



## **A Profile of Religious Fundamentalism and Terrorist Activism**

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**Abstract:** *Religious fundamentalism and Islamic activism in general aren't necessarily related to violent or even terrorist activism. This article provides a conceptual and descriptive clarification of the notion of jihadism by presenting 13 definitional features. These features help to identify the subtle varieties between different forms of Islamic activism. The article provides no new empirical findings but rather compiles crucial contributions from the vast literature on the topic.*

**Keywords:** *Religious fundamentalism, Jihadism, Islamic activism, terrorism.*

### **Introduction**

Contemporary terrorism is often equated with religious terrorism, and more so with Islam. The image of an "Islamic danger" emerged, because jihadi violence is no longer confined to countries in the Middle East but, also, poses a threat to the domestic security of Western states. Like all stereotypes, the image of so-called "Islamic terrorism" helps to heuristically cope with a complex subject. Such mental shortcuts are at the expense of details, subtle relations and broader background, and refer to two complexities that are sometimes poorly understood: terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism. While religious fundamentalism in general isn't necessarily related to violent or even terrorist activism this is the case with jihadism.<sup>1</sup> This article seeks to provide a solid description of jihadi fundamentalism by thoroughly defining the term jihadism.

Jihadism refers to a certain form of Islamic social movement – deterritorialized and loosely connected through an ideology – that employs a heterodox form of jihad as a mean to fight

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<sup>1</sup> Jihadism could likewise be termed jihadi fundamentalism. Both terms are used throughout this text interchangeably. The term jihadism is used within the academic and intelligence community as well as by the press.

secular-democratic influences and to assert fundamentalists beliefs. While the movement's fundamentalist outlook largely derives from Salafism – a pious and purist Islamic denomination – its militant activism roots in the intellectual legacy of certain influential political activists, ideologists and religious scholars such as Sayyid Qutb, Mohammed Faraj, Abdallah Azzam, and more recently Muhammad al-Maqdisi, Yusuf al-Uyayri and many others.<sup>2</sup>

It would be too simplistic to equate jihadism with terrorism but jihadi violence partly is terrorist violence. That makes it descriptive and therefore conceptual understanding even more difficult. Our academic (western-secular) concepts and analytical frameworks such as crime, deviant behavior, terrorism and war do not adequately capture the contemporary social phenomenon of jihadism. Terrorism is said to be the “blurring of the war/crime dichotomy” (Waddington, 2007:4) that exhibits *three anomalies*: it is a) altruistic violence that b) responds to perceived injustice by applying collective liability (Black 2004:10), and it is c) countered through a mix of criminal justice and war like measures (Pedahzur/Ranstorp, 2001) although it is neither genuine crime nor genuine military aggression.

In this article jihadism is characterized and defined in regard to three constitutive dimensions: It is “Islamic activism” (*activist dimension*) but it is different from other forms of Islamic activism (namely political Islam, Islamic nationalism and mainstream fundamentalism) in that jihadism has developed a doctrine that is different from orthodox judicial interpretations of jihad (*discursive dimension*), and it continues the long history of jihad-warfare, however in an unprecedented manner that takes the form of a new type of conflict that is neither genuine crime nor genuine nor war (*military dimension*).

According to these three dimensions, part 1 describes and compares jihadism with other forms of Islamic activism to highlight their differences and similarities. Part 2 singles out jihadists' unique and novel interpretation of the religious concept of jihad and compares it to the dogmatic conception of jihad as it is stipulated in Islamic international law [siyar]. Beyond the comparison of these competing jihad-dogmata (in part 2.3), part 3 shows how contemporary global jihad is different from historical occurrences of jihad as a state-doctrine in foreign policy. Thereby thirteen definitional features of jihadism are compiled into a profile of jihadism (see figure 2 at the end of the article).

The compilation of these definitional features is the result of a meta-review of appropriate literature from various disciplines (Islamic and oriental studies, sociology, terrorist studies). This article shall condense and systemize some of the contributions of knowledgeable authors in the field, to propose a conceptual rather than an anecdotal and narrative definition of jihadism.

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<sup>2</sup> For a comprehensive overview of influential jihadi ideologues see the militant ideology atlas (McCants 2006).

	Islamism	Islamic Nationalism	Salafi Fundamentalism		
			apolitical	dissident	jihadi
Roy (1994, 2004)	political Islam	Islamic Nationalism	Neofundamentalism/Salafism		
			mainstream	- <sup>3</sup>	jihadi
ICG (2005)	internal jihadi	-political Islamism/political Islamic activism - irredentist jihad	missionary Islamic activism	-	global jihadi
Wiktorowicz (2005)	-	-	Salafism		
			purists	Politicos, dissident ulamas	jihadi
Gerges (2005)	religious nationalism	statist nationalism	-	-	transnational jihadism
Hegghammer /Lacroix (2007)	-	-	rejectionists, Neo-Salafists	reformists Islamism	jihadism
Keppel (2004)	-	-	Salafi pietists	-	Salafi jihadists
Criteria	- capture the nation-state - doctrinaire jihad - takfir-jihad - the near enemy - revolutionary - political sovereignty of god - "the Quran is our constitution"	- laical, secular - religion follows state - political sovereignty of the people - non-revolutionary - desacralization of politics	- apolitical - rejection of the nation state - reform of the soul - political sovereignty of god	- politicized - oppositional - reform of the state and the religious establishment - influenced by Islamism - political sovereignty of god	- abolition of the nation-state - doctrinaire jihad - the near & far enemy - influenced by Islamism/Quibism - political sovereignty of god
Examples	- Muslim Brotherhood (Quitbist branch)	- PLO (Palestine) - Muslim Brotherhood (al-Hudaybi branch) - Pan-Arabism (Nasserism)	- al-Jama'a al-Salafiyya al-Muchtasiba (JSM)	- Al-sahwa al-Islamiyya (Saudi Arabia)	- Al-Qaida and associates

Figure 1: Five forms of Sunni Islamic activism<sup>4</sup> in the terminology used by 6 different authors

<sup>3</sup> The authors do not explicitly speak about this form of Islamic activism.

<sup>4</sup> Islamic activism is defined as "the active assertion and promotion of beliefs, prescriptions, laws, or policies that are held to be Islamic in character." (ICG 2005:1)

### Jihadism in the Universe of Islamic Activism

The International Crisis Group (ICG) reasonably defines Islamic activism as: “the active assertion and promotion of beliefs, prescriptions, laws, or policies that are held to be Islamic in character.” (2005:1). Literature distinguishes three kinds of Islamic activism (Islamism<sup>5</sup>, Islamic nationalism, and Islamic fundamentalism) whereby fundamentalism is subdivided into apolitical, dissident, and jihadi. Mapping the different manifestations of Islamic activism and highlighting jihadi fundamentalism (jihadism) as one of its manifestations, is the concern of this section. Figure 1 illustrates this division and shall help to navigate through part 1.

