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UNDERSTANDING THE DIVERSITY OF JIHADI RHETORIC: WHO SAYS WHAT, AND HOW?

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	1
THEORETICAL APPROACH.....	2
METHODOLOGY	4
SOURCE ANALYSIS OF JIHADI VIDEOS.....	6
CONTENT ANALYSIS OF JIHADI VIDEOS	8
THE DIAGNOSTIC FRAMING.....	9
THE PROGNOSTIC FRAMING	11
MEDIA ANALYSIS OF JIHADI VIDEOS	12
THE MOTIVATIONAL FRAMING	14
CONCLUDING REMARKS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS	15
REFERENCES	17

INTRODUCTION

The threat of violent extremism is now a priority for many national security agencies around the world. In order to curtail this phenomenon, particular attention is paid to the Global Jihadist Movement (GJM), a diverse set of organizations united by shared ideological beliefs, predominantly Global Salafi-Jihadism. Global Salafi-Jihadism was introduced by Abdullah Azzam, Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri in the 1980s in Afghanistan (Filiu 2010; Sageman 2004). Several jihadist organizations are part of this movement, al-Qaeda (AQ) and Islamic State (IS) being the dominant ones. Today, the GJM poses a serious threat to Western society, since jihadist organizations carry out attacks in several countries. Furthermore, thousands of Westerners, mainly from Western Europe, recently left their country to join jihadist organizations in different conflict zones (Hegghammer 2011; The Soufan Group 2015). These people are motivated by the GJM's ideology, and numerous studies are conducted in an effort to better understand its attraction. However, the structural fragmentation within the GJM has led to a decentralization of its discourse production, as various groups have been disseminating different types of message based on their local objectives. In fact, the GJM's communication apparatus has greatly evolved and is no longer the work of one specific branch of the organization or of its high-ranking officials. Many sympathizers – foreign fighters, for example – are now involved in the production of this discourse. Therefore, in order to counter these discourses, it is even more important to have a clear understanding of the various organizations' respective ideological discourse and mobilization rhetoric.

Information on how the GJM's leaders define their ideology is widely available, but few studies have focused on analyzing the entire contribution of all the actors involved in the construction of this decentralized movement's discourse (Winter 2015), and few studies provide an in-depth qualitative analysis of it (Macnair and Frank 2017). In order to address this deficiency, I studied one of the main media through which the jihadists address their audience: the videos. Because of their prevalence and the

ease with which they can be shared with the masses through information and communication technologies, video is a particularly effective propaganda and mobilization instrument (Gates and Podder 2015; Macnair and Frank 2017). It was one of the most influential media of the German regime before the Second World War (Domenach 1973; Hoffmann 1996). Drawing on the collective action framing theory, this study aims to better understand the diversity of the GJM discourse by focusing on its underlying problems (diagnostic framing), the solutions therein (prognostic framing), and the mobilization rhetoric used (motivational framing) (Snow and Benford 1988).

This paper is structured as follows. First, I explain the theoretical approach that drove this study. Then, I present the methodology and the data. The results are presented in three separate sections: the source of the discourse, its content and its dissemination media. This research shows the preliminary results of my PhD thesis that examines all jihadi videos officially produced, translated or subtitled in English by multiple jihadist organizations in the Middle East between 2006 and 2016. Thus, the results presented in this working paper are based on a sample of my data.

THEORETICAL APPROACH

We are among those who consider that social movement theory may well apply and can be useful to the study of radical/terrorist movements (e.g., Beck 2008; Burriss, Smith, and Strahm 2000; della Porta 1995; Fillieule 2012; Futrell and Simi 2004; Gunning 2009; Perry and Scrivens 2016). A review of social movement theory suggests that this field of study has long been dominated by two major trends on social and political sociology (Oliver and Johnston 2000). In 1986, for example, social psychology introduced the collective action framing theory (Snow and Benford 1988, 1992; Snow, Rochford Jr, Worden, and Benford 1986). Until then, the models and theories did not delve into the mobilization discourse nor did it systematically examine the ideological vision emphasized in this type of discourse. The frame and framing perspectives, which are also used in the field of mass communication (Entman

1993), allow the social movement theory to highlight the dynamic nature of social movements (Oliver and Johnston 2000) and the mobilization rhetoric used in ideological discourse (Entman 1993). The distinction between frame and framing also allows the concept of framing as a verb and as an evolving and continuous process of creating frames (a name), which are seen as a construct (Benford and Snow 2000; Snow, Benford, McCammon, Hewitt, and Fitzgerald 2014). Accordingly, the collective action frames are defined as the product of a framing process (Benford and Snow 2000).

