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VIDEO CONTENT ANALYSIS OF THE TALIBAN, ISIS, AND AL-QA'IDA: COMMON  
THEMES AND THE UTILIZATION OF DIFFERENT SONIC MODES

by

UMNIAH AL BAYATI

Under the Direction of Andrew Wedeman, PhD

ABSTRACT

Terrorist organizations, such as the Taliban, the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, and al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula, produce videos to disseminate their messages. Even though there are many studies closely examining the text in jihadi videos, there are fewer studies that examine multimodal messages, specifically the audiovisual messages. This study aims to examine the audiovisual messages in videos produced by three jihadi groups: the Taliban, ISIS, and AQAP. This research attempts to answer the following strategic questions. One, what are some common themes in propaganda videos produced by the Taliban, ISIS, and al-Qa'ida? Two, how does each group utilize different Sonic Modes in common themes? Three, how do the three jihadi groups compare in their utilization of different Sonic Modes? Some of the findings include the utilization of specific common themes amongst the three groups, and these groups differ in their utilization of the audiovisual messages.

INDEX WORDS: Terrorism, Anashid, Music, Taliban, Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, ISIS, al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula, AQAP, Themes, Sonic Modes

VIDEO CONTENT ANALYSIS OF THE TALIBAN, ISIS, AND AL-QA'IDA: COMMON  
THEMES AND THE UTILIZATION OF DIFFERENT SONIC TECHNIQUES

by

UMNIAH AL BAYATI

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2020

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2020

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

Over the past decades, terrorist organizations have become particularly skillful at producing multimedia videos as a way to disseminate their messages but also, and this has become more apparent since the rise of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (variously referred to as ISIS, ISIL, or Daesh), to incite political violence. When examining jihadi videos, communication strategies, specifically the audiovisual information-sharing channel, become easily perceptible that thus far have not gathered much attention. Even though there are studies that closely examine the text in jihadi videos (Mahood & Rane, 2017) or the utilization of jihadi music in media products (Gråtrud, 2016; Lahoud, 2017; Lahoud & Pieslak, 2018; Pieslak, 2015, 2017; Pieslak & Lahoud, 2018), there are fewer studies (Allendorfer & Herring, 2015; Winkler & Pieslak, 2018) that examine audiovisual communication strategy in jihadi videos.

Jihadi organizations recognize the benefits of exploiting different communication strategies in their videos to disseminate their messages and “consolidating media power as a necessary step for accomplishing the end goals of the group.” (Winkler & Pieslak, 2018) Some of these communication strategies used extensively in jihadi videos include using different sonic elements, such as music utilization, prerecorded or live, alongside battleground and non-battleground sounds. The added value of sonic elements (Chion, 2019) reinforces the visual content by encouraging increased individual understanding and recall (Drew & Grimes, 1987; Graber, 1996) of the jihadi group’s primary messages (Winkler & Pieslak, 2018). Specifically, combining sonic elements with visual content makes the experience more enjoyable (Chion, 2019) and memorable (Graber, 1996). Therefore, pictures integrated with words, particularly dramatic pictures, make the message more memorable than pictures combined with text (Graber, 1996). The prominence of rich sonic elements in media products is well recognized by many

extremist organizations, such as al-Qa'ida and its affiliates, Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), Hizb ut Tahrir (Lemieux & Nill, 2011), Hammerskin Nation, Hale's Creativity Movement Christian Radicals (Pieslak, 2015), the Taliban, and ISIS.

Analyzing the visual content used by the Taliban, ISIS, and al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula or AQAP in the videos entails establishing common themes utilized in these videos, and to this end, several themes have been identified. Such themes include Military Training, Martyrdom, Conquest and Military Operation, Oppression and Suffering, *Amaliyat Inghimasiyah*<sup>1</sup>, or martyrdom operation, Punishment and Execution, and Power Projection. Across all videos analyzed, each group utilizes different sonic techniques, such as music utilization in the background, foreground, or live singing, battleground and non-battleground sounds, and vocalization. Therefore, this study aims to examine the audiovisual messaging strategies in videos produced by the three jihadi groups.

By exploring a total of 118 videos produced by the Taliban, ISIS, and AQAP, this research contributes to the growing field that examines multimodal communication strategies of jihadi videos by offering an understanding of some of the common themes and audiovisual communication messages used by the three jihadi groups in their videos. Studying audiovisual communication strategies is of vital importance because of not only the ability of information to reach a broader and younger audience but also the ability of audiovisual messages to enhance memory and increase their memorability (Graber, 1996). In jihadi videos, those who examine the interaction between multimodal elements attempt to find the group's strategic themes, preferred messaging strategies (Winkler & Pieslak, 2018), and how they present their messages

<sup>1</sup> Amaliyat inghimasiyah (plural), amaliyah inghimasiyah (singular) meaning a martyrdom operation or immersing operation.

(Allendorfer & Herring, 2015) to a shared audience. Also, studies that examine jihadi imagery and text production through multimodal analysis attempt to find how extremist groups use semiotic messages to incite violence, influence potential online recruits, and legitimize their views (O'Halloran et al., 2019).

Despite great contributions from other studies in the field of visual analysis and the interaction of multimodal communication strategies in jihadi videos, there is a lack in the comparative analysis of audiovisual communication messages used in videos produced by the Taliban, ISIS, and AQAP. Therefore, this research attempts to fill in the gap by answering the following strategic questions. One, what are some common themes in propaganda videos produced by the Taliban, ISIS, and al-Qa'ida? Two, how does each group utilize different Sonic Modes in common themes? Three, how do the three jihadi groups compare in their utilization of different Sonic Modes? By answering these questions, this research is adding to the broader literature that examines multimodal communication messages by establishing common strategic themes and comparing the audiovisual communication strategies in videos produced by the three jihadi groups. Additionally, the results of this study help analysts, policymakers, scholars, and online responders recognize some of the common themes utilized by the three groups and understand how each of these groups use the audiovisual information-sharing channel and the observed differences between them.

While such research has an underlying value of establishing common strategic themes used in videos disseminated by the Taliban, ISIS, and AQAP, there should be a growing need to study multimodal communication messages in jihadi videos. A multimodal analysis is best used to understand what lies beyond the surface analysis of content or platform (Wignell et al., 2017) and produce a better understanding of the different communication toolkit used by jihadi

organizations in their media campaigns. Despite the fact that there are studies that examine multimodal interactions of jihadi media campaigns (Allendorfer & Herring, 2015; Al-Rawi & Jiwani, 2017; Chouliaraki & Kissas, 2018; O'Halloran et al., 2019; Wignell et al., 2017), especially the contributions of Winkler and Pieslak's audiovisual study of ISIS videos, this study adds to multimodal studies by examining the audiovisual messages in videos produced by the Taliban, ISIS, and AQAP, and compares the similarities and difference between group's utilization of sonic elements within common themes. Even though the three groups utilize similar Sonic Modes in their videos to reinforce common themes, there are discrepancies within the utilization of common themes and sonic elements in the videos. Such discrepancies imply that the groups are of different nature and with different aims and goals. The oversight of studying communication strategies of jihadi media campaign may risks, as has been established by Allendorfer and Herring's study, overlooking how jihad groups present their messages using dynamic communication strategies towards a targeted audience. Therefore, when countering violent extremism, analysts can apply more comprehensive methods for a more accurate understanding of extremist communication strategies to create effective, result-oriented counter-propaganda messages.

This thesis is divided into several sections starting with a literature review, the purpose of which is to introduce the concept and significance of multimodality and explore one of the most prominent sonic elements used in jihadi videos, i.e., jihadi anashid. This is followed by an explanation of the methodology used in the study and followed by subsections of detailed interpretations of the results.

## 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The bulk of studies to date that examine jihadi media campaigns focus on exploring a single communication strategy by studying either videos, images, text, or music. Many studies are focusing on visual or imagery content analysis (Euben, 2017; Friis, 2015; Hafez, 2007; Mahood & Rane, 2017; Ramsay, 2013; Stenersen, 2017; Winkler et al., 2019, 2020), and some focus on the textual analysis of jihadi poetry (Creswell & Haykel, 2017). Others, on the other hand, examine sonic elements of jihadi media products (Frishkopf, 2000; Gråtrud, 2016; Lahoud, 2017; Lahoud & Pieslak, 2018; Pieslak, 2015, 2017; Pieslak et al., 2019; Pieslak & Lahoud, 2018; Weinreich & Pelevin, 2012). Even though multimodal studies of jihadi media campaigns hold a promising future, to date, there are fewer studies aimed at exploring jihadi multimodal communication messages (Allendorfer & Herring, 2015; Al-Rawi & Jiwani, 2017; Chouliaraki & Kissas, 2018; O'Halloran et al., 2019; Wignell et al., 2017; Winkler & Pieslak, 2018).

Since the use of multimodal messages creates a dynamic method of information sharing, one contemplates how is multimodality defined, and why is it significant when studying jihadi videos. Lemke defines multimodal discourse analysis (Gee & Handford, 2012) as “set of techniques for making connections between texts and their meaning,” in which, the text is not only words, but it can also denote visual forms of communication, such as diagrams, images, sound effects and music, full-motion videos, etc. (Lemke, 2012, p.79). Therefore, language is a multimodal semiotic system in which the interaction between the signs and symbols can deploy and construct more complex meaning (Lemke, 2012) and can exist in two, three, or four dimensions (Kress, 2012). Lemke describes all information-making channels, visual, sound, symbols, etc., as multimodal, especially information sharing through videos. Video is a “multimedia and multichannel technology” in which its content is multimodal and dynamic

through the combination of “action, language, non-speech sound effects, and visual semiotics” that contribute to the creation of a real-time sense of what is going on (Lemke, 2012, p.83). Accordingly, multimodal messages have meanings beyond the capabilities of traditional language and denote various ways of communication, such as visual, sonic, and other semiotic means (Jewitt, 2014).

This study focuses on the sonic and visual elements in videos produced by the Taliban, ISIS, and AQAP because audio and visual elements enhance our understanding of information transmission and processing capabilities (Graber, 1996). Information shared through the audiovisual channel encourages memory enhancement due to the effects generated by combining pictures with sound, which in essence make the information more memorable and recoverable than information shared solely through audio or text (Graber, 1996; Grimes, 1990). Thus, the merging of multimodality is more powerful because a single modal information-sharing channel leaves a “blind spot in our visualization in media (Cook, 2015, p.126), and multimodal channels are more immersive and powerful.

Furthermore, there is an essential relationship between the visual and audio elements because the sound has an *added value* that gives the image a definite impression, which contributes to creating a better-remembered experience of the content (Chion, 2019). Chion adds that there are two ways or effects in which the added value can create emotions with the visual image; *empathetic* and *anempathetic* effects. Empathetic effect of sound—derived from empathy—is when sound, such as music, can directly express its participation in the scene’s tone, rhythm, and phrasing, which in turn can invoke emotions, such as sadness, happiness, and movement. Additionally, Chion describes the anempathetic effect of sound is intensifying emotions by



progressing in a “steady, undaunted, and ineluctable manner” in which the music is indifferent to the scenes (Chion, 2019, p.8).

In addition to the added value of sound to the image, the sound can enrich the image by giving it a definitive impression in the immediate experience one has from it (Chion, 2019) in a way that text or writing alone fails to enrich the image. This forges a relationship between “something one sees and something one hears.” (Chion, 2019, p.5) Due to the significance of the forged relationship between the sound and the image, generally, the audience can process sonic and visual information faster and with less resistance than textual information (Winkler & Pieslak, 2018). Information transmitted audiovisually is more memorable and enjoyable than information shared through text because the sound is a critical element that is designed to draw the attention of the viewer to the visual content. Therefore, sound elements in jihadi videos enhance the visual content by making it more memorable and easier to process and recall.