Jihadism has to be carefully distinguished from other forms of Islamic activism. It has its own set of doctrines and concepts of how to react to the perceived malaise of the Muslim world. Different authors use different expressions when they refer to the same kinds of Islamic activism: In his two famous books “Globalised Islam” and “The failure of political Islam” Oliver Roy distinguishes three kinds of Islamic activism: Islamism (also called political Islam), Islamic nationalism, and neofundamentalism (subdivided into mainstream and jihadi).<sup>6</sup> Roy’s categorization encompasses the whole spectrum of Islamic activism<sup>7</sup>, while other authors focus on specific manifestations. Accordingly, the top line of Figure 1 is based on Roy’s typology. It is the encompassing framework under which the terminology of six authors is subsumed. A clarification and explanation of these terms highlights jihadism (right column) as a distinct entity in the universe of Islamic activism.

The International Crisis Group (ICG 2005) distinguishes five types of Sunni Islamic activism: Political Islamism, missionary Islamic activism and jihadi activism, the latter can be internal, global or irredentist. In the context of Salafism (which Roy labels ‘neofundamentalism’) social scientist Quintan Wiktorowicz has identified purists, politicians and jihadis (rejectionists, reformists and jihadi according to Hegghammer/Lacroix in the context of Saudi Arabia). The Middle East expert Fawaz Gerges uses the terms religious nationalists and transnational jihadis when talking about Islamism and jihadi Salafism. Gilles Kepel, focusing on the Wahabi context in Saudi Arabia, speaks about Salafi pietists and jihadists.

Despite considerable confusion in the usage of the words Islamism and Islamic fundamentalism<sup>8</sup> concerning the question as to whether these words connote the same or different

<sup>5</sup> Apparently, there is some confusion about the term Islamism. Many authors use “Islamism” synonymously with “Islamic activism”.<sup>5</sup> Throughout this paper the term ‘Islamism’ is used synonymously with ‘political Islam’ which is a subset of the broader, capacious term of ‘Islamic activism’.

<sup>6</sup> Such categorizations are more heuristically than are empirically validated, e.g. concerning internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity (Roy 2004:21). It should be noted that these are diachronic categories which represent different stages of the transformation-process from *Islamism* (political Islam) to *post-Islamism* (Islamic nationalism and Neofundamentalism/Salafism). Despite the importance of Roy’s thesis the transformation-process is not the subject of this paper.

<sup>7</sup> Roy elaborates these categories in his books “Globalised Islam” (2004) and “The failure of political Islam” (1994). The terms are dealt with on the following pages in the original text sources: *Islamism*, (2004) pages 1-4, 21, 40, 58-92, 99, 245-254; (1994) pages 35-60, 75; *Nationalism*: (2004) pages 62-67, 315; *Neofundamentalism (mainstream)*: (2004): 232-257, (1994) pages 60-75; *Neofundamentalism (jihadi)*: (2004) pages 41f, 234, 244, 250, 254-257.

<sup>8</sup> See e.g. Kramer 2003.

social phenomena, this article make an analytical distinction between the two: Islamism utilizes political mechanisms that allow for the exercise of power such as political dialogue, lobbying, or the foundations of parties. Political participation is considered legitimate as long as it is beneficial for the Islamist's agenda (that can indeed contain fundamentalist issues). Fundamentalists, in contrast, might follow a very similar agenda but abstain from and condemn political participation. They indeed offer an alternative societal concept concerning goals and means.

### Islamism/Political Islam

When comparing Islamism (Figure 1, 1<sup>st</sup> column) and jihadism (5<sup>th</sup> column) several similarities appear, such as their disappointment about 'apostate' Muslim regimes, resentment towards Western influences and their doctrinaire-revolutionary conception of jihad. Despite their affinity it is justified to draw a distinction between both forms of activism because jihadi fundamentalists reject the idea of utilizing state institutions and politics as a tool to Islamize society (unlike political Islamists) and they have expanded their domestic struggle (internal jihad against the near enemy) to a transnational level (jihad against the far enemy) as a result of strategic considerations.

Many of the Muslim countries in the Middle East fit the description of authoritarian or single party systems. However, it is not the lack of democratic principles that Islamists criticize. Rather, their movements criticize these regimes to be un-Islamic since they fail to comprehensively implement Sharia law in the domestic legislation. Islamists witness the growth of cultural and social pluralism and consequently consider the Muslim society to be going astray. They use the word *jahiliyya*<sup>9</sup> to describe the societal status quo, a truly negatively connoted term that refers to the pre-Islamic era in which war, hatred and chaos ruled. The corrupt and dependent state power is considered to be the cause for this profane and secular situation. Consequently Islamists oppose and try to overthrow most regimes in the Middle East through oppositional activities (e.g. education, propagation, political mobilization, and sometimes through political violence).

### Capture the State vs. Abolish the State

This is what distinguishes political Islam from the global Salafi jihadism: Islamists try to capture the nation-state alongside with all its institutions through which political power can be exercised, police, military, schools and universities, legislative and judiciary bodies and so on. In this way Islam shall be promoted and asserted top down via the nation state. The Muslim Brotherhood's<sup>10</sup> slogan "The Quran is our constitution" is illustrative for the *sympiosis of religion, politics and state*.<sup>11</sup> Contrarily, Salafists try to abandon all man-made political institutions, the nation state and

<sup>9</sup> The Muslim Brother ideologue Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966) re-used the term jahiliyya [ignorance] to describe of the societal situation of Egypt in the 1950s.

<sup>10</sup> The Muslim Brotherhood – founded 1928 in Egypt by Hassan al-Banna – is the prototype of Islamist movements. Note that today the MB is not considered a revolutionary movement anymore since it has subscribed to democratic principles and abstains from the use of violence. However, there might be a fine line between political activism and subversion.

<sup>11</sup> Therefore, Juergensmeyer (1994, 1996) as well as Gerges (2005:43ff) appropriately call Islamism *religious nationalism*. Religious nationalism is not to be confused with secular Islamic nationalism in which politics and religion are separated (compare second and third column in table 1).

“the Western Westphalian order in world politics” (Tibi 2008:112) altogether. A leading Salafi hadith scholar – Shaykh Nasir al-Din al-Albani – repeatedly stated: “the good policy is to abandon politics” (Lacroix 2008:6). For the Salafi movement the administrative entity is not the state (especially contemporary nation states with their foreign made borders) but, more vaguely, the Muslim collective (the ummah).