David A. Snow noted in 1948 the relevancy of Goffman's (1974) "frame" concept for the study of social movements: "Framing, I thought, might very well be the alignment problem and the signifying, discursive aspects of interaction both within movements and between movements and other relevant organizational actors" (Snow et al. 2014, p.28). Also drawing on the work of Wilson (1973), the collective action framing theory states that there are three core framing tasks in an ideological discourse: diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing. The diagnostic framing of an ideology underlines a problem and identifies who is accountable for it. The prognostic framing is the solution to eradicate the problem and the ways to achieve this. The motivational framing is a call to arms and a rationale for engaging in the solution. Indeed, in addition to motivating people to join the movement, the latter is designed to motivate people to actively engage in the solution. It is therefore more related to its mobilization techniques than to the message itself.

According to Oliver and Johnston (2000), the innovation that Snow and his colleagues (1986) suggest "was central in the social psychological turn, and is widely credited with 'bringing ideas back in'." Framing theory has provided a way to link ideas and the social construction of ideas with organizational and political process factors (p. 37). For Gamson (1992), collective action frames are mainly interactive; they go beyond personal perceptions and are constructed by interactions and sharing of meaning between two or more individuals.

METHODOLOGY

To analyze what is often called “hostile propaganda” (Clow 2009; Lauder 2013),¹ I relied on the source-content-audience-media-effect (SCAME) approach² used by many security actors. For example, within the NATO armed forces Psychological Operations (PSYOPS) units, this approach is part of a broader process of Target Audience Analysis (TAA) (Tatham and Le Page 2014). This stage of the process, which initially aims to identify details of the main elements of hostile PSYOPS, also allows the gathering of knowledge on the construction of this particular form of communication. Since the scope of this study is the jihadist discourse itself and its diversity, the analysis focuses on the source (who is speaking in the videos), the content (what is being said), and the media (how it is being said) – three of the five SCAME elements. Although audience and effect are equally relevant, these two elements are not covered in this study for two reasons. First, since this study focuses on the problems encountered in Western countries, the data analyzed is intended for a Western audience. Various audiences are identified in these communications, but it would be unwise to assume that the announced target is actually the intended one. For example, when a jihadist organization sends a message aimed at the US government, this message is nevertheless part of a global approach of influential activities which generally aims to inspire, persuade, recruit, or provoke Westerners. Secondly, in the same vein, the data does not provide the initial expected effects with certainty. Therefore, reflection on this is limited in the sense that the nature of a social movement relates to striving for a cause and to rallying participants and activists (Benford 1997; Pinard 2011). It is also worth noting that the analysis does not necessarily

¹ The SCAME approach’s elements are similar to Lasswell’s (1948) 5Ws model of communication, which defines: Who, Says what, In which Channel, To Whom, With what effect.

² Canada. Department of National Defence, B-GL-353-002/FP-001, Psychological Operations Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (Ottawa: DND, 30 November 2010); Canada. Department of National Defence, B-GJ-005-313/FP-001, Joint Doctrine Manual on Psychological Operations (Ottawa: DND, 15 January 2004).

follow the standard SCAME approach as it explores additional dimensions of these elements. The idea is to challenge the SCAME grid and to see what else these elements can provide about such a discourse.

TABLE 1. SAMPLE OF 12 ENGLISH-LANGUAGE VIDEOS RELEASED IN 2016.

