, but following the more activist Ibn Taymiyya, Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab was willing to call all those who did not adhere to the doctrine of *tawhid* unbelievers (*kafir/kuffar*) or apostates (*murtaddun*), who can be excommunicated (*takfir*), which was a precondition for waging *jihad* against them. A recent study regards combating superstitions and calling to reform (*da'wa*) as the essence of the Wahhabi mission.<sup>12</sup>

Wahhabism was not the only revivalist movement of this period that drew its energy from classic Salafi doctrines.<sup>13</sup> In Yemen Muhammad ibn 'Ali al-Shawkani (d. 1834) was a reformer, who radically reorienting the sources of law by a direct use of Qur'an and *hadith*, insisting on *ijtihad*, as well as developing a method to implement these reforms.<sup>14</sup> In India, a contemporary of Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab, Shah Wali Allah (1703–1762), launched a comparable reform programme that rejected *taqlid* and popular custom and concentrated on the study of *hadith* and the Qur'an.<sup>15</sup> The Deobandi School, opening in 1867, near Delhi, also taught mainly *hadith* and opposed the rational studies of law, logic and philosophy since they were based on deficient human reasoning.<sup>16</sup> In contrast, however, to Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab, most of the Indian reform

<sup>12</sup> David Commins, *The Wahhabi Mission and Saudi Arabia*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2006, pp. 14–17.

<sup>13</sup> For a general analysis of the emergence of revivalist thinkers and movement in the early modern period, see John Voll, "Foundations for Renewal and Reform", in John L. Esposito (ed.), *The Oxford History of Islam*, Oxford University Press, 1999, pp. 509–47.

<sup>14</sup> Haykal, *Revival and Reform in Islam*, pp. 76–108.

<sup>15</sup> Metcalf, *Islamic Revival*, pp. 35–45.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 100–1.

movements were more conciliatory towards Islamic mysticism, or Sufism. Shah Wali Allah was himself a Sufi and tried to reconcile Sufism and even Shi'ism with a more orthodox, Salafi Islam. Deobandis regarded themselves as both intellectual and spiritual teachers and therefore combined the Law and the Path, although they advocated a responsible Sufism that was shorn of its excesses.<sup>17</sup> The same goes for the Tablighi Jama'at in India, a split-off of the Deobandi school founded by Mawlana Muhammad Ilyas (1885–1944) in 1934. This transnational movement, was, in contrast to Wahhabism, geared to spreading tolerance and forbearance and rejected the use of force as in *jihad*.<sup>18</sup> However, on most other issues the Arab and Indian reform movements shared the same programme with Wahhabism. Both emphasised *tawhid* and condemned as *bid'a* local customs, such as the celebration of the Prophet's birthday, the playing of music as a means to reach ecstasy, or elaborate weddings or funerals, or worse, the inclusion of Hindu and Shi'i rituals into Sunni practices. They also discouraged social and business contacts with Shi'is and Hindus. In addition, both limited their reforms in regard to the law schools and practiced *taqlid* in regard to Hanbalism (Wahhabism) or Hanafism (Deobandis), thus limiting the reach of *ijtihad* as a means of directly finding solution to problems by studying the sources of Islam, especially the *hadith*. In this respect, as Mariam Abou Zahab in chapter 5 makes clear, another contemporary reform movement, the Ahl-e Hadith, founded by Shah Isma'il Shahid (d. 1831), basing himself on the medieval Ahl al-Hadith, went a step further by rejecting *taqlid* completely. The modern Ahl-e Hadith even accuse the Tablighis of *shirk* for following a law school,<sup>19</sup> an accusation levelled later, albeit in milder form, against Wahhabism by Nasir al-Din al-Albani.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 139.

<sup>18</sup> Muhammad Khalid Masud, 'The Growth and Development of the Tablighi Jama'at in India', in Muhammad Khalid Masud (ed.), *Travellers in Faith: Studies of the Tablighi Jama'at as a Transnational Islamic Movement for Faith Renewal*, Leiden: Brill, date, pp. 22–3. The main difference between the Tablighi Jama'at and Wahhabism is the former's tolerance. While Wahhabism is strident and stresses the punishment of deviation, Tablighis seek communalities, or in Mawlana Ilyas' words: "You should make sure that our movement and Islamic *tabligh* do not allow hurting someone's feelings. Nor do we want to hear the words *fitna* and *fasad* (disturbance). You have called some people *bid'ati* (heretics). You should avoid such words in future that incite disturbance". Quotation from Muhammad Khalid Masud, 'Ideology and Legitimacy', in *Travellers in Faith*, p. 95.

<sup>19</sup> For a brief but illuminating overview of the different groups in South Asia and the tensions between quietism and activism, see Barbara Metcalf, 'Traditionalist' Islamic Activism: Deoband, Tablighis, and Talibs', [www.ssrc.org/sept11/essays/metcalf\\_text\\_only.htm](http://www.ssrc.org/sept11/essays/metcalf_text_only.htm)

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If Wahhabism differed from many other early modern movements in form and degree, it differed in content from the late nineteenth-century Salafi reformist movement in the Arab Middle East led by such thinkers as the Egyptian Muhammad 'Abduh (1849–1905), the Persian Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1839–97) and the Syrian Rashid Rida (1865–1935). The basic difference between these two movements is that the first emerged as a response to the Western cultural, political and economic threat but regarded the West as a model for emulation, whereas Wahhabism emerged as a purely revivalist movement directed to the purification of doctrine and later, in the twentieth century, when it was brought into contact with the West, rejected all Western models and even, for a while, Western technology.<sup>20</sup> Although they were scripturalist, the late nineteenth-century reformers were not literalist, trying to find all answers to life in the *hadith*, as Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab had done. With the exception of Rashid Rida, who later became an admirer of Wahhabism, they believed that a return to the sources of Islam did not contradict the acceptance of Western models of emulation, Western education, or learning English or French.<sup>21</sup> They resembled the Indian reform movements in their more restricted political ambitions, both regions having been incorporated into the British Empire. Quietism, would however, not be a permanent feature of some of these movements. For instance, a modern Deobandi movement, such as the Jamiat Ulema-i Islami (JUI) is highly political, protesting against Pakistan's support for the US invasion of Afghanistan in 2001.<sup>22</sup> Many of the Deobandi madrasas in Pakistan are even associated with the activism of the Taliban.<sup>23</sup> In contrast, the Tablighi Jama'at have remained adherents of the primal quietist and pious Salafi creed, stating that "the true solution lies in strengthening your faith and in returning to God".<sup>24</sup>

Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab was able to evade the choice between quietist submission and activist confrontation by making a deal with political power. In fact, Wahhabism would have remained an isolated sect if he had not made a political alliance with the tribal chief, amir Muhammad ibn al-Sa'ud in 1744.

<sup>20</sup> Commins, *The Wahhabi Mission*, pp. 130–43.

<sup>21</sup> See Albert Hourani for an analysis of the modernist Salafi thinkers Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and Muhammad 'Abduh, in his *Arabic Thought in a Liberal Age, 1798–1939*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970, pp. 103–60.

<sup>22</sup> Metcalf, 'Preface to the Paperback Edition', in *Islamic Revival*, p. xviii.

<sup>23</sup> See Rashid, *Taliban*, pp. 89–94.

<sup>24</sup> Quote from the second leader of the Tablighi Jama'at, Muhammad Yusuf Kandhalawi, at a rally in Pakistan in 1947 during the partition. Muhammad Khalid Masud, 'The Growth and Development of the Tablighi Jama'at in India', in *Travellers in Faith*, p. 16.