### *Jihad Against the Near Enemy vs. Jihad Against the Far Enemy*

The second point of distinction between global jihadists and Islamists is in their scope of jihad. It is quite natural that the revolutionary aspirations of the Islamists have often resulted in violent conflicts with the state power. Activists design this conflict as a jihad. In this regard Sayyid Qutb (in the 1950’s) introduced very appealing thoughts to the Egyptian context by arguing that Muslim rulers can be the legitimate target of jihad if it is proven that these rulers are in fact apostates and renegades who have betrayed Islam.<sup>12</sup> Various Islamist movements have utilized Qutb’s doctrine to legitimize their *jihad against the near enemy* (internal jihad against the state power). One arena of such conflict is Egypt (Sadat’s assassination 1981 and a jihadi terrorist campaign of Jama’a al-Islamiyya in the 1990’s).

In contrast global jihadists have made a strategic shift. Many members of the global jihadi movement are former domestic Islamists who experienced merciless repression during their revolution at home. Their experience and their strategic reasoning holds that the jihad against the near enemy cannot be won as long as the Arab regimes are supported by the US. Consequently they target the far enemy (the US and its allies) to address the alleged root causes for the Muslim malaise and jahiliyya. In the groundbreaking manifest “Knight’s under the prophet’s banner” published in 2001, Ayman al-Zawahiri details the strategic shift from the near to the far enemy.

In his analysis “The failure of political Islam”, Roy (1994) argues that the era of Islamism has ended after its revolutions were unsuccessful (except for the Shiite context in Iran). Today’s situation (post-Islamism) shows that the former activists either started to be secular nationalists or took a fundamentalist outlook refraining from any political participation. “The Islamist myth was that of the unification of the religious and the political; post-Islamism means that both spheres are autonomous.” (Roy 2004:3).

### *Islamic Nationalism*

Another type of Islamic activism is Islamic nationalism<sup>13</sup> (Figure 1, 2<sup>nd</sup> column). Unlike political Islamism, Islamic nationalism shows little or no revolutionary momentum. Their movements and

<sup>12</sup> Qutb uses to the takfir doctrine, which is the Islamic practice of denouncing people as infidels and which includes the excommunication of Muslims. Since this practice is about the question ‘who is a Muslim, and who is not’ it is very contentious in Islam. In Islamic history takfir has been applied in several contexts not only to stigmatize rulers who are too profane but also to “denounce entire populations as apostates” (Phares 2007). Qutb borrowed main ideas from the prominent scholar Ibn Taymiyya (1263-1328), who first codified takfir in order denounce unpopular Muslim rulers of his time (namely the Mongolians who converted to Islam after their intrusion into Muslim territory).

<sup>13</sup> What the ICG describes as *political Islamic activism* and *political Islamism* is what Roy names

parties are acting entirely secularly but with an Islamic agenda. Nationalist activists try to “assert Islamic beliefs, prescriptions and laws” through political participation. Their primate is their state not the religion.

### ***Political Sovereignty of People vs. Political Sovereignty of God***

The differences between jihadi movements are apparent. *Salafi Jihadists reject the nation state while Islamic nationalists embody the nation state*. Nationalists believe in the political sovereignty of people (not necessarily through democracy); Islamists, and especially Salafists, believe in the sovereignty of God.

Tellingly, when Hamas (the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood), participated and succeeded in the 2006 election, the al-Qaeda official Ayman al-Zawahiri condemned their participation in the election exactly because the Salafiyya jihadiyya feared Hamas’ transformation from a religious-revolutionary to a nationalist movement:

How come they did not demand an Islamic constitution for Palestine before entering any elections? Are they not an Islamic movement? [. . .] Accepting the legitimacy of Mahmoud Abbas [. . .] is an abyss that will ultimately lead to eliminating the jihad and recognizing Israel.<sup>14</sup>

At a later point Abu Yahya al-Libi joined the dispute:

Those listening to your statements can no longer differentiate between you and secular groups. . . . They [Hamas] betrayed the dreams of their young fighters.<sup>15</sup>

Surprisingly, despite the fundamental differences between nationalists and jihadi Salafists both movements sometimes engage side-by-side in the same conflict namely in irredentist jihads.

### ***Irredentist Jihad vs. “Nomadic Jihad”***

Irredentist jihad is a means to defend the national sovereignty of Muslim nations in case of foreign occupation (e.g. Hamas and Islamic Jihad in Palestine, Muqtada al-Sadr’s Mahdi Army (Shiite) in Iraq). Irredentist jihadists have national interests – often not even considering themselves as jihadists – and have to be distinguished from global Salafi jihadists, who are often involved in the same armed conflicts but with entirely different motivations.<sup>16</sup> Global jihadists see irredentist conflicts as a chance to widen their sway among other non-Salafi Muslims and to engage in jihad against infidels. In the literature the Salafi involvement in irredentist conflicts is called “nomadic jihad” (Roy 1999:7, Wiktorowicz 2001) because some mujahedeen travel from conflict to conflict far away from their homes to engage in jihad.

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*nationalism* (Roy 2005:62). Confusingly, Roy uses the term Islamism/political Islam when referring to what the ICG labels *internal jihadi activism*.

<sup>14</sup> Statement of Ayman al-Zawahiri published December 20<sup>th</sup> 2006. For the entire dispute, see the online article “The war of words between Hamas and al-Qaeda” (Lipton 2007).

<sup>15</sup> Statement of Abu Yahya al-Libi published April 29<sup>th</sup> 2007.

<sup>16</sup> For an insightful article about the Bosnian context see Mitchell 2008, also Cetin 2008.

Quite often, however, they alienate the domestic Muslim population with their austere and anti-nationalist ideas. An example of the strange alliance between nationalists and transnational fundamentalists is the War in Bosnia in which a contingent of foreign Salafī mujahedeen supported the regular Bosnian army. A Bosnian soldier said about his foreign Salafī brothers-in-arms: “They are superb fighters, but you can’t argue with them” (cited in Mitchell 2008:813).

In the Chechen context, the nomadic mujahedeen were even able to change the nature of the conflict. What has started as a secular-irredentist conflict, driven by the demand of a Muslim province for political autonomy from Russia, became a religiously inspired conflict after Salafī jihadists under the leadership of Shamil Basayev and Ibn al-Khattab entered the scene and provoked the second Chechen war by declaring a caliphate in Dagestan.

### *Fundamentalism/Salafism*

Salafism is a very austere and strict Islamic denomination. Their model of society comes from the early Islamic period and the rule of Mohammad and the two following generations of caliphs also called the Rashidun Caliphs or rightly guided caliphs. This kind of Islamic activism can be considered fundamentalist. Like all kinds of religious fundamentalism it is characterized by three features: it strictly opposes the concessions to modernism and secularism made by their moderate brothers-in-faith; it perceives societal pluralism as an existential threat to their religion; it follows a scriptural interpretation of the holy texts to counterweight profane influences. Jihadism clearly has a Salafī dimension. However, the opposite is not true. Salafism cannot be reduced to global jihad and terrorism. Only a small minority within the Salafī community has a jihadi outlook, while the majority abstains from political activism.