More importantly, jihadi organizations emphasize heavily on using a specific form of sound, i.e., anashid, in their media campaigns. In *44 Ways to Support Jihad*, a 2009 essay written by Anwar al-Awlaki, the jihadi leader encouraged his supporters to use anashid because of anashid’s ability to reach a wider and younger audience, and he identified anashid as a necessary component in creating a “jihadi culture” (Lahoud, 2017, p.42). Another jihadi leader, Osama bin Laden, recognized the importance of anashid early on in the 1970s by establishing anashid group and distributing the tapes to his friends (Said, 2012). Hence, the combination of sound and image is not the only factor why anashid are an important sonic element in jihadi media products. Jihadi leaders place their emphasis on the usefulness of anashid to attract the listener and produce an “activist jihadi culture.” (Lahoud, 2017, p.43)

When exploring some of the different sonic components in jihadi media products, one finds that jihadi music, anashid, is often used in video production. Anashid are defined as a sung a capella (Lahoud, 2017) that are vocalized by one or several male voices (Gråtrud, 2016). Some associate the origin of jihadi anashid to the late 1960s during the Arab-Israeli War in which Fatah—a Palestinian political party—disseminated anashid with violence-endorsing themes (Pieslak, 2017). Others link the origin of jihadi anashid to the 1970s and 1980s because they are connected to Islamic revival in Western Asia and North Africa (WANA) region (Ramsay, 2013). During this period, jihadi organizations started producing videos, and, by the 2000s, the number of videos had increased exponentially due to technological advancement (Stenersen, 2017). At the same time, the strict views of Salafism<sup>2</sup> had begun to influence the content of jihadi anashid, and this contributed to a stricter interpretation of music utilization, including influencing content, lack of instruments, and male-only munshid.

The stricter interpretation of music utilization contributed to the current structure of jihadi anashid, in which such structure is identical to jihadi poetry because anashid are composed in classical Arabic by applying the rules of Arabic poetry (Gråtrud, 2016). So, principally, they are indistinguishable from jihadi poetry (Ramsay, 2013). Since the use of musical instruments in jihadi anashid is forbidden, jihadi organizations manipulate and multilayer the voices in anashid to introduce a relatively modern effect to voices that substitute the use of instruments (Ramsay, 2013; Stenersen, 2017). Hence, sound effects paint anashid with contemporary quality. Also, the

<sup>2</sup> Salafism, from *al-salaf al-salih*, or the pious predecessors, is a term used to describe pious Muslims who represent the best of Islam because they follow Prophet Muhammad and his predecessors as closely as possible. However, Salafis are not a homogenous group because they are different categories of Salafis, including those who focus on education and missionary activities, politics, or jihad, who are considered minority among the Salafis (Wagemakers, 2018).

structure of anashid—composed in classical Arabic, applying a single meter, and two hemistichs—help emphasize repetition and rapid sequence of sound (Gråtrud, 2016).

The *munshid* (singer) has to possess specific skills that stimulate the emotions of listeners and master “rhetorical flourishes... and linguistic tools to facilitate memorization,” such skills include analogy, repetition, a contrast in meanings, and especially rhymed prose in which the combination produces a musical output, even though the nashid is not accompanied by musical instruments (Lahoud, 2017, p.44). The influence of repetition on story understanding and auditory recall is highlighted in Drew and Grimes’ study in which they found when there is a high-redundancy condition, there is a higher story understanding and auditory recall (Drew & Grimes, 1987). For example, Gråtrud (2016) explains how, in the ISIS nasheed *Clanging of the Swords*, the chorus<sup>3</sup> is repeated at least sixteen out of twenty-five times, and even when there is no chorus—that when some lines are repeated multiple times—it is through this repetition that key ideas become emphasized and emotions become engaged.

Others who study jihadi anashid argue that there is a cultural value to the utilization of anashid in jihadi media campaigns (Hegghammer, 2017; Lahoud, 2017; Pieslak, 2017; Ramsay, 2013). Such cultural significance can be identified as “products and practices that do something other than fill the basic military needs of jihadi groups.” (Hegghammer, 2017, p.5). Ramsay highlights the notion of *cultural capital*, such as but not limited to, the right taste in music, in which, the investment in cultural capital can ensure social membership and subculture groupings, like fan communities (Ramsay, 2013). Although the origin of anashid is contested, some jihadi organizations pursue anashid production as means to “enticing recruits, retaining members, and motivating members to action by eliciting emotion,” (Pieslak, 2017, p.63) Specifically, Lemieux

<sup>3</sup> Part of a song that is repeated several times by more than one singer (Dictionary.com, n.d.).

and Nill (2011) state that music can create a platform that enables shared interests, concerns, likes and dislikes, and ideas of members to be underlined and raised. Moreover, it is essential to note that music with violent lyrics can potentially increase the amount of aggressive thoughts and feelings. Still, it may not be directly linked to behaviors in all instances (Lemieux & Nill, 2011).

Despite different interpretations of anashid origin and studies examining the themes utilized in jihad anashid (Gråtrud, 2016; Lahoud, 2017; Lahoud & Pieslak, 2018; Pieslak, 2015; Pieslak & Lahoud, 2018; Weinreich & Pelevin, 2012), it is essential to look at the audiovisual messaging strategies in jihadi videos as to analyze the connection between sonic elements and content. To this end, this study examines the audiovisual communication strategies in the Taliban, ISIS, and AQAP videos. To examine the interaction of sonic and visual strategies, this study utilizes a multimodal approach, specifically *reinforcement* and *redundancy* of the sonic elements. In their study, Winkler and Pieslak state that multimodal components—reinforcement and redundancy—serve to implore framing cues and broader narratives, which is made possible through activating “pre-existing attitudes that increase message salience” (Winkler & Pieslak, 2018, p.346). The ability to repeat segments—redundancy—heightens the viewer’s recall speed and accuracy, comprehension, and learning. Specifically, Winkler and Pieslak’s study examines the reinforcement aspect of sonic elements that are used to appeal to the visual and auditory senses since viewers process sonic and visual information faster than textual information. Therefore, this thesis focuses on examining audiovisual communication strategies rather than other information-sharing channels, and that is not to say other information-sharing channels are not worthy of scholarly attention. Rather, the utilization of music and other sonic techniques in jihadi videos has deep meaning in jihadi culture and the ability of music to entice recruits and elicit emotions.

### 3 METHODOLOGY

In this study, there is a total of 118 videos analyzed: ninety-five videos produced by the Taliban between 2011 and 2018, with an average length of 17 minutes (median of 9.5 minutes); thirteen videos produced by ISIS between 2015 and 2016, with an average length of 13 minutes (median of 10.5 minutes); and ten videos produced by AQAP between 2010 and 2018, with an average length of 24 minutes (median of 25.4 minutes). For a complete list of videos' title, date, duration, and length, refer to *Appendix A, B, and C*. The number of videos listed are by no means representative of the total number of videos produced by the groups. It is important to note that since the collection process of the Taliban videos started in 2018, the majority of videos in the sample are from 2018, and the Taliban videos from earlier years were added to the sample to consider the change in communication strategies utilized by the group over time.

Furthermore, in an effort to examine the audiovisual messaging strategies, ISIS and AQAP videos were selected based on the dynamic of the audiovisual content in the videos. That is, videos showing still images, or a screenshot were not considered during the collection process. The reason for excluding still images and screenshots is because they lack dynamic visual content and sonic elements, i.e., lack of anashid utilization and background sounds. Furthermore, this research excludes anashid videos—those that are comparable to music videos—because, in some of these videos, different Sonic Modes are not utilized to their fullest extent, and such videos often utilize foregrounded anashid as the sole Sonic Mode. The selection of both ISIS and AQAP videos, based on their audiovisual messaging strategies, was done randomly; ISIS videos were selected from a sample of over 600 videos and AQAP from a sample of over 450 videos.

Currently, the Mobilizing Media<sup>4</sup> team collected 478 videos produced by the Taliban, 913 ISIS videos, and 143 AQAP videos. Two things are important to note regarding the data collection process. One, the numbers mentioned above are by no means representative of all videos produced by the three groups because some videos are circulating through online platforms that have not been captured nor included in the sample of videos. Second, the analysis of videos was conducted over sixteen months, starting with video analysis of the Taliban, followed by ISIS then al-Qa'ida. Therefore, as the analysis was being conducted, the groups were producing newer videos that are not considered when selecting the sample.

### **3.1 Data Analysis**

All 118 videos are analyzed through NVivo Software by manually coding videos. As will be discussed below, the use of an extensive and detailed codebook allowed for capturing the maximum amount of details in videos produced by the Taliban. *Table 3.1.1* shows a detailed view of how the variables are defined and measured in the study. The common themes or visual content observed in videos are Military Training, Martyrdom, Conquest and Military Operation, Oppression and Suffering, Amaliyat Inghimasiyah, Punishment and Execution, and Power Projection. A detailed description of the themes is discussed in the Results section. Furthermore, Sonic Modes observed in the study are anashid playing in the foreground, anashid playing in the background, battleground sounds, non-battleground sounds, live singing, and vocalization.

The codebook utilized in this study is supported by themes and sonic elements observed in other studies. The Martyrdom theme utilized in this study is also observed in (Aggarwal, 2016;

<sup>4</sup> *Mobilizing Media: A Deep and Comparative Analysis of Magazines, Music, and Videos in the Context of Terrorism* is a project that seeks to examine diverse components of successful online propaganda by extremist groups. The project is funded by the Minerva Research Initiative through the Air Force Office of Scientific Research.

Hafez, 2007; Mahood & Rane, 2017; Stenersen, 2017; Winkler & Pieslak, 2018). In these studies, the dominant narrative of martyrdom rewards is often highlighted in jihadi videos (Winkler & Pieslak, 2018) by showing long clips of martyrdom (Hafez, 2007). Therefore, one would expect there is a high emphasis on the Martyrdom theme in jihadi videos; but, how do these groups compare in coverage percentage of the Martyrdom theme? The second theme observed is the Military Training theme that is underlined in Winkler and Pieslak's study. They observe the utilization of specific core themes in Military Training segments in ISIS videos, such themes include all recruits successfully complete the training, recruits who complete the training are superior and become unified members of ISIS fighter group, and ISIS military will attain its military campaign goals. Therefore, another prominent theme this study looks for is Military Training. The Conquest and Military Operation theme observed in this study is also identified by (Stenersen, 2017; Winkler et al., 2020), in which Winkler et al. state that the competitive nature of non-state groups is contributed to the use of *military operation* against state actors. So, one would expect to find Conquest and Military Operation theme in jihadi videos since such content indicates the competitiveness and legitimacy of the group.

*Table 3.1.1 Measurement of Codes in the Taliban, ISIS, and AQAP Videos*

	<i>Code</i>	<i>Description</i>
<i>Common Themes</i>	Military Training	Showing Group of fighters in training camps who are practicing physical exercises and firearm training. Physical training includes stretching, jogging, sit-ups, rope-climbing, etc. Firearm training includes practicing aiming skills by firing shots from handguns, rifles, heavy machine guns, throwing grenades, firing missiles and Rocket-Propelled Grenade (RPG), etc.

	Martyrdom	Showing martyrs' clips or images, such as recorded messages of pre- and/or post-martyrdom operations. Martyrdom clips also include dead bodies of martyrs who perished in combat and narrator showing and talking about dead martyrs.
	Conquest and Military Operation	Fighters are shown raiding a city/military compound and liberating the territory from state and international troops. This theme is different from Amaliyat Inghimasiyah because the fighters are much greater in numbers and are not carrying a suicide mission (even if they will not survive the military operation), and there are no pre-recorded messages of mujahidin before conducting the operation.
	Oppression and Suffering	Showing clips of civilian casualty or oppression of citizens at the hands of local government, international alliances (NATO, Security Belt Forces, etc.), the United States, and other terrorist organizations. Such images of oppression often include bodies of injured or dead children due to airstrikes.
	Amaliyat Inghimasiyah	Showing martyrs heavily armed and going into a lethal martyrdom operation in an attempt to weaken the enemy and inflict as many casualties as possible. This theme includes footage when martyrs are conducting the martyrdom operation.
	Punishment and Execution	Showing clips of how the jihadi group is establishing "justice" by punishing those who defy their rule, committed crimes, or captured military personnel and police officers. Clips shown in videos include executions, beheadings, and dead bodies of military personnel after a battle.
	Power Projection	Terrorist groups show their military capabilities, including showing clips of a significant number of fighters. Also, clips of spoils of war, such as firearms, heavy machine guns, ammunition, tanks and High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle, etc.
<i>Sonic Modes</i>	Anashid in the Foreground	Nasheed is playing in the foreground either dominating the sound element or with other sounds, such as speech or battle sounds.



