

The Intellectual Roots of Violence in Jihadi Salafism and their Impact

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Abstract:

In recent years, Salafi Jihadism has gained a great reputation, especially with its great field successes that have attracted the interest of researchers who studied the various aspects related to the Salafi Jihadist phenomenon. However, efforts to understand the origins of Salafi jihadist ideology, and the violence practiced by groups that belong to this intellectual stream still need more interpretation, analysis and criticism. The purpose of this study is to investigate the possible link between the ideological origins of Jihadi Salafism (cultural violence) and violence in its verbal and physical forms (direct violence). It also aims to find out if these origins represent an extension of the religious discourse of *al-Khawārij* sect, which carried a political project sought to impose by the sword. This research adopts the analytical method, which aims to provide interpretation and critique to the basic ideas that have a direct relationship to the issues of legitimizing or practicing violence as they are presented in the primary sources of Salafi Jihadism. It also focuses on of al-Qaeda and ISIS literature as the most recent and famous representatives of this ideology.

The study tackles the concept of violence and its various philosophical interpretations. It also refers to the various ideas that explain its causes. Moreover, it points to the importance of understanding violence from its three angles: direct violence, structural violence and cultural violence, where cultural violence is at the heart of this research. In addition to the concept of violence, it studies the definition of Salafism, its types and the most important differences between them.

The first chapter deals with the characteristics of the Salafi Jihadist Ideology, which represents the basic structure of the doctrinal discourse, while the second and the third chapters deal with the study of verbal and physical violence, that are manifested in the ideas of *takfīr* and jihad. The study shows that there is a direct relationship between the cultural violence represented by the intellectual origins of jihadist Salafism and the intellectual authorities, and the direct violence that these beliefs encourage, glorify, and legitimize. It also appears that Salafi Jihadism is a political project with historical origins rooted in *al-Khawārij* sect.