Through this pact Ibn Sa'ud could harness the religious fervour of a revivalist movement to the political ambitions of his family. The territory that was liberated was purged of *'ulama* who opposed the mission, while the population was forced to adhere to the new creed and a new class of *'ulama* was trained to enforce it. The descendants of Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab established a religious dynasty, called the Al al-Shaykh (family of the *shaykh*), who gained power over the new religious establishment, while the Al Sa'ud (Sa'ud family) provided the political elite of the new state. Two states were founded by this coalition in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries before amir 'Abd al-'Aziz ibn Sa'ud (d. 1953) eventually founded the Saudi state in 1932. In order to survive, he realised that he had to curtail the zealotry of his religious fighters, the *ikhwan*, and establish the primacy of political power. He thereby established the present division of labour and laid the foundation for a return of the main contradiction of Wahhabism/Salafism between its quietist presence and activist past. At present the political and bureaucratic elite rule the Saudi state and determine its economic and foreign policy without regard for the *shari'a* in these spheres, while the religious establishment has been given control over society, enforcing a strict Wahhabi morality in exchange for political subservience.<sup>25</sup> Partly this division had been sanctioned by the Wahhabis in the doctrine of *wali al-amr*, the duty of obedience to the ruler, but its inner tensions could not be so easily laid to rest and would be revived by more activist Salafis who could use it to challenge the political legitimacy of the Saudi rulers.

The tensions in Salafism would emerge with the growing importance of the Saudi state. Having been founded in relative isolation in a backwater of the Islamic world in the deserts of Arabia, Wahhabism was rudely confronted by modernity once Saudi Arabia became a powerful oil-producing state in the 1950s and especially after the oil crisis in 1973. From a sectarian, excluded, localised, parochial, and marginal movement, Wahhabism was pulled into the modern world by more sophisticated, ideologically and culturally diverse independent thinkers and groups who transformed it to confront the modern world. They brought into the equation their own doctrines, interests and issues and backgrounds to create a multifaceted Salafism that is reflected in a diversity of strains, ranging from apolitical, quietist currents, including lifestyle and identity movements, to political activist movements and violent Jihadi networks. These currents trace their origins to Salafism and share basic doctrines and terms with Wahhabism, but have their own genealogies,

<sup>25</sup> Madawi Al-Rasheed, *Contesting the Saudi State*, pp. 10–11.



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developing their own particular interpretation of Salafism based on specific local circumstances and global developments.

As several contributions to this volume demonstrate, modern Salafism has brought out the tensions in Wahhabism. In the last part of this section I will analyse four elements of its doctrine that have been radicalised after having escaped the control of the state and the religious establishment. The first tension lies in Wahhabism's programme of returning to the sources of Islam, the Qur'an and the *hadith*, while in fact it followed (*taqlid*) the Hanbali school of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*). Although this issue deals with doctrine, it had political important implications. The reformer Nasir al-Din al-Albani (1914–99), one of the most important influences on modern Salafism, was the first to point out this contradiction in Wahhabism, as Stéphane Lacroix shows in chapter 2. Al-Albani was influenced by the liberal Salafi reformers of the end of the nineteenth century, who rejected the veneration of tombs of *shaykhs* and *taqlid* and promoted *ijtihad* (individual reasoning). But he was also more radical than these reformers in the sense that he made the study of *hadith* the central point of his reformist movement, turning it into a science. When he was asked to teach in Saudi Arabia, al-Albani's method was contentious not for rejecting Wahhabism, but, as Lacroix points out, for outdoing Wahhabism on its own terms and therefore posing a threat to the vested interests of the '*ulama* whose power was based on upholding Hanbalism. Proclaiming that Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab was not a *hadith* specialist and indeed was not a Salafi because he followed the Hanbali *madhhab*, was a revolutionary position to adopt in Saudi Arabia. Al-Albani transformed Wahhabism in another way as well. With his accusation that the Muslim Brotherhood paid more attention to politics than '*ilm*, religious knowledge, al-Albani laid the basis of the present day friction between Salafism and the Brotherhood and integrated Salafism into modern Islamic discourse. A third legacy of al-Albani is his organisational form of transmitting knowledge. Like the Abbasid Hanbalis,<sup>26</sup> it is based on the informal teacher-scholar relationship.<sup>27</sup> This relationship constitutes one of the basic forms of the organisational genealogy for the dissemination of Salafism. Although quietist, it can be contentious for escaping the control of the state.

<sup>26</sup> See Daphne Ephrat, *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition: The Sunni 'Ulama' of Eleventh-Century Baghdad*, SUNY Press, Albany NY, 2000.

<sup>27</sup> See especially Quintan Wiktorowicz, *The Management of Islamic Activism: Salafis, the Muslim Brotherhood, and State Power in Jordan*, Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2001, pp. 133–44.

The second source of tension that has resurfaced and has been given a much more activist interpretation is the doctrine that regulates the relationship between the community of believers and outsiders/non-believers. Wahhabism's contribution to Salafism lay in its strengthening of a xenophobic attitude towards foreigners and its sectarianism towards non-Wahhabi Muslims. On the basis of the principle of loyalty and disavowal (*wala' wa-l-bara'*) Muslims were called upon to distance themselves from Muslims who did not adhere to Wahhabism. A true believer could only express his belief and the sincerity of his faith by demonstrating open enmity towards "idolators".<sup>28</sup> Already in the nineteenth century tracts existed condemning travelling to the land of idolators (*bilad al-mushrikin*) and befriending them and becoming "corrupted" and offering loyalty to them. Muslims were explicitly urged "to sever ties with them, to wage *jihad* against them and grow closer to God by hating them."<sup>29</sup> Accordingly, the struggle with the Ottoman Empire was framed as a struggle between believers and non-believers. This doctrine would re-emerge in the first quarter of the twentieth century when Wahhabi zealots such as the *ikhwan* tried to spread Wahhabism to Iraq, while in the second half of the twentieth century a figure as important as the mufti of Saudi Arabia, Ibn Baz, ordered Muslims to withhold their greetings to non-believers and cultivate hatred for them.<sup>30</sup>

As in the case of *hadith* studies by al-Albani and *ijtihad*, the concept of *wala' wa-l-bara'* has been radicalised by modern thinkers, as Joas Wagemakers demonstrates in his analysis of the reinterpretation of this concept by Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi (b. 1959) in chapter 3. Wagemakers traces the genealogy of its transformation from the writings of Taqi al-Din ibn Taymiyya (1263–1328), to a grandson of the founder of Wahhabism, Sulayman ibn 'Abdallah Al al-Shaykh (1786–1818), who urged believers to "cut the loyalty (*al-muwala*) between the believers and them (non-Muslims)", to such modern Saudi scholars as Salih ibn Fawzan al-Fawzan (b. 1935), who argued that Muslims in non-Muslim countries should emigrate to the Islamic world because "settling in the countries of the unbelievers will lead to forming loyalty [to them]". In the last stages of the genealogy of the concept of *wala' wa-l-bara'*, activists such as Juhayman al-'Utaybi (d. 1980), who led the occupation of the Grand Mosque in Mecca in 1979, directed it against the Saudi rulers, arguing that Muslims should also disavow the rulers who ally themselves with

<sup>28</sup> Commins, *The Wahhabi Mission*, pp. 34–5.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>30</sup> Al-Rasheed, *Contesting the Saudi State*, p. 36.

the polytheists, not just distance themselves from foreigners.<sup>31</sup> Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi would finally take the concept to its radical activist conclusion by excommunicating (*takfir*) the Saudi state for its close relations with the West, thus for the first time legitimising *jihad* against rulers purely on the basis of Wahhabi/Salafi reasoning.