Anashid in the Background	Nasheed is playing in the background dominated by other sounds.
Battle Sounds	Sounds of gunshots, explosions, flame, jets or helicopter flying overhead, etc.
Non-Battle Sounds	Sounds of people shouting, thunder, animals (horse's neigh, lion's roar), burning sound of paper, etc.
Live Singing	Live singing of anashid
Vocalization	Humming sound

Moreover, Hafez (2007) finds that *humiliation* experienced at the hands of “arrogant powers” in which such clips are accompanied by “chilling melancholic chants” and images of children and women killed with bombardment (Hafez, 2007, p.99). Hence, to justify martyrdom committed by the groups against state actors and other groups, one would find Oppression and Suffering of civilians at the hands of “arrogant powers” to be reinforced with Sonic Modes, such as vocalization. Another theme that often captures scholarly attention is the Punishment and Execution theme. Such a theme is detected by (Euben, 2017; Friis, 2015; Mahood & Rane, 2017; Stenersen, 2017) and includes executions of those who committed a “crime,” such as captured military personnel, police officers, tribe leaders, and civilians within the controlled territory by the group. Therefore, it is important to explore the audiovisual content that falls under the Punishment and Execution theme since such theme is often examined in ISIS video studies.

In addition to themes observed by other studies, this study looks at additional themes used in video production by the Taliban, ISIS, and AQAP. Such themes include Amaliyat Inghimasiyah and Power Projection. Specifically, this study distinguishes between Martyrdom and Amaliyat Inghimasiyah segments. For a detailed description of the difference, refer to *Table 3.1.1*. The reason for distinguishing between the two themes, even though they might fall under a similar category, is to explore whether there is a difference in the utilization of sonic elements when the

groups are talking about martyrdom and when show clips of martyrdom operations. Also, adding Power Projection theme is essential to the analysis because these groups often show off their military capabilities and spoils-of-war in the videos.

Furthermore, sonic elements included in the codebook are also observed in other studies. This study focuses on examining how and where live singing is utilized in the videos produced by the three groups. In (Pieslak et al., 2019), the authors examine the utilization of “live recitation” in a collection of 755 ISIS videos. Also, in (Stenersen, 2017; Winkler & Pieslak, 2018), the authors notice the utilization of different anashid techniques (foregrounded or backgrounded) when examining the audiovisual messaging strategies in jihadi videos. Therefore, closely examining the changes in anashid techniques (foreground vs. background vs. live singing), non-battleground and battleground sounds, and vocalization produces a better assessment of how jihadi groups use diverse Sonic Modes in their video products.

The analysis process of each group’s videos was conducted in two stages. The first stage includes assigning codes to the videos using all codes provided, and the second stage includes increasing the accuracy of the coded segments by assigning specific codes to the four coders. The Taliban videos were coded first, followed by ISIS, then AQAP. During the first stage of the Taliban and ISIS video analysis, coders employed a comprehensive list of codes. Then, the second stage of data analysis entailed code-specialization in one set of codes and were asked to confirm the accuracy of the coded segments, add new segments to specific codes, dispute it, or point out confusion to be considered separately and clarified.

During the initial coding process, four coders utilized a comprehensive codebook that contains detailed codes to analyze the Taliban videos. For instance, under the Oppression and Suffering theme, they were instructed to code segments that fall under “destroyed

buildings/infrastructure, civilian victims, victims as women, victims as children, etc.” The detailed codes guided the coders towards a more accurate placement of segments in their proper category. Also, by focusing their attention on specific codes, coders are better able to notice the emergence of new observations that might fall under a particular theme. For example, if one coder noticed the emergence of “censored civilian victims” that would fall under the Oppression and Suffering theme, then, during the weekly meeting, coders discussed the emergence and prominence of new observations. This process allowed coders to capture new observations and increase the accuracy of the coded theme.

Moreover, throughout the coding process, coders met weekly to discuss and resolve discrepancies when utilizing the codes. For example, when one coder observed the use of people shouting sounds in the foreground and other coders did not directly notice a similar observation, they met to clarify the coding and how to categorize it. Therefore, weekly meetings discussing the codebook and new observations contributed to strengthening inter-coder reliability.

After completing the first stage of coding the Taliban videos, coders moved to analyze ISIS videos by utilizing the same comprehensive codebook. After finishing coding all ISIS videos, coders were assigned specific codes and were instructed to check the accuracy of the coded segments that were observed during the first stage. For example, Sonic Modes were assigned to one coder, and the coder re-watched all of the Taliban and ISIS videos to check the correctness of the coded segments. Consequently, increasing the accuracy of the coded segments as well as inter-coder reliability.

After checking the accuracy of their specialized coded segments in the Taliban and ISIS videos, two coders started analyzing 10 AQAP videos by utilizing a more general codebook. It is important to mention that, unlike the first stage analysis of the Taliban and ISIS videos, AQAP

first stage included utilizing a broad codebook and coding for general thematic content, such as coding for Oppression and Suffering theme and not detailed codes. As coders became more specialized and familiar with the analysis process, utilizing a broad codebook allowed us to preserve time and focus on specific codes. As for the second stage of coding, one coder re-watched AQAP videos and specialized in adding Sonic Modes to the analysis.

## 4 RESULTS

After careful analysis of videos produced by the Taliban, ISIS, and AQAP, this study finds two outcomes; one, there are seven common themes in videos produced by the three groups; and two, there are discrepancies within the sonic elements utilized in the common themes. The seven common themes observed in the videos are Military Training, Martyrdom, Conquest and Military Operation, Oppression and Suffering, Amaliyat Inghimasiyah, Punishment and Execution, and Power Projection. Moreover, Sonic Modes utilized in this study are anashid in the background, anashid in the foreground, vocalization, live singing, non-battle sounds, and battle sounds. The sections below further explain the two outcomes.

### 4.1 Common Themes

After examining the observed themes in other studies (Euben, 2017; Friis, 2015; Hafez, 2007; Mahood & Rane, 2017; Stenersen, 2017; Winkler et al., 2019; Winkler & Pieslak, 2018) and watching the 118 videos produced by the Taliban, ISIS, and AQAP, one primary result is the emergence of shared thematic content in videos produced by the three groups, such as Military Training, Martyrdom, Conquest and Military Operation, Oppression and Suffering, Amaliyat Inghimasiyah, Punishment and Execution, and Power Projection.

#### 4.1.1 *Military Training*

In Military Training segments, the three organizations show a group of men in boot camps, training to improve their physical endurance, and arm-to-arm combat and firearm skills. For example, in the Taliban's video, *Convoy of Conquest #12*, there are five references of Military Training segments covering 62.27% of the entire duration of the video. The video begins by showing a large number of men marching while carrying firearms as well as RPGs. Then, divided segments show eleven men aiming at bullseye targets to increase their aiming skills and

weapon-handling. Later on, the same men are shown during physical and weaponry training in which the segments are divided between an individual martyr training followed by an introductory message from the same martyr. After introducing the martyrs, the camera switches to show the men exercising, such as doing warm-up activities and stretching, sprinting, core-building activities, and jumping through fire hoops and over burning tires. After physical training, individuals are practicing their firearm and aiming skills, such as shooting firearm while moving towards a target, lying down on the ground, and moving, then dropping down on the ground. Also, the video shows these men practicing taking down each other, handcuffing, and frisking. At the end of the video, there are short training segments shown of the martyrs after committing a martyrdom operation.

#### ***4.1.2 Martyrdom***

In Martyrdom segments, the jihadi groups are playing still or moving images of martyrs who died by an airstrike, during a military operation, or as a result of a martyrdom operation. Some of the content that falls under Martyrdom segments includes recorded messages of pre- and post-martyrdom operations, bodies of martyrs who died in combat, narrator talking about perished martyrs, or showing pictures of martyrs who died. For example, in a video produced by ISIS, *My son has preceded me*, the narrator is describing how the younger generation is now used to an environment riddled by war and struggle, and how they are making all the sacrifices. At the beginning of the video, the narrator is reading a short script between a father and a son, in which the father is encouraging his son to commit martyrdom so he can join all other martyrs in heaven. Then, clips of the young martyr with his father are showing the father's reasons for encouraging his son to walk the martyrdom path. In a later clip, an ISIS interview team is conducting Q&A with the young 14-year-old martyr and his father. By solely examining clips of martyrs before

committing amaliyah inghimasiyah, one can distinguish between the utilization of Sonic Modes before, during, and after a martyrdom operation. This is explained in further detail in section 4.1.5 *Amaliyat Inghimasiyah*.

### **4.1.3 Conquest and Military Operation**

In Conquest and Military Operation segments, the Taliban, ISIS, and AQAP utilize footage of when they are raiding military compounds or cities under the state's control. The men in the videos are using weapons, such as firearms, grenades, RPGs, and armored vehicles. Conquest and Military Operation content is different from the content that falls under Martyrdom or Amaliyat Inghimasiyah for two main reasons. One, the jihadi groups raid and attack military compounds and personnel in larger numbers than those who commit martyrdom operations. Second, the primary purpose of Conquest and Military Operation content is "liberating" a city, territory, or site from the enemy's control. On the other side, martyrdom operations are aimed at inflicting maximum damage to the enemy through suicidal operations. For instance, in *The Conquest of Ghazni*, a video produced by the Taliban, the group shows the aftermath of a military operation in Ghazni, Afghanistan. The video starts by showing the aftermath of the group's operation to "liberate" Ghazni. Afterward, there are interview clips with the mujahidin who participated in the military operation. In this video, the Conquest and Military Operation theme covers 96.56% of the total duration. In another example, a video produced by ISIS, *Raid of Suhayb al Iraqi*, falls under the theme in which there is one reference covering 100% of the video. The video shows a man giving a speech to the fighters before going to battle to motivate them as they prepare their weapons for battle. After that, the video shows actual footage of the battle that lasted for several hours, and at the end of the video, the screen is displaying clips of

the aftermath of the battle and the camera focused on the killed martyrs to show the significance of the sacrifice.

#### ***4.1.4 Oppression and Suffering***

In the Oppression and Suffering theme, the groups use content that describes the suffering and oppression experienced by unarmed civilians. Such content includes footage of the damage caused by airstrikes to human life and infrastructure. The groups often highlight civilian casualties by showing dead bodies of children, and the destruction of homes and businesses caused by airstrikes. Also, the groups illustrate how local forces and international alliances are treating civilians by showing footage of mistreatment experienced at the hands of government officials. An example of the theme can be seen in the *Repulsion of Aggression 1* by AQAP. Oppression and Suffering theme covers 95.82% of the total duration of the video, with four references to the theme. The video starts with Quranic recitation (Surah al-Nisa') in which the group emphasizes the part of the Surah that questions those who are not fighting for the oppressed. Then, the video shows an interview with a crying woman who says that the government is keeping her innocent sons incarcerated. After the interview, the video plays excerpts of media reporters who are discussing how the Yemeni government and the United States are indiscriminately killing civilians, and indefinitely imprisoning innocent Muslims. Later on, the video shifts to showing interviews with civilians who experienced persecution at the hands of the government, the Security Belt Forces, and the United States. It is important to note that videos containing Oppression and Suffering theme will often include Martyrdom and Amaliyat Inghimasiyah themes because the group justifies martyrdom by showing persecution of civilians at the hands of the local government and international alliances.



#### ***4.1.5 Amaliyat Inghimasiyah***

In Amaliyat Inghimasiyah segments, a martyr(s) is shown heavily armed, wearing a suicide vest, or riding a bombed vehicle as he goes into a suicide mission. Even though this theme implies that the martyr is going to die, this theme is different from Martyrdom segments because it contains segments when the martyr is conducting a martyrdom operation, and he is a few seconds away from dying. It is important to make the previously mentioned distinction to be able to capture how Sonic Modes differ when talking about martyrdom and then showing the actual martyrdom operation. An example is *My son has preceded me* produced by ISIS, where Amaliyat Inghimasiyah covers 23.68% of the total duration of the video. In the segment, after ISIS media crew conducts interviews with the martyr and his father, the group shows the father helping his son climb into the bombed vehicle and giving him final instructions on how to proceed. Later on, the video shows footage of the vehicle approaching a police checkpoint and then exploding upon reaching the target.