Contemporary Salafism (almost indistinguishable from the Saudi Wahabism<sup>17</sup>) are not to be mistaken for the classical Salafīyya (embodied by Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani and Muhammad ‘Abduh at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century) which was an Islamic reform movement.<sup>18</sup> The term neo-Salafism (Figure 1, 3<sup>rd</sup> column) is used by Hegghammer/Lacroix (2007) to name the apolitical and rejectionists branch of Saudi fundamentalists (to be distinguished from the establishment Wahabis on the one hand and the political Salafists, namely the ‘sahwa islamiyya’ on the other hand). Wiktorowicz (2006) distinguishes three major factions within Salafism: purists, politicians and jihadis.

The Salafī movement does not think and act in terms of state-power, nationality or democracy. Adherers perceive such concepts as heretic innovations [bid’ah] and vehemently polemicize against them. A detained member of the Saudi jihadi movement puts it this way:

I read history and did not find something called jinsiyya [nationality]. Each Muslim must operate in Dar al-Islam [Islamic territory] wherever he wants and without borders restraining him or passports confining him and without a taghut watan [despot nation] to worship. [...] I

<sup>17</sup> The term Wahabism has a pejorative connotation and is used by Muslims that are critical towards Salafism rather than by the Salafī movement itself.

<sup>18</sup> For this reason Roy chooses to name contemporary Salafism “neofundamentalism” to avoid confusion with the classical Salafīyya.



do not belong to Al-Saud who have no right to make people belong to them. (al-Shuwayl quoted in al-Rasheed 2008:8)

### ***Mainstream Salafism: Rejectionist and Da'wa***

The activism of (non-jihadi) Islamic fundamentalists (Figure 1, 3<sup>rd</sup> column) is consequently apolitical and is focused on the adherence to licit individual conduct: "Reform of the soul should precede reform of the state. [...] For neofundamentalists the aim of action is salvation, not revolution" (Roy 2004:248). Any political activism is proscribed. Societal change can only permissibly be achieved through propagation [da'wa], purification [tazkiyya], and religious education or cultivation [tarbiya] (Wiktorowicz 2006:217).

In the view of the mainstream Salafis, internal jihad against an unjust Muslim ruler is an illegitimate innovation adopted from the Western model of political participation and political revolution. Those who engage in such activism are driven by political utility and human desire, two bogeys to Salafists. Because purists refuse both, a (corrupt) Muslim government as well as political opposition against it, Hegghammer calls this Salafi current (for the Saudi Arabian context) *rejectionist Islamism* that is "intellectually and organizationally separate from the other and more visible forms of Saudi Islamist opposition such as the so-called "the Awakening" [al-Sahwa] movement or the Bin Laden-style jihadists" (Hegghammer/Lacroix 2007:104).<sup>19</sup> For the rejectionists/purists contemporary engagement in jihad is only permissible for defensive purposes (e.g. irredentist jihad in Afghanistan, Iraq, Bosnia) while an offensive jihad against non-Muslim countries requires the purification of the ummah as well as its reorganization to a caliphate (both criteria are not met nowadays).

In the specific case of Saudi Arabia, the clergy is largely comprised of highly educated establishment (mainstream) Salafis. Most of them hold views that are similar to those of the rejectionists (purists). However, due to their symbiotic relation to the monarchy they do not openly question its legitimacy. The ulamas are a very influential force in the Saudi kingdom, but when it comes to the religious approval of political decisions they often go along with the earthly will of the rulers in order not to jeopardize their own power and influence. Because of these strategic concessions other Salafis pejoratively call them "palace-ulamas" [ulama al Balat], "the scholars of power" [al-ulama al-sulta] or "palace lackeys" (Kepel 204:310; Wiktorowicz 2006:227).

### ***Political and Jihadi Salafism***

Besides the purist or mainstream faction there is a political as well as a jihadi faction of Salafi fundamentalism.<sup>20</sup> (4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> column) The political and jihadi Salafis agree with the knowledgeable purist scholars in many religious regards. However, they do not rely exclusively

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<sup>19</sup> Likewise Wiktorowicz (2006:219): "Purists ardently reject the oppositional (and often violent) method of the politicians and jihadis as religious innovations without precedent in the prophetic model and consensus of the companions."

<sup>20</sup> (Roy 2004: 41f 234, 244, 250; ICC 2005:11, 16; Wiktorowicz 2006:225ff). Another term for the same distinction is given by Kepel who speaks of Salafi pietists compared to Salafi jihadis (2004:308ff).

on non-violent da'wa [propagation] as the only option to defend Islam against profane influences. Politicos and jihadis mainly differ in their readiness to express their opposition by violent means. The politicians, also called "dissident ulamas" (ICG 2005:12), are to a certain degree politicized, mainly through the intellectual and personal influence of the Muslim Brotherhood, who entered the Saudi stage in the 1960's.<sup>21</sup> They criticize the political blindness of the purists, and especially of the Saudi ulamas and claim to have a better understanding of current affairs, notably, that the Muslim regimes appear to be too dependent on the West.

The jihadis exhibit the political disobedience of the politicians in combination with the radical takfir-thinking of the Qutbists. They have adopted the idea that – under contemporary political conditions – jihad has to be an individual obligation [fard 'ayn] because the ruler who solely can declare jihad traditionally (offensive jihad as a collective obligation [fard kifaya]) conspires with the actual enemy of Islam and therefore will not declare jihad against his ally and himself. "This is probably the best criterion with which to draw a line between conservative neofundamentalists and radical ones: the latter are rightly called 'jihadists' by the Pakistani press" (Roy 2004:42).

In this respect, the Qutbist Islamists (1<sup>st</sup> column) and the jihadi Salafis (5<sup>th</sup> column) seem to be one and the same: They share the idea that the corrupt Muslim regimes are the main obstacle on the path to the ideal Islamic society, and they hold the same conception of doctrinal takfir-jihad as a mean of opposition. Nonetheless, two distinctive features separate them. The first is in their conception of the post-conflict society. Islamists would use the captured political institutions and the existing social infrastructure to introduce the Sharia and Islamize the nation that allegedly has been misguided under the despotic regime. Jihadi fundamentalists do not hold such conceptions of societal administration. They would rule the community through propagation (da'wa), purification (tazkiyya), religious education or cultivation (tarbiya) and the direct application of the Sharia, without any concessions to national law, thereby building a full-fledged theocracy (abolish the state). The second difference is in the scope of their militant struggle. Islamists are almost solely concerned with the inner-political situation in their respective countries (the near enemy). Before the political power is not in their hands, other urgent problems of the ummah (e.g. the Palestinian question), they think, cannot be dealt with effectively. Quite contrary, Salafi jihadis have a global outlook beyond the context of certain nation-states.