The third example of a Wahhabi theme that has influenced Salafism and has become radicalised, is the condemnation of Shi'ism as a heresy. Wahhabism condemned Shi'ism for two doctrinal reasons. The first was that Shi'is venerated the *imams* who were regarded as infallible. Secondly, Shi'is denied the legitimacy of three of the four Rightly Guided Caliphs (who ruled from 632–661) and therefore also the Companions of the Prophet and the authenticity of the *hadith*, the very basis of Wahhabism/Salafism. Guido Steinberg in chapter 4, however, not only traces the genealogy of anti-Shi'ism to Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab's writings on the "rejectionists" (*rawafid*) (of the Rightly Guided Caliphs), but also to the writings of the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood, which adopted the same anti-Shi'a attitude for political reasons after the support of Iran for the Alawite regime of Hafez al-Asad in 1980. Developed by the Syrian Brotherhood leader Sa'id Hawwa (1935–1989), and later provided with a Salafi stamp of approval by the intermediary figure Muhammad Surur Zain al-'Abidin (b. 1938), it finally became an ideological weapon in the hands of the Jihadi-Salafi Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi (d. 2006) who was to use the doctrine with devastating effect in Iraq, where the Shi'is' doctrinal and historical "perfidy" in always collaborating with the enemies of Islam was confirmed by their political alliance with the United States against the true Sunni believers.

The fourth and final example in this volume of the ambiguities Wahhabism has bequeathed to modern Salafism lies in the practice of *hisba*, or commanding right and forbidding wrong (*al-amr bi-l-ma'ruf wa nahy 'an al-munkar*).<sup>32</sup> Although this practice goes a long way back and had existed during the time of the Abbasids (750–1258) and was regarded by Ibn Taymiyya as the ultimate form of *jihad*,<sup>33</sup> it was revived by Wahhabism as a means to impose its

<sup>31</sup> Thomas Hegghammer and Stéphane Lacroix, 'Rejectionist Islamism in Saudi Arabia: The Story of Juhayman al-Utaybi Revisited', *The International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 39, no. 1 (2007), pp. 97–116.

<sup>32</sup> For the most extensive account of this principle see Cook, *Commanding Right*.

<sup>33</sup> For more on the relation between *jihad* and *hisba* see Richard Bonney, *Jihad: From Qur'an to bin Laden*. Foreword by Sheikh Dr Zaki Badawi, New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004, pp.111–26.

strict moral rectitude on the population and correct deviations such as smoking tobacco, worshipping at shrines, and other forms of engaging in *shirk*. In the 1920s the practice of *hisba* was institutionalised by the religious police (*mutawwaʿ/matawiʿa*) to enforce public morality and the punctual observance of prayers. In the 1950s, the Committee for Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong was also used as a political tool to counter the secular opposition.<sup>34</sup>

As with *al-walaʿ wa-l-baraʿ* and anti-Shiʿism, *hisba* has its own particular genealogy, being transformed from a socially conservative principle to ensure political subservience in Saudi Arabia into an instrument for social activism and even revolution with the Egyptian Jamaʿa al-Islamiyya, as Roel Meijer demonstrates in chapter 8. In the case of anti-Shiʿism non-Wahhabi/Salafi influences were crucial in this transformation. In the case of the Jamaʿa al-Islamiyya, it was the inspiration of medieval thinkers such as Ibn Taymiyya in combination with the revolutionary thought of the radical Egyptian Islamist thinker Sayyid Qutb (1906–66) that probably explains the specific form it acquired as well as the way it was used to ensure internal discipline, expand “Islamic space”, intimidate opponents, challenge the state’s authority and eventually legitimise revolt against the ruler in the 1970s and 1980s. That such a classical concept had become a flexible modern tool that could be reinterpreted and adapted to new circumstances has more recently been confirmed when it was transformed for a second time in the books the leadership of the Jamaʿat issued in 2002 in which it constitutes the basis of an Islamic doctrine of responsible citizenship.

Another aspect related to the inner contradictions of the doctrine of Wahhabism/Salafism that is emphasised in this volume is its tendency to fragmentation. It stands to reason that the strong emphasis on doctrinal purity and the literalist bent that Salafism has inherited from Wahhabism inevitably leads to internal disputes, splits and fragmentation. Whether they belong to the Jamaʿa al-Islamiyya in Egypt (chapter 8), or the group around Jaʿfar ʿUmar Thalib in Indonesia (chapter 7), or in Bale, Ethiopia (chapter 15), or are active in Great Britain (chapter 17), Salafis spend a considerable amount of time and energy on doctrinal disputes. Although Salafism claims that its doctrine is transparent, its quietist and activist interpretations lead to endless interpretations. Moreover, the organisational form of the informal network enhances splits, a tendency that is highly accentuated by new media forms such as the internet and manifestations of modernisation such as increasing individualisation.

<sup>34</sup> Cook, *Commanding Right*, pp. 180–91, and Commins, *The Wahhabi Mission*, p. 109.

Typically, a political activist such as Abu Mus'ab al-Suri, who was not concerned with doctrinal niceties, was exasperated by the damage doctrinal bickering caused to the Jihadist cause in Afghanistan and elsewhere, as Brynjar Lia makes clear in chapter 12.

## Identity and empowerment

Despite doctrinal disputes “Salafi clarity” has been an important reason for its appeal. Although Salafism is mostly associated with repression of women and acute social control, in this volume, its capacity to empower and change identities. In a contentious age, Salafism transforms the humiliated, the downtrodden, disgruntled young people, the discriminated migrant, or the politically repressed into a chosen sect (*al-firqa al-najiya*) that immediately gains privileged access to the Truth. Salafis are therefore able to contest the hegemonic power of their opponents: parents, the elite, the state, or dominant cultural and economic values of the global capitalist system as well as the total identification with an alien nation which nation-states in Europe impose. Because its emphasis is on doctrinal purity and not politics, Salafism, more than the Muslim Brotherhood or Hizb ut-Tahrir, has been able to empower individuals by providing a universal alternative model of truth and social action (even in its passive form of rejecting existing religious, cultural and political systems). As Roy has pointed out, due to its universal quality and its de-territorialised, de-culturised character it has become a highly powerful model of identification and is eminently suitable for the creation of new virtual communities.<sup>35</sup> But the real power of Salafism's mobilisational capacity, as Haykel stresses in this volume, lies in its ability to morally upstage the opponent. As Mohamed-Ali Adraoui states in chapter 16 on Salafism in France, the basic power of Salafism lies in its capacity to say “we are better than you”.

This sense of superiority has six dimensions. First, it is not explicitly revolutionary, i.e. it does not directly challenge the status quo by claiming to overthrow it by a foreign ideology, such as Marxism. Rather it claims to build a superior moral order by purifying existing structures on the level of the individual, the family or the community. Like so many other reformist movements it is iconoclastic in the name of conservatism. Second, its empowerment derives from its claim to intellectual superiority of religious knowledge (*‘ilm*). Few competitors are as thorough, or so demanding in the knowledge of the

<sup>35</sup> Olivier Roy, *Globalised Islam*.

sources of Islam as Salafism, and joining the “saved sect” means not only obtaining the moral high ground but also acquiring a superior knowledge of Islam that every Muslim should have. Moreover, direct access to the text enables one to challenge the religious establishment, which is mostly based on *fiqh* of the four jurisprudential schools as well as on “folk Islam”, both of which are associated with the dominant power structure or prevalent culture. Third, Salafism provides its followers with a strong identity. Salafis are conspicuous for being different in appearance. As Roy has pointed out, neo-fundamentalists are obsessed with boundaries.<sup>36</sup> Fourth, it allows its followers to identify much more easily with the larger *umma*, which enhances its universal pretensions, in contrast to the much more nation-oriented Brotherhood. Fifth, it is activist while being (mostly) quietist. It empowers the follower by urging him/her to actively participate in the Salafi mission and the spread of the call (*da'wa*). It therefore has an immediate social function of not only showing one's superiority but also of exerting it in the public and private domain by means of *wala wa-l-bara'* and *hisba*, or in even stronger terms by taking part in *jihad*. Sixth, as all religious movements, and in contrast to political ideologies, it has the tremendous advantage of ambiguity and flexibility. Although it claims to be clear and rigid in its doctrine and in its striving for purity, as has been explained above, in practice it is malleable. Its ambiguity allows the adherent to be politically supportive of regimes as well as reject them.