#### ***4.1.6 Punishment and Execution***

In Punishment and Execution segments, the three groups show how they are establishing justice and punishing those who defy their laws, commit crimes, or captured police officers and military personnel. Some of the clips that fall under the theme include executions, beheadings, and dead bodies of police officers or military personnel. For example, in *America and Its Latest Trap 2*, an AQAP video, there are two references to the theme in the video covering 11.49% of the total duration. In the first reference, the group shows recorded segments of American soldiers dropping down from a helicopter with a stretcher. Then, in the same reference, an interview with the mujahidin shows that they were fighting American soldiers and inflicted a lot of damage to them. In the second reference, the group shows various segments of what the group attained as

they fight the United States. In these segments, they show various images with a country's name followed by "Cemetery." For instance, they write "Yemen Cemetery" and accompany it with pictures of fallen U.S. soldiers, USS Cole after the attack, and coffins wrapped with the U.S. flag. In another example, ISIS produced video, *The good men*, there is one reference to the theme in which it covers 19.45% of the total duration of the video. In the video, the group is filming the execution of a prisoner.

#### ***4.1.7 Power Projection***

In Power Projection videos, the groups show their military capabilities by displaying a great number of fighters lining up and spoils-of-war, such as ammunition, firearms, heavy machine guns, tanks, High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle. An example of the theme is observed in the Taliban video, *Conquests in Qarabagh (Ghazni)*. The theme covers 47.36% of the total duration, with a total of 4 references to the theme. In the video, there is an interview with a man who is surrounded by firearms and ammunition and explaining how the conquest happened. In the following clip, there is a man in a room talking and surrounded with around ten assault rifles. Then, another clip shows a close shot to the weapons in possession of the group, such as assault rifles, machine guns, and RPGs displayed on the ground in a room. In another example, *Victory from God and an imminent conquest*, and ISIS videos, there are a total of 3 references, covering 31.50% of the total duration of the video. In the first reference, the camera shows a large number of men lined up, carrying their weapons, and ready to go into battle. Also, right before the battle, the scene is showing the soldiers riding their tanks and trucks and driving towards the targets.

## **4.2 Analysis of the Common Themes Observed in the Taliban, ISIS, and AQAP**

In *Table 4.2.1*, Conquest and Military Operation theme in the Taliban videos is the highest used theme, capturing 25.10% of the total duration of the coded segments. Followed by Military

Training segments in which 24.54% of the coded parts fall under the theme. So, approximately 50% of the coded segments in the Taliban videos are under Conquest and Military Operation and Military Training. Almost half of the coded segments fall under two themes, indicating that there is a strong emphasis on showing the group's capability to re-capture territory and their physical and combative skill. On the other hand, the lowest percentage of the total duration is under Punishment and Execution theme, capturing 0.79% of the coded segments, indicating that the group emphasizes less on establishing a "just" community and punishing captured government men. The remaining percentage of duration is somewhat evenly distributed between Martyrdom, Amaliyat Inghimasiyah, Oppression and Suffering, and Power Projection themes.

*Table 4.2.1 The Taliban's Number of Videos and References, Duration, and Range of Theme Coverage*

	<b>Theme</b>	<b>Number of Videos<sup>5</sup></b>	<b>Number of References<sup>6</sup></b>	<b>Approximate Total Duration (in minutes)</b>	<b>Percentage of Duration (in minutes)<sup>7</sup></b>	<b>Range of Theme Coverages<sup>8</sup></b>
<b><i>The Taliban</i></b>	Military Training	16	52	347	24.54%	0.5% - 95.7%
	Martyrdom	7	21	172	12.17%	12% - 53.5%
	Conquest and Military Operation	40	40	355	25.10%	0.02% - 98.9%
	Oppression and Suffering	25	32	214	15.18%	0.5% - 99.1%

<sup>5</sup> The total number of videos coded under each theme is not similar to the total number of videos analyzed for each group due to the existence of more than one theme in a given video. Hence, the total number of videos coded for the Taliban is 95, and the 113 reflect the existence of duplicate videos due to the group's utilization of more than one theme in one video.

<sup>6</sup> Number of References refers to how many times the code has been utilized continuously in videos in which one video can have as many references as possible. For example, if Martyrdom theme exists in one video twice in which it is coded from 01:13 until 02:50 and again from 05:04 until 10:32, then the number of references in that specific video is going to be 2 for Martyrdom theme.

<sup>7</sup> This is calculated by dividing each theme's Approximate Total Duration by the total in Approximate Total Duration (1413 minutes).

<sup>8</sup> This indicates the range of theme coverage (percent) in a given theme. This is calculated through NVivo, in which the software produces a list of all videos containing a specific theme and the percentage of coded segments in each video.

	Amaliyat Inghimasiyah	8	12	157	11.08%	11.9% - 73.7%
	Punishment and Execution	2	2	11	0.79%	6.5% - 9.9%
	Power Projection	33	72	157	11.13%	0.2% - 90.3%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>1413</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	-

Conquest and Military Operation videos have the broadest range, between 0.02% and 98.9%, of theme coverage out of all observed themes. Indicating that in a given video, 0.02% of the content falls under the Conquest and Military Operation theme, and the remaining content falls under a different theme. On the other hand, 98.9% of the content in a specific video falls under Conquest and Military Operation theme, and the remaining percentage (1.1%) of the video's duration falls under different theme(s). The high percentage of coverage indicates that the group produces videos aimed specifically at showing the group's ability to conquer their enemy by re-capturing a place or territory and defeating the local military. As for the low percentage of coverage, it shows that the group cares about covering Conquest and Military Operation briefly, even though the general theme of a specific video is not Conquest and Military Operation.

On the other hand, in *Table 4.2.2*, in ISIS videos, the highest percentage of duration is Military Training, taking 29.25% of the coded segments' total duration. 30% of the total percentage of theme duration covers the group's physical and weaponry skills. This is followed by Martyrdom and Conquest and Military Operation with 25.32% and 20.65%, respectively. However, compared to ISIS, the Taliban places a larger emphasis on using content that portrays the capability of the group to gain territorial dominance. Yet, both groups allocated close to one-

quarter of video content to Military Training and Conquest and Military Operation themes.

*Table 4.2.2 The Islamic State in Iraq and Syria's Number of Videos and References, Duration, and Range of Theme Coverage*

	<b>Theme</b>	<b>Number of Videos</b>	<b>Number of References</b>	<b>Approximate Total Duration (in minutes)</b>	<b>Percentage of Duration (in minutes)</b>	<b>Range of Theme Coverage</b>
<b>ISIS</b>	Military Training	5	6	39	29.25%	17.3% - 96.9%
	Martyrdom	5	9	34	25.32%	1.1% - 76.3%
	Conquest and Military Operation	3	4	28	20.65%	2.1% - 100%
	Oppression and Suffering	1	1	0.27	0.20%	1.20%
	Amaliyat Inghimasiyah	6	6	22	16.39%	14.3% - 97.6%
	Punishment and Executions	1	1	2	1.31%	19.50%
	Power Projection	2	5	9	6.89%	24.4% - 31.5%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	-

In ISIS videos, some of the lowest percentages of coverage are in Oppression and Suffering (0.20%), Punishment and Execution (1.31%), and Power Projection (6.89%), indicating that the group focuses on increasing coverage of other themes, such as Military Training, Martyrdom, and Conquest and Military Operation. This is expected since the group focuses on showing the successful completion and superiority of members who go through ISIS military training (Winkler & Pieslak, 2018), the rewards of martyrdom (Hafez, 2007; Winkler & Pieslak, 2018), and the competitiveness and triumph of the group when conducting a military operation (Winkler et al., 2020). Comparing the Taliban and ISIS, both allocate around 1% of the duration to show

the ability of the group to establish a “just community” by punishing citizens who don’t follow the law and captured military personnel and police officers (Punishment and Execution). It is important to point out that one of the possible explanations for the low percentage of Punishment and Execution theme duration in ISIS videos is because this study excludes anashid videos. In Pieslak and Lahoud’s study (2018), Tarhib theme, i.e., causing people to be terrified or fearful, is in the center of focus in ISIS anashid in which it appeared in 31 out of 122 ISIS nashid. They argue that Tarhib is highlighted in ISIS anashid to remind “of gruesome actions that await the enemies of IS, but is also educated into the rationale of the gory actions of IS as a method and a philosophy to embrace and celebrate.” (Pieslak & Lahoud, 2018, p.287). Therefore, excluding anashid videos, where ISIS uses execution segments to reinforce the Tarhib theme, may have caused the low duration percentage in this research. Consequently, one can assume that ISIS focuses less on content that falls under Punishment and Execution theme in their non-anashid videos. However, based on the results in this study, a definite conclusion cannot be made without examining multimodal messaging strategies in ISIS anashid videos.

In *Table 4.2.3*, as predicted by Stenersen (2017), Oppression and Suffering theme in AQAP videos is the most used theme in the video sample where it covers 28.11% of the coded segments. This implies that the group emphasizes more on showing civilian casualty and oppression experienced by state actors. The second highest observed theme (22.99%) is Martyrdom. As for Amaliyat Inghimasiyah and Conquest and Military Operation, they cover 13.66% and 12.90%, respectively. Unlike the Taliban and ISIS, who emphasize more on showing off their military capabilities and physical and weaponry skills, AQAP focuses more the oppression experienced at the hands of the local government and state actors.

*Table 4.2.3 AQAP's Number of Videos and References, Duration, and Range of Theme Coverage*

	Theme	Number of Videos	Number of References	Approximate Total Duration (in minutes)	Percentage of Duration (in minutes)	Range of Theme Coverage
<b>AQAP</b>	Military Training	6	12	14	4.86%	1.7% - 22%
	Martyrdom	5	18	50	22.99%	7.7% - 96.6%
	Conquest and Military Operation	3	3	28	12.90%	3.3% - 68.1%
	Oppression and Suffering	9	20	80	28.11%	0.3% - 95.9%
	Amaliyat Inghimasiyah	6	13	39	13.66%	8.2% - 43.8%
	Punishment and Executions	3	5	4	1.39%	2.8% - 11.5%
	Power Projection	5	7	4	1.32%	1.2% - 5.6%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>284</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	-

Military Training (4.86%), Punishment and Executions (1.39%), and Power Projection (1.32%) are also used the least in the AQAP video sample, indicating the group's low emphasis on the previously mentioned themes. When comparing the three groups, Punishment and Execution theme has a similar low coverage percentage, indicating that the group does not prioritize covering the content of those who commit crimes, defy their authority, or captured military and state individuals. As mentioned previously, one of the possible explanations for getting a low duration percentage of Punishment and Execution theme in ISIS videos is due to excluding anashid videos from the sample studied. However, low coverage of Punishment and Execution theme in AQAP videos is expected because Sheikh Nasser bin Ali al-Ansi, al-Qa'ida veteran who had ties to Osama bin Laden, states that ISIS beheadings and execution videos are

barbaric and not acceptable (Simcox, 2015). Therefore, it is expected to notice low Punishment and Execution theme in AQAP videos since the group often criticizes ISIS for their graphic video production. Even though executions and beheadings continue to be the Taliban's frequent method of severe discipline, the Taliban leaders have "made an appeal to end this unpopular battlefield conduct." (Johnson & DuPee, 2012, p.81) So, one would expect that the Taliban emphasizes less on covering Punishment and Execution content.

In AQAP videos, Oppression and Suffering videos contain the widest range of theme coverage out of all observed themes, between 0.3% and 95.9%, indicating that in a particular video, 0.3% of the duration is covering the content of Oppression and Suffering, but 99.7% is covering another theme(s). On the other hand, the highest coverage percentage is 98.9%, showing that AQAP places particular emphasis on covering Oppression and Suffering content in one specific video.

### **4.3 Sonic Modes**

After observing the Common Themes in the videos, one wonders how each group compare and contrast in their utilization of different Sonic Modes in the common themes. Such sonic modes include anashid in the background, anashid in the foreground, battle sounds, non-battle sounds, live singing, and vocalization. This section discusses how each group uses different Sonic Modes in common themes, as well as the similarities and differences when they are employing different Sonic Modes in common themes.