The universe of Islamic activism is made up of different movements with their corresponding ideologies and worldviews. One of which is jihadism. The above described categorizations are

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<sup>21</sup> Political awareness was introduced to the inherently religious outlook of Saudi clerics in the 1960's when numerous followers of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood fled oppression in their country. Subsequently "they even managed to do the near-impossible – to radicalize the already radical Wahabism" (Fradkin 2008:10f). Sahwa followers, during the 1980's were critical, yet not rebellious towards the Saudi monarchy. Saudi rulers accepted the movement with the ulterior motive to form a counterweight for the oppositional religious propaganda of the rejectionists which were popular among the masses. However, this precarious alliance only lasted until 1990 when establishment ulamas sanctioned the decision to host American forces on Saudi soil. This event was, and still is, a sacrilege for many Salafists. Two prominent leaders of the sahwa, Safar al-Hawali and Salman al-Awdah, were imprisoned between 1994 and 1999 because they exhausted their credit of criticism. At this time many sahwa followers joined Bin Laden's and Zawahiri's call for global jihad in the "Declaration of war against the Americans occupying the land of the two holy places" (Bin Laden 1996).

constructed by experts with a profound knowledge about Islamic societies and their social movements, but who have not always validated their thoughts empirically.<sup>22</sup> Although systematic differences in discourse and social behavior between the specific types of Islamic activism obviously exist these types partly overlap. Roy describes this lack of mutual exclusiveness as “[t]he blurring of the divide between Muslim Brothers, neofundamentalists and conservatives” (Roy 2004:253). The right segment of figure 1 shows six (of thirteen) criteria of jihadism.

### **Jihad in the Book: The Dogmatic Conception of Jihad**

The previous part of this article described different types of Islamic activism to give an impression of its complexity and heterogeneity concerning actors, doctrines, strategies and worldviews. Another criterion of jihadism, which distinguishes it from nonviolent forms of fundamentalism, is its doctrinaire and heterodox conception of jihad. It is central in the ideology of Jihadism and constitutes the primary mean for the activists.<sup>23</sup> This form of jihad, as it was recently invented by Salafi intellectuals and ideologues, is religiously heterodox and has no precedence in the military history of jihad. This section shall give a short overview of jihad “in the book” and its historical manifestations “in action” (part 3) in order to show further distinctive features of contemporary global jihad.

Substantially jihad is a judicial concept that concerns ‘jus in bello’ (conduct within war) and ‘jus ad bellum’ (provisions for the use of armed force). Its textual sources can be found in the Medinan suras of the Quran and in different hadith collections (written tradition of the words and the deeds of the prophet).<sup>24</sup> Through exegesis from these textual sources are derived the legislation of lesser jihad as the Islamic instrument “of governance for war and peace” (Phares 2005:22). A distinction is made by some Muslims between the greater jihad (as practiced by the Sufis) – a spiritual struggle to overcome wrongful human drives and earthly temptations – and the lesser jihad, which is the only legitimate form of warfare in Islamic law. However, the hadith, which favors the greater jihad over the lesser jihad, is considered apocryphical and weak by some

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<sup>22</sup> Christina Hellmich expressed a harsh critique in this regard: “[P]articularly those explanations that seem to have become the official wisdom regarding the fundamental logic of Al Qaeda, Wahabism and the Salafi-Jihadist discourse, are concepts that are poorly understood and subject to much controversy. In the anxious quest to explain Al Qaeda, the terrorism studies community seems to have deviated from the guidelines of academic conduct” (2008:111). Hellmich recommends the analysis of primary data from the Al Qaeda’s inner tiers to reach conceptual clarification of notions of global salafi jihad. Some authors have done so: Brachmann (2009) has extensively reviewed ideological and strategic writings of the global salafi movement. Likewise the 360-page “Militant Ideology Atlas” (McCants 2006) provides a systematic insight into the writings of the jihadi movement. Gerges (2005; 2006) based his contributions on empirical field work and finally the studies of Thomas Hegghammer (for instance 2005) show his detailed knowledge of primary data from al-Qaida.

<sup>23</sup> The Dutch General Intelligence and Security Service (AIVD 2004) describes four different modus operandi of Islamic activism: overt- and covert dawa; overt- and covert jihad. The authors assess the impact of these strategies on the vertical democratic order (between government and citizens) and the horizontal democratic order (between citizens).

<sup>24</sup> In the Arabic language use, ‘jihad’ also connotes ‘effort’ or ‘struggle’ in general without implying a specific religious concept.

Sunni scholars and of course by the jihadi movement. This section exclusively deals with the bellicose conception of jihad.

Jihad is an integral part of Islamic international law [al-siyar], which is a branch of general Islamic jurisprudence and “a fully functional body of the sharia” (Ali/Rehman 2005:323). Siyar regulates the conduct of the Islamic state (the caliphate) when interacting with other “de facto or de jure states” (Hamidullah 1961:3), or with the collective of infidels (kafir) in general. Islamic international law, together with its concept of jihad, has been subject to constant judicial development and adjustment to the socio-political context. “There is very little that is rigid and immutable in Islamic law” (Badr 1982:56, cited in Ali/Rehman 2005:327).

Still, there is no univocal Muslim position on central questions concerning jihad.<sup>25</sup> Different scholars and exegetes treat different aspects they may regard as opportune or believe to be prudent. In particular, the intellectual elite of the jihadi movement have made painstaking efforts to construct jihad-related fatwas that serve their cause. This has challenged more peace loving Muslims to make relative the practice of militant jihad in modernity. As we will see next, the un-contextualized and literal understanding of jihad indeed can lead to a confrontational and militant position towards non-Muslims.

### *Origins of the Jihad-Dogma*

The militant accentuation of jihad in the Medinan suras of the Quran is due to the historical circumstances from which these passages originate.<sup>26</sup> After Mohammed’s emigration from Mecca to Medina in 622 (the hijra), he established the first Islamic nation-like community [al dawla al Islamiyya], which was surrounded and threatened by hostile Bedouin tribes and pagan Mecca. The process of da’wa [propagation, proselytization] was opposed by the non-Muslim environment which demanded the temporary use of force in order to eventually pacify and Islamize the conflict-torn region. “It was at this time that the doctrine of jihad, in the sense of armed conflict, gained currency” (Ali/Rehman 2005:332).<sup>27</sup> Even more detailed is the bellicose description of jihad in numerous hadiths. There is general agreement among scholars that these hadiths are authentic

<sup>25</sup> This juridical pluralism is not restricted to the legal concept of jihad but is omnipresent in Islamic jurisprudence. It is due to what Jackson (2002:34) calls “the problem of free speech”. By this he means that every jurist can have his own position on any legal topic, and as long as he uses the recognized sources and abides by recognized methods of interpretation (as stipulated by *usul-al fiqh* - the sources of knowledge and understanding of the law), his position is equally valid to any other’s. Accordingly, Jackson distinguishes between “an Islamic position” and “the Islamic position” (ibid. p. 34). Only the latter is considered infallible. This infallibility (otherwise only granted to the prophet Muhammad) can be reached when the “interpretive community as a whole” has reached a “unanimous consensus” (ibid). Remarkably some jihadi ideologues claim infallibility of their views. This infallibility allegedly is given through transcendent experience during the practice of jihad. See Alshech (2008).