Perhaps the most conspicuous forms of empowerment and transformation of the individual have occurred in those parts of the world where Salafism is a recent phenomenon, where the influence of local culture and folk Islam is rapidly being eroded, such as Indonesia (chapter 7), or Upper Egypt (chapter 8), where social and educational changes are rapid and where the youth is in search of new means of empowerment without being able to reject their background completely. In Europe, Salafism has especially led to a kind of “conversion” of Muslims who have adopted a new identity that is based neither on that of their parents nor on that of the dominant culture of the nation-state they live in. Adraoui in chapter 16 and Martijn de Koning in chapter 18 show how Salafism has transformed second-generation migrants from humiliated and despised marginal citizens to superior human beings who have access to the Truth. “The appeal of Salafi puritanism lies in its ability to provide a way of not only opting out of society but creating an alternative, superior community based on the unity of God (*tawhid*).” It is the absolute character of Salafism that attracts. Instead of being passive followers, Salafis become active

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36.

role models. Adraoui regards Salafism as a strong “product” because it succeeds in convincing the customers of the religious market in believing it is the *real* Islam, provides an explanation why their lives have gone awry and how to become a true believer by living in accordance with correct Islamic rules in line with the Salafi practice (*manhaj*). The economic success of some members confirms the correctness of the Salafi *‘aqida* and their belonging to the “saved sect”. It has also expanded their identity by allowing them to identify with the Arab Gulf countries, where some have emigrated.

The same politics of identity occur in the Netherlands. De Koning shows in his analysis of two Dutch Moroccan Salafi women in chapter 18 that Salafism’s strength lies in “a merging of the idea of the authentic self with the idea of a pure Islam as revealed by Allah”. Salafism in Europe reflects a transformation in society that enhances self-fulfilment, individual choice and assertiveness. It furthermore has the advantage that it allows for individual self-study of the sources of Islam to find out “what Islam really says”. Moreover, in the midst of turmoil it provides “peace, a direction in life, the right answers”.

Salafism’s empowerment as a way of solving modern identity crises is also evident in Bale, Ethiopia, among the new generation of Salafis who grew up during the Marxist Derg regime, which fell in 1991. Terje Østebø points out in chapter 15 that “when the red stars and the statues of Lenin were removed, this generation harboured a profound sense of disorientation and found itself in a psychological and ideological vacuum.” As a result, “the propagandists of the Ahl al-Sunna (a Salafi group) found fertile ground in a generation disenchanted with the past and burdened by an uncertainty regarding the future.” Speaking the same language as the young generation, addressing issues directly related to their daily lives, the message of the Ahl al-Sunna found a welcome reception among the youngsters. As part of the generational conflict Salafism provided them with the tools to attack local customs, outbidding the older generation, who were accused of being “corrupt” and “lax”.

Even in the heartland of Salafism, Saudi Arabia, where Salafism is a state religion and is used to control society and enforce a strict conservative morality, a new generation of Salafi thinkers and ideologues have succeeded in using the contentious potential of Wahhabism and turning it against the political and religious authorities, cutting down boundaries, and criticising the notion of a Saudi state as totally opposed to the basic notions of *tawhid*. Always regarded as a rigid doctrine that allows no room for interpretation and in fact does its best to rule out human individual reason (*ray*), Madawi Al-Rasheed



shows in chapter 13 the astonishing capacity of Salafism to empower a diversity of groups and individuals and challenge foreign and internal opponents without having recourse to Western concepts.

In all cases, the new identity of Salafi converts has been conspicuously marked by outward forms, clothing and beards, to stress the difference between “us” and “them”, based on *al-wala’ wa-l-bara’* and *hisba*. First of all it is directed towards themselves. Salafis distinguish themselves from the rest of society (Muslim and non-Muslim) by their special rituals and attire. In France and the rest of Europe, male Salafis are conspicuous for the *qamis*, the long robe and the short *gallaba*, revealing the calves, the women for the *niqab*, the veil that covers the face. In Saudi Arabia, the neo-Ahl al-Hadith have given rise to protests for staying shod during prayers and forbidding women to wear the *niqab*. In addition they reject common practices wherever they live. In France they refuse certain occupations and avoid “contamination” of their purity by mingling with non-believers (*kuffar*). This sense of separateness is also expressed in their time management that revolves around the obligatory five daily prayers. In Egypt, Westernised forms of culture or social codes were attacked by breaking up mixed meetings of men and women, music festivals, setting fire to video shops and cinemas, while traditional folk practices were disturbed during the celebration of *mawlid*s of saints or the Prophet, or traditional pagan holidays such as Sham al-Nassim. In Yemen, Salafis were conspicuous for banning the chewing of *qat* and traditional music, whereas in Saudi Arabia the followers of Nasir al-Din al-Albani became famous for the critique of the *‘iqal*, the headband and the traditional headdress, which were considered un-Islamic. In its battle to purify Islam in Bale, a number of local Oromo customs and practices, particularly rituals connected to weddings and funerals, were denounced and labelled as both backward and irreconcilable with the life of a true Muslim. Salafism has also been conspicuous for claiming and expanding purified Islamic space. In France, Salafis dominate certain city neighbourhoods while other neighbourhoods are avoided because they are dominated by the “unbelievers”. Whereas in Egypt, the semi-Salafi al-Jama’a al-Islamiyya tried to take over secondary schools, universities, mosques, or even whole villages and neighbourhoods in Cairo.

Despite the “traditional” outward appearances, the identity issue stresses the paradox of Salafism. Both de Koning and Østebø, following Eickelman and Piscatori,<sup>37</sup> point out, that Salafism is par excellence a modern phenome-

<sup>37</sup> Dale F. Eickelman and James Piscatori, *Muslim Politics*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996.

non and the result of the objectification of religion and the conscious answer to questions such as: what is my religion? Why is it important to my life? How do my beliefs guide my conduct? According to Adraoui, Salafism is even a postmodern phenomenon: "The uprooted, postmodern French Salafi is a globalised individual who is no longer interested in his own cultural roots and the land of his parents, preferring instead the non-cultural dynamics of the Gulf, such as Dubai or Abu Dhabi." It is ironic, however, that in spite of themselves, they are more integrated into French society than they would concede. For although Salafism, based on *al-wala' wa-l-bara'*, rejects contacts with the non-believers, it does allow for economic relations, "as long as loyalty remains to one's own community". It is through this loophole that they become imbued with the materialistic culture of the modern consumerist society.

## Politics

Undoubtedly the link with politics is one of the most puzzling, slippery and fascinating aspects of Salafism.<sup>38</sup> As has been stated earlier, this forms the central dilemma in Salafism. Traditionally, politics in Wahhabism has adopted the form of discrete advice (*nasiha*) given by the *'ulama* to the ruler behind the scenes. This still is the official political code of behaviour in Saudi Arabia, despite some minor changes. The central problem of modern Salafism is how to act non-politically in a political world, where media attention is crucial, Islamism has become a mass movement, and the Western public has become highly suspicious of a current that is often associated with intolerance and terrorism. What makes this all the more difficult is the empowerment of the Salafi creed, the sense of mission it provides to its followers and the energy and activism it generates with its strong identity. With the help of Saudi educational institutions (charity organisations, and universities), supported by the Saudi state, this sense of mission has gained a transnational dimension.