#### ***4.3.1 Use of Sonic Modes by the Taliban***

*Table 4.3.1.1* offers an analysis of the Taliban videos with an observed number of duration (in minutes) of each Sonic Mode in common themes with expected values in parenthesis. As seen in the table, anashid are used differently in each theme. When looking at the utilization of anashid



in the background, there is a higher chance of finding anashid in the background in Conquest and Military Operation segments than in other themes. In these segments, the group is displaying clips of mujahidin raiding military compounds and cities under the state's control. For instance, in *Enemy Defeat in Kunduz*, there is a great number of mujahidin holding their weapons and are seen walking around in a military compound after they have killed all of the soldiers and "liberated" the area. The utilization of backgrounded anashid indicates that the group is placing high emphasis on the content or the message that is being broadcasted to the audience than playing music in the foreground but still believes in the significance of anashid to scene by placing them in the background.

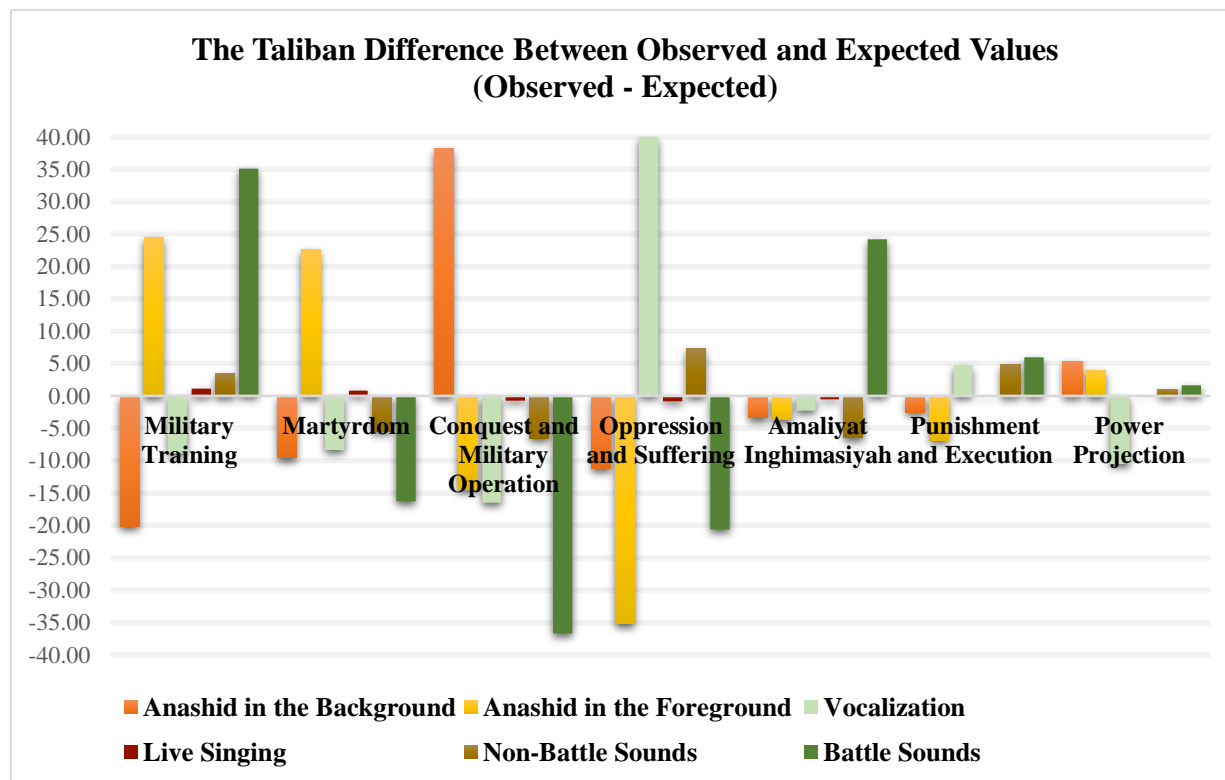
*Table 4.3.1 Crosstab of The Taliban's Utilization of Sonic Modes Across Common Themes*

	<b>Anashid in the Background</b>	<b>Anashid in the Foreground</b>	<b>Vocalization</b>	<b>Live Singing</b>	<b>Non-Battle Sounds</b>	<b>Battle Sounds</b>
<b>Military Training</b>	24.8 (44.89)	145.8 (121.34)	17.5 (26.33)	3.1 (2.01)	28.2 (24.78)	125.2 (90.07)
<b>Martyrdom</b>	11.7 (21.30)	80.2 (57.58)	4.1 (12.50)	1.8 (0.95)	6.3 (11.76)	26.4 (42.74)
<b>Conquest and Military Operation</b>	67.2 (29.06)	64.2 (78.56)	0.5 (17.05)	0.6 (1.30)	9.5 (16.04)	21.7 (58.32)
<b>Oppression and Suffering</b>	11.5 (22.76)	26.4 (61.53)	53.3 (13.35)	0.2 (1.02)	19.9 (12.57)	25.1 (45.68)
<b>Amaliyat Inghimasiyah</b>	8.3 (11.69)	27.9 (31.61)	4.6 (6.86)	0 (0.52)	0 (6.45)	47.6 (23.46)
<b>Punishment and Execution</b>	0 (2.54)	0 (6.86)	6.2 (1.49)	0 (0.11)	6.2 (1.4)	11.1 (5.09)
<b>Power Projection</b>	23.4 (17.99)	52.6 (48.62)	0 (10.55)	0.9 (0.80)	11.0 (9.93)	37.7 (36.09)
	$\chi^2 = 408.81$	p-value < 0.001		*Expected values are in parenthesis		

Also, looking at *Figure 4.3.1-1*, the observed value of backgrounded anashid in Conquest and Military Operation segments is higher than expected (67.2 minutes observed vs. 29.06 minutes expected). This indicates that videos containing Conquest and Military Operation segments are most likely to contain anashid in the background as a preferred Sonic Mode than other sonic techniques. Throughout the Conquest and Military Operation segments, in “in *Enemy Defeat in Kunduz*,” there are anashid in the background playing where they cover 88.21% of the theme’s total duration. After further calculations based on *Table 4.3.1*, 16.87% of anashid in the background are in Military Training segments, 7.98% in Martyrdom, 45.76% in Conquest and Military Operation, 7.83% in Oppression and Suffering, 5.64% in Amaliyat Inghimasiyah, and 15.92% in Power Projection.

On the other hand, looking at the utilization of anashid in the foreground, they are more likely to be found in Military Training segments. This is expected because in Military Training videos, as seen in *A Warning #3*, there is a group of men who are participating in military training to prepare for amaliyah inghimasiyah. Battle sounds, as well as anashid in the foreground, are observed in the video because the men are practicing their shooting and handling explosives skills. This suggests that the Taliban emphasizes more on utilizing both anashid in the foreground and battle sounds than any other Sonic Mode to underline the significance of Military Training segments. Interestingly, there is a big difference between the observed and expected value of anashid in the foreground and battleground sounds in Military Training segments with values of 145.8 minutes observed versus 121.34 minutes expected of anashid in the foreground, and 125.2 minutes observed versus 90.07 minutes expected in battle sounds. This indicates that Military Training segments often present fighters during firearm, missile, and explosive training.

Hence, there is a higher number of observed battleground sounds. It also indicates that the group chooses to reinforce visual images of Military Training segments by playing anashid in the foreground and battle sounds more than other Sonic Mode.



*Figure 4.3.1-1 The Taliban Difference Between Observed and Expected Values*

Calculating the coverage percentage of anashid in the foreground and battle sounds, one finds that 36.72% of anashid in the foreground are in Military Training segments, 20.20% in Martyrdom, 16.16% in Conquest and Military Operation, 6.64% in Oppression and Suffering, 7.03% in Amaliyat Inghimasiyah, and 13.25% in Power Projection segments. As for battleground sounds, 42.48% are in Military Training segments, 8.97% in Martyrdom, 7.35% in Conquest and Military Operation, 8.51% in Oppression and Suffering, 16.16% in Amaliyat Inghimasiyah, 3.77% in Punishment and Execution, and 12.79% in Power Projection. While 28.98% of non-battle sounds coverage percentage exist in Military Training, 6.47% in

Martyrdom, 20.40% in Conquest and Military Operation, 16.79% in Oppression and Suffering, 6.37% in Amaliyat Inghimasiyah, 6.37% in Punishment and Execution, and 11.26% in Power Projection.

Interestingly, six themes contain anashid in the background and/or foreground except Punishment and Execution segments. There are two explanations for the observed results. One, as explained above, the exclusion of anashid videos might impact the observed number. Secondly, even though the anashid in the background and anashid in the foreground cover 8.90% and 24.05% of the total duration of all videos, respectively, the Taliban places their emphasis on using other Sonic Modes than anashid, such as vocalization, non-battle sounds, and battle sounds in Punishment and Execution segments.

Moreover, 53.3 observed minutes, compared to 13.35 expected minutes of vocalization, are in Oppression and Suffering segments. This indicates that vocalization is the Taliban's preferred Sonic Mode in Oppression and Suffering segments than any Sonic Mode. Therefore, in the Taliban videos, it is more likely to find vocalization in Oppression and Suffering segments. On the other hand, live singing can be seen as one of the Sonic Modes the group uses the least with a range of 0 to 3.1 minutes, although it is more likely to be found in Military Training and Martyrdom segments.

In the Oppression and Suffering theme, there is a lower observed value (26.4 minutes) compared to an expected value (61.35 minutes). One reason for such an observation is due to the group's higher emphasis on the visual message and/or message being narrated than playing anashid in the foreground because doing so might divert the full attention away from the message and/or images. The same can be said for anashid in the background in Oppression and Suffering segments. Therefore, it is more likely that the group will choose different sonic

techniques than foregrounded or backgrounded anashid to convey the message. On the other hand, vocalization is more prominent in the Oppression and Suffering theme, in which the observed value is higher than the expected (39.95 minutes difference). That is since the group is more likely to choose vocalization as a form of Sonic Mode to reinforce the image and message being broadcasted; emphasis on vocalization more than other Sonic Modes in Oppression and Suffering segments.

#### ***4.3.2 Use of Sonic Modes by ISIS***

*Table 4.3.2.1* offers an analysis of ISIS videos with an observed and expected number of duration (in minutes) of each Sonic Mode in common themes with expected values in parenthesis. Looking at anashid utilization, similar to the Taliban, anashid in the foreground and battle sounds are more likely to appear in Military Training segments. This indicates that both ISIS and the Taliban place high emphasis on using anashid in the foreground and battleground sounds than other Sonic Modes during Military Training segments. In Military Training segments, the observed values of both anashid in the foreground and battle sounds are greater than the expected values; anashid in the foreground have an observed value of 25.8 minutes and expected value of 21.55 minutes, and battleground sounds have an observed value of 20.7 minutes and an expected of 13.80 minutes. This shows that, since Military Training segments have clips of physical exercises and firearm training, the observed value is higher than the expected value. Utilizing foregrounded anashid and battle sounds reinforce the visual images in Military Training segments.

