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ANALYZING MEDIA OF ISIS, TALIBAN, AND AL-QAEDA: USE OF  
CINEMATOGRAPHIC TECHNIQUES IN RETRIBUTIVE JUSTICE VIDEOS

by

MATTHEW MOTTET

Under the Direction of Andrew Wedeman, PhD, and Anthony Lemieux, PhD

ABSTRACT

Major extremist organizations such as the Taliban, the Islamic State in al-Sham and Iraq, and al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula utilize the internet to disseminate media products such as videos that promote the group's messages to a specific audience and craft self-images. This study analyzes the videos produced by these groups that contain themes of retributive justice through a novel lens: cinematographic techniques. This study analyzes the following questions: What are some common cinematographic techniques used by these groups? What are the systematic similarities and differences between the techniques employed, and what does this say about the audience and the self-image of these groups? Is there systematic variation in the techniques used in English and foreign language videos, and how does this impact the audience? Lastly, is there evidence that Taliban and AQAP have adopted techniques that were popularized by ISIS?

INDEX WORDS: Terrorism, Extremism, Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham, ISIS, Taliban al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, AQAP, Retributive justice, Cinematography, Videos

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by

MATTHEW MOTTET

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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Matthew Paul Mottet  
2020

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December 2020

## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to my family, who have been a source of inspiration, strength, and support throughout my academic career. None of my accomplishments would have been possible without them.

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**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

ISIS                    The Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham

AQAP                    al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Extremist organizations like al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), the Taliban, and the Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) have heavily utilized the internet to disseminate extremist media products like music, videos, and magazines (Nacos, 2016). With the explosion of social media usage, extremist groups have been able to “virtually knock” on the door of any user, thus exposing any internet user to extremist media (Weimann, 2015, p.182).

Communication strategies by extremist groups such as AQAP, Taliban, and ISIS often include the dissemination of media products to a wider audience, including videos. After starting with movies sold in niche stores, jihadi groups have utilized the internet to mass distribute videos that feature professional editing and filming techniques (Stenersen, 2017). The internet allows for the swift dissemination of high-quality videos on platforms like YouTube and Dailymotion (Stenersen, 2017). Specifically, the Islamic State revolutionized jihadi videos both in terms of production value and distribution via the internet (Stenersen, 2017). These videos included horrifying scenes of foreign journalists being executed at the hands of ISIS militants (Friis, 2015). Despite ISIS being credited with revolutionizing the medium to create “Hollywood-like” videos, themes of retributive justice are evident across various extremist organizations (Stenersen, 2017, 125; Harrow, 2011). Stenersen posits that other extremist groups who wish to reach Western audiences will copy ISIS’ sophisticated techniques, however this assertion has not been properly researched across several groups (2017). Various cinematographic techniques in these videos offer insight into what audience an extremist organization is attempting to reach and how these groups utilize power over an audience. This thesis attempts to analyze the function of various cinematographic techniques in retributive justice videos created by the Taliban, ISIS, and al-Qaeda.

Retributive justice is a philosophical theory of punishment that “those who commit wrongful acts, especially serious crimes, should be punished even if punishing them would produce no other good” (Walen, 2020). Retributive justice is an intentional act that is in response to a wrongful act that one makes (Walen, 2020). Punishment and retribution themes in extremist media are identified as a common theme shared across extremist media, including ISIS, Al-Qaeda, and Taliban (Stenersen 2017; Euben, 2017; Friis 2015; Harrow 2011). Within these videos, executions of prisoners, foreign nationals, or a person who is accused of transgressing against the extremist group are often shown (Friis, 2015; Harrow, 2011). Execution videos first gained prominence in 2004 (Stenersen, 2017), but were largely an abandoned strategy (Harrow, 2011) until ISIS shocked the world by releasing the video of James Foley’s beheading in 2014 (Friis, 2015). Since, retributive justice videos have regained their status as a prominent theme in extremist videos, thus creating the opportunity to undergo in-depth research on these videos. Friis argues that these violent videos have not been properly scrutinized through empirical study, which allows this study to research these videos through a novel lens of cinematography (2017). Retributive justice was chosen as the main subject matter of study due to the prominence of this theme throughout extremist videos. While extremist media often contains a wide variety of themes such as recruitment and statebuilding (Fernandez, 2015), the public consciousness regarding extremist content is their violent nature (Friis, 2015). Given that extremist organizations often use violent tactics to garner media attention, the general population is more likely to be exposed to retributive justice content more than other themes (Barr & Herfroy-Mischler, 2018). Thus, this study utilizes common cinematographic techniques used by Hollywood filmmakers to understand how extremist groups craft their self-image and influence their audience.

Cinematographic techniques, such as camera angle, subject position, and zooming, are an underutilized frame to study extremist videos. Strategic cinematographic techniques are an important variable of study because they offer insight into the self-image, power posturing, and audience of these widely shared videos (Winkler et al., 2016; Baranowski & Hecht, 2018). Studying the employment of these cinematographic techniques will offer insight into how extremist organizations attempt to posture themselves and create different power dynamics with the audience. The techniques used within these videos often vary depending on the group, which opens the door to analyze the similarities and differences between the techniques used between these groups. Even lesser studied is the potential that other groups have been inspired to copy ISIS' brutal tactics to steal the media spotlight. Given the comparative nature of this study, this question can be addressed and contribute to the broader scholarly knowledge about the communication strategies of AQAP and Taliban.

Through analyzing 66 videos produced by ISIS, Taliban, and AQAP, this study contributes to the area of research that examines videos produced by extremist groups and the function of cinematographic techniques utilized in these videos. This thesis seeks to address the following questions and contribute to the less-examined literature of extremist videos:

1. What are some common cinematographic techniques used by the ISIS, Taliban, and AQAP's retributive justice videos?
2. What are the function and significance of these techniques and why might these three groups employ them in videos?
3. What are the systematic similarities and differences between the techniques employed, and what does this say about the audience and the self-image of these groups?

4. Is there systematic variation in the techniques used in English and foreign language videos, and how does this impact the audience and role of the extremist organization?
5. Lastly, is there evidence that Taliban and AQAP have adopted techniques in retributive justice videos that were popularized by ISIS?

By addressing these research questions, this study supplements the literature on extremist media, and considerably contributes to the under-researched area of extremist videos and the cinematographic techniques they employ.

This research will deepen our understanding of the extremist media and the audience it attempts to reach. In the United States, the United Kingdom, and organizations in the private sector, there is agreement that “strategic communications” are a preferred strategy of counterterrorism (Glazzard & Reed, 2020, 74). Part of countering violent extremism involves understanding the messages being effectively sold to audiences (Glazzard & Reed, 2020). A “Pillar” of the UK’s strategy is prevention, which involves protecting vulnerable people from becoming radicalized or recruited into an extremist organization (Glazzard & Reed, 2020, 76). Before any successful counterterrorism campaign can begin, it is first important to understand what messages the extremist group is trying to send and how they could potentially contribute to radicalization. This research contributes to the deeper understanding of how extremist groups successfully use certain techniques or themes to influence their audience. Given that “strategic communications” are a preferred method for countering violent extremism, learning from the successful techniques used by these groups will allow experts and practitioners to craft compelling messages that prevent political violence (Glazzard & Reed, 2020, 74). Research shows that counter-narrative videos created in the past are ineffective because they lack



credibility and authority compared to ISIS videos (Allendorfer & Herring, 2015). Given that groups like ISIS were able to utilize certain messages to effectively reach audience, this research is important to understand how ISIS accomplished that.

This thesis is organized first with a literature review to introduce a concise history of jihadi cinematography and the current knowledge on retributive justice videos and the techniques employed by extremist groups. The literature review is followed by an overview of the methodology used in this research, which is followed by substantive analysis of the results. The paper is concluded with future directions for empirically studying cinematographic techniques employed in extremist group videos.

