



The Muslim Extremist Discourse: Constructing Us versus Them

By Faizullah Jan



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This unique book analyzes the discourse of organizations affiliated with al-Qaeda. It interrogates the discourse of these extremist organizations, which publish their own newspapers. These publications, widely distributed to the local population, play a critical role in securing and maintaining public support for the militant organizations. The book examines how these organizations discursively construct the socio-political reality of their world, in the process defining the Self and the Other. The Self becomes *umma*, or the global Muslim community, while the Other becomes the West, including the United States, Israel, and India. This book presents an analysis of three historical moments—the assassination of al-Qaeda chief Osama Bin Laden, the controversial YouTube video *Innocence of the Muslims*, and the shooting of the Pakistani child activist and Nobel Laureate Malala Yousafzai. This analysis reveals the discursive strategies used by the militant organizations to create what Foucault calls *regimes of truth* and articulate identities of the Self and the Other.

The first of its kind, this book provides an insight into the mind-set of extremists. It presents a picture of the world that extremists construct through their own discourse and explains how extremists try to win the hearts and minds of mainstream Muslims in order to expand their support base, seek donations, and find new recruits. Understanding extremist narratives and the ways they feed the broader militant discourse may yield more meaningful and effective strategies for the West to communicate with mainstream Muslims.



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- Rank: #3716651 in eBooks
- Published on: 2015-11-12
- Released on: 2015-11-12
- Format: Kindle eBook

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Editorial Review

Review

Faizullah Jan . . . has come out with a fantastic study of militant discourse in the country. . . .The author has correctly pointed out the significance of narratives, which are critical tools to create a social reality that is then marketed amongst the clientele of a group or party. (*The Express Tribune*)

A ground-breaking new book investigates this dimly lit field to provide greater light on what has been happening in Pakistan. Extensively researched, marked by academic rigour and penned by Peshawar-based Faizullah Jan, *The Muslim Extremist Discourse: Constructing 'Us' versus 'Them'*, examines how Muslim extremists construct sociopolitical reality of the world. . . .A must-read, then, for anyone interested in understanding the use of media by the extremists in Pakistan and their designs. (*The News on Sunday*)

The[se] cumulative effects have turned America and the West against Islam, instilled an idea that only Muslims can be terrorists and compelled Muslims to defend their religion in a way that no follower of any other world religion has to. This book flips the script, and in doing so reminds us of the importance of critically evaluating who is saying what, and for what purpose. Faizullah Jan's book, which grew out of his doctoral dissertation, reviews reporting in multiple media operated by radical Islamist groups inside Pakistan. (*Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*)

The unique element about this book is that it provides a vision into what extremists think of the world and which methods and resources they employ to win support among Muslims in Pakistan.... [T]his book is valuable in reminding readers that although each country is unique, tactful access to influential media of communication can shape and control the minds and hearts of many otherwise unsympathetic people.... [T]his book is recommended to linguistic researchers and political thinkers who are interested in merging and forging a unified proactive approach towards dealing with the extremist language which is rooted in reality considering the co-constructed 'truth' of the players of the field. (*Journal of Language and Politics*)

Faizullah Jan provides a path-breaking study on the media landscape of Pakistan and how Pakistani militant extremist organizations are using media messages and images in the battle for hearts and minds of the local Pakistani population. The book combines rare cultural and political insights with a rigorous, systematic analysis of the discourse that the militants use to cultivate an identity, define enemies, and perpetuate a vision of the sociopolitical reality for the Muslim umma in the 'war on terrorism.' (R.S. Zaharna, American University)

About the Author

Faizullah Jan is a lecturer in the Department of Journalism at the University of Peshawar.

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