<sup>26</sup> Muslim reformers and of course historians make the argument to historicize the Quranic text: “It matters little whether we accept the Quran as divine revelation or not. For whether it came from God or Muhammad or anywhere else, it certainly reflected the social, historical and political realities of seventh century Arabia” (Jackson 2003:37). See also: Donner (1991).

<sup>27</sup> Likewise Tibi (1999:84): “The call for the use of force occurs in the Quran step by step in Medina and thickens to a jihad-doctrine.”

(unlike the hadith promoting greater jihad). However, the synonym of armed struggle in the Quran is not jihad but qital: “According to the Quran the military part of jihad is called qital/combat” (Tibi 1999:74).<sup>28</sup> Qital is to be distinguished from the term harb (war) which denotes illegitimate aggression. Thus, it can be maintained that jihad cannot be reduced to qital, but qital is an integral part of jihad as it is described in the Medinan suras and some hadith collections. As noted before it is difficult to relativize its martial character, because the writings about the lesser jihad in Quran and Sunna are coined by the military-expansional situation of the ummah at the time of its origin. Modernists do this by historic-contextualized reading while conservatives rarely try to relativize the doctrine at all.

What is the characteristic legal discourse of the jihadi movement that delimitates it from the interpretations of the Islamic mainstream?

### ***Contentious Aspects of Jihad***

Inherent in Islam (as in other religions) is a necessity for proselytization. This necessity is due to the universal claim of Islam: “Muslims are obligated to spread the Islamic revelation worldwide” (Tibi 1999:80) and jihad is the mean. “Islam calls his project of Islamization of the world jihad” (ibid. p. 51).<sup>29</sup> When this religious universalism is combined with governance (especially foreign policy), as a consequence the Muslim ummah has to subdue the whole mankind under Islamic rule. As long as a worldwide Islamic administration is not established, this obligation does not cease. This universal claim is so categorical and non-disputable because Islam explains, that only its holistic rule can allow for a peaceful human society. Non-Islamic territory is named dar al’harb (house of war) or possibly dar al-sulh (house of treaty) if there is a peace agreement,<sup>30</sup> while territory under Muslim rule is called dar al-Islam (house of peace).

### ***Offensive Jihad: Use of Armed Force [Qital] and Perpetual Warfare?***

The dispute between reformers and conservatives is not about the concept of jihad per se, but about the legitimacy and even the obligation to use force for Islamic expansion [futuhat] in the contemporary political context. Reformists admit that jihad for the purpose of Islamic expansion into dar al’harb *can*<sup>31</sup> include the use of force [qital] as *ultima ratio*, when peaceful attempts of proselytization and subjugation are forcefully prevented by the unbelievers. However, they argue, that contemporary political realities do not meet the prerequisites under which qital as jihad is to

<sup>28</sup> All quotations of Tibi (1999) are translated from German by the author.

<sup>29</sup> Rahman gives a similar explanation: “There is no doubt that the Quran wanted Muslims to establish a political order on earth for the sake of creating an egalitarian and just moral-social order. Jihad is the instrument for doing so” (1980:63f, cited in Streusand 1997:6), and by Khadduri (1966:xi): “Islam was neither the first nor the last of the nations that sought to establish a world public order based on divine legislation and to enforce it by the ‘jihad’”.

<sup>30</sup> The distinction into dar al-harb and dar al-Islam is not genuine to the Quran but was introduced at a later point through the practice of ijtihad (independent interpretation of the textual sources).

<sup>31</sup> But is not necessarily limited to the smaller jihad: “Although the instrument by which the Islamic state was meant to sustain itself and expand territorially was through waging jihad, this did not always mean going to war” (Ali/Rehman 2005:333). See also Bar (2006:28ff).

be applied.<sup>32</sup> Contrary, more textual interpretations of the sources in Quran and hadith make it difficult to detach qital from jihad no matter what current affairs look like. Other reformists, rather than separating qital from jihad, make the point that jihad does not necessarily mean a perpetual warfare against all non Muslims.<sup>33</sup>

Although clerics from the jihadi movement may support the exegetical thesis of jihad as perpetual warfare, offensive jihad is not of immediate concern to the jihadi movement. This is because offensive jihad is an instrument of foreign policy and military expansion. The movement lacks the geopolitical capacity for concerted military campaigns. Therefore, contemporary jihad is fought as defensive jihad with certain doctrinal innovations. Nevertheless the global jihadi movement seeks to establish a geopolitical basis for offensive jihad like it did in Afghanistan under the Taliban, in the Republic of Dagestan and currently in the Federal Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) in Pakistan.

#### *Defensive Jihad: An Individual Obligation [Fard Ayn]*

For the jihadi movement the classical distinction into dar al-Islam and dar al-harb does not meet contemporary geopolitical realities anymore. A country, in which people live under the nomocracy of the Sharia, does not exist. The entire world seems to be dar al'harb and the movement perceives itself as the vanguard of Islam just as the Prophet Muhammad and his companions were the Muslim vanguard in Medina. Possibly, the federally administered tribal areas in Pakistan (FATA) best compare to the situation of this time.

Territories that used to fulfill the Sharia-criteria for dar al'-Islam are either occupied by the "enemies of Islam" (it matters little whether the invaders are people of the book, polytheists or atheists), or they are governed by corrupt Muslim leaders. In the case of foreign occupation or military deployment jihad is fought as defensive jihad (Cashmere, Afghanistan, Iraq, Bosnia, Palestine, Saudi Arabia Andalusia) and therefore is an individual obligation (fard ayn) that does not necessitate the command of a Caliph. Every territory that has ever been under Islamic rule is suitable for launching defensive jihad. Local Muslims have to fulfill this obligation and if they are not able or powerful enough to do so, the obligation passes to Muslims elsewhere.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> The eminent Azhar University in Cairo takes the following position: "Is it necessary to carry out da'wa/the call to Islam with the weapon? [...] The sword used to be a mean for the spread of Islam, today, however, this is only important when it is to avert evil from Muslims. [...] Today there are newspapers and other communication media, with whose one can intrude in the houses of the others in order to spread Islam. However, there is a small group of Muslims who want spread Islam via weapons without realizing that the foes of Islam are fighting us with much more dangerous means today." (al-Azhar 1984, Bayan li al-nas min al-Azhar al-sharif (Declaration to mankind from the grand al-Azhar), cited in Tibi 1999:72).