## 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Currently, there is less scholarly literature that analyzes extremist videos (compared to other forms of media), despite videos being one of the main forms of communication utilized by extremist groups. Specifically, there has been a lack of literature that specifically compares retributive justice videos in a systematic way. Scholars have noted that the majority of research on extremist media has analyzed text of extremist media (Lemieux, Brachman, Levitt, & Wood, 2014; Skillicorn & Reid, 2014), imagery (Winkler, El Damanhoury, Dicker, & Lemieux, 2019; ), and audio/music (Lemieux & Nill, 2011; Pieslak 2015; Lahoud, 2017; Pieslak, 2017 Winkler & Pieslak, 2018). Several studies have analyzed the Taliban's media including online text content (Aggarwal, 2016), the historical overview of Taliban's use of decapitation videos (Harrow, 2011), and audiovisual forms in videos (Al Bayati, 2020). Recent research has analyzed ISIS videos through the lens of understanding how certain themes (such as military operations and glorification of fighters) play a role in the group's "brand management" (Royo-Vela & McBee, 2020, 179). During a study on English ISIS videos, Qi quantitatively analyzed "production characteristics", such as the prevalence of violent content and music utilization (2020, 2). In a 2018 study about hostage videos released by extremist organizations, the authors analyze several variables within these videos, such as sex of the hostage, whether the hostage is seen in restraints, and whether a weapon is pointed at the hostage (Rossin, Craun, Miller, & Collier, 2018). While there is no lack of research analyzing the content of extremist videos, there has been no systematic comparative studies on retributive justice videos among extremist groups that also focus on function of cinematographic techniques. The above studies mainly focus on ISIS, which highlights the importance of broadening the understanding of Taliban and AQAP videos. This research opens the door to expand our understanding of how extremist groups employ

cinematographic techniques within videos and broaden our knowledge of extremist group communication strategies. What makes analyzing extremist videos through this framework especially meaningful is that certain cinematographic techniques are used in a calculated, purposeful manner to evoke emotions from the audience and craft a self-image. Whether the intention of the video is to evoke sympathy or fear from the audience, the deliberate use of certain cinematographic techniques offers insight into the motives and intentions of an extremist group's media strategy.

## **2.1 Brief History of Extremist Videos**

As the Internet and social media increase the dissemination and availability of terrorist media content produced by extremist organizations like the Islamic State (ISIS), the field of analyzing extremist content (including videos, magazines, images, and music) has similarly grown. Extremist groups release videos for several reasons, which include intimidating a certain audience and perpetuating their message and goals (Salem, Reid, & Chen, 2008). Extremist groups like ISIS and al-Qaeda have widely used the internet to circulate terrorist media products like videos, audio/music, and magazines (Nacos, 2016). From the power of the internet, these videos achieve a "multiplier effect" that encourages extremist groups to produce more videos to impact their intended audience (Salem, Reid, & Chen, 2008, 607). Extremist groups have been utilizing the power of cinematography and moving pictures to communicate with audiences since the early 1980s (Stenersen, 2017). Initially, these movies were sold in small stores, however, the creation of the Internet allows extremist groups to distribute this content on a massive scale (Stenersen, 2017). Extremist groups have historically adapted to utilize new technologies to create and distribute videos, which makes videos an enticing option for terrorist organizations compared to books and pamphlets (Stenersen, 2017). These modern videos often contain

professional editing and filming techniques, which was revolutionized by ISIS beginning in 2014 (Stenersen, 2017).

After ISIS began to lose territory, financial resources, media officials, and online access (including social media platforms like Twitter and YouTube) their utilization of the internet began to dwindle (Royo-Vela & Mcbee, 2020). In response to ISIS' extensive media campaign, social media websites have similarly responded by employing artificial intelligence (AI) to remove extremist media from their services (Macdonald, Correia, & Watkin, 2019). Invoking the rule of law and each site's individual terms of service, extremist content is banned on most sites (Macdonald, Correia, & Watkin, 2019). To prevent the posting and spread of this media, companies have instituted AI tools that recognize previously uploaded material and remove it automatically (Macdonald, Correia, & Watkin, 2019). To prevent the content from being reuploaded elsewhere, Twitter, YouTube, Microsoft, and Facebook have implemented a "shared industry database of hashes" that allows each company to quickly identify and block extremist material (Macdonald, Correia, & Watkin, 2019, 184). These technical innovations have made it more difficult for extremist organizations to widely disseminate material in the same way they previously could. As a result, ISIS' massive online profile has dwindled and their video content and began to concentrate on events in Syria and Iraq (Royo-Vela & Mcbee, 2020). In response to newer social media strategies, extremist organizations have migrated to more secretive and encrypted channels to spread their media, such as Telegram and WhatsApp (Macdonald, Correia, & Watkin, 2019). Facebook has also been recognized as a platform active extremists use to spread their ideology online (Speckhard & Shajkovci, 2019). While extremist media output faces greater obstacles to dissemination in 2020, these groups still find channels to regularly release media.

ISIS content is unique due to its high levels of professionalism in editing, uploading, and distribution of these videos (Stenersen, 2017). Unlike other groups, ISIS videos employ a wide range of techniques that imitate Western movies, which led to ISIS content being described as having “Hollywood-like” quality (Stenersen, 2017, 125). The availability of these high-quality terrorist videos on platforms like Dailymotion and YouTube creates the opportunity for these organizations to push narratives to the audience consuming these videos (Stenersen, 2017). Social media usage allows terrorist organizations to “virtually knock” on the door of any Internet user and expose them to terrorist media and narratives (Weimann, 2015, p.182). ISIS is unique in that it created an independent media wing called al-Hayat whose sole purpose was to produce and disseminate magazine and video content (Cunningham, Everton, & Schroeder, 2015). Unlike other organizations, al-Hayat produced videos in English to reach even wider audiences (Cunningham et al., 2015). ISIS has seen great success in being able to identify a sympathetic online audience and use videos to push certain narratives with credibility (Allendorfer & Herring, 2015). The lack of research on extremist videos, despite such a massive population of videos existing, creates the opportunity to empirically research these videos from many angles.

## **2.2 Retributive Justice in Extremist Videos:**

Retributive justice is a philosophical theory of punishment that “those who commit wrongful acts, especially serious crimes, should be punished even if punishing them would produce no other good” (Walen, 2020). In the eyes of a retributivist, the perpetrator of a crime absolutely deserves to be punished equally for their crime (Riishojgaard, 2019). Retributive justice is an intentional act that is in response to a wrongful act that one makes (Walen, 2020). This justice is thought to be the most effective when coupled with a message of condemnation for the wrongful act (Walen, 2020). In extremist videos, retributive justice is often used in conjunction with

victimization, such as showing a US soldiers attacking and killing Muslim women and children (Holt, Freilich, Chermak, & McCauley, 2015). By providing evidence of wrongdoing, the extremist group can then seek revenge to achieve justice against their enemy (Holt et al., 2015). Revenge, or “directing harm towards another person” is often a key component of retributive justice and is often the preferred tactic of gaining justice (Osgood, 2017, 102). When committing acts of revenge, perpetrators often attempt to send a message to the offender that their actions will no longer be tolerated (Osgood, 2017). Scholarly literature generally finds that perpetrators of revenge generally conduct their actions out of vengeance, as opposed to establishing deterrence against future crimes (Osgood, 2017). Retributive justice stands in opposition to restorative justice, which is when justice is achieved through healing the relationship between perpetrator and victim through apologies, reparations (Li, Leidner, Petrović, Orazani, & Rad, 2018). Generally, victims of a crime are more likely to pursue retributive justice tactics as opposed to restorative justice, which can assist in explaining the prevalence of this theme in extremist content (Li et al., 2018).

Retributive justice or punishment for wrongdoing is a common theme identified in extremist material, often in the form of execution videos (Stenersen 2017; Friis 2015; Harrow 2011). Scholars argue that extremist groups often employ violent tactics in their videos to “exploit” global media norms, thus generating greater amounts of attention and captivating a larger audience (Barr & Herfroy-Mischler, 2018, 946-947). By releasing violent videos, commentary on extremist material is discussed by news sources and social media users, which perpetuates the image and agenda of the extremist organization (Barr & Herfroy-Mischler, 2018). One of the earliest prolific examples is the beheading of Nicholas Berg in May 2004 by al-Qaeda (Stenersen, 2017). Following that video, al-Qaeda released a string of similar

beheading videos through the end of 2004 (Stenersen, 2017). It's not clear why al-Qaeda stopped releasing these graphic videos, but the intention was to garner media attention and promote the group's powerful position in Iraq (Stenersen, 2017). In the years following, Harrow argues that retributive justice videos were not widely disseminated because they never found a popular audience with many people being unaccustomed to extreme violence (2011). This changed with the explosion of social media and the rise of ISIS, which led to widespread dissemination of several high-profile execution videos (Friis, 2015). Social media allowed for the "horrors of war" to transcend borders and reach new audiences (Friis, 2015, 726). Through a study of English ISIS videos, Qi found that 53% of the videos analyzed contained themes of violence, which underscores the importance of studying retributive justice in greater depth (2020). A 2019 study found that following the release of ISIS beheading videos, people who experienced fear of future violent events were more likely to view the beheading video (Redmond, Holman, & Silver). The authors conclude people with preexisting fear of victimization are more likely to view violent ISIS content (Redmond, Holman, & Silver, 2019). Thus, people who are already predisposed to be fearful of ISIS are more likely to engage with and be influenced by their content. Friis argues that these violent videos have not been scrutinized through empirical study, which allows this study to research these videos through a novel lens.