*Table 4.3.2 Crosstab of ISIS Utilization of Sonic Modes Across Common Themes*

	<b>Anashid in the Background</b>	<b>Anashid in the Foreground</b>	<b>Vocalization</b>	<b>Live Singing</b>	<b>Non-Battle Sounds</b>	<b>Battle Sounds</b>
	2.7	25.8	0	1.1	0.8	20.7

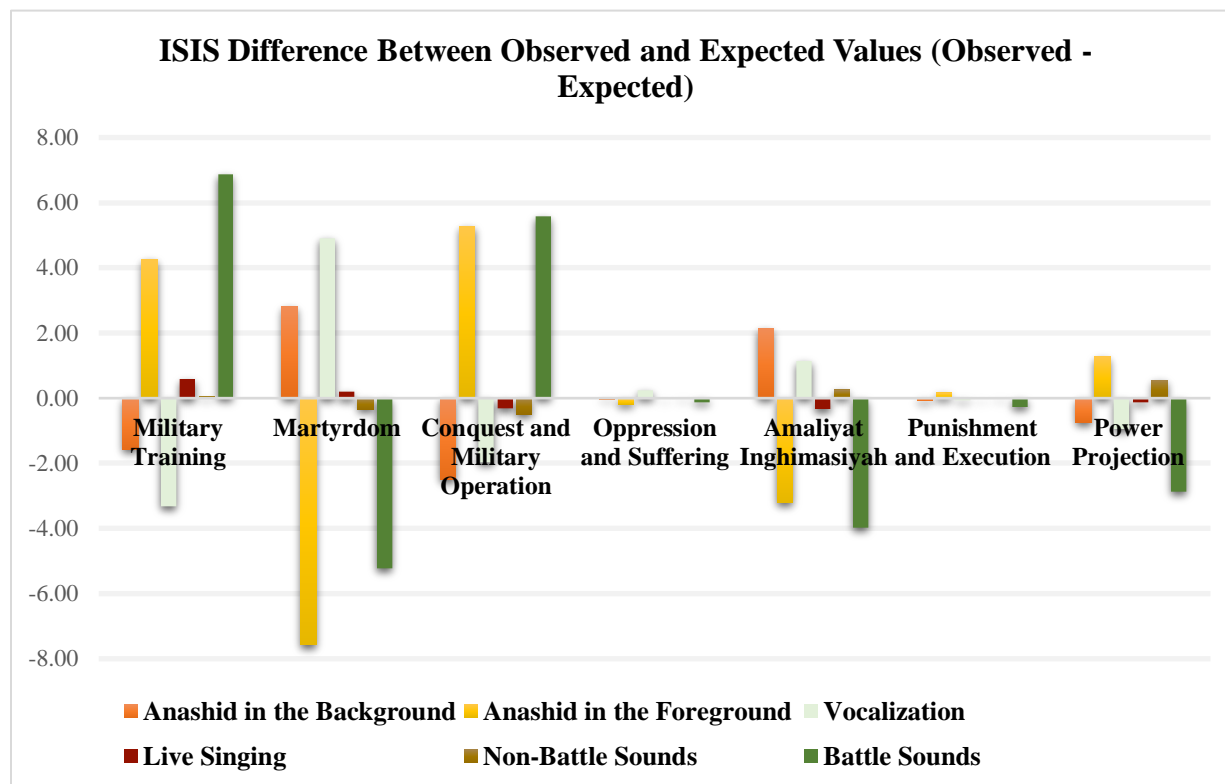
<b>Military Training</b>	(4.30)	(21.55)	(3.31)	(0.47)	(0.73)	(13.80)
<b>Martyrdom</b>	4.9 (2.04)	2.7 (10.22)	6.5 (1.57)	0.4 (0.22)	0 (0.35)	1.3 (6.55)
<b>Conquest and Military Operation</b>	0.4 (2.87)	19.7 (14.41)	0.3 (2.21)	0 (0.31)	0 (0.49)	14.8 (9.23)
<b>Oppression and Suffering</b>	0 (0.04)	0 (0.19)	0.3 (0.03)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.01)	0 (0.12)
<b>Amaliyat Inghimasiyah</b>	5.2 (3.02)	11.9 (15.12)	3.5 (2.32)	0 (0.33)	0.8 (0.51)	5.7 (9.68)
<b>Punishment and Execution</b>	0 (0.08)	0.6 (0.41)	0 (0.06)	0 (0.01)	0 (0.01)	0 (0.27)
<b>Power Projection</b>	0.5 (1.24)	7.5 (6.21)	0 (0.95)	0 (0.14)	0.8 (0.21)	1.1 (3.98)
$\chi^2 = 61.49$ p-value = 0.004                      *Expected values are in parenthesis						

On the other hand, unlike the Taliban, it is more likely to find anashid in the foreground and battle sounds than other Sound Modes in ISIS Conquest and Military Operation segments. This is because the observed value of anashid in the foreground is higher than the expected value in ISIS videos compared to the Taliban videos (19.7 minutes observed versus 14.41 minutes expected of anashid in the foreground, and 14.8 minutes observed versus 9.23 minutes expected value of battle sounds). This indicates that ISIS, unlike the Taliban, is more likely to use foregrounded anashid and battle sounds than other Sonic Modes in Conquest and Military Operation segments to reinforce the visual content. As for the Taliban, the observed values of foregrounded anashid and battle sounds are lower than the expected values, indicating that it is more likely to find other Sonic Modes in Conquest and Military Operation segments. On the other hand, the Taliban utilizes anashid in the background more than other Sonic Modes in

Conquest and Military Operation segments to emphasize more on the message than other Sonic Modes.

For example, in *Healing wounds of their nation 7*, ISIS introduces the martyr by showing a clip in slow motion accompanied by anashid in the foreground. Then, anashid are playing in the background as the martyr expresses his message before the martyrdom operation. Afterward, the music and battle sounds switch to the foreground as the martyr is riding the bombed vehicle towards his target combined. On the other hand, in *The Continental Heroes*, the narrator in the Taliban video introduces the martyrs with the anashid playing in the background. The following clip focuses on the martyrs stating their message while the clip does not contain any Sonic Modes other than the speech. Then, the music switches to the foreground while images of the martyrs are playing. Afterward, the video shows the martyrdom operation with the only battleground sounds in the foreground.

Furthermore, ISIS utilizes backgrounded anashid the most in Amaliyat Inghimasiyah segments, with 37.87% of anashid in the background is under the theme. Looking at *Figure 4.3.2-1*, since ISIS often utilizes anashid in the background during Martyrdom and Amaliyat Inghimasiyah segments, the presence of anashid in the background is higher than expected; 2.81 minutes difference in Martyrdom segments and 2.13 minutes in Amaliyat Inghimasiyah segments. On the other hand, the observed value of backgrounded anashid in Martyrdom and Amaliyat Inghimasiyah is lower than the expected value in the Taliban segments (*Figure 4.3.1-1*). This shows that there is a higher chance of finding other Sonic Modes than anashid in the background in Martyrdom and Amaliyat Inghimasiyah.



*Figure 4.3.2-1 ISIS Difference Between Observed and Expected Values*

Unlike ISIS, it is more likely to find vocalization sounds than other sonic techniques in the Taliban's Oppression and Suffering segments (with 39.95 minutes difference between observed and expected values). In ISIS Martyrdom and Amaliyat Inghimasiyah segments, the observed value of vocalization is higher than the expected value, indicating that ISIS utilizes vocalization in Martyrdom and Amaliyat Inghimasiyah segments more than other Sonic Modes. For instance, in *My son has preceded me*, at the beginning of the video, the narrator introduces the martyrs who are sacrificing themselves while playing humming sound in the background and showing pictures of both civilian causality and ISIS perished martyrs. As the interviewer is asking the young martyr some questions, vocalization plays in the background. This is followed by more humming sounds as the martyr is getting inside the bombed truck. Throughout the video, there



are as many as six references (covering 28.03% of the total duration of the video) of vocalization in the Martyrdom segments. As described earlier in *4.1.5 Amaliyat Inghimasiyah* section, the video portrays a 14-year-old martyr who drives a bombed pick-up truck to a police checkpoint, and what is striking is that it is the only video in the ISIS sample that contains vocalization in the Martyrdom theme. Therefore, future analysis is recommended to distinguish how martyrdom committed by adolescents is reinforced with Sonic Modes jihadi videos. Thus, even though the average percentage of vocalization in Martyrdom segments is higher in ISIS videos than in the Taliban videos (ISIS 28.03% and the Taliban 2.62%), this comparative analysis cannot be fully thorough because this study does not closely examine the age of martyrs as a theme in the utilization of Sonic Modes.

When examining live singing in the Taliban and ISIS videos, one notices that both have a higher live singing observed value than expected value in Military Training videos, a 1.08-minute difference in the Taliban, and 0.60 difference in ISIS Military Training segments. This indicates that, in Military Training segments, both groups are more likely to utilize live singing (as well as foregrounded anashid and battle sounds) than other Sonic Modes. In Pieslak et al. study, the authors examine soundtrack elements—*anashid*, Koranic recitation, and live recitation—utilized in 755 ISIS videos, and find that the use of live recitation is at 2.1 percent. They conclude that the usage of both live recitation (and Koranic recitation) holds a “position of value,” but their usage does not demonstrate “significant and discernable trends over time.” (Pieslak et al., 2019, p.4)

As for non-battle sounds, in both the Taliban and ISIS videos, it is more likely to find non-battle sounds than other Sonic Modes in Power Projection segments since the observed values are higher than the expected values. These segments are when the groups show their military

capabilities and spoils-of-war. Also, it is less likely to find non-battle sounds in Martyrdom, and Conquest and Military Operation segments of both the Taliban and ISIS since the observed value is less than the expected value.

### **4.3.3 Use of Sonic Modes by AQAP**

*Table 4.3.3.1* offers an analysis of AQAP videos with an observed and expected number of duration (in minutes) of each Sonic Mode in common themes with expected values in parenthesis. Looking carefully at the use of anashid in the background in AQAP videos, one can notice that it is more likely to find them in Martyrdom, and Oppression and Suffering segments than in other themes. This indicates that the group prefers highlighting the message being conveyed by placing the anashid in the background but not fully removing the anashid soundtrack from the segments. For instance, in an AQAP video, *Repulsion of Aggression 5*, there is a series of martyrdom operations to fight off the aggression of the enemy. As the martyrs stating their message, there are anashid playing in the background.

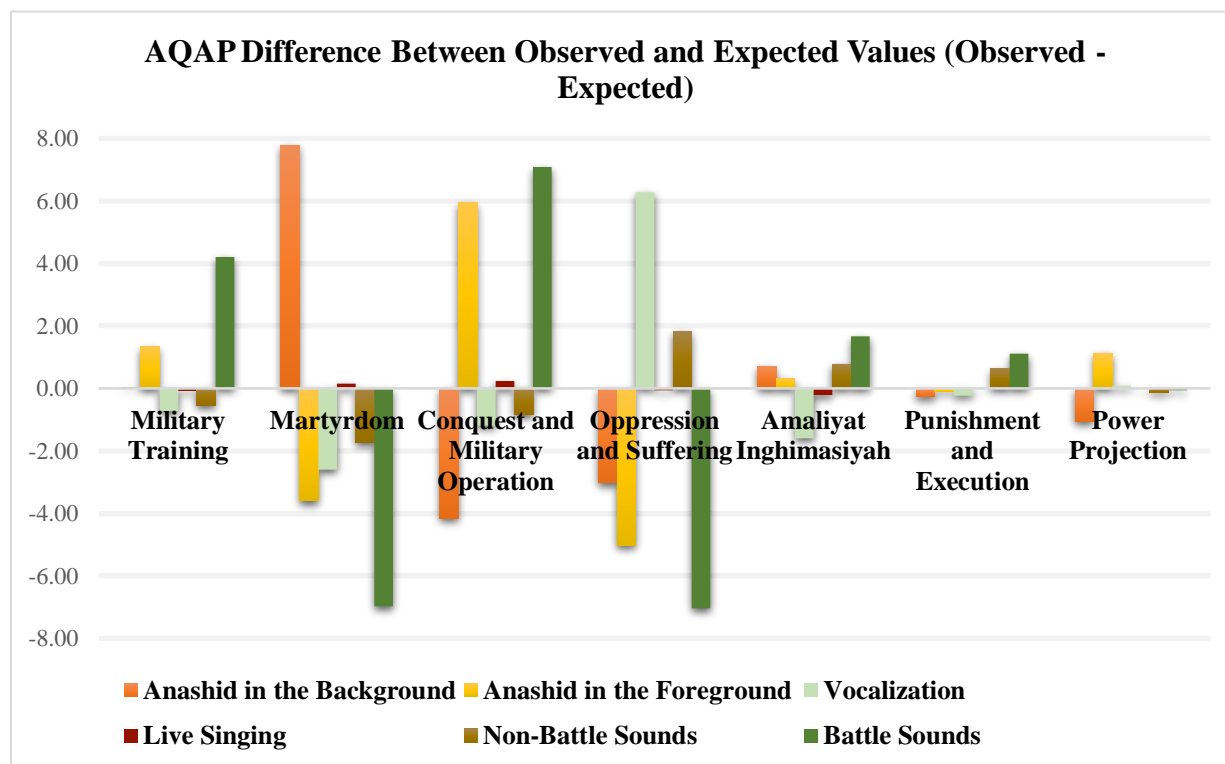
Looking at *Figure 4.3.3-1*, compared to other Sonic Modes, there is a higher chance of finding anashid in the background in Martyrdom and Amaliyat Inghimasiyah segments for both ISIS and AQAP, since the observed values are higher than expected values (a difference between the observed and expected value of 2.81 minutes in ISIS segments and 0.72 minutes in AQAP segments). Moreover, in the Taliban and AQAP videos, the observed value of backgrounded anashid in Oppression and Suffering, and Punishment and Execution segments is lower than the expected value. This indicates that there is a higher probability of finding other Sonic Modes than anashid in the background to reinforce the visual image, such as vocalization and non-battle sounds.

