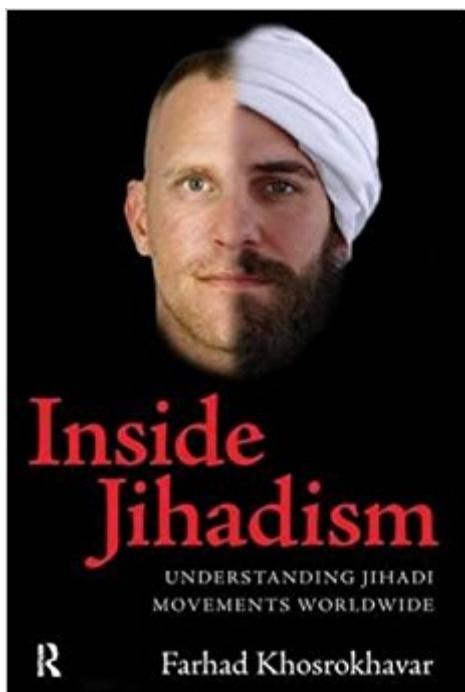


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# Inside Jihadism: Understanding Jihadi Movements Worldwide (The Yale Cultural Sociology Series)



## **Synopsis**

Jihad is the most organized force against Western capitalism since the Soviet era. Yet jihadism is multifaceted and complex, much broader than Al Qaeda alone. In the first wide-ranging introduction to today's rapidly growing jihadism, Khosrokhavar explains how two key movements variously influence jihadi activists. One, based in the Middle East, is more heavily influenced by Islamic religion and political thought. The other, composed of individuals growing up or living mostly in Europe and Western democracies including the United States, is motivated by secular as well as religious influences. Khosrokhavar interprets religious and lesser-known Arabic texts and the real-world economic and political dynamics that make jihadism a growing threat to Western democracies. Interviews with imprisoned jihadists on what motivated their plots and actions help the readers understand reality as seen by jihadists. The author concludes with recommendations to safeguard democracies from future jihadism.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

"The author's intimate knowledge of and keen insight into the dynamics of jihadism and his reliance on important primary sources make this book essential reading for anyone interested in obtaining a critical understanding of jihadism." Library Journal "In the field of studies on radical Islam that is overwhelmed in the West by junk ideological literature and fake expertise, Farhad Khosrokhavar stands out as a true and distinguished expert with first hand and intimate

knowledge. One great advantage of his approach is that it knits together discourse analysis and sociology— including first hand sociological research— according to the best tradition of social sciences. His study of Jihadism, defined as the most radical and violent brand of Islamic fundamentalism, is a most welcome and useful addition to the serious literature on this most complex of global sociopolitical phenomena. • Gilbert Achcar, Professor, School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London; coauthor with Noam Chomsky of *Perilous Power: The Middle East and U.S. Foreign Policy*

Born in Iran, now living in Paris, the distinguished Iranian-French sociologist Farhad Khosrokhavar has interviewed Arab nationals throughout his career. A student of Arab and other middle east languages, he is the author of 17 books, some of them translated into 10 languages. He writes frequently for major French magazines. He has taught or lectured in the United States at Yale, Harvard, and other universities. He is Professor at Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales in Paris (School of Advanced Studies).