Salafism's political dimension adopts three forms: quietist and discrete (with behind the scenes advice to rulers), covert (professing quietism, but acting politically while condemning open political involvement as *hizbiyya*, leading to *fitna* or factionalism) and openly activist by calling for political reform. When Salafist groups openly propagate politics, they shade off into the Islamism (political Islam) of the Muslim Brotherhood, as is the case with the Saudi *Sabwa* movement or the Jama'a al-Islamiyya in Egypt. But although

<sup>38</sup> Wiktorowicz's article 'Anatomy of the Salafi Movement', has undoubtedly been the most comprehensive analysis on the issue of the division of 'purists', 'politicos' and 'jihadi' Salafis.

this happens more often, Salafism's appeal is based on the purist rejection of the world and one of its weakest aspects is the underdeveloped nature of its political vocabulary. Transcending politics, its overt political activism takes the form of violence and *jihad*. Salafism does, however, provide certain concepts and practices that can be transformed into political tools, such as the principles of loyalty and disavowal (*al-wala' wa-l-bara'*) and commanding good and forbidding wrong (*al-amr bi-l-ma'ruf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar*) (see chapters 3 and 8). These principles allow for active interference in the public sphere and can be expanded from a quietist, minimalist to an active, maximalist political and even violent stance. Therefore the division should not be regarded as rigid but as a sliding scale. In contrast to what normally is assumed, the violent form can be reached through a quietist trajectory if *hisba* and *wala' wa-l-bara'* are radicalised as has been seen in the examples of the Jama'a al-Islamiyya in Egypt and the Jihadi-Salafi thinker Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi in chapters 8 and 3.

In its minimalist form someone as politically reticent as Nasir al-Din al-Albani acknowledges the need for an Islamic state but disagrees with the method to reach that stage. For Salafism politics for its own sake is not important, but rather it is doctrinal purity that is the basis for political involvement. In practice, the focus is on *da'wa*, which according to al-Albani consists of *al-tasfiya wa-l-tarbiya* (purification of the creed and education). As Lacroix shows, this principle, logically pursued, leads to astonishing results, of which the most famous is al-Albani's *fatwa* in which he calls on the Palestinians to leave the West Bank and Gaza Strip because they cannot perform their religion correctly under Israeli occupation. Given a choice between protecting the creed (*'aqida*) and the land, it is the creed, according to al-Albani, that has priority. Similarly, as Laurent Bonnefoy points out in chapter 14, the founder of Salafism in Yemen and follower of al-Albani, Muqbil Hadi al-Wadi'i, stated that the independence of South Yemen from British rule in 1967 was worse than colonialism since it brought to power a socialist government and led to the death of fellow Muslims. For the same reason, as Noorhaidi shows, the Indonesian version of apolitical Salafism regretted the downfall of the Suharto regime in 1998. This prioritisation of *'aqida* above politics, has led to a severe critique of Salafism by the more politically inclined Muslim Brotherhood. Already as early as the 1930s, the Brotherhood in Egypt blamed the local Salafis, the Jam'iyya al-Shar'iyya, for being more interested in rituals and doctrine than in liberating the country from the British occupation.<sup>39</sup> The same

<sup>39</sup> Brynjar Lia, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt: The Rise of an Islamic Mass Movement*, Reading: Ithaca Press, 1998, p. 59–60.

accusation was also made against the Jama'a al-Islamiyya in Egypt by the Left in the 1970s.<sup>40</sup> By far the largest Salafi movement in present-day Egypt, the al-Jama'iyya al-Shari'yya and others groups like the Shubban al-Muslimin are quietist and apolitical and are therefore supported by the Mubarak regime. Khaled Hroub shows in chapter 9 that Hamas can easily portray Salafism as a collaborator with the Israeli government because its leaders shy away from politics and thus can be framed as supporting the occupation.

In practice, however, it has been hard for Salafism to completely ignore politics. Partly this has been the result of the fact that religion and politics have been so enmeshed that religious doctrines become political, as was apparent in the challenge of al-Albani's *hadith* study to the authority of the Saudi religious establishment. But the main source of tension between religion and politics derives from the doctrine of the Oneness of God (*tawhid*) itself, as we have explained. The duty to worship only God (*tawhid*) and recognise God as the only authority challenges the allegiance and duty of obedience of the subject/citizen to the ruler. Even if Qutb's *hakimiyya* (usually regarded as the legitimacy to rebel against established political authority (*khuruj 'ala al-hakim*) is rejected as an innovation (*bid'a*) by Salafism because the term does not occur in the Qur'an,<sup>41</sup> the tension between total political subservience to the ruler, even if he is corrupt (the original doctrine of Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab) and the complete worship of God forces adherents of "apolitical" Salafism to take a position. In fact, as Noorhaidi in chapter 7 explains, the more a group emphasises the purity of belief and concentrates on religious knowledge (*'ilm*), the greater the tensions with reality and the greater the pressure to adopt a political stance and criticise the political establishment as deviant, corrupt and un-Islamic. Political *takfir* is a monster that mainstream Salafism desperately tries to keep in its cage while other currents within the movement have done their best to let it escape.

Al-Albani himself set the first step in this direction by regarding the Al Sa'ud as illegitimate rulers because the family does not descend from the tribe of Quraysh. As we have seen, a group of his followers, organised as al-Jama'a al-Salafiyya al-Muhtasiba (JSM), led by Juhayman al-'Utaybi, took this reasoning one step further, condemning the close ties of the Al Sa'ud with the West

<sup>40</sup> Ahmed Abdalla, *The Student Movement and National Politics in Egypt*, London: Al Saqi Books, 1985, pp. 227–8.

<sup>41</sup> *Hakimiyya* as such does not appear in the Qur'an but *hukm Allah* does, and as such is considered Qur'anic in derivation if not in inspiration. Information provided by Bernard Haykel.

and the corruption of its members, while Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, took the final step of excommunicating (*takfir*) the rulers. That the Saudi authorities were aware of the contentious and political potential of al-Albani's doctrines is apparent from the fact that al-Albani was temporarily banished from the kingdom after the occupation of the Grand Mosque. Even the mufti of Saudi Arabia, Ibn Baz, was not completely exonerated as he was closely connected with JSM and was loath to disavow 'Utaybi's ideas. Another famous, so-called quietist Salafist religious leader, Muqbil Hadi al-Wadi'i, who also was a member of JSM and would later establish Salafism in Yemen, was arrested and later sent back to his home country. On the other hand, it was equally possible for other followers of al-Albani to wholeheartedly support the regime, as happened with his neo-Ahl al-Hadith disciples Rabi' ibn Hadi Madkhali and Muhammad Aman al-Jami, who supported the Saudi invitation to American troops in 1990.<sup>42</sup> They were allowed to gain control over such important institutions as the Islamic University in Medina in exchange for purging them of the Sahwist and Muslim Brotherhood critics of the regime. Whereas the "political" genealogy leads to Afghanistan and Jihadi-Salafism, the "apolitical" trend can be traced to Europe, as many foreign students who studied at institutions such as Medina's Islamic University, or other Islamic universities in Saudi Arabia, brought the Madhkali trend back to countries like France and the Netherlands. As Adraoui shows, it is this form of "apolitical", quietist Salafism that has inspired French Salafists to take the step of rejecting the legitimacy of the French state, Republicanism and the rights they have as citizens, such as taking part in elections. As an alternative, Salafism provides them with a new identification with Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states.

How difficult it has been to keep the lid on the central Wahhabi paradox is clear from the effects of the fallout of the decision to allow Americans to station troops on holy soil in 1990.<sup>43</sup> Whereas the Saudi state promoted Salafism worldwide with the intention of using it against Shi'ism in the 1980s and increasing its influence<sup>44</sup> through the expansion of student stipends and the

<sup>42</sup> See also Wiktorowicz for the diversity of trends leading from al-Albani, even leading to violent forms of Salafism as propounded by Abu Qatada. 'Anatomy of the Salafi Movement', p. 213.