### **2.3 The Function of Various Cinematographic Techniques:**

The main techniques of study are camera angle, subject position, and zooming. The camera angle is an important variable of study because different camera angle influences how the scene and subjects are interpreted by the audience (Baranowski & Hecht, 2018). Winkler, Damanhoury, Dicker, and Lemieux identify camera angle changes in "about to die images" from the ISIS magazine *dabiq*, and argue that these camera angles denote "differential power relationships"

(2016, 13). For example, straight angles convey neutrality with the subject (Baranowski & Hecht, 2018). According to extremist media research, straight angles inform the audience that they are on the same level as the victims of retributive justice (Winkler et al., 2016). Similarly, Kraft argues that neutral camera angles create a sense of empathy and similarity with the audience, as the subject is on equal level with them (1987, in Lankhuizen, Bálint, Savardi, Konijn, Bartsch, & Benini 2020). This is opposed to low and high camera angles, which imply varying levels of power between the subject and viewer. High angle shots, where the camera is above the subject looking down, diminishes the subjects power and promotes a sense of vulnerability (Baranowski & Hecht, 2018). Meanwhile, low angle shots, where the camera is below the subject looking up, make the subject seem powerful and large (Baranowski & Hecht, 2018). A low angle forces the viewer to look up, which makes the subject appear taller, imposing, and aggressive (Kraft, 1837, in Lankhuizen et al., 2020). Camera angles that vary widely in any direction drastically change the “atmosphere” of the scene, which reinforces the message being promoted (Baranowski & Hecht, 2018, 2).

Another variable of study is the location of the subject compared to the audience, which can range from intimate to the subject being in the background (Winkler et al., 2016). Long shots involve greater distance between the viewer and subject, which can decrease the emotional impact of a scene (Heiderich, 2012). Scenes shot at a distance tend to be informative and generate less emotional impact than closer shots (Heiderich, 2012). Medium shots are scenes at a personal and conversational level, with a small amount of distance between the viewer and subject (Heiderich, 2012). At this distance, viewers have greater emotional engagement with the subject being filmed (Heiderich, 2012). Finally, Close Shots are the most intimate, as they deeply capture the emotions and facial expressions of the subject in a direct way (Heiderich, 2012). It is



noted that when subjects are closer to the viewer, they pay greater attention to the scene and are more likely to relate to the subject (Winkler et al., 2016). As shots get closer to the individual, the emotional connection between the viewer and subject amplifies, which allows the filmmaker to manipulate how the audience reacts to a subject (Heiderich, 2012). Finally, zooming gives the director the ability to focus on one subject or increase the power of one subject (StudioBinder, 2020). The employment of this technique forces the viewer to hyper focus on the subject of the shot. These techniques are often combined to emphasize a certain message or evoke a certain feeling. For example, scene could include the medium shot and the straight angle of a subject, both of which evoke a certain sympathetic, emotional bond. By using those two techniques in conjunction, the connection between the is further emphasized.

These techniques will be analyzed in detail to understand the similarities and differences between audience and power projection amongst several extremist groups. Qi notes that little research has been conducted to understand how a viewer might “digest” extremist content or how deeply certain themes might resonate with viewers (2020, 20). However, analyzing extremist content through the lens of common cinematographic techniques offers some insight into how extremist groups seek to influence their audience and generate certain emotions. For example, analyzing if a group commonly uses close and medium shots would indicate that the group wants the viewer to emotionally connect with the victim of retributive justice. Similarly, if a group prominently uses straight angle, that would indicate the group wants the viewer to feel equal to the victim, and thus *could* be on the receiving end of retributive justice. The type of self-image and messages the extremist group wants to produce are structured by the cinematographic techniques they employ in videos. The implications of studying the cinematographic techniques

used in extremist media are particularly interesting and important to understand, as they illuminate how the group crafts its self-image and how the audience is influenced.

### 3 METHODOLOGY

This research design incorporated mixed methods research and content analysis of ISIS, Taliban, and AQAP videos. The content analysis was conducted through NVIVO, a qualitative analysis software. The majority of the videos were retrieved by members of the Mobilizing Media <sup>1</sup>team from Jihadology.net, which is a reputable online resource created for terrorism scholars that contains collections of terrorist magazines, images, audio, video, and press releases. Some videos were collected through other direct sources, such as Taliban's main website. In this study, thirty-four foreign language ISIS videos produced between 2015 and 2019 were analyzed, with an average length of 7.45 minutes and median of 5.5 minutes. Ten English language ISIS videos produced between 2015 and 2018 were analyzed, with an average length of 12.9 minutes and a median of 6.3 minutes. Twelve Taliban videos produced between 2014 and 2019 were analyzed, with an average length of 25.6 minutes and a median of 9.3 minutes. Finally, ten AQAP videos produced between 2007 and 2018 were analyzed, with an average length of 29 minutes and a median of 24.6 minutes. These videos were chosen for analysis from a collection of 600 ISIS videos, 478 Taliban videos, and 143 AQAP videos gathered by the Mobilizing Media team. One limitation regarding the data collection process is that the number of videos in the Mobilizing Media collection are not representative of all videos disseminated by ISIS, the Taliban, and AQAP. There are a greater number of videos that exist which have not been collected by the Mobilizing Media team, therefore they were not considered during the data collection process.

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<sup>1</sup> Videos were collected for *Mobilizing Media: A Deep and Comparative Analysis of Magazines, Music, and Videos in the Context of Terrorism*. The project is based at Georgia State University and is funded through the Minerva Research Initiative through the Air Force Office of Scientific Research.

To view a list of each video's title, date, duration, length in minutes, and foreign or English language, refer to Appendices A, B, and C.

All ISIS, Taliban, and al-Qaeda videos were manually coded. This study utilized the NVivo software and a comprehensive codebook. The codebook was built through collaboration of the Mobilizing Media team members based on literature of prominent themes and techniques in extremist media content. The codebook includes substantive descriptions for the theme of retributive justice and the techniques for straight angle, low angle, high angle, close shot medium shot, long shot, and zooming. For the coding process, the videos were uploaded to NVivo alongside the codebook. The original codebook was used to broadly capture general details about the video, such as the location, time of day, details about the video subjects (sex, age, militant/non-militant, technical aspects, audio (such as narration and music usage), and themes. When the coder detected a theme or technique was being shown, we used the coding tool within NVivo to track whenever a certain narrative theme was shown in the video. This creates detailed reports of when these codes appear and how prominent they are within each video. While coding, NVivo allows for precision coding of when exactly a certain theme or technique appears in an extremist video. All videos were coded with similar precision to detect when the themes and techniques appeared throughout the videos. Following the coding process, NVIVO creates reports that allow the researcher to draw conclusions about the usage of techniques in this sample of videos.

### **3.1 Data Analysis**

Using the NVIVO coding software, all 66 videos were manually coded by the researcher. Throughout the coding process, a comprehensive codebook was utilized to capture detailed information about each video containing retributive justice themes. Table 3.1.1 contains a

snapshot of the operationalization of the variables used throughout this study. The first part of the codebook contains various retributive justice themes of Private Execution, Public Execution, Punishment, and Military Revenge Acts Against the Enemy. The second part of the codebook contains cinematographic techniques of straight angle, low angle, high angle, close shot, medium shot, long shot, and zooming. The Results section contains detailed descriptions of how these various codes manifest throughout the retributive justice themed videos produced by these groups.

*Table 3.1.1 Operationalization of Codes in the ISIS, AQAP, and Taliban Retributive Justice Videos*

	<b>Code</b>	<b>Operationalization</b>
	Punishment	Shows the group exacting punishment (such as torture or imprisonment) on a citizen, police officer, military personnel, or enemy for committing crimes or defying orders of the group.
	Private Execution	Shows the groups executing an enemy (by beheading, gunshot, or other method) for committing a crime or defying the group, thus establishing justice. The execution occurs in front of members of the extremist group and away from the public.
	Public Execution	Shows the groups executing an enemy (by beheading, gunshot, or other method) for committing a crime or defying the group, thus establishing justice. The execution occurs in public, such as a public area or in front of a group.
	Military Revenge Acts Against the Enemy	Shows the group getting revenge and establishing justice against their enemy through a variety of means, such as bombing enemy vehicles or displaying killed military personnel.
<b>Cinematographic Techniques</b>	Straight Angle	Camera angle depicts subjects at a level view.
	Low Angle	Camera angle depicts subjects from above, with the camera filming from below the subjects.