"Inside Jihadism: Understanding Jihadi Movements Worldwide" by Farhad Khosrokhavar (2009). I've read dozens of books regarding Jihadism, and this one should be at the top for reading by anyone interested in this genre. Unlike so many similar-theme books that seem to be haphazardly tossed together, this book reveals fine, extensive scholarly research. The author has interviewed numerous jailed jihadists, and compares his findings with similar studies. While recognizing the impact of some of the destitute socio-economic influences on jihadism, the author does not buy into the "let's ignore the influence of Islam"- hostage syndrome of apologetic Western 'scholars' -- and warns: "many studies of Jihadism are flawed because of a lack of understanding of Islamic culture, history and society" (p. 6) and "By ignoring the role of Islam as a culture and a religion, these studies give at best a one-sided account of Jihadism" (p.11). In trying to understand the roots of Jihad jingoism, the author looks back at the Kharijite rift with Imam Ali (c. 661). Also, the author looks at the theological disputes and differences between the Jihadists and the 'lesser' hajjis, and debates the issue as to whether or not jihadism is the semi-hidden 'sixth' pillar of Islam. Besides the theologians, the author reviews the jihadist-theory contributions of Banna, Qutb and other 'modern' Islamists. The author discusses how Jihadist cells and their membership assimilate differently in various countries, and how a jihadist's nuclear family may impact upon a young jihadist's development (c. p. 231). The author noted: "For Jihadists as well as major trends within Muslim Fundamentalists, Islam, in its essence, is about ruling and government" (p. 30). The author

discusses who is to be ruled: Christians and Jews as dhimmi, with repression of all other religions? The author explores the development of jihadists: 'foreign born' from the Middle East, or 'home grown' from Muslim families anchored in Europe, and converts from minority Americans. The author concluded "a subculture of violence has mutated into a subculture of death through contemporary Jihadism. Jihadism has been, from the inception of Islam, a subculture of violence within the much larger Islamic culture" (p. 294). Furthermore, the author opined: "...in the Muslim world Jihadism is a movement with deep roots in the cultural and historical dimensions of Islam" (p. 295). While the author sees that Jihadism "is a regressive, repressive and dangerous trend" and as "a counter-secularization tendency is doomed to failure, but as an ideological and social movement in the world it will survive" (p. 296). Nonetheless, the author maintains that Jihadism will succumb eventually, as Middle Eastern countries become educated through Westoxification. I also liked the many Arabic 'transliteration' words that the author used throughout this book. The author isn't an Islamophobe, but an Islamo-realist. One of the most informative books regarding Jihadism. (But why the Islamic jihadist hatred against the secular West? Need to read: "The Truth About Muhammad" by Robert Spencer.)

Excellent resource for anyone doing scholarly research on Jihad. I have cited this book for my honors thesis and consulted with a Middle Eastern native who possess extensive knowledge on the Taliban and Jihad. Also, very well written. Highly recommend this book.

for school

A French Sociology professor, Farhad Khosrokhavar is in a good position to relate some of the underpinnings of Jihadism, mostly through a European lens. His political spectrum runs from Reformist to Fundamentalist, to Hyper-Fundamentalist to Jihadist. He is able to cogently organize Koranic verses to explain the interpretations a radical Islamist uses as his (or occasionally, her) justifications for violence. He also picks pertinent quotes from influential Jihadist writing to support the Jihadist philosophy. These justifications support an underlying anomie, sense of humiliation and frustration that Khosrokhavar generally ascribes to Western domination and lack of respect for Islamic values, and also Western support of autocratic Islamic regimes. He actually uses interviews with jailed Jihadists to illustrate his points, but their limited and proscribed viewpoints do not much advance his argument. I was somewhat disappointed that Khosrokhavar, in a good position to do so, did not use his sociological or psychological insight to interpret the true mindset of a suicide

bomber, in terms that Westerners could use, if certainly not sympathize, with. Unfortunately, Khosrokhavar does not present much of a solution for the syndrome he has carefully illuminated. He feels the West must forbear against a completely uncompromising and rigid pathology which self-admittedly seeks to destroy it. It is true that escalating the mutual antipathy between Jihadists and Western Culture is unlikely to be productive, even were it possible. He also believes that a Reformist interpretation of Koranic aggression would be essential, though his prescription, as even he admits, goes against current educational Islamic norms, and any Western support for reform would only be a kiss of death. Nevertheless, he feels that Jihadism, which is a negative and life-destroying worldview, can give no long-term success to the House of Islam in its struggle against the House of War.

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