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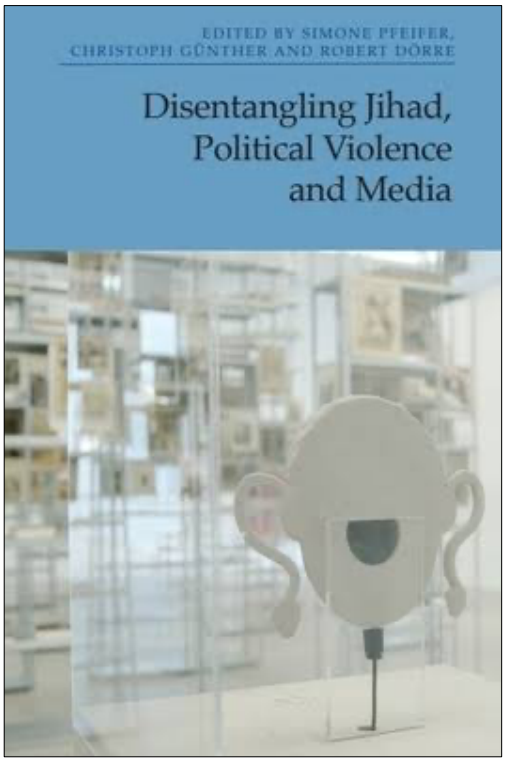
Simone Pfeifer, Christoph Günther, and Robert Dörre (Eds.), **Disentangling Jihad, Political Violence and Media**, Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University, 2023, 449 pp., $113.21 (hardcover).

Reviewed by
Katherine Bullock
University of Toronto Mississauga



Every now and then, unexpected world events overtake a recently published book. Israel's destruction of Gaza after Hamas's October 7, 2023, attacks has shifted the focal point of conversations over "terrorism" from what they were when ***Disentangling Jihad, Political Violence and Media***, edited by Simone Pfeifer, Christoph Günther, and Robert Dörre, was published. Many authors in this book note that since 9/11 and the subsequent "War on Terror," national security establishments, media, and academia have been fixated on Muslim-perpetrated violence that is analyzed through the concept of "jihadism" specifically, "Salafi-jihadism." Hamas comes out of a different tradition, a heritage linked to the Muslim Brotherhood, which has embraced democratic participation, unlike the "Salafi-jihadists." The contemporary conversation is about Palestinian "terrorism." Governments, academic institutions, and private corporations—all in the name of combatting anti-Semitism—are ferreting out and repressing "pro-Palestinian" supporters rather than "Salafi-jihadists."

Having said that, it is important to note that in spite of this shift in coordinates, the key insights from *Disentangling Jihad, Political Violence and Media* apply to the current situation in disturbing ways. The volume draws attention to geopolitical military power structures and their interlacing with media, academic, and political configurations that the authors unpack with respect to discourses over "jihad" or "Salafi-jihadism," but that can be switched out with "Hamas," "Hamas supporters," "terrorists," "pro-Palestinian" without a loss of explanatory power. Four authors mention Hamas in passing. That Hamas and "Salafi-jihadist" can be used in place of each other, in spite of their important differences is not surprising; scholars have long noted that anti-Palestinian racism is the precursor to post 9/11 Islamophobia.

Disentangling Jihad, Political Violence and Media is a volume with 16 chapters organized into four parts. The book opens with a foreword by Salman Sayyid explaining how the volume is connected to the Critical Muslim Studies project: developing non-Eurocentric frameworks to understand Muslimness and probing Western knowledge production on Islam and Muslims for its "geopolitical socio-economic Eurocentrism" (p. xxv) and hypocrisy with which Western countries manage racialized Muslimness. An afterword by Wendy M. K. Shaw looks at the controversy and accusations of anti-Semitism over a 2022 exhibition in a German city that included foetale from a Japannees film collection (1968–1982) that

explores Japanese and Palestinian solidarity. She argues that Germany's grappling with its own past and its current conceptions of anti-Semitism "overrides the possibility of the speech of others" (p. 403), and in so doing, create binaries that ignore "our immanent collective peril" (p. 404).