	High Angle	Camera angle depicts subjects below the viewer, filming from above the subjects.
	Close Shot	Subjects are depicted close to camera, with full bodies out of view. More intimate view than Medium Shot.
	Medium Shot	Subjects are depicted at a personal level, with full bodies typically in view.
	Long Shot	Subjects are depicted far from the camera, with full bodies in the view. Scene shot from a distance.
	Zooming	Scene zooms from a further to a closer distance on the subjects, to focus on one specific subject.

These variables were partially generated through themes and observations from other studies within the field of extremist media research. Through a study of images produced by ISIS, Winkler et al utilize the codes of straight angle, low angle, high angle, subject in foreground, and subject in background. Themes of execution and punishment are found by (Stenersen 2017; Euben, 2017; Friis 2015; Harrow 2011) within the context of punishing or executing prisoners, enemies, foreign nationals, or a person viewed as defying the authority of the extremist organization. Close shot, medium shot, long shot and zooming are included due to the common employment of this technique by these groups to focus on or highlight the importance and power of one subject (Heiderich, 2012; StudioBinder, 2020).

Following the creation of the codebook, data collection was conducted from the Mobilizing Media team's repository of extremist videos. English language ISIS videos were selected after reviewing summaries of 600 videos written by an Arabic-speaking member of the Mobilizing Media team. Each summary was reviewed to conclude whether it contained themes of retributive justice before adding it to the sample. The summaries also contained the video's language, which made it possible to select a sample of English language ISIS videos for analysis.

All videos that contained themes of retributive justice were included in this analysis. Currently, the Mobilizing Media team's repository contains 478 Taliban videos and 143 AQAP videos, all of which were watched and reviewed for themes of retributive justice. All videos from the repository that contained themes of retributive justice were included in this analysis.

Following the collection of sixty-six extremist videos, the sample was uploaded to the NVivo software for coding and analysis. The coding of each video occurred in three rounds. During the first round of the coding process, each video was watched and coded for the themes of retributive justice. After establishing where retributive justice was shown in each video, a second round of coding was conducted to capture the cinematographic techniques used during those scenes. In the final round, each video was re-watched by the coder to ensure accuracy of the coding before reporting results of the study, which are detailed below. NVivo produced reports about the various codes in duration (in minutes) of each coded segment, which provided the observed and expected values in the results section.

It's worth noting that due to the nature of this study, the researcher viewed a hefty amount of visually violent and distressing content. To limit the effects of viewing the content, several precautions were taken. Previously, the Mobilizing Media team met with counselors at Georgia State University to understand the psychological effects of viewing violent content and learned about coping resources should there be any distress. When viewing the videos, the window containing the video was minimized during brutal portions of the video, to minimize eye contact. While the viewer was small, the researcher could still see enough to code precisely. Lastly, the videos were viewed without audio (unless the English videos required it) to prevent hearing any violent or distressing sounds, such as gunshots. Future researchers could utilize these precautions to prevent any unnecessary stress that could arise from this particular research area.

It is important to note the limitations of this study, the main one being a lack of language contextual analysis. Outside of English ISIS videos analyzed, there is a language barrier that does not allow the researcher to study extremist videos for context. However, the main focus of the study is visual techniques, so the language barrier should not significantly diminish the results. Another limitation is that the sample will likely include more ISIS videos than other groups, due to the greater volume of videos produced by ISIS. All groups produce videos with retributive justice themes, however, ISIS heavily relied on this theme during the peak of their media campaign. One benefit of analyzing a greater number of ISIS retributive justice videos is the ability to include some English videos. Thus, the researcher was able to study whether there is systematic variation between English and foreign language retributive justice videos.



## 4 RESULTS

Following the analysis of 66 Retributive Justice videos released by ISIS, the Taliban, and AQAP, the results of the study are broken down into several parts. First, the usage and prominence of Retributive Justice themes will be discussed. Then, each theme will be qualitatively discussed to establish what the use of these themes suggest about how each extremist group crafts their self-image and affect the audience. Then, a novel lens will be used to analyze the similarities and differences of the Cinematographic Techniques used in these themes, and how these techniques affect the group's image. Finally, the question about whether ISIS' shocking and widely disseminated videos inspired AQAP and the Taliban will be explored.

### 4.1 Use of Retributive Justice Themes in Extremist Videos

From reading *Table 4.1.1*, the most heavily featured theme in ISIS foreign language videos is Private Execution, accounting for 98 total minutes and 71.66% of the total duration of coded segments. This indicates ISIS' strong preference for showing executions, but also specifically executions that occur in private. Following Private Execution, Public Execution and Punishment are also prominently featured, at 11% and 10% respectively in total duration in coded segments. These results indicate ISIS' preference to film executions in private, with there being 9 public executions compared to 26 private executions. During Public Executions, the overall duration is rather low, at 15 minutes across nine videos, indicating that ISIS does not dedicate a significant amount of time to displaying executions in public. With only 10% of total duration dedicated to Punishment, it appears that ISIS prefers to enact revenge and retributive justice through executions. This indicates that instead of displaying torture or punishment of people living under ISIS rule, the group prefers to execute captives as opposed to imprisoning them.

*Table 4.1.1. ISIS' Foreign Language Number of Videos, Theme References, Duration, and Percentage of Total Duration*

	<b>Retributive Justice Theme</b>	<b>Number of Videos</b>	<b>Number of References for Each Theme<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>~Duration in Minutes<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>Percentage of Total Duration in Minutes</b>
<b>ISIS Foreign Language Videos</b>	Private Execution	26	39	98	71.66%
	Public Execution	9	12	15	10.97%
	Military Revenge Acts Against the Enemy	3	4	10	7.31%
	Punishment	5	7	14	10.05%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

On the other hand, ISIS does not show a preference for displaying themes of Military Revenge Acts Against the Enemy, as only three videos contained this theme with approximately 7% of the total duration of coded segments. Similar to Punishment, ISIS shows a strong preference for execution videos, as they are more likely to gain newsworthy attention and be shared across social media platforms than videos containing torture or military revenge (Friis, 2015).

Alternatively, reviewing *Table 4.1.2*, when speaking to a Western audience, ISIS clearly shows a strong preference for displaying Private Executions, with approximately 74% of the total duration in coded segments being dedicated to this theme. This indicates that ISIS only cares to show the execution to a Western audience, and not a local audience in a town or a Muslim audience living under ISIS rule. ISIS also heavily utilizes Military Revenge Acts Against the Enemy, with approximately 26% of coded segments containing this theme. Similar to the use of Private Executions, ISIS wants to show a Western audience their military strength, thus creating an identity of power and strength. It makes intuitive sense that English language videos would

<sup>2</sup> References refer to the number of times a certain theme appears in a video. For example, if Private Execution is displayed from times 1:51-3:51 and 4:21-6:21, the number of Private Execution References in that video is two.

<sup>3</sup> Duration is calculated by dividing each theme's approximate duration in minutes by the approximate total duration of all themes, which is 137 minutes for ISIS foreign language videos.

rely on these themes, as they support the notion that ISIS is pushing an image as a ruthless conqueror to Western audiences.

*Table 4.1.2 ISIS' English Language Number of Videos, Theme References, Duration, and Percentage of Total Duration*

	<b>Retributive Justice Theme</b>	<b>Number of Videos</b>	<b>Number of References for Each Theme</b>	<b>~Duration in Minutes</b>	<b>Percentage of Total Duration in Minutes</b>
<b>ISIS English Language Videos</b>	Private Execution	10	18	44	74.36%
	Public Execution	0	0	0	0.00%
	Military Revenge Acts Against the Enemy	1	9	15	25.64%
	Punishment	0	0	0	0.00%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

It is noteworthy that themes of both Public Execution and Punishment appear zero times in this group of videos, indicating ISIS has little interest in showing these themes. By omitting Public Executions, Western audiences are spared visuals of ISIS parading captives through a town and then committing executions in front of large crowds and children. Thus, ISIS is pushing the idea of legitimacy to Western audiences by avoiding Public Execution and Punishment, as these show mistreatment of Muslims under ISIS rule. This could undermine the group's credibility as a state. Those themes are reserved for foreign language videos to strike fear into the hearts of Muslims, encouraging them to submit to the iron grip of ISIS rule.