<sup>43</sup> See for the analysis of this event and the effect it has had on the rise of religious opposition: Stéphane Lacroix and Thomas Hegghammer, *Saudi Arabia Background: Who are the Islamists?* International Crisis Group Middle East Report no. 31, Amman/Riyadh/Brussels, 21 September 2004.

<sup>44</sup> Gilles Kepel, *The War for the Muslim Mind: Islam and the West*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004, pp. 152–96.

global media, this process has been hard to control, and the Gulf War in 1990–1991 has shown how its transnationalisation can backfire. As a result, the decision of the Saudi government to welcome American troops did not only damage Saudi Arabia itself, shattering its self-righteousness and provoking internal opposition in the form of the *Sahwa* movement,<sup>45</sup> it also had a devastating effect on the countries where Salafism had taken root, as several contributors to this volume make clear. Exposing its contradictions, international Salafism had to adopt a position in favour or against this decision and everywhere the battles raging inside Saudi Arabia were replayed elsewhere. Noorhaidi has analysed how in Indonesia the struggle between *da'wa salafiyya* and the *da'wa hizbiyya* turned into a vicious struggle between the so-called “*Sururis*” (the followers of Muhammad ibn Surur Zayn al-'Abidin, who was critical of the American presence on holy soil) and the “non-*Sururis*”.<sup>46</sup> In chapter 17, Sadek Hamid analyses how in Great Britain the JIMAS split into different groups, one, supporting the *Sahwa* movement in Saudi Arabia, vilified by its detractors as “Harakeyoon” “Kharijites”, or “Qutbists”, while the more pure, “unadulterated” Salafis supporting the Saudi government, were derogatorily labelled the “Super Salafis” for their self-righteousness. These examples make clear how politics has fragmented the Salafist movement. It even had effect in Bale in the internal power struggle between the generations, as Østebø makes clear.

Crucial for the emergence of the political dimension of Salafism and the heightened tension within the movement, has been the problematic relationship with the Muslim Brotherhood on account of its more flexible, pragmatic, and political approach, which is also much more attuned to local cultural traits (usually reflected in its acceptance of Sufism) and nationalist causes. The rule of thumb is that where nationalist causes are dominant, such as in Palestine, or ethnic strife is strong, as is the case in Bale in Ethiopia, or politics has been more evolved, such as Egypt, the Brotherhood will be dominant, whereas Salafism, for its deterritorialised, deculturised, and apolitical character will be prevalent in an environment where these issues are non-existent, have not evolved or have failed, and where the population is devastated and radicalised

<sup>45</sup> See for more on the *Sahwa* movement: Mamoun Fandi, *Saudi Arabia and the Politics of Dissent*, New York: Palgrave, 2001; and the way Saudi Arabia got caught up in the problems of its making, Gilles Kepel; *The War for the Muslim Mind: Islam and the West*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004, pp. 152–96.

<sup>46</sup> For more on Muhammad ibn Surur Zayn al-'Abidin, see the section on Salafi biographies at the end of the book.

as in Algeria in the 1990s,<sup>47</sup> Chechnya during the second war,<sup>48</sup> or Iraq after the American invasion.<sup>49</sup> In these last three cases, Jihadi-Salafism transplanted political Salafism. This shows that where politics has evolved as a form of contention, as in Egypt, Salafism is also not very strong. In these circumstances the Muslim Brotherhood has better cards. For while the Brotherhood (and its offshoots like Hamas) has been looked down upon as shallow, misguided, and deviant (*munharif*) by Salafism for its emphasis on politics at the expense of *'aqida* and religious knowledge (*'ilm*), it is worldwide a more powerful force than Salafism. As a result the relationship between the two is highly complex. Not only is the Brotherhood regarded as an external enemy, but it is also feared as a direct challenge that brings out the tensions and paradoxes within the Salafi movement itself in its attitude towards politics. In many cases, the simple fact that the Muslim Brotherhood exists and is highly active and as such is a competitor for people, resources and influence, forces the Salafis, despite themselves, to take sides and formulate political views. The relations are all the more tense as Salafis and the Muslim Brotherhood formed coalitions in the past to oppose their common enemy. In Saudi Arabia, in the 1950s and 1960s, they found each other in opposing Nasser; in Indonesia in the 1980s and 1990s they shouldered the opposition against the New Order of Suharto, organising shared study groups under the term "Salafi *'aqida*, Brotherhood *manhaj*"; in the Sudan, Noah Salomon shows in chapter 6, the Salafists and the Muslim Brotherhood have in recent times joined a common front despite their significant doctrinal differences. Some thinkers such as Muham-

<sup>47</sup> See on the transformation of Algeria into "a land of the infidels" and the sanction of large scale massacres among the population, based on an utopian, non-political terminology derived from Salafism: Luis Martinez, 'The Distinctive Development of Islamist Violence in Algeria', in Amélie Blom, et.al, *The Enigma of Islamist Violence*, London: Hurst & Company, pp. 121–35, and Muhammad M. Hafez, 'From Marginalization to Massacres: A Political Process Explanation of GIA Violence in Algeria', in Quintan Wiktorowicz (ed.), *Islamic Activism: A Social Movement Theory Approach*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004, pp. 37–60.

<sup>48</sup> Jihadi-Salafism only gained ground in Chechnya after the devastation of the first war from 1994 to 1996, see James Hughes, *Chechnya: From Nationalism to Jihad*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007.

<sup>49</sup> *In Their Own Words: Reading the Iraqi Insurgency*, International Crisis Group Middle East Report, no. 59, 15 February 2006; Mohammed M. Hafez, *Suicide Bombers in Iraq: The Strategy and Ideology of Martyrdom*, Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 2007. Some groups with a more political inclination combined a Salafi ideology with nationalism and even Baathism, see Roel Meijer, 'Muslim Politics under Occupation: The Association of Muslim Scholars and the Politics of Resistance in Iraq', *Arab Studies Journal*, vol. 13 and 14, nos. 2 and 1 (Fall 2005–Spring 2006), pp. 92–112.



mad ibn Surur Zayn al-'Abidin, or 'Abd al-Rahman 'Abd al-Khaliq in Kuwait took this opportunity to try to build bridges between the two movements and combine Brotherhood activism with the Salafi emphasis on doctrine. Bernard Haykel mentions this influence as the source of hybridity of Salafism. But it is clear from the vehement attacks on thinkers who have tried to combine the two that it has evoked tremendous opposition.