<sup>33</sup> For instance see Shakir (2003). In an article on the website Islamic-answers.com the position of the conservatives is described as follows: "In the past some classical Muslim Jurists held the opinion that Islam enjoins Muslims to maintain a state of permanent belligerence with all non-believers. According to this opinion Muslims are under a legal obligation to reduce all non-Muslim communities to Islamic rule. Proponents of this view did not make any distinction between neutral or peaceful non-Muslim states and those who are violent and aggressive towards the Islamic State." (Kareem 2008:1).

<sup>34</sup> The provisions for jus ad bellum have been provided by Abdullah Azzam. See Wiktorowicz (2001:23f).

Both, reformists and conservatives, agree that jihad for the defense of dar al-Islam sanctions the use of armed force. Thus, the omnipresent theories about the global conspiracy against Islam in jihadist circles are ideologically important.<sup>35</sup> Additionally, the classification of contemporary global jihad as defensive jihad also provides the possibility for jihadi agitators to bypass the Islamic prohibition of the indiscriminate killings of civilians (women and children) since such regulations only exist for offensive jihad.

#### *Takfir vs. Fitna*

The defensive paradigm is also present in the *takfir-jihad* against allegedly apostate Muslim governments. War among Muslims [fitna] cannot be justified theologically. Accordingly, the internal jihadists excommunicate their Muslim adversaries to make them a legitimate target. “Arab regimes are thus considered the functional equivalent of foreign occupation” (Wiktorowicz 2001:26). The controversial debate about the practice of takfir within the Salafi community cannot avoid that jihadi groups use takfir in a utilitarian manner without considering its dogmatic restrictions.

This is not the place to review the far reaching theological discussion of jihad in detail. It surely would be worthwhile to describe the dogmatic position of the four schools of Sunni jurisprudence (Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi’I and Hanbali) on different aspects of jihad and Siyar, but for the understanding of jihadism it is not important to grasp this discourse comprehensively.

#### **Jihad in Action: the Military History of Jihad**

Contemporary jihadism has no prior correlates, neither in the dogmatic design of jihad, nor in its historic occurrence. The application of jihad to social realities, as performed by past Muslim rulers, has always somewhat deviated from its theological conception. Therefore, it is worth comparing the “religious-doctrinaire meaning” with the actual “historical meaning” (Tibi 1999:57).<sup>36</sup> Historically, jihad means warfare, theologically jihad *can* mean warfare. “[T]he history of Islam is characterized by recurring violence claimed to be justified by jihad, even when it was not.” (Bassiouni 2008:79).<sup>37</sup> Therefore, the historical novelty of jihadism is not constituted in the discrepancy between jihad in the book and jihad in action but rather in the combination of three characteristics (left segment in figure 1: Non-state actors waging jihad against Muslim and non-Muslim rulers alike, directing their violent campaign partially against civilians as part of their strategy.

<sup>35</sup> That is one reason why Wiktorowicz in 2001 cautions to consider the wider impact the war on terror could have on the non-jihadi Salafi movement. The invasion in Afghanistan and Iraq certainly undermines the moderate’s argument that Islam is not under attack and defensive jihad thus is not appropriate.

<sup>36</sup> Jackson (2003:41) makes a similar distinction by speaking of the “Quranic and the classical articulation of jihad”. Likewise Bassiouni (2008:80): “Jihad, like many other aspects of Islam, has its theoretical and practical aspects – both being frequently quite distinct from each other”.

<sup>37</sup> Similarly Roy (2004:56) states: “Notwithstanding the debate on what the word really means, it is clear that jihad, as an armed struggle, has always been instrumentalized for political and strategic purposes, by state actors or would-be state actors”.

As described above, the origins of the codification of the lesser jihad fall in the period of its first application, when the prophet Mohammad expanded the Islamic ummah into the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>38</sup> After the prophet's death in 632 in Medina, his institutional succession was established in the caliphate, which was the political embodiment of Islam. Only the official caliph could declare jihad for territorial expansion of the ummah, In fact, he was under the religious-legal obligation to do so whenever conditions were favorable.

Consequently, the early caliphs, the so-called Rashidun caliphs (632-661), translated these religious requirements into military conquest. The first dynasty after the Rashidun era – the Umayyads (661-750) – further developed jihad into a “doctrine of conquest” (Phares 2005:26) and made it an essential pillar of their governance. Through the rigorous usage of jihad as a state tool, objectives other than religious (proselytization) could be achieved: the region became politically more stable because rivaling Bedouin clans were subdued and united; growing socioeconomic needs could be satisfied by opening up new resources and trade relations; and the spiritual dimension of the military campaigns facilitated recruiting. The geopolitical expansion of Islam through the caliphate-jihad is also called *fatah* or *futuh* [opening]. The Umayyads (and later the Ottomans) are described as “jihad-states” (Blankenship 1994) because these states were structurally based on *fatah*. The Umayyad's *fatah* let them conquer territories in North Africa, Andalusia, and Asia.

Beside *fatah* there were two other modes of military conflict in the course of Islam: *fitna* and *ridda*. *Fitna* is the term for war and unrest among Muslims while *ridda* means “a revolt against Islam, a retreat from the religion back to apostasy” (Bukay 2008:142), that is, a war between Muslims and Muslim apostates. Both types of conflict are not fought as a jihad, which poses a judicial problem since jihad is the only legitimate form of warfare in Islam. Therefore, *ridda* is considered as a war “of reinstating Islam among tribes that decided to quit it” (*hurub al ridda*) (Phares 2005:28) based on the sharia provision that conversion from Islam is punishable by death. In the case of *fitna*, the use of force against other Muslims was legally sanctioned by the application of the *takfir* doctrine (the excommunication of Muslims). So, the difference between *fitna* and *ridda* is that in first case the enemy is excommunicated *in order* to fight him, while in the latter case the enemy actively converses from Islam and *therefore* is fought.

During periods of *fitna* the questions about the right faith and therefore the question about the legitimate rule of the ummah were central. “*Fitna* became a permanent condition after 750, when the political unity of the Muslim community (ummah) came to an end” (Streusand 1997:3). The fragmentation of the ummah undermined the dichotomy of *dar al'harb* and *dar al'islam*. So for the most time in Islamic history the premise, under which jihad was waged in order to establish worldwide peace has not been met. Because the first (influential) codification of Islamic international law (*Siyar*) is attributed to the work of Muhammad Ibn al-Hassan al-Shybbani (8<sup>th</sup> century) (see: Khadduri 1966), Streusand (1997) concludes: “In effect, the law of jihad was formulated after the condition it fit had passed.” However, despite intellectual controversy, the Umayyad Caliphate was militarily successful and judicial considerations could not stop their campaigns.