From reading *Table 4.1.3*, the Taliban uses the theme of Military Revenge Acts Against the Enemy the most compared to other themes, having approximately 63% of total duration ((in minutes) of coded segments. An important component of The Taliban's videos is fighting off an enemy (typically referred to as the "regime") that has subjugated the Afghan people. By prominently displaying Military Revenge Acts Against the Enemy, the Taliban generates an image of fighting for justice of people who have been harmed, thus the group chooses to enact

justice through military actions. Given the small amount of English content in Taliban videos, the main audience is citizens of Afghanistan. With this in mind, by utilizing Military Revenge Acts Against the Enemy the most, the Taliban forges a righteous image as the defender of Afghanistan against wrongful invaders.

*Table 4.1.3. Taliban's Number of Videos, Theme References, Duration, and Percentage of Total Duration*

	<b>Retributive Justice Theme</b>	<b>Number of Videos</b>	<b>Number of References for Each Theme</b>	<b>~Duration in Minutes</b>	<b>Percentage of Total Duration in Minutes</b>
<b>Taliban Videos</b>	Private Execution	3	3	4	10.53%
	Public Execution	0	0	0	0.00%
	Military Revenge Acts Against the Enemy	10	24	24	63.16%
	Punishment	2	2	10	26.32%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

According to these results, The Taliban utilizes the themes of Punishment with approximately 26% of coded segments containing this theme. When the Taliban does utilize Punishment in their videos, the punishments shown are not brutal (*see section 4.2.3*). This keeps in line with the Taliban's desire to uphold an identity as a fair defender of Afghanistan that does not resort to violent tactics of other groups. Unsurprisingly, the Taliban relies on themes of execution the least, especially Public Execution which appears zero times in this video sample. When the Taliban does execute enemies they only occur in private, with approximately 10.5% of coded segments containing this theme. To uphold its separate identity, the Taliban actively chooses to avoid showcasing the brutal executions that were once the cornerstone of AQAP and ISIS' communications strategies.

Lastly, according to *Table 4.1.4*, AQAP shows a decisive preference for the theme of Military Revenge Acts Against the Enemy with approximately 91% of coded segments

containing this theme. With these results, AQAP clearly tries to forge an identity as a military organization that enacts retributive justice through foreign attacks and military operations.

Unlike ISIS, AQAP does not often execute individuals to send a message, but would rather use its military power, which is reflected in AQAP videos that contain retributive justice themes.

*Table 4.1.4. AQAP's Number of Videos, Theme References, Duration, and Percentage of Total Duration*

	<b>Retributive Justice Theme</b>	<b>Number of Videos</b>	<b>Number of References for Each Theme</b>	<b>~Duration in Minutes</b>	<b>Percentage of Total Duration in Minutes</b>
<b>AQAP Videos</b>	Private Execution	1	1	2	8.64%
	Public Execution	1	1	0.03	0.13%
	Military Revenge Acts Against the Enemy	9	19	21	90.67%
	Punishment	1	1	0.1	1%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23.160</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

These findings affirm the notion argued by Stenersen that AQAP decided to move away from displaying brutal execution videos that were popularized by ISIS (2017). In the sample, only one video contained both themes of Public Execution and Punishment, while another video contained the theme of Private Execution. Both Public Execution and Punishment account for approximately less than 1% of the total duration (in minutes) of coded segments, indicating AQAP's preference to not have an overly violent image in their communication strategy.

## **4.2 Analysis of Retributive Justice Theme Employment**

After reviewing the prominence of each theme within the videos of ISIS, the Taliban, and AQAP, this section gives a qualitative overview of how the four themes of Retributive Justice are shown in these videos. Even though all groups analyzed share certain themes like Execution (Private or Public) and Military Revenge Acts Against the Enemy, a great deal of variation exists in how each group utilizes these themes.

#### 4.2.1 *Private Execution*

During videos containing Private Execution, the execution of a hostage or prisoner is shown to the viewer. During these videos, the videos begin by the interviewing the hostage, where the accused confesses their crimes or divulges information to the extremist organization. In the style of a “last will and testament videos”, the prisoners attempt to explain the situations that led to their capture. For example, in the English language video *Uncovering an Enemy Within*, the bulk of the video contains two captured Russian spies whose mission was to uncover information about ISIS for a Russian Intelligence agency. Following the interview, the prisoner is taken to a private location, typically in the desert or in the rubble of a city or battlefield. The prisoner is often shown slowly walking to the place of execution, where they kneel before one ISIS fighter or a group of militants. Before the execution takes place, an ISIS militant typically charges the prisoner with their crimes and extends a message to the enemy. In the English language video *A Message Signed in Blood*, the militant speaking warns “crusaders” about the dangers of fighting ISIS and the word of Allah. Following the brief speech, the militant then proceeds with the execution of the prisoner, typically showing the action with a variety of special effects to enhance the brutality of the execution. Following the execution, the corpse is then prominently displayed in a vulnerable position, such as showing a severed head on top of the corpse’s back. Other groups typically feature less stylized or brutal executions, such as the Taliban video *Kllna alqool, Colonel Inam execution by TTP* blurs the victim before and after he is shot, thus protecting the viewer from experiencing the execution’s glorified brutality. In the Taliban video *Indeed is Falsehood [By Nature], Ever Bound to Depart*, the video shows Taliban militants chasing after two men in a car with the intention of killing them. After shooting one man, the other surrenders to the militants and is captured. In the following text, the Taliban states that

people who surrender to the rule of the Taliban will be spared by the group. This indicates that the Taliban's main audience is citizens of Afghanistan, and the group desires to forge a beneficent, forgiving identity. Similarly, the AQAP video titled *Msr3-khwnh 2* shows similarities to ISIS execution videos by showing the prisoner kneeling blindfolded in the desert before a group of militants, but the actual execution is not shown, but rather implied through the text. Unlike ISIS videos, AQAP and the Taliban have shown more restraint in the graphic imagery the groups wish to disseminate, offering insight about how these groups may desire to be viewed as less violent than ISIS.

#### **4.2.2 Public Execution**

Public Execution videos often follow a similar formula as Private Execution videos, however the key difference is that these videos take place in public areas, such as town square. For example, in the ISIS foreign language video *Amputation of the corruption with the judgment of the lord of mankind #1 - Wilayat ninawa* follows the pattern of interviewing the prisoner before the execution. Before the execution takes place, a crowd of people is gathered in a circle around the prisoner to witness the execution. In what appears to be a major intersection, the crowd listens as a militant reads off a piece of paper, then proceeding to execute the prisoner in front of the crowd. The beheaded corpses are then propped in the back of a pick-up truck and briefly shown driving through town, displaying ISIS' brutal actions to people of the town. Children are featured prominently as witnesses of the execution, with a group of children shown standing in front of their parents in the ISIS video *Establishment of the Limit Upon the Corrupt in the Land*. The children are prominently displayed in the background behind the militant speaking before the execution, indicating that not even children are exempt from witnessing the totalitarian control of ISIS. When attempting to address the question of how extremist groups forge an identity, this

theme offers insight as the only group of videos that contains themes of Public Execution are foreign language ISIS videos. Of the Mobilizing Media's 600 summarized ISIS videos, no English language videos contain scenes of public executions. Therefore, it is likely that ISIS has less interest in forging an identity as a subjugator of Muslim people. By only creating English videos that contain Private Executions, Western audiences do not bear witness to the ways ISIS struck fear into the people it ruled. ISIS only attempts to forge an identity as a totalitarian ruler for Muslim audiences it controls by prominently featuring public executions in foreign language videos.

#### **4.2.3 Punishment**

The theme of Punishment in extremist videos offers a wide range of ways, ranging from showing brutal imprisonment of captives to torture. For example, in the foreign language ISIS video *And Heal the Chest of a Believing People*, a group of prisoners in orange jumpsuits are paraded through a town in large metal cages as large crowds watch and cheer. Before the execution in a private location, the captives were shown publicly imprisoned and humiliated by ISIS. Similarly, in the ISIS video *Here is my Warning so you Have no Excuse*, ISIS captives are shown living in brutal conditions. Prisoners are shown sitting on the floor and handcuffed to the wall. The prisoners' feet are bound and attached to a ball and chain. In opposition to ISIS, in the Taliban video *Detained American University Professors Pleading Their Governments For Release and Prisoner Exchange*, two American professors are shown pleading for their release from Taliban control in exchange for imprisoned Taliban fighters. Unlike ISIS, the professors are interviewed in a private location and explain that Taliban keeps them fed and in good condition. This video highlights how ISIS forges a more barbarous identity compared to the Taliban, which attempts to create an image as a forgiving, tolerant group. This video offers evidence that when speaking to a



Western audience, the Taliban desires to be viewed as a fair group that wants to negotiate for the exchange of prisoners, instead of brutally killing the American captives.