Release Date	Title	Length (mm:ss)	Media production house	Associated group	Main language	Subtitles
2016-01-24	“And kill them wherever you find them”	0:17:38	Al-Hayat Media	IS	French	English
2016-02-19	“The Hollywood reality of al-Baghdadi group”	0:11:47	Al-Hidayah Media Production	AQAP	Arabic	English
2016-03-19	“John Cantlie Talks about the American Airstrikes on Media Kiosks in Mosul City”	0:03:36	Amaq	IS	English	Arabic
2016-03-25	“Story of the life of Abu Basir al-Hindi”	0:09:16	Al-Manarah al-Bayda	JN	English	Arabic
2016-04-01	“Make takbir ô muwahhid”	0:03:03	Al-Hayat Media	IS	Arabic	English
2016-04-22	“Such are the days”	0:08:02	Al-Manarah al-Bayda	JN	Arabic	English
2016-04-29	“Blood for blood”	0:03:40	Al-Hayat Media	IS	French	English
2016-05-30	“The religion of kufr is one”	0:03:13	Al-Hayat Media	IS	English	None
2016-06-26	“Miracles of The Mujahideen: Afghanistan – The Soviet Invasion – Episode One – Sheikh Usama Bin Ladin”	0:10:45	Al-Risalah Media	JN	Arabic	English
2016-07-05	“My revenge”	0:04:31	Al-Hayat Media	IS	French	English
2016-07-06	“The structure of the Khilafah”	0:14:58	Al-Furqan	IS	English	None
2016-07-12	“John Cantlie Speaking about the US Bombing Mosul University and Popular Areas in the City”	0:03:13	Amaq Agency	IS	English	Arabic

This study examines a sampling of 12 videos that were officially produced, translated or subtitled in English by multiple jihadist organizations in the Middle East in 2016. Among them, four have been produced by AQ – more specifically by Jahbat al-Nusra (JN)³ and al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) – and eight by IS. As shown in Table 1, three videos are linked to the 2015–2016 attacks in France and Belgium, two videos feature John Cantlie, a British journalist kidnapped by IS in 2012, one

³ This group, mainly active in Syria, was rebuilt in July 2016 under the name of Jabhat Fatah al-Sham.

video describes the complete structure of the IS “state”, and one video is a counter-propaganda from AQ in Yemen against IS. Others are conventional tribute, *nasheed* (a work of vocal music) and interview videos.

In addition to the discourse’s qualitative data, quantitative data were also collected on both the videos (see Table 1) and the individuals they were staging (e.g., sex, age group, nationality, spoken language, ranking, etc.), to conduct deeper analyses. The purpose of this approach is to provide a more nuanced understanding of the videos by examining the speakers, the content of what was being said, and the media they used to assess how it was being said. For the last two categories, I relied on the collective action framing theory where the diagnostic and prognostic framing tells us more about the content. The motivational framing enhances the analysis of the media by alluding to the influence techniques and lines of persuasion used.

SOURCE ANALYSIS OF JIHADI VIDEOS

Based on the SCAME approach, the first aspect of the propaganda to explore is its source. It is important to not downplay the human role in such discourse analysis, since framing is produced by the people and not by the movement per se. In fact, the combination of the individual propagandists’ frames reflects the framing of the movement (Benford 1997). First, it is worth noting that the official propaganda of the GJM is produced and delivered by its various media production houses. At the beginning, all AQ’s productions were produced by the as-Sahab Media production house, but new media branches were created in the other AQ franchises that emerged in Iraq, Yemen, and so on. More recently, since the beginning of the Syrian conflict, a struggle occurred for the international governance of jihad. The split of the Iraqi branch of AQ and the creation of IS have divided the movement into two factions and escalated the propaganda in favour of both factions. To date, there are up to 46 official media production houses linked exclusively to IS. The conflictual interactions between the West and the GJM,

as well as those resulting from its inside disputes, have ensured the decentralization of the GJM since its inception. Agreeing with Oliver, Marwell and Teixeira (1985) that the heterogeneity of a movement can favour its collective action, the GJM seems to profit from the diversification of the actors involved in its decentralized network with a proliferation and a diversification of its human and communication resources.