The manner in which Salafism has coped with politics also depends on the quality of its leaders. In Yemen, as Laurent Bonnefoy shows, the Salafi establishment Muqbil Hadi al-Wadi'i founded was careful to maintain good relations with the state and led to a typical situation where he claimed to be neutral and apolitical, but in fact supported the state by, for instance, not taking part in elections, working with the state against common enemies, such as the Yemeni Muslim Brotherhood or militant Zaydi groups. At the same time, Muqbil Hadi al-Wadi'i was clever enough to express his political views when they were called for, such as condemning Ibn Baz for issuing the *fatwa* in 1990 as a means to protect Salafism from the political fallout, while at the same time, condemning the *Sahwa* movement in Saudi Arabia for its overt political involvement, or *hizbiyya*. Not all Salafi movements have been so adept in combining covert and overt politics and defusing the inherent tension in Salafism. The most spectacular example of the tension between the ideal of spreading *da'wa* and the temptation of politics is Indonesia, where Ja'far 'Umar Thalib had for a long time proclaimed to lead a pious, apolitical movement that condemned other currents for their *da'wa hizbiyya*. This stance backfired once the Suharto regime fell and the movement was forced to manifest itself in competition with other movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood and organise mass meetings. It was heavily discredited when it became involved in *jihad*. In Palestine, Salafism has fared even worse, as Hroub shows in chapter 8. By staying close to the original doctrine and concentrating on *da'wa*, the Salafi movement was unable to ensconce itself within the dominant struggle for national liberation and acquire a position in the competition between Fatah and the religious-nationalist Hamas movement (in fact a transformed Muslim Brotherhood). On the other hand, as Bernard Rougier shows for the Palestinian camps in Lebanon, where the nationalist struggle has failed, de-territorialised Salafism, with its stress on the *ummah*, can be successful if it is linked to a transnational struggle.<sup>50</sup> In the Sudan the Ansar al-Sunna

<sup>50</sup> Bernard Rougier, *Every Day Jihad: The Rise of Militant Islam among Palestinians in Lebanon*, (translated by Pascale Ghazaleh), Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007.

al-Muhammadiyya adopted a halfway position as a way out of the basic dilemma of remaining apolitical in a contentious world. In fact, it seems to have cleverly taken advantage of the denouement of the NIF, not rejecting politics completely, as the other wing of the Ansar al-Sunna had done, but rather, under influence of Salafi/Brotherhood thinkers such as ‘Abd al-Rahman ‘Abd al-Khaliq, tried to incorporate politics and subsume it under its activities of *da’wa*. In this way the Ansar al-Sunna al-Muhammadiyya has given the non-political doctrinal terms such as the purification (*tasfiya*) of society by first purifying (*tazkiya*) doctrines, as al-Albani advocated, a political connotation. Thus, like the Muslim Brotherhood, it strives for the Islamic state, but, unlike its competitor, it regards the acceptance of the correct creed (*‘aqida sahiha*) as a precondition for its establishment. The semi-Salafi Jama’a al-Islamiyya was able to adjust itself as well to changing circumstances, revising its previous rejectionist interpretation of *hisba* to a more accommodating form after it had been defeated by the state.

### Jihadi-Salafism

The problematic interaction of Salafism with the real world and politics has been compounded by its relationship with violence. Logically, violence stems from the same rejection of reality as corrupt and corrupting because it leads to compromises in doctrine (*‘aqida*) and practice (*manhaj*) that lie at the basis of apolitical Salafism. Ironically, Jihadi-Salafism, usually regarded as its most retrograde form, is Salafism’s most modern manifestation, as we have seen above in the reinterpretation of Wahhabism by ideologues such as Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi and Abu Mus’ab al-Zarqawi. The main difference with mainstream Salafism is that, Jihadi-Salafism is primarily concerned with the analysis of reality (*waqi’*) and changing that reality. In contrast to mainstream Salafism, whose creed (*‘aqida*) is based on the basic principles of Wahhabism (*tawhid*, *shirk*, etc), and whose practice and method (*manhaj*) is largely related to avoiding reality and separating oneself from that reality and avoiding politics, Jihadi-Salafism concentrates on the analysis of political reality, devising strategies and practices for how to change it, and applying them (*tatbiq*) to different situations and circumstances. In return, also, its *‘aqida* is transformed into being fully geared to *jihad*.<sup>51</sup> Jihadi-Salafism probably found its original

<sup>51</sup> See Roel Meijer, ‘Yusuf al-‘Uyairi and the Making of a Revolutionary Salafi Praxis’, *Die Welt des Islams*, Vol. 47, nos. 3–4 (2007), pp. 422–59, and ‘Yusuf al-Uyairi and the

inspiration from Sayyid Qutb (1906–66), whose ideas on pre-Islamic society (*jahiliyya*) and sovereignty of God (*hakimiyya*), coincide with those of Salafism, but are much more highly politicised.<sup>52</sup> Yusuf al-‘Uyairi, is a good example of a contemporary *jihadi* who combined the Salafi terminology of *tawhid*, purification (*tazkiya*), and pure intention (*niyya*), with a sharp and ruthless analysis of reality, geared to the implementation (*tatbiq*) of a *jihadi* strategy, thus producing a Salafist activist concept of praxis that is comparable to Leninism. Revolutionaries, like Abu Mus‘ab al-Suri, seemed to realise this necessary ideological contribution of Salafism, despite his irritation with its tendency towards doctrinal bickering, as Brynjar Lia explains in chapter 12. In genealogical terms, al-Suri branches off from ideologues like al-Uyairi or al-Maqdisi, who legitimise *jihad* as an ideology within the boundaries of Wahhabism, into a secularised, political *jihad* without the religious paraphernalia, geared to fighting the enemy by the most efficient means. Needless to say, if Salafism empowers individuals with feelings of superiority, Jihadi-Salafism empowers them even more as it makes greater demands on its adherents. Because in its popular, non-intellectual forms its propaganda is widely available in sound bites, video clips and translated texts on the internet, and its importance is proportionally exaggerated by Western politicians and intelligence agencies, it can feed the frustrations of youth in the West and the East, focus them and allow them to become heroes as *mujahidin* and martyrs.<sup>53</sup>

How modern this type of Salafism is and how far it is removed from the cautious, pietistic Salafism of Nasir al-Din al-Albani and Muqbil Hadi al-Wadi‘i—although we have seen there are links—is clear from Al-Rasheed’s analysis of the jihadis in chapter 13. She argues that Jihadi-Salafism has as much to do with the West as with Salafism or religion in general. In her words it is “a hybrid construction deeply rooted in the last three decades of the twen-

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Transnationalisation of Saudi Jihadism’, in Madawi Al-Rasheed (ed.) *Kingdom without Borders*, Hurst & Co, 2008, pp. 221–43.

<sup>52</sup> See for more on Sayyid Qutb, Leonard Binder, ‘The Religious Aesthetics of Sayyid Qutb: A Non-Scriptural Fundamentalism’, in his *Islamic Liberalism: A Critique of Development Ideologies*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988, pp. 170–205; and Roxanne L. Euben, *Enemy in the Mirror: Islamic Fundamentalism and the Limit of Modern Rationalism: A Work of Comparative Political Theory*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999.

<sup>53</sup> See for an excellent analysis of Salafism and radicalisation in Europe: Samir Amghar, ‘Salafism and Radicalisation of Young European Muslims’, in Samir Amghar, Amel Boubekur, Michael Emerson (eds) *European Islam: Challenges for Public Policy and Society*, Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies, 2007, pp. 38–51.

tieth century that is desperate to anchor itself in an authentic Islamic tradition, yet reflecting serious borrowing from the discourse of Western modernity". She argues that it is precisely the *mimicry* of the West which the Jihadis want simultaneously to become part of and reject that accounts for their violence. Like any other modern identity it can be adopted and shed and people have reinvented themselves from pietistic Salafis to Jihadis and vice versa. They are transnational like modern capitalist markets, and promote a Western idea of changing the world by action, and like the West they promote a subjective experience of the world and a privatisation of pleasure and pain, loss and gain, and wealth and poverty, to improve life, spread prosperity, and dominate as a world system. Saudi intellectuals such as Lewis 'Atiyat Allah have given old-fashioned anti-imperialism wings to Salafism by linking the rejection of the West with the notion of purity and sacredness of the land of the two holy shrines (*bilad al-haramayn*). The modernist embrace of chaos and dissent, so abhorrent to al-Albani and others, but characteristic as an expression of transition and rebirth, is taken for granted and even welcomed as a means of cleansing and creating a *tabula rasa*. Al Rasheed warns, however, against over-emphasising the importance of these ideologies as a source of violence. Circumstances must explain the appeal Jihadism has in a certain place and time. Recruitment is carried out through friends and connections and not just by reading the internet, which can also be cathartic.