#### ***4.2.4 Military Revenge Acts Against the Enemy***

During videos that contain themes of Military Revenge Acts Against the Enemy, an extremist group is shown achieving retributive justice and revenge against an enemy through violent military action. For example, in the AQAP video *Liberation of Waqār City From the Gangs of ‘Abd al-Latīf al-Sayyid- Wilāyat Abyan*, AQAP military forces are shown recapturing a town from an enemy by placing a triggering a bomb at an enemy base. Following the detonation, AQAP shows the corpses of their enemies to the viewer. Another prominent theme of AQAP videos are showing clip reels of their attacks against foreign enemies. In the video *America and Its Latest Trap 2*, AQAP shows clips of attacks against Yemen, Iraq, Somalia, and America, showing the “Cemetery” of these attacks. When discussing fights against America, AQAP often uses clips from the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Military Revenge Acts Against the Enemy are the most common Retributive Justice theme in Taliban videos. For example, in the video *Enemy Helicopter Shot Down in Farah*, the Taliban is shown shooting down a helicopter of “the regime”, then exploring the wreckage and showing corpses of enemies who were killed. Also, in the video *Clearing Da’ish from Darzah*, the Taliban plays a short clip of ISIS executing Taliban members. In retaliation, the Taliban is shown hunting down ISIS militants and then showing the viewer the corpses. It is noteworthy that Taliban often blurs the corpses, protecting the identity of the deceased and preventing the viewer from witnessing the brutality of the group’s actions. This observation contributes to the notion that the Taliban wishes to avoid the violent identity that ISIS wears with pride. However, the Taliban does still exert an identity of strength and prowess, as the group often shows the enemy being defeated and killed. For example, in the

video *From the Battlefronts of Faryab*, Taliban militants are shown planting explosives along a road, detonating the explosives on enemy vehicles, and then engaging in gunfire with the enemy. Often, the charred remains of vehicles are shown, alongside corpses of defeated enemies. While the Taliban and AQAP try to appear less brutal than ISIS, the groups do actively try to create an image of military strength that can exact revenge against their enemies. While all three groups attempt to show strength, they pursue this in different ways,

### **4.3 Cinematographic Techniques Within Retributive Justice Themed Videos**

Following a review of how these extremist groups employ Retributive Justice themes, this section utilizes a novel lens to analyze the similarities and differences of the Cinematographic Techniques used in these themes. The Cinematographic Techniques used in the study are High Angle, Low Angle, Straight Angle, Close Shot, Medium Shot, Long Shot, and Zooming. The following section is organized by group to analyze which techniques are used the most by each group, as well as any trends in how techniques are used broadly in each theme. By analyzing the Cinematographic Techniques prominently used by each group, the communication strategies regarding the audience how the group desires to be perceived become clear. Through this section, the question of whether ISIS videos inspired the production of Taliban and AQAP videos will be discussed, as well as whether variation exists between English and foreign language ISIS videos.

#### ***4.3.1 Cinematographic Techniques used by ISIS in Foreign Language Videos***

The results begin with an analysis of *Table 4.3.1*, which contains observed values expressed in duration (in minutes) of each Cinematographic Technique coded with Retributive Justices themes, with expected values in the parentheses. Initially, it's clear that great disparity exists in the technique used depending on the theme analyzed. In both Private and Public Executions,

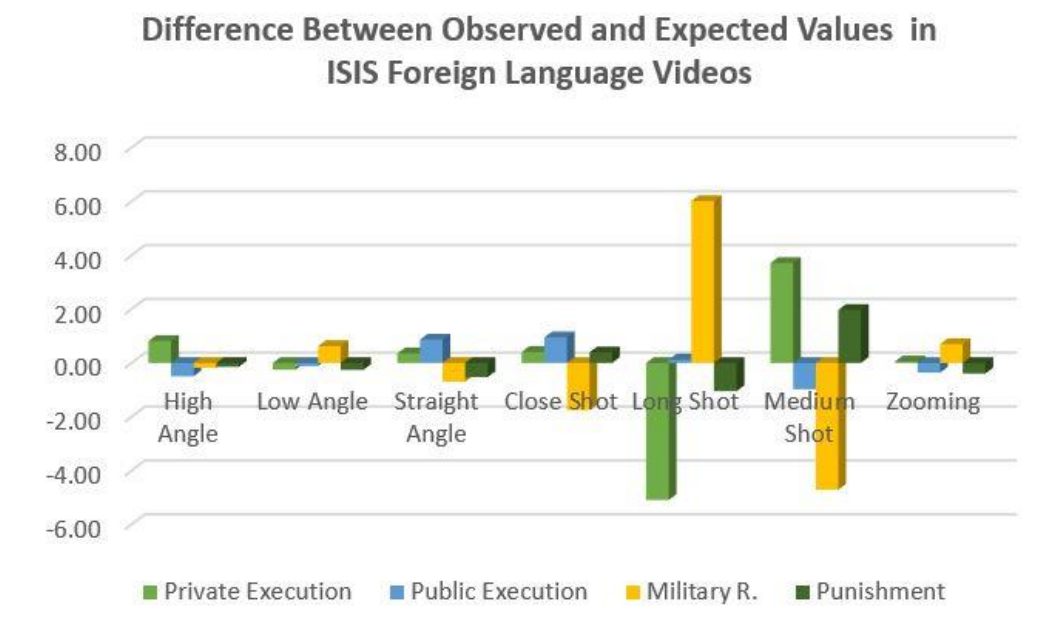
there is a higher chance of finding High and Low Angles compared to the other themes. This finding is in line with the idea that ISIS uses certain techniques in their Execution videos to project power or weakness, and elicit fear in the audience. In Execution videos, Low Angle shots on the militant projects power over the viewer, while High Angle shots of the victim make the subject seem weak and powerless before their death. Within Private Execution videos, such as *Execute an Apostate Sahwa Leader*, the camera is looking down on the blindfolded victim before they are killed, indicating their powerlessness to the audience. By utilizing these varying angles, ISIS is using techniques create a self-image of power over the audience, making the viewer believe the extremist group is stronger than it is. Similarly, ISIS foreign language videos heavily utilize straight angle, which is a technique often used to generate sympathy with the victim leading up to their execution (Kraft, 1837, in Lankhuizen et al., 2020). Private Executions also utilize Zooming more than any other Retributive Justice theme (4.41 minutes), which indicates ISIS' desire to draw great emphasis on the victim , deepening the sympathetic connection alongside the heavy use of Medium and Close Shots (StudioBinder, 2020; Heiderich, 2012).

*Table 4.3.1 Cross-tabulation of ISIS Foreign Language Video Usage of Cinematographic Techniques Within Retributive Justice Themes*

	<b>High Angle</b>	<b>Low Angle</b>	<b>Straight Angle</b>	<b>Close Shot</b>	<b>Long Shot</b>	<b>Medium Shot</b>	<b>Zooming</b>
<b>Private Execution</b>	9 (8.18)	1.88 (2.13)	86.93 (86.58)	17.06 (16.65)	28.73 (33.82)	52.01 (48.30)	4.41 (4.36)
<b>Public Execution</b>	0.71 (1.20)	0.2 (0.31)	13.6 (12.73)	3.4 (2.45)	5.1 (4.97)	6.13 (7.10)	0.28 (0.64)
<b>Military Revenge Acts Against the Enemy</b>	0.68 (0.86)	0.85 (0.22)	8.43 (9.12)	0 (1.75)	9.58 (3.56)	0.38 (5.09)	1.16 (0.46)
<b>Punishment</b>	1.08 (1.22)	0.06 (0.32)	12.4 (12.92)	2.88 (2.49)	4 (5.05)	9.18 (7.21)	0.26 (0.65)

	$\chi^2 = 22.65$	p-value = .20	* Expected values are in parentheses ** Values are Duration in Minutes
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Reviewing *Figure 4.3.1*, observed Long Shot is higher than expected in Military Revenge Acts Against the Enemy (difference of approximately 6 minutes), meaning that videos containing this theme are more likely to utilize the Long Shot technique. Often because battleground videos are filmed from a distance, these videos containing retribution through the military will most likely heavily utilize Long Shot. This is reinforced with the observed value of 0 minutes of Close Shot, which is lower than the expected value of approximately 2 minutes. Interestingly, the opposite holds true for Private Execution, as the observed is lower than the expected value for Long Shot (difference of approximately -5 minutes). Meaning, Execution videos are less likely to rely on Long Shot as distanced shots do not allow for an emotional connection between the viewer and victim (Heiderich, 2012).