The first thing we notice in the 2016 videos is that all the actors are men. In spite of a recent trend towards using women for recruitment purposes on social media (Huey and Witmer 2016; Pearson 2017), women did not seem to be involved in this type of media production. In addition, IS videos usually feature a larger number of speakers than AQ videos. Therefore, IS offers a greater number of jihadi figures with which more viewers can relate. IS speakers are also often younger than AQ speakers, since they value younger fighters, and even sometimes children, whereas AQ speakers are often leaders or high-ranking officials. However, it is worth mentioning that unlike the other AQ-affiliated groups, JN was featuring many of its fighters as well. In fact, it shows that the more decentralized the organizations are, the more the new media production houses tend to use the people to whom they have access to, rather than the high-ranking officials who are more likely to be associated with the core of the movement. Given that IS is recruiting more foreign fighters, their videos feature a higher number of Westerners, but this trend has also slightly changed for AQ in recent years. While they were often considered as a more elitist movement, some of their franchises tend to recruit more broadly.

FIGURE 1. STILLS OF INDIVIDUALS FEATURING IN VIDEOS

Islamic State

Al-Qaeda



Top left: “And kill them wherever you find them”, Al-Hayat Media (IS), 2016-01-24; Top right: “Miracles of the Mujahideen: Afghanistan – The Soviet Invasion – Episode One – Sheikh Usama Bin Ladin”, Al-Risalah Media (AQ), 2016-06-26; Bottom left: “Blood for blood”, Al-Hayat Media (IS), 2016-04-29; Bottom right: “Story of the life of Abu Basir al-Hindi”, Al-Manarah al-Bayda (AQ), 2016-03-25.

Generally, actors in the videos are not hiding their identity. If we think of black, gray and white propaganda (Baran and Davis 2006), the jihadi propaganda would be a mix of white and gray. On the one hand, the source is clearly identified; on the other hand, the messages include both true and false information, as long as it meets the objectives of the movement, as we will see in the following section.

CONTENT ANALYSIS OF JIHADI VIDEOS

As previously discussed, part of the objective of the GJM’s discourse is to incite the commission of a terrorist attack or *hijrah*, the emigration. Therefore, most of its propaganda aims to promote illegal acts and the use of violence in the name of the cause. This cause, or ideology, portrays a negative picture of the societies in which the Muslim populations live, and suggests the ultimate goal of building a fair,

just and Sharia-based society for Muslims (Mitchell 2008). This is their diagnostic and prognostic collective action framing. The following analysis underlines the discourse diversity within the GJM and shows a number of framing inconsistencies.

The Diagnostic Framing

The identification of problems is one of the core tasks when constructing a mobilization discourse. On this specific aspect, both emphasize the foreign interventions in Muslim countries. For IS, it is more exactly foreign interventions against the *Khilafah*, their “state”. As you can see from the two following examples, AQ complains about the benefits of the Russian airstrikes to its enemies, and IS blames the ones that come to what they call “the lands of the Muslims”.

During the period of the Russian intervention aiding the regime, they were able to achieve several military victories, depending on the cover of Russian airstrikes.

“Such are the days”, Al-Manarah al-Bayda (AQ), 2016-04-22

You are the ones who came to us. You are the ones who dared to come. You fly in the sky of Allah (the Glorified and Exalted). You are the ones who dared to come to the lands of the Muslims to fight them.

“And kill them wherever you find them”, Al-Hayat Media (IS), 2016-01-24

More specifically, IS also focuses on Muslims victimized in Syria and Iraq, in order to incite people to help them by joining the ranks of jihadist organizations. They consider such travelling as a form of *hijrah*, which helps to convince that it is the duty of all Muslims join the battlefield and defend Muslims there.

You see your brothers and sisters being killed and being slaughtered, while you live a normal life making wages and receiving financial support.

“And kill them wherever you find them”, Al-Hayat Media (IS), 2016-01-24

On the other hand, the two following quotes suggest that AQ brings attention to the disinformation disseminated by its opponents. Whether it is against Westerners or other jihadi groups like IS, AQ tries

to present itself as a more reliable source of information. AQ therefore considers its opponents, and even other jihadist organizations like IS, as a nuisance to the jihadist cause. By discrediting its opponent, AQ aims to bring back the GJM's followers on what they believe is the "true" path of Allah.