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<sup>38</sup> The occurrence of the actual written version of the Qur'an, like it is known today, dates to 644 when the third caliph Uthman Ibn Affan compiled and homogenized the existing written sources.



The importance of jihad as military invasion diminished during the Abbasid dynasty (750-1258). Although not used as a tool for large scale military conquest, jihad remained in the course of Islamic conflicts, such as in anti-colonial jihads (Sedgwick 2007). The last official jihad was declared in 1914 by Caliph Mehmed V. At the same time it was the first jihad that was fought with an “infidel” ally, the Germans, who trained, counseled and equipped the Ottoman military in the preceding years (Schwanitz 2007, 2008). This last Caliphate-jihad in history did not have much in common with its early conception. The subsequent end of the Caliphate in 1924 is perceived by today’s jihadists as a bitter setback in the conflict between Islam and the often mentioned “crusader-conspiracy”. Although the Caliphate as an entity in international relations disappeared, it is exactly this geopolitical situation that contemporary global jihadis seek to re-establish. “In the years after the collapse of the Caliphate, three currents emerged from the ashes of the world official body of jihad: one that rejected it and adhered to international law; another one that ignored the debate while adhering practically to the new international community; and third, the jihadists, which resuscitated it, reshaped its doctrines, and wages wars and conflicts in its name” (Phares 2005:45). Contemporary jihadism is one manifestation of the ever-changing nature of jihad conflicts. Hassan al-Banna “was one of the first Muslims since the abolition of the caliphate, who again used the term jihad and called for its resumption.” (Tibi 1999:243)

What makes contemporary jihad exceptional is the combination of three characteristics. First, territorial annexation is not the primary objective of jihadi violence (in some cases it still is, Dagestan, Cashmere, Iraq) but rather subversion and nihilism. Second, it is not anymore orchestrated by a central command but is practiced by everyone who claims so. Third, it makes strategic use of terrorism.

The point could be made that the Ismaili-Hashshashin, or Assassins, in the twelfth century were the first sub-state actors engaging in jihad against other Muslims (while rarely against non-Muslims). Roy describes their action as “an exception in Muslim history, an isolated and weird episode born out of a marginal heresy” (Roy 2004:42). What is uncertain, however, is whether today’s Jihadism will become anything else but a “marginal heresy” in Islamic history.

## **Conclusion**

This article discusses 13 opposing pairs (dissident vs. rejectionist; nomadic jihad vs. irredentist jihad...) that characterize jihadism and help to distinguish it from related phenomena. Figure 1 depicts these 13 definitional characteristics of jihadism. They have been divided into three sets: Jihadism as one form of Islamic activism (right segment) with a distinct dogma of jihad (middle segment) that employs a historically novel modus operandi of militant action (left segment). This enumeration is not exhaustive but it provides an overview of crucial features of jihadism. It can be summarized as follows:

Although deeply committed to the Salafi creed Salafi jihadists gave up the rejectionist stance of their spiritual leaders and consider jihad, rather than da’wa [propagation] purification [tazkiyya], and religious education or cultivation [tarbiya], as a legitimate means of protest against profane tendencies. Unlike Islamic nationalists, who follow a secular/laical pro-nationalist agenda (which of course can contain Islamic issues), Salafi jihadists condemn all manmade laws and believe in the political sovereignty of god. Nevertheless they migrate to conflicts in which Islamic

nation-states are involved in order to wage jihad (e.g. Bosnia, Chechnya, or Cashmere). Islamism seeks to assert religious goals through capturing and utilizing the existing political infrastructure of a nation. It is quite natural that such aspirations often result in violent conflicts with the state power (jihad against the near enemy). In contrast, Salafi jihadists fight the near enemy with the intention of abandoning the existing political infrastructure. In addition they reason that apostate Muslim regimes are difficult to defeat as long as they are supported by Western nations (the far enemy), which therefore have to be attacked, too.

The Islamic international law (Siyar), of which the religious concept of jihad is a subset, has been developed and modified by clerics and jurists in a sophisticated manner over the centuries to adjust it to social-political realities of their time. It is part of this adjustment that today's reformists seek for a non-hostile interpretation of jihad, such as the separation of jihad and qital or the relativization of jihad as perpetual warfare. Jihadists, too, have adapted the jihad-doctrine to current affairs from their point of view. In their perception, Islam is under attack which makes jihad through the force of arms [qital] an individual obligation [fard ayn], even against 'apostate' Muslims [takfir].

The inventive discourse of the jihadi intellectuals has been translated into action. Jihadi warfare traditionally has been a doctrine for foreign policy that was employed by Muslims rulers for military conquest [fatah]. In contrast, contemporary jihad is an asymmetrical conflict in which terrorist and guerilla tactics are employed.

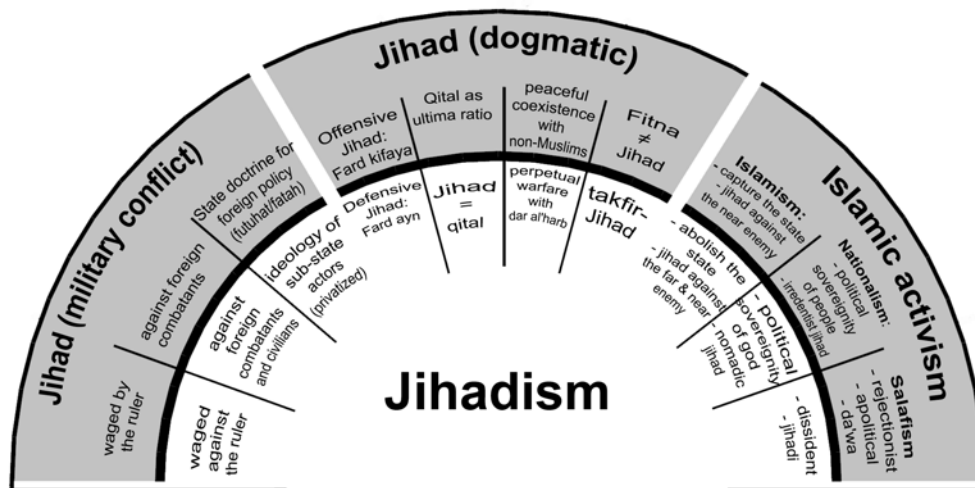


Figure 2: Thirteen definitional features of Jihadism. *The inner segment shows the configuration of ten criteria that are characteristic for jihadism.*

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