*Figure 4.3.1 Difference Between Observed and Expected Values in ISIS Foreign Language Videos*

In Military Revenge Acts Against the Enemy, there are 9.58 observed minutes compared to 3.56 expected minutes for Long Shot, meaning Long Shot is the preferred technique in ISIS foreign language videos. This stands in opposition to Medium Shot in Military Revenge Acts Against the Enemy, in which the expected value is higher by 4.71 minutes. This indicates that in Military Revenge Acts Against the Enemy videos, ISIS foreign language videos are significantly less likely to utilize this technique. Similarly, the observed value of Close Shot is 0 minutes and the expected value is 1.75 minutes, meaning ISIS foreign language videos are also less likely to utilize the Close Shot technique in this theme. These findings indicate that ISIS is less interested in eliciting an emotional response from the audience when using this theme, as these distanced shots are meant to be informative and less emotional (Heiderich, 2012).

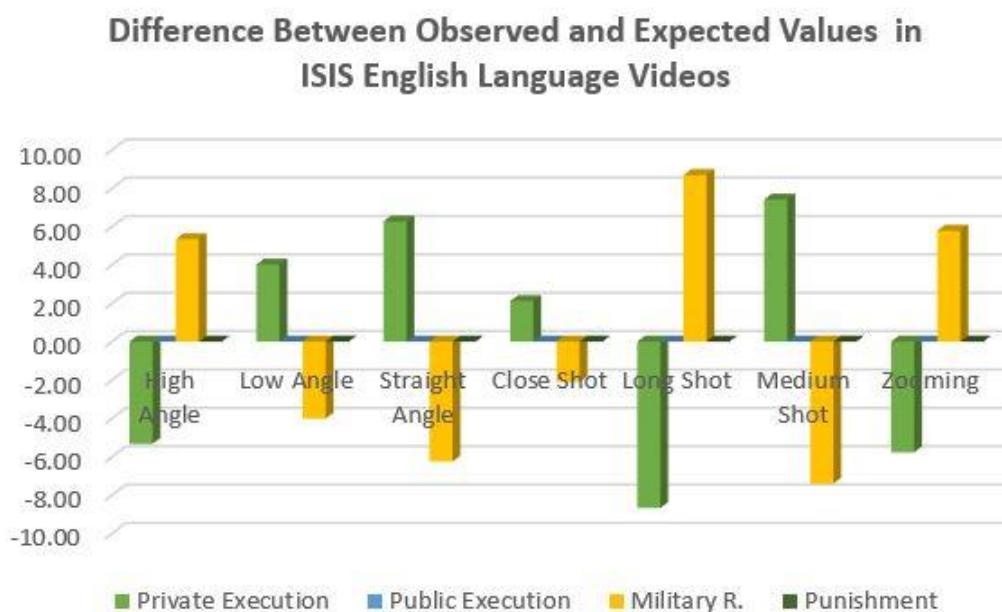
Looking at covering percentages, 19% of Zooming techniques are found in Military Revenge Acts Against the Enemy, which is behind Private Execution which contains 72% of Zooming. When used in this theme ISIS often zooms on militants during battle, as seen in the video *Storming the Barracks of Peshmerga*, where the cameraman zooms a militant firing a machine gun on a roof. Military Revenge Acts Against the Enemy also contains the second highest percentage of Low Angle shots with 28%. In that same video, fighters are shot from a low angle as they are fighting from a roof. The combination of Zooming and Low Angle indicate that even during military operations, ISIS foreign language videos drive home that ISIS wants the viewer to think the group is imposing and mighty, with their fighters being undefeatable.

It's worth noting that the level of significance for ISIS Foreign language videos is lower than the other three categories of videos. Thus, it is important to not overstate the results of this section. However, based on the observed values, it's still possible to make inferences about which techniques ISIS uses the most in foreign language videos, and compare those observed values to



	$\chi^2 = 145$	p-value < 0.001	* Expected values are in parentheses **Values are Duration in Minutes
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Private Execution also utilizes Low Angle the most of with an observed value of 15.08 minutes (88%), which is shared with foreign language videos. Both foreign and English videos heavily rely on this technique to make their fighters seem taller, stronger, and imposing compared to the victim. Interestingly, reviewing *Figure 4.3.2*, the High Angle observed value (2.65 minutes) is significantly lower than the expected value (7.98). This stands in opposition to foreign language videos, where High Angle's observed value was higher than the expected value, indicating ISIS often used this technique in foreign language videos. According to the results, ISIS is less likely to use High Angle in English language videos, meaning this technique is not used *as often* to represent the weakness of the victim.



*Figure 4.3.2 Difference Between Observed and Expected Values in ISIS English Language Videos*

In Military Revenge Acts Against the Enemy videos, ISIS English language videos heavily rely on Long Shot (14.55 minutes), High Angle (8.33 minutes), and Zooming (9.45 minutes) techniques. For example, in the video *We Will Surely Guide Them To Our Ways*, the victims of explosive attacks are shown from above, with the camera zooming onto the explosion to emphasize the attack. This is similar to foreign language ISIS videos where Long Shot and Zooming were preferred techniques for Military Revenge Acts Against the Enemy themed videos. For Low Angle, Straight Angle, Close Shot, and Medium Shot, the expected value is significantly higher than the observed value, but this is likely influenced by only one English Military Revenge Acts Against the Enemy themed video was observed in the 600 ISIS videos collected by the Mobilizing Media team.

These findings regarding Execution videos share great similarity, as both English and foreign language videos share heavy preference for Straight Angle, Medium Shot, and Zooming. The utilization of these three techniques creates a situation where ISIS wants all audiences regardless of origin to heavily sympathize with the victim, thus eliciting greater fear when the victim is later executed (Kraft, 1837, in Lankhuizen et al., 2020). The main immediate difference also discussed earlier is that English language videos do not utilize Public Executions or Punishment, unlike the foreign language counterparts. Despite English videos not containing these themes, there exists a great deal of similarity between videos that contain Private Execution and Military Revenge Acts Against the Enemy. I theorize that should Public Execution or Punishment appear in an English language Retributive Justice video, they would likely follow the techniques of foreign language videos. However, no Public Executions or Punishment were found in 600 ISIS videos, so there is systematic variation in which Retributive Justice themes ISIS chooses to include in English language videos.