*Table 4.3.3 Crosstab of AQAP Utilization of Sonic Modes Across Common Themes*

	<b>Anashid in the Background</b>	<b>Anashid in the Foreground</b>	<b>Vocalization</b>	<b>Live Singing</b>	<b>Non-Battle Sounds</b>	<b>Battle Sounds</b>
<b>Military Training</b>	6.7 (6.66)	5.7 (4.40)	0.1 (0.83)	0 (0.08)	0 (0.53)	6.8 (2.63)
<b>Martyrdom</b>	29.5 (21.69)	10.7 (14.32)	0.1 (2.69)	0.4 (0.27)	0 (1.73)	1.6 (8.57)
<b>Conquest and Military Operation</b>	6.3 (10.43)	12.8 (6.89)	0.1 (1.30)	0.4 (0.13)	0 (0.83)	11.2 (4.12)
<b>Oppression and Suffering</b>	30.3 (33.27)	17.0 (21.96)	10.4 (4.13)	0.4 (0.42)	4.5 (2.66)	6.1 (13.14)
<b>Amaliyat Inghimasiyah</b>	17.0 (16.28)	11.1 (10.75)	0.4 (2.02)	0 (0.21)	2.1 (1.30)	8.1 (6.43)
<b>Punishment and Execution</b>	1.6 (1.89)	1.2 (1.25)	0 (0.23)	0 (0.02)	0.8 (0.15)	1.9 (0.75)
<b>Power Projection</b>	0.6 (1.66)	2.2 (1.10)	0.3 (0.21)	0 (0.02)	0 (0.13)	0.6 (0.66)
	$\chi^2 = 68.37$	p-value = 0.035		*Expected values are in parenthesis		

As for videos produced by ISIS and AQAP, the observed value of anashid in the background in Conquest and Military Operation and Power Projection segments is lower than the expected value. This means that there is a higher chance that the two groups utilize other Sonic Modes, such as foregrounded anashid and battle sounds, to get their message across. Calculating the percentage of backgrounded anashid coverage in AQAP videos, one finds that 7.26% of anashid in the background fall under Military Training segments, 32.06% in Martyrdom, 6.84% in Conquest and Military Operation, 32.92% in Oppression and Suffering, 18.50% in Amaliyat Inghimasiyah, 1.76% in Punishment and Execution, and 0.65% in Power Projection. Therefore, both ISIS and AQAP's Martyrdom segments contain the majority of anashid in the background. On the other hand, the Taliban emphasizes more on using anashid in the background in Conquest

and Military Operation segments (45.76% of anashid in the background can be found in Conquest and Military Operation).



*Figure 4.3.3-1 AQAP Difference Between Observed and Expected Values*

On the other hand, 27.92% of anashid in the foreground is found in AQAP Oppression and Suffering segments. This is different in the Taliban and ISIS case because the highest percentage of foregrounded anashid (36.72% and 37.89% respectively) are in Military Training segments. In all three groups, there is a higher chance to find anashid in the foreground than other Sonic forms in Military Training, Conquest and Military Operation, and Power Projection segments because the observed value is higher than the expected value. This implies that segments containing physical and firearms training, raids, and spoils-of-war are more likely to contain anashid in the foreground than other Sonic Modes.

Looking at vocalization and live singing, 91.23% of vocalization falls under the Oppression and Suffering theme, and the percentage of minute-duration of live singing is almost divided in thirds between Martyrdom, Conquest and Military Operation, and Oppression and Suffering. In which 35.83% of live singing falls under Martyrdom, 30.58% under Conquest and Military Training, and 30.58% under Oppression and Suffering. Compared to the Taliban, AQAP also uses the highest percentage of vocalization in Oppression and Suffering segments, since these segments portray visual images of civilian casualty.

When observing the use of vocalization in all three groups, there is a higher chance of finding vocalization in Oppression and Suffering segments since the observed value is higher than the expected value. On the other hand, one is more likely to observe other Sonic Modes than vocalization in Military Training (e.g., foregrounded anashid and battle sounds in all three groups) and Conquest and Military Operation (anashid in the foreground and battle sounds in ISIS and AQAP segments). Furthermore, there is a higher chance of noticing live singing (combined with backgrounded anashid in the case of ISIS and AQAP) in Martyrdom segments amongst the three groups because the observed value is higher than the expected value. Also, in Amaliyat Inghimasiyah segments of all three groups, there is a higher chance of observing other Sonic Modes (e.g., in Amaliyat Inghimasiyah, backgrounded anashid in ISIS and AQAP segments, and battle sounds in the Taliban and AQAP segments) than live singing.

When exploring non-battle sounds and battle sounds in AQAP videos, the majority of non-battle sounds percentage (61.41%) falls under Oppression and Suffering segments. In comparison, 28.53% falls under Amaliyat Inghimasiyah, and 10.73% is under Punishment and Execution. Also, the majority of battle sounds percentage (30.90%) falls under Conquest and Military Operation while 22.31% is under Amaliyat Inghimasiyah, 18.82% under Military

Training, 16.80% under Oppression and Suffering, 5.10% under Punishment and Execution, 4.41% under Martyrdom, and 1.65% under Power Projection. The results are expected since non-battle sounds contain sounds of people shouting, and Oppression and Suffering segments often cover citizens' reaction to civilian casualty due to airstrikes.

Comparing the three groups, there is a higher chance of finding battleground sounds (along with anashid in the foreground) in Military Training segments than other Sonic Modes, since the observed values in all three groups are higher than the expected values. Also, there is an increased probability of finding other Sonic Modes than battle sounds in the groups' Martyrdom as well as Oppression and Suffering segments because the observed values are lower than the expected values. Other Sonic Modes include foregrounded anashid in the Taliban Martyrdom segments and backgrounded anashid in ISIS and AQAP's Martyrdom segments. On the other hand, there is a higher probability of finding other Sonic Modes (e.g., in Conquest and Military Operation segments, backgrounded anashid in the Taliban and foregrounded anashid and battle sounds in ISIS and AQAP segments) than non-battle sounds in Martyrdom as well as Conquest and Military Operation segments of the three groups.

## 5 SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

This study has systematically examined the audiovisual messages in video production by the Taliban, the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, and al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula. To explore the similarities and differences in the utilization of audiovisual messages amongst the three groups, this study explored the multimodal communication strategies to analyze the audiovisual channel of communication in jihadi videos. Doing so encourages a more accurate analysis of information-sharing channels that jihadi groups use to reach their targeted audience. Therefore, the examination of 118 videos led to the emergence of common visual themes utilized by the three groups. Such themes are Military Training, Martyrdom, Conquest and Military Operation, Oppression and Suffering, Amaliyat Inghimasiyah, Punishment and Execution, and Power Projection.

This study finds that both the Taliban and ISIS place their emphasis on content that falls under Military Training and Conquest and Military Operation more than other themes; the Taliban focuses more on Conquest and Military Operation theme. One possible reason for the Taliban's high emphasis on Conquest and Military Operation theme is, as reported by Giustozzi (2018), several donors who previously supported the Taliban (and al-Qa'ida) financially are now supporting the Islamic State in Khorasan because the Taliban "did not see as many achievements as was expected from them." (Giustozzi, 2018, p.168) Therefore, to attract donors back to support the Taliban, the group has to increase its achievements as well as document it.

Additionally, ISIS places the most emphasis on the Military Training theme. Such a result is predictable because many studies report observing the prominence of Military Training theme in ISIS propaganda videos. Such studies include (Besenyö & Mayer, 2015; Shamieh & Szenes, 2015; Winkler & Pieslak, 2018). On the other hand, AQAP places high significance on content

that falls under Oppression and Suffering, unlike the Taliban and ISIS, who puts a lower emphasis on covering the theme. The victim narrative in AQAP videos (Stenersen, 2017) is driven by the need to establish “collective dignity and social justice.” (Chapman & Adelman, 2011, p.9)

Within these themes, looking at the utilization of Sonic Modes in the Taliban videos, the group is more likely to use anashid in the background in Conquest and Military Operation and foregrounded anashid in the Military Training segments. Utilizing backgrounded anashid indicates that the group emphasizes more on the message being narrated than the music but still values the music’s prominence in their production by placing them in the background. However, using foregrounded anashid signals the group’s choice to reinforce the visual image with the sonic element by allowing the sonic element to dominate the perception. Also, vocalization segments are mostly found in Oppression and Suffering segments. This indicates the group’s need to reinforce the visual image of oppressed citizens with humming sounds. Battle sounds, non-battle sounds, and live singing of anashid are more likely to be found in Military Training segments.

Looking at ISIS utilization of Sonic Modes in common themes, there is a higher chance of finding backgrounded anashid in Amaliyat Inghimasiyah and Martyrdom segments than finding other Sonic Modes. In Military Training segments, similar to the Taliban, one is more likely to find anashid in the foreground and battle sounds than other sonic techniques. Moreover, in AQAP videos, it is more likely to find the highest percentage of backgrounded and foregrounded anashid, vocalization, and non-battle sounds in Oppression and Suffering. But it is more likely to find battle sounds in Conquest and Military Operation.



Even though the three groups utilize common themes and essentially similar sonic techniques in their video, i.e., music utilization, vocalization, and battle and non-battled sounds, still, there are discrepancies within the utilization of common themes and sonic elements in the videos. These discrepancies show what visual content is considered the most important for each group and with what sonic element to reinforce such content; implying that the groups are of different nature and with dissimilar aims. For instance, while the Taliban place their emphasis on reinforcing Conquest and Military Operation segments with sonic elements, ISIS places most of their focus on Military Training segments, and AQAP underlines Oppression and Suffering segments. Their differences reflect their aims and identity; the Taliban aims to please their financial donors by raiding and taking over a target (Giustozzi, 2018), while ISIS is focusing on state-building (Lahoud, 2017) by utilizing Sonic Modes to reinforce the physical strength, identity, and unification of the members in the group. Additionally, AQAP emphasizes the most on Oppression and Suffering content to reinforce the notion of who are the evil forces and why they should be stopped. Even though these groups utilize similar sonic elements to highlight their messages, they choose to focus on themes differently and for different reasons.

Also, examining the low thematic coverage of each group, one notices that ISIS focuses the least on the Oppression and Suffering theme compared to the Taliban, and especially AQAP, who emphasizes the most on victim narratives. One explanation for such an observation is because, compared to the Taliban and AQAP, ISIS emphasizes the most on state-building and how the group is achieving that goal. Therefore, highlighting themes like Military Training, and Conquest and Military Operation allows the group to be perceived as achieving their highly publicized goal; i.e., building a strong, unified state. On the other hand, the low emphasis on Oppression and Suffering content shows that the group is not only focusing on result-oriented

effort, but it is paying less attention to content that might draw negative attention to the ineffective efforts to establish the Islamic State.

Interestingly, on the other hand, AQAP emphasizes the least on the Military Training theme (4.86% of the total duration of themes covered) compared to the Taliban and ISIS (24.54% and 29.25% respectively). By emphasizing more on the victim narrative, AQAP is showing less content that might counter the effect of victim narrative, such as the military superiority of its members. Despite the fact that the Taliban, ISIS, and AQAP are jihadi organizations that utilize different communication strategies to disseminate their messages to a relatively similar audience. Regardless of using a similar information-sharing channel, these groups compete amongst themselves to attract a specific audience by emphasizing on different themes to maximize the impact of their message

Furthermore, by identifying which theme each group focuses on the most through using the reinforcement mechanism of sonic elements in producing an easier and quicker to process visual content, analysts can focus their attention and effort on messages that are easier to process and quicker to process. This is especially important for analysts working to counter violent extremism because producing successful anti-propaganda videos depends on utilizing similar techniques as those used by jihadi groups. Therefore, exploring the discrepancies within the utilization of sonic elements in the common themes allows for producing successful anti-propaganda videos aimed at countering the narratives of a specific group.