The editors' opening chapter explains the genesis of the book in a project by six researchers from the fields of film and media, Islamic studies, social and cultural anthropology, and information sciences that ran from 2017 to 2022. They were exploring how groups that fight "in the name of jihad" (p. 1) use audiovisual media and how people interact with such products. Already this is an understudied aspect of political violence with respect to Muslim groups, which is dominated by studies trying to understand such violence through the prism of religious ideas or identity profiles. The chapter includes a brief analysis of three different uses of the concept of "jihad:" a German documentary film titled "Addicted to Jihad" that includes the perspectives of a humanitarian aid worker in Syria who calls his work "my jihad" (p. 5), a 2019 Facebook post by a group of U.S. Republicans about four Democratic Party women Congress members under the title "The Jihad Squad," and a 2007 film by a Muslim organization in the United Kingdom entitled "Clean Medina" that tried to reclaim the word "jihad" by portraying a group effort to clean Birmingham's littered streets as a "true jihad" (p. 14). The film has shots of men in silhouette that look like guns but turn out to be brooms. This range sets up the rest of the book with an understanding of jihad as "polysemic" (p. 1). The power relationship by which a dominant West sets a "narrow" meaning of jihad that turns Muslims into an "evil other" that is used to control and discipline Muslims, and the justification for Western "necessary" violence against Muslims in the name of democracy and civilization (p. 2) is never far from the surface of the chapters in this book.

In a short review, it is hard to do justice to the 18 chapters that make up this book. The theme that runs through the first five chapters, by Jaan S. Islam, Nicole Nguyen, Sindyan Qasem, Farid Hafez, and Darryl Li, which constitute Part I ("Notions of Jihad and the Production of Knowledge") is Western academic, judicial, or governmental attempts to control and discipline Muslim life through poorly defined concepts of "jihad," "Salafi-jihadism," "jihadism," and "political Islam." As Hafez notes in chapter 4, counter-terrorism has expanded from countering violent extremism into thought control (p. 100). At the time of writing, this alarming phenomenon whereby the state seeks to control thought and expression is still expanding globally: the Quebec government has set a target on "political Islam" and is contemplating legislation that bans prayer in public spaces like parks, and the Trump administration is arresting and deporting people for Palestinian solidarity.

After disentangling various conceptual meanings of jihad, the four chapters of Part II ("Audiovisual Mediations and Formations of Jihad") turn to analyze various kinds of media that militant groups and their opponents or survivors seeking justice use to propagate their cause. A thread pulling these chapters together, besides their case studies of media—apps, memes, posters, documentaries, and chants—is the interrelationship between the global sociopolitical environment and the product in question, their "judo politics" (p. 161; Christiane Gruber in chapter 7) carried out via audiovisual terrain: ISIS children's apps aim to "jihadise" (p. 149) their children and pull them away from the Western world order (Ahmed Al-Rawi in chapter 6); a right-wing German group uses posters to shock an audience into expelling Muslims from Europe (Christiane Gruber in chapter 7); Muslim militant groups adapt and develop Arabic chants to recruit

members, again, away from the Western world order (Kurstin Gatt in chapter 8); and survivors of the Yazidi genocide use film and memoir in a fight for justice against their perpetrators (Sebastian Köthe in chapter 9).

Part III ("Ethnographic Perspectives on Imaginations and Materialities") contains four chapters by Martijn de Koning, Hamza Esmili, Anja Kublitz, and Aïcha Bounaga that explore various case studies, not on conceptual meanings of jihad, but on how European governments use those definitions to control and surveil Muslim populations they view as an existential threat. de Koning, Esmili, and Kublitz also document extensive fieldwork with young Muslims who went to Syria or Iraq and their attempts to "talk back" (p. 252) and reclaim the meanings ascribed to them by the state.

Three chapters make up the final part of the book ("Affective Archives—Enduring Sounds and Images"). Robert Dörre, Enrico De Angelis and Yazan Badran, and Kevin B. Lee engage with the questions and ethics of what happens to digital archived materials—photos or videos—after war, torture, or militant or governmental violence. They explore the complexities of a need to document so that an event is never forgotten and for accountability, versus the privacy of individuals captured in death or extreme injury and not giving consent to the use of their image. Dörre draws attention to the way that considering Daesh videos of violence as more than images of violence, but violence itself (p. 333), centers a viewer who becomes concerned about their own vulnerability—displacing "potential empathy" for the victim of the violence—and "carries the risk that the circumstances and consequences of political violence will be forgotten" (p. 335).

Rightly giving diverse voices space to reflect on, challenge, and disentangle the power relationships behind meanings and application of jihad, one result is some ambiguity over the meaning of the central concept. While chapters like Islam's and Li's question the very concept of "Salafi-jihadism," other chapters use the term non-problematically, as if it is a solid construct. This ambiguity means those with little background might find the book confusing. No chapter gives a basic summary or overview of the concept—a couple of paragraphs nestled in the beginning of the editors' introduction (pp. 6–7) is not enough. Emphasizing the polysemic nature of "jihad" is entirely necessary in a world in which people are sent to prison over narrow meanings. Because of its conceptual complexity, the book is best suited to upper-level students and academics with some background in the field or paired with a basic introductory text for those unfamiliar with the term and field.