The modern character of Jihadism is also stressed by Paz in chapter 11 in its form of organisation. While the classic organisation of Salafism from medieval times is the informal scholar-student relationship and the regional network of scholars, Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi and al-'Uyairi use the internet to create what Paz calls "the Open University for *Jihad* Studies", creating a "virtual community" of brothers devoted to global *jihad*. The use of the internet also has consequences for the content of their message. Living in a virtual and paranoid world, Jihadis plunder the Salafi terminological toolkit of intolerance, xenophobia, sectarianism, and violence, turning them into a terminology supporting total war against apostate governments and unbelieving forces of global oppression with which Islam is locked in a apocalyptic clash of civilisations. However, Paz at the same time points out the paradoxes of Jihadism. Whereas public debates in the Arab world are suppressed or highly controlled, the open character of the Jihadi sites has led to a pluralism that is rare in the region.

But if Salafism can harbour such extremes, the question which Hegghammer poses in chapter 10 is more than justified. What is the use of the term

Salafism if it can harbour such quietist tendencies as those of Nasir al-Din al-Albani and Muqbil Hadi al-Wadi'i on the one hand, and radical activists such as Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, or terrorists like Abu Yahya al-Libi, on the other hand? Hegghammer raises additional questions to make the link even more problematic. Can the term Jihadi-Salafism apply to all these diverse groups? For instance, what is the term *takfiri* worth as an analytical tool if it is a label and not a self-appellation? And what is the use of Salafism when it is often only used to denote the authenticity of the ideology propounded or the person active in *jihad*? The major problem, as Hegghammer points out, is that "the term Salafism [...] is a *theological*, not a political category." As such, he quite rightly argues that "it says very little about the political preferences of the actors described as Salafists". The problem is compounded when Salafism is related to *jihad* in Jihadi-Salafism. Hegghammer proposes a new model based on analytical categories to end the present confusion and at least acquire some insight into the *political* distinctions between the different groups as far as their political programme is concerned. The main religious category he uses is Islamism, doing away with the term Salafism. In a sense this is the ultimate answer to solving the riddle of the relationship between Salafism and violence. He argues that Salafism is so diverse and so mixed up with other currents and elements that it is not useful for understanding the sources of violence. On the other hand, he gives up the search for the genealogy of the different currents in Salafism and how they have managed to put together their own doctrine and practices. For instance, in Hegghammer's useful model of categorisation of political activity, Salafism, due to its puritanical imprint and piety, has more affinity with the last three categories: *umma*-oriented (Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi), morality-oriented (the semi-Salafi Egyptian al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya) and sectarian (Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi) than with the more politically developed and nationalistic orientations focused on the state and the nation, which are more easily claimed by the Muslim Brotherhood or movements associated with it, such as Hamas (chapter 9), or influenced by it, such as the *Sahwa* in Saudi Arabia, as has already been pointed out above.

### The local and the global

As we have seen above, Salafism is certainly not a unified movement. We can speak of genealogies of different currents within Salafism, each with its own historical trajectory and combination of local and transnational networks. In this volume the most conspicuous transnational network is the one that starts

out with Nasir al-Din al-Albani and Muqbil Hadi al-Wadi'i, is institutionalised by the Madkhalis in Saudi Arabia, and in one remove to Yemen by Muqbil al-Wadi'i. Later it branches out to the groups of Salafis around Ja'far 'Umar Thalib in Indonesia in one direction, Bale in Ethiopia in another direction and French Salafis in a third direction. Official institutions such as the Islamic University in Medina and Muqbil's institute in Yemen play a role, but also networks of scholars and, in Indonesia, *pesantren* (religious school/*madrasa*). Not all of these networks flow in one direction. Abou Zahab shows that the Ahl-e Hadith has influenced the Salafi movement. Another network is that of the Ansar al-Sunna al-Muhammadiyah. Although this movement is only analysed by Salomon in chapter 6, it pops up in Egyptian history in the 1930s, in Saudi Arabia in relation to Juhayman al-'Utaybi, and then finally in the Sudan. Such genealogies can also be made for the Ahl-e Hadith as well as all the violent networks dealt with in this volume. It is important to trace the manner in which these networks change over time, how they adapt to their circumstances and what influences they exert on their environment.

The extent to which Salafism has become a global affair and can be seen as a global movement is clear by the early 1990s after the mufti of Saudi Arabia, Ibn Baz, issued his *fatwa* condoning the stationing of American troops in Saudi Arabia in 1990–1991. Not only did the shock-waves of the ensuing crisis reverberate throughout the Salafi transnational networks—in all their different forms (from the Ahl al-Sunna in Bale, to the Ahl-e Hadith in Pakistan, to the Salafis organised in JIMES in Great Britain, and those in Indonesia); but it is clear that underneath these broad transnational developments, Salafism has also had to cope with local circumstances, adapting to them—and sometimes succumbing to them. Adraoui shows in chapter 16 that in France Salafism has adopted a postmodern attitude towards capitalism, individualism, marketing and the acceptance of material success. De Koning in chapter 18 shows how in the Netherlands Salafi women try to find a modern identity that is neither Dutch nor traditional Moroccan. In Yemen, where there exists a rivalry with Saudi Arabia, Bonnefoy shows how the success of Muqbil al-Wadi'i was linked to his capability of remaining independent from Saudi Arabia. In Egypt, the Jama'a al-Islamiyya was able to successfully harness a Salafi principle such as *hisba* to its activist social revolutionary programme. And in Iraq, Zarqawi was able successfully to mobilise the sectarian dimension of Salafism and play on the sectarian divides to widen the gulf between Sunnis and Shi'as in the special circumstances of the American invasion and the ensuing civil war.

## INTRODUCTION

Local circumstances have also clearly hampered the development of some movements. Hroub has shown that in the West Bank and Gaza Salafism has not been able to make any inroads on the dominant position of Hamas. In Bale, ethno-national or religio-nationalist forces have prevented the younger generation of Salafis from prevailing. In Afghanistan, as Lia has shown, the rigidity of Salafism greatly damaged its prospects in a traditional environment. It appears that where either the population is still strongly embedded in local practices and individualisation has not evolved sufficiently, or where an ethnic-nationalist struggle is prominent, transnational Salafism is unable to take root. It can only succeed in making inroads when its quietist current can find a niche or the nationalist movement has failed and the national struggle can be linked with a larger global struggle, or it fits into the politics of identity in Western Europe.

The contributions in this volume make clear that the more global Salafism becomes, the more diverse, contradictory, ambivalent, and fragmented it appears to be in its local variations. It is abundantly clear that neither states, nor in fact Salafist schools themselves, are able to control the general flow of people, goods and information, and even the different currents of Salafism—due to the diversity of books, videos, tapes, let alone what television has to offer in the form of shows. Ideologically, it may mix with the ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood or not. In Egypt, in the 1980s and early 1990s, the Jama'a al-Islamiyya blended Qutbism with Salafism, while in Saudi Arabia Muhammad Surur blended Salafism with the ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood. In Iraq Zarqawi has gone his own way and the Association of Muslim Scholars has been able to devise an ideology that blends Arab nationalism, political and Jihadi-Salafism. In parts of the world where the authority of figures and institutions that try to maintain an “orthodox” view is weak, such as Great Britain, as Sadek Hamid demonstrates, some have recently even tried to combine Salafism with its arch-enemy, Sufism, very much in the way many of the Indian reformist currents have done.

In this sense Salafism's strong points, such as clarity, empowerment, quietism, activism, and universalism are undermined by its countervailing forces: rigidity, fragmentation, political dissolution and localism. As it is being reduced to a toolbox, it will increasingly be hijacked by other issues, such as the politics of identity in Europe, the anti-imperialist movement in the Middle East and Asia and sectarianism in countries like Iraq and Lebanon.



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