The second thing [reasons why I left IS]: the lie of their media which deceived many people.

"The Hollywood reality of al-Baghdadi group", Al-Hidayah Media Production (AQ), 2016-02-19

Do not grieve and do not listen to those who spread false rumors nor the forsakers!

"Such are the days", Al-Manarah al-Bayda (AQ), 2016-04-22

The jihadist discourse in these videos underlines a significant number of enemies they consider accountable for previous problems (aside from those who divert the jihadists from their path). Actually, IS has a much more diverse list of enemies than AQ. Among its enemies, IS blames their far-away enemies like the Coalition fighting Islamic State, the Crusaders, and foreign countries like France, Belgium, and Turkey. IS also blames closer enemies they consider traitors, such as the *mushrikin*,⁴ the Taliban, the Kurds, the Pakistanis and, more broadly, what they call the *kufir* (unbelievers/infidels) or the enemies of Allah. The extent of this list confirms that IS' original local strategy has morphed beyond their local base. On the other hand, it also confirms that AQ was at this time much more concerned with its nearby enemies and was trying to disrupt its local opponents' efforts, since apart from Russia, their main enemies are the Alawites and IS. Since they were advocating less or terrorist attacks abroad, it may be part of the reasons why fewer attacks were carried out in Western countries in the name of AQ.

⁴ Arabic for polytheist (one who worships beings other than Allah)

The Prognostic Framing

For these two factions of the GJM, the solutions to the problems highlighted in the framing diagnosis are diverse. They both advocate violent actions against their enemies, but for IS, it is clear that the main solution lies in the establishment of an Islamic Caliphate in Iraq and Syria:

The religion thrived, likewise by the blood of the muhajirin and today there has emerged the dawn of the Khilafah and we draw our strength from our creator. So we have become strong, by his grace and there has been established with clarity the legitimate Khilafah and with the return of the Khilafah.

“Make takbir ô muwahhid”, Al-Hayat Media (IS), 2016-04-01

The state is so important for IS that it is a component of most of their discourse, as reflected in one of their mottos “*Dawlatul Islam, Baaqiyah!*” (“The Islamic State will remain”). They deploy considerable time and effort to explain how their state works and how it is structured as a conventional state, with a government, various provinces (the *wilayat*), and several departments administering the various aspects of their society (the *dawawin*). In fact, the struggle to build a state is what distinguishes IS from other jihadist groups, and their attractive power would be lessened without this proto-state.

In 2016, IS recommendations on the use of violence also differed from those of AQ. If IS puts an emphasis on an offensive jihad against all of its enemies, most of AQ’s more recent discourse incites to a more defensive form of jihad. For example, the following quote shows that JN is seeking to defend its achievements in Syria, rather than trying to extend its borders in a more pan-Islamist view. It also shows that both AQ and IS still actively promote suicide attacks, but IS seems to promote a more conventional engagement on the battlefield that can also lead to martyrdom.

They have invaded our land, but soon they will be buried under its soil. [...] Wait for our meeting, from which there is no fleeing, no escape and no refuge. We will explode you with car bombs and kill you with our own hands, so wait we too are waiting.

“Such are the days”, Al-Manarah al-Bayda (AQ), 2016-04-22

MEDIA ANALYSIS OF JIHADI VIDEOS

This study also looks closely at a third aspect of the jihadi discourse – the medium used to disseminate the message. In this case, as all the data comes from video, I go deeper into this analysis to observe the various ways in which this medium is used and the particularities about how videos are produced. In particular, it is relevant to examine the visual environment in which the message is presented.