For scholars, online responders, policymakers, and those examining jihadi media products, this research has two important implications. First, examining multimodal messages in jihadi videos is essential to effectively study how jihadi organizations use multimodal communication strategies to disseminate their messages to the targeted audience. Focusing on one mode of

communication (often textual) could contribute to misunderstanding the groups' messaging strategies. After all, language is a multimodal semiotic system that is "a collection of signs or symbols to be deployed and construct more complex meanings." (Lemke, 2012, p.79) By analyzing themes that are reinforced by sonic elements, such as Conquest and Military Operation in the Taliban videos, Military Training in ISIS videos, and Oppression and Suffering in AQAP videos, those studying jihadi media campaigns can focus attention on content that is easier to remember and process (Winkler & Pieslak, 2018).

Second, the lack of multimodal analysis of jihadi videos is illustrated by Allendorfer and Herring in a study that examines the effectiveness of ISIS and the U.S. Department of State (USDS) propaganda videos through multimodal analysis, ISIS propaganda videos succeeded in capturing the targeted audience's attention because of their ability to identify and appeal with their audience. On the other hand, the USDS propaganda videos are deemed ineffective because of presentation techniques and content of videos, in which the utilization of instrumental music is featured in every USDS video (Allendorfer & Herring, 2015). Their study shows that for an effective evaluation of how the group presents their messages, those in the field should pursue exploring how the utilization of various information-sharing channels, such as the visual, textual, sonic, etc. influence the presentation of messages.

Although this study systematically analyzes the audiovisual messaging strategies in the Taliban, ISIS, and AQAP, there are some limitations to keep in mind. One, this study investigates the audiovisual messages of the three groups and overlooks the examination of two prominent messaging strategies in jihadi videos, i.e., text embedded in videos and cinematographic techniques. Jihadi groups utilize text on the screen to introduce a person, switch between sections by inserting the group's logo or video's title, or Quran verses. While it is

important to study the audiovisual messages, it is also important to examine the text within jihadi videos to increase the understanding of different messaging techniques by adding an extra layer of multimodality to jihadi video analysis. Second, since this study does not include anashid videos, the results of Punishment and Execution theme are lower than expected (observed value is lower than expected), especially the observed value of Punishment and Execution in ISIS videos. There are many studies focusing on the graphic images of ISIS (Euben, 2017; Friis, 2015; Mahood & Rane, 2017), and as stated before, one possible explanation is the exclusion of anashid videos from the analysis. Therefore, before drawing a definitive conclusion, future studies distinguishing between non-anashid videos and anashid videos are helpful in elaborating further on how each group utilizes anashid techniques in different themes.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A

*Appendix A - The Taliban Video Title, Duration, and Length*

	<b>Title</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Length (in minutes)</b>
1	A Brilliant Id Release-Badri Lashkar 1	11/11/11	1:08:55	68.9
2	Badri Lashkar #2	7/23/12	1:08:56	68.9
3	Badri Lashkar #3	8/3/13	1:08:04	68.1
4	Badri Lashkar #4	2/9/14	1:26:19	86.3
5	Liberation of Dashti Archi	6/26/15	7:02	7
6	Badri Lashkar #6	11/11/16	1:19:28	79.5
7	Bombing that Killed Children at the Ceremony in Ghazni Province	3/26/17	9:42	9.1
8	Latest Trends of the Mujahidin in Alingar District of Laghman Province	3/30/17	7:48	7.8
9	Indeed is the Falsehood [by nature], Ever Bound to Depart	4/4/17	8:12	8.2
10	Brotherhood of the Mujahidin Ahmad Khilai District of the Paktia Province	8/20/17	3:17	3.3
11	Health and Wellbeing #2	3/4/18	9:59	10
12	The Honorable Way	3/7/18	30:08:00	38
13	Enemy Savagery in Khakrez	3/11/18	18:00	18
14	Latest Conquests in Ghazni	3/13/18	10:23	18.4
15	A Warning #3	3/15/18	50	50
16	Education and Learning #11	3/17/18	8:42	8.7
17	Successful Operations in Farah	3/18/18	39:15:00	39.3
18	Mujahidin Raid	3/21/18	9:44	9.7
19	Clashes against the Hirelings in Ghir	3/27/18	6:53	6.9
20	Enemy Barbarity in Dashte Archi in Kunduz Province	4/3/18	23:02	23
21	The Continental Heroes	4/4/18	36:38:00	36.6
22	The Enemy Lies	4/5/18	5:01	5
23	Barbarity of Hirelings Against a Defenseless Nation	4/7/18	28:13:00	28.2
24	The Fronts of Martyrdom	4/8/18	13:25	13.4
25	Aiding the Needy Countrymen #2	4/10/18	17:46	17.8
26	Enemy Defeat in Farah	4/12/18	18:40	18.7
27	Protests Against the Shocking Event of Kunduz	4/17/18	8:00	8
28	Fresh Conquests in Ghazni's Wilderness	4/19/18	1:44	1.7
29	Latest Conquests in Zabul	4/23/18	6:14	6.2
30	Enemy Barbarity in Bala Bluk	4/24/18	5:26	5.4
31	New Advances in Ghazni	4/26/18	6:10	6.2

32	Mujahidin Raids on Check Points in Balkh and Paktia	4/27/18	7:02	7
33	Great Mujahidin Successes in Takhar to Welcome al-Khandaq Operations	4/30/18	8:51	8.9
34	From the Fronts of Spin Ghar	5/6/18	8:54	8.9
35	Hazrat Abu Bakr	5/6/18	8:37	8.6
36	About the Closure of the Ghazni Paktika Highway for the Enemy	5/8/18	3:31	3.5
37	Jihadi Conquests in Baglan	5/14/18	5:54	5.9
38	Latest Jihadi Situation in Ghazni	5/17/18	12:04	12.1
39	Kunduz's Bleeding Horror	5/21/18	57:18:00	57.3
40	Interview with Mulla Muhammad Daud Muzamill	5/28/18	15:28	15.5
41	Interview with Haji Yusuf	5/29/18	14:01	14
42	Jihad Situation in Chora	5/30/18	14:20	14.3
43	Aid Distribution to Needy Countrymen #3	6/2/18	10:01	10
44	Life in Jihad #3	6/4/18	26:52:00	26.9
45	Report about Weapons and Ammunition	6/5/18	2:18	2.3
46	Ghazni Patika Highway	6/6/18	16:08	16.1
47	Interview with Reconciled Police Chief of Pur Chaman District	6/7/18	8:40	8.7
48	Education and Learning #12	6/7/18	14:35	14.6
49	Conquests and Achievements in Tala Wa Barfak	6/9/18	11:14	11.2
50	Conquest of Chora (Uruzgan Province)	6/10/18	13:16	13.3
51	Liberation of Jaghatu	6/11/18	11:14	11.2
52	In Helmand Thirteen Prisoners Released From Prison On the Occasion of 'Īd	6/12/18	9:17	9.3
53	Takeover of Key Base in Maruf (Kandahar Province)	6/12/18	4:55	4.9
54	Umari Army	6/14/18	44:21:00	44.4
55	Jihādī Advances in Ghazni	6/15/18	26:10:00	26.2
56	Īd of the Nation and Mujāhidīn #3	6/22/18	8:19	8.3
57	Jihādī Advances in Baghdis	6/26/18	2:24	2.4
58	Enemy Savagery in Baghdis	6/28/18	3:23	3.4
59	Operational Actions in Farah Province	6/29/18	2:41	2.7
60	Recent Conquests in Zabul	7/1/18	7:09	7.2
61	Aid Distribution to Needy Countrymen #4	7/4/18	15:45	15.8
62	Real Men #3	7/7/18	21:06	21.1
63	Conquests in Balkh	7/9/18	12:58	13
64	Gate of Kabul and Convoy of Conquests	7/12/18	32:30:00	32.5
65	The Latest Victories of the Mujāhidīn in Khogyani	7/14/18	7:44	7.7
66	What Really Transpired in Zurmat and Nangarhar	7/16/18	22:50	22.8
67	Education and Training #13	7/19/18	8:00	8
68	Enemy Savagery in the Zabul Campaign	7/21/18	9:05	9.1

69	Distribution of the 'Īd Message on the Occasion of 'Īd al-Fiṭr	7/23/18	14:01	14
70	Latest Conquests in Badakhshan	7/26/18	4:49	4.8
71	Distribution of the Message of the Leader of the Faithful #2	7/27/18	3:32	3.5
72	Distribution of the Message of the Leader of the Faithful #3	7/27/18	9:45	9.8
73	Soldiers in Kundiz Join the Mujāhidīn With Weapons	7/29/18	2:41	2.7
74	Arrest in Helmand With a Car and Money	8/2/18	6:53	6.9
75	Successful Operations at the Gate of Kabul	8/2/18	13:02	12
76	Enemy Defeat in Ghazni	8/7/18	13:05	13.1
77	Enemy Barbarity in Farah Rod	8/8/18	5:23	5.4
78	Latest Conquests in Ghazni	8/11/18	6:12	6.2
79	18 Soldiers Join the Mujāhidīn in Paktia	8/13/18	2:15	2.3
80	Report on Ghazni	8/14/18	2:00	2
81	The Conquest of Ghazni	8/14/18	12:06	12.1
82	The Conquest of Dih Yak	8/16/18	12:12	12.2
83	Interview with Imprisoned Police in Farah	8/18/18	4:26	4.4
84	About the Closure of Roads in Front of the Enemy in Maidan Wardak and Zabul Provinces	8/18/18	8:13	4.2
85	Clearing Dā'ish From Darzah	8/19/18	4:40	4.7
86	Victorious Operations in the Zabul Capital	8/19/18	8:23	8.4
87	Convoy of Conquest #12	8/19/18	1:12:19	72.3
88	Enemy Defeat in Kunduz	8/20/18	6:54	6.9
89	Release of Prisoners of War On the Occasion of 'Īd in Ghazni	8/20/18	22:39	22.7
90	Distribution of the Message of the Leader of the Faithful	8/21/18	6:02	6
91	Education and Training #14	8/21/18	5:14	5.2
92	Badri Lashkar #5	8/31/18	1:35:18	95.3
93	Enemy Retreat From Shomolzo (Zabul)	9/10/18	9:30	9.5
94	Conquests in Qarabagh (Ghazni)	9/11/18	12:53	12.9
95	Mujāhidīn Operations in the Ghaziabad District	9/11/18	6:06	6.1

## Appendix B

### *Appendix B - ISIS Video Title, Duration, and Length*

	<b>Title</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Length (in minutes)</b>
1	Victory from God and an imminent conquest	5/11/15	12:29	12.5
2	The nectar of life	6/16/15	9:23	9.4
3	Healing wounds of their nation 7	8/19/15	3:39	3.6
4	Abo Isa training camp	8/30/15	8:49	8.8
5	The Martyr's message	11/7/15	5:42	5.7
6	Message to the Medical Professionals	11/8/15	6:03	6.1
7	Upon You Oh Tyrants of the Arabian Peninsula	12/16/15	21:04	21.1
8	Terrify the Enemy of God and Your Enemy	1/3/16	21:10	21.2
9	Rather, They Are Alive with Their Lord	1/9/16	10:29	10.5
10	My son has preceded me	2/19/16	23:06	23.1
11	The good men	2/23/16	9:01	9
12	The raid of Suhayb al Iraqi	3/13/16	14:34	14.6
13	The light	Unknown	21:30	21.5

## Appendix C

### *Appendix C - AQAP Video Title, Duration, and Length*

	<b>Title</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Length</b>	<b>Duration (in minutes)</b>
1	Repulsion of Aggression 1	11/11/10	31:23:00	31.4
2	Repulsion of Aggression 3	3/7/14	31:20:00	31.3
3	Repulsion of Aggression 4	5/28/14	11:19	11.3
4	Repulsion of Aggression 5	7/29/14	12:00	12
5	Repulsion of Aggression 6	11/9/16	29:51:00	29.9
6	America and Its Latest Trap 2	4/20/17	20:18	20.3
7	Repulsion of Aggression 7	5/2/17	15:13	15.2
8	Repulsion of Aggression 9	4/20/18	30:54:00	30.9
9	Repulsion of Aggression 10	4/23/18	20:58	21
10	The Preliminary Introduction of Demolishing the Espionage	9/4/18	40:55:00	40.9