For more than a decade, AQ has had the reputation of producing very long videos. For example, some Ayman al-Zawahiri or Usama bin Laden speeches lasted more than an hour. Although this trend is decreasing over time, our data suggest that, in 2016, AQ's videos are still longer than those of IS – 9 minutes and 57 seconds and 6 minutes 44 seconds respectively. As Macnair and Frank (2017) pointed out, in addition being shorter, IS videos also offers better quality and editing, and they even occasionally shoot with drones. For instance, in “John Cantlie Speaking about the US Bombing Mosul University and Popular Areas in the City” (Amaq Agency [IS], 2016-07-12), a drone is used to show the extent of the damage caused by the American bombings on Mosul University facilities. With respect to the spoken language, IS offers more videos in foreign languages, especially in English, and not just with English subtitles. This is probably linked to the fact that they are also featuring more Westerners and foreign fighters in their videos.

These videos were disseminated in different ways through the Internet. For instance, Twitter is widely used by jihadists to relay other communications platforms. According to Klausen (2015), social media has significantly changed the communicative dynamics of jihadist organizations. In the age of social media, jihadists have less need for traditional media such as the Al-Jazeera channel to reach an outside audience. They count on their sympathizers to share their material, which then often gets

broadcast on mainstream media. Since there are now fewer “jihadist websites”, most of the video diffusion has to follow a more or less complex path before reaching the desired audience. At times, jihadi organizations use social media such as Facebook or YouTube to directly upload videos, but since many of these companies strive to remove content that violates their users’ policies, some jihadists opt for web hosting or archiving websites instead. Unlike the main social media, some of them seek to protect freedom of expression and/or a free and open Internet (Milton 2016). This helps jihadists because their videos tend to be longer on these types of platforms. When they opt for this solution, they then need to share the download links through other communication channels. These channels could be social media or instant messaging applications. While instant messaging applications like Telegram are now gaining popularity within the GJM and among young people in general, social media such as Facebook and Twitter are still the most widely used channels (Eltantawy and Wiest 2011; Gerbaudo 2012; Khondker 2011; Prucha 2016). However, according to Conway et al. (2017), the activities on social media platforms “has largely been reduced to tactical use of throwaway accounts for distributing links to pro-IS content on other platforms, rather than as a space for public IS support and influencing activity” (p. 30). In addition, instead of linking directly to the videos on such platforms, the shared link can also be a forum thread or a text hosting website like Justpaste.it, which offers the possibility of enlisting multiple download links for different file formats or languages (Carter, Maher, and Neumann 2014).

As for the mobilization strategies, this discourse analysis highlighted the importance of religion as justification. Both AQ and IS often refer to quotes from the Koran or to religion statements more broadly to justify their statements and actions. As the following quotes suggest, IS justifies the establishment of the Caliphate as the will of Allah, and AQ has no doubt about the outcome of its fight on the battlefield, because it is God’s fight and God cannot be beaten:

So the religion was lost and the lands usurped, but Allah sends forth for the Ummah at the head of everyone hundred years, a man who will renew for the Ummah its religion.

“The structure of the Khilafah”, Al-Hayat Media (IS), 2016-07-06

We derive our strength from the Almighty, who cannot be defeated, from the Subjugator, who cannot be overcome, and from the All-powerful who cannot be beaten.

“Such are the days”, Al-Manarah al-Bayda (AQ), 2016-04-22

The Motivational Framing

In order to mobilize Westerners, religion and utopia are the two main topics that transcend all types of narratives – these two themes being closely interrelated. More specifically, the jihadist account and vision underline dystopian and utopian narratives where religion is fundamental and essential to justify the jihadi call for action (Juergensmeyer 2017; Moghadam 2008). The religious discourse resonates with the audience and offers elements to theatricalize and amplify the proposed utopian vision. Religious discourse also contains a lot of symbolism and emotions which can be used to mobilize its audience (Ducol 2013). As illustrated in many of the previous quotes, jihadists rely on theological arguments to incite to offensive jihad.

By drawing on the main emotional pull factors that can be used in a discourse for mobilization, such as thrill, justice and revenge (Borum 2014; Ducol 2013; McCauley and Moskalenko 2008; Venhaus 2010), the IS discourse mostly alludes to a desire for revenge, aggressiveness and violence. It also romanticizes their ideology, as it proposes an ideal future within the Caliphate, since it is a place ruled according to Shari'a principles and where Islam is the state religion. On the other hand, AQ emphasizes a personal identity for its followers through the use of personal narratives and examples to follow, in order to provide different identities that their sympathizers can relate to. Finally, both of them also emphasize the group identity and its values of bravery and honour (Macnair and Frank 2017). They try to convey

group cohesion and friendship among the fighters in order to fill a need for belonging, and they show a positive picture of the organization which can, in addition, provide a certain status to those who join it.

Finally, these videos show several ways in which the jihadist propaganda is consistent with Cialdini's (1993) principles of influence. The first principle, reciprocity, is used to incite Muslim to engage in jihad because Allah granted them the life they have:

Now I direct my words to the Muslims of France, those whom Allah has blessed with the correct understanding of the texts and with care for. Attack these kuffar however you can.

“My Revenge”, Al-Hayat Media (IS), 2016-07-05

The IS mobilization strategy is also consistent with the consensus and liking principles as they are featuring more foreign fighters in their video. It demonstrates that they opt for a strategy of persuasion by peers. They call for familiar representations with which certain populations can more easily relate, and see them as someone who can better understand their reality. In contrast, by featuring leaders of the movement and ideologists, AQ tends to rely on the authority principle, where people are more likely to follow people who appear to know what they are doing and why they are doing it.

CONCLUDING REMARKS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

In a context where unconventional warfare is more common than traditional warfare, new capacities need to be developed. Conventional interventions against terrorist groups are still unavoidable, but the success of such interventions also depends on other tactics, such as influence activities. Indeed, the battle for “hearts and mind” seems to become more important, and this is the case particularly with conflict involving terrorist actors, who themselves use extensive PSYOPS campaigns to which we need to respond (Clow 2009). Numerous PSYOPS against hostile propaganda have shown to be effective, but actual techniques still need to be improved (Purcell 2007). In particular, to conduct effective strategic communications, a deep understanding of the opponent and its techniques is essential. This applies to

various audience-centric approaches such as TAA tactics, where the analysis “*strive to see things from their viewpoint in order to understand how the ‘right’ solution would look like to them*” (Mackay and Tatham 2011, p.168). A better understanding of the various jihadist mobilization strategies is also crucial to the implementation of empirical-based prevention strategies. The more we know on how they try to appeal sympathizers, the more we can build specific interventions based on the pull-factor identified therein (Brachman and McCants 2006; Fishman and Moghadam 2011; Venhaus 2010).

The way this research has been conducted shows that TAA, and in this case the SCAME approach, can benefit from theoretical inputs. The recent evolution of jihadist activism has greatly complicated the common understanding of this phenomenon and the ways in which governments and societies need to respond to it. The decentralization of the GJM and its adaptation to new communication technologies have resulted in the construction of narratives that are much more adapted to a variety of audience (Neumann 2013). By studying these various discourses, this study shows that it is possible to clearly identify the main topics of the various jihadist discourses. It also suggests that we can get a sense of the risk that each jihadist organization can pose to Western countries at any given time. Indeed, on the one hand, according to the content of this sample, AQ appeared to present a lesser threat than IS for the West at that time, as AQ was more focused on consolidating its local assets than on waging an offensive jihad. The Global Terrorism Database indicates that no attacks against the West were claimed by AQ in 2016, whereas IS inspired attacks in many Western countries during the same period, such as France, Belgium, Germany and the U.S. This research also posits that IS videos may be more attractive to young people: they are generally shorter and of better quality, feature young fighters, present attractive environments, and increasingly use a language level tailored to sympathizers who do not possess extensive theological knowledge. In addition, producers use recognized persuasive techniques. Finally, this findings show that relying on the collective action framing theory allows to better understand the diversity of the framing strategies used by the multiple organizations of the GJM. In addition, a

reflection based on Cialdini's (1993) principles help us understand their use of influence techniques. It is worth noting that these are preliminary results, and that further analyses will allow more specific comparisons between jihadi groups and media production houses and provide a historical perspective going back to 2006. Accordingly, further analyses of this propaganda will provide a deeper understanding of the discourse we need to counter.

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