### 4.3.3 Cinematographic Techniques used in Taliban Videos

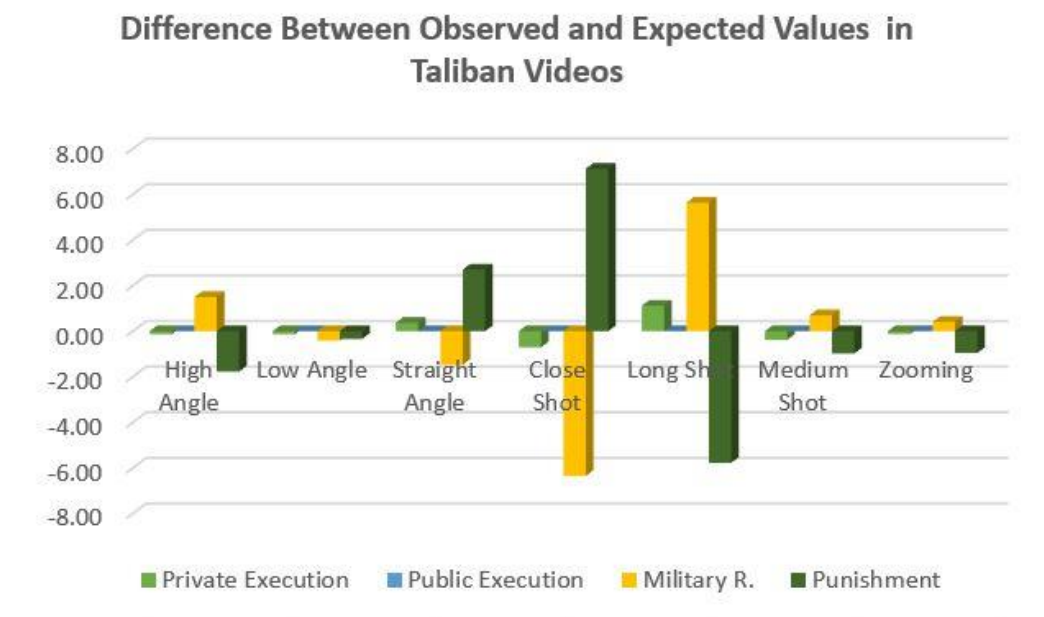
Results for the Taliban's videos begin with an analysis of *Table 4.3.3*, which contains observed values expressed in duration (in minutes) of each Cinematographic Technique coded with Retributive Justices themes, with expected values in the parentheses. The most prominent Retributive Justice theme found in Taliban videos is Military Revenge Acts Against the Enemy, where Long Shot (19.78 minutes) and Straight Angle (17.1 minutes) are the most preferred techniques. For example, in the video *Conquest of Marjah*, the Taliban is shown killing enemies, then zooming onto the blurred corpses. Another prominent technique used is High Angle (5.76 minutes), although the expected value (13.86 minutes) is significantly higher. This indicates that although the Taliban does use High Angle, the theme is not as prominent as expected. When the Taliban does use High Angle, such as the video *The Continental Heroics*, the victim is shown from a High Angle, indicating the Taliban's triumph over their enemy. Throughout the video, the scenes are shot at a neutral angle and from a distance. In this case, the Taliban is creating a self-image as a defender of Afghanistan by showing informative videos of enemies being driven away. However, the Taliban does not desire to be seen as unnecessarily brutal like ISIS, as the Taliban chooses to blur the corpses of their enemies.

*Table 4.3.3. Cross-tabulation of Taliban Usage of Cinematographic Techniques Within Retributive Justice Themes*

	<b>High Angle</b>	<b>Low Angle</b>	<b>Straight Angle</b>	<b>Close Shot</b>	<b>Long Shot</b>	<b>Medium Shot</b>	<b>Zooming</b>
<b>Private Execution</b>	0.56 (0.69)	0 (0.13)	3.38 (3.01)	0.53 (1.24)	3.41 (2.29)	0 (0.38)	0.25 (0.37)
<b>Public Execution</b>	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
<b>Military Revenge Acts Against the Enemy</b>	5.76 (13.86)	0.41 (0.14)	17.1 (10.74)	1.3 (15.20)	19.78 (8.09)	3.06 (1.06)	2.71 (1.03)

<b>Punishment</b>	0	0	10.41	10.3	0.1	0	0
	(5.75)	(0.06)	(4.46)	(6.31)	(3.36)	(0.44)	(0.43)
	$\chi^2 = 36.87$	p-value < 0.001	* Expected values are in parentheses **Values are Duration in Minutes				

In Taliban Private Execution videos, the technique Straight Angle is most prominently used, with 3.38 minutes out of 4 minutes total utilizing this technique. Normally, this would indicate the Taliban desiring the audience to feel equal and sympathetic to the victim, however, the technique Long Shot is heavily used (3.41 minutes), which makes the viewer feel detached. By using Long Shot instead of Medium Shot (0 Minutes) or Close Shot (.53 minutes), the Taliban shows executions on video mainly to share information that they occurred.



*Figure 4.3.3 Difference Between Observed and Expected Values in Taliban Videos*

Similarly, in the theme Punishment, Straight Angle and Close Shot are preferred techniques at 10.41 minutes and 10.3 minutes respectively. These techniques further show that the Taliban desires the self-image as a beneficent and fair group. Reviewing *Figure 4.3.3*, one

would expect to see high usage of the Close Shot. For example, in the video *Detained American University Professors Pleading Their Governments For Release and Prisoner Exchange*, two men are shown pleading the United States government to aid their release from a Straight Angle and Close Shot. The use of Close Shot indicates high emotional connection between the viewer and subject, so the audience is more sympathetic towards the detained professors. The professors indicate in the video that the Taliban has kept them fed and in good condition. Use of the Straight Angle puts the audience (the West) on equal footing with the captives, thus making the viewer think that the Taliban would also treat them fairly in that situation. The combination of these two themes contributes to the idea that the Taliban does not desire the ruthless self-image that ISIS proudly created.

Comparing the Taliban to ISIS videos, there is a clear distinction in the usage of Execution videos, as the Taliban does not use these videos to seem powerful in any capacity. There is great similarity in the use of Long Shot and Straight Angle in Military Revenge Acts Against the Enemy videos, indicating there is similarity across groups in the application of this theme. These results confirm the notion that the Taliban desires to be viewed as a defender of Afghanistan and in opposition to the Western-supported “regime.”

#### ***4.3.4 Cinematographic Techniques Used in AQAP Videos***

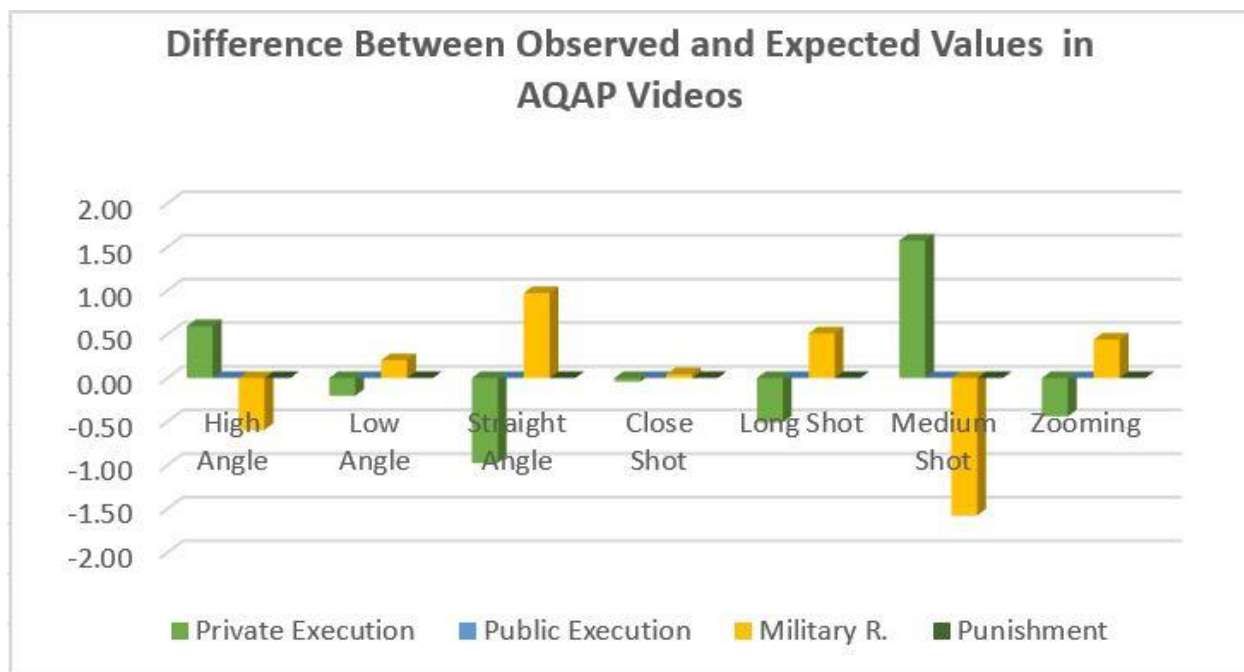
Results for AQAP begin with an analysis of *Table 4.3.4*, which contains observed values expressed in duration (in minutes) of each Cinematographic Technique coded with Retributive Justices themes, with expected values in the parentheses. Throughout all Retributive Justice themes, AQAP most prominently uses Long Shot throughout their videos. In both Private and Public Execution themes, Long Shot was used, which means AQAP is less interested in the viewer establishing an emotional connection with the victim than ISIS and the Taliban. In the

video titled *Msr3-khwnh 2*, the victim is portrayed at a Medium Shot from a High Angle, with militants standing behind in the distance. Given the victim is shot from a High Angle and never a Straight Angle, this supports the notion that AQAP is less interested in the audience feeling sympathy or emotionally connecting with the victim.

*Table 4.3.4. Cross-tabulation of AQAP Usage of Cinematographic Techniques Within Retributive Justice Themes*

	<b>High Angle</b>	<b>Low Angle</b>	<b>Straight Angle</b>	<b>Close Shot</b>	<b>Long Shot</b>	<b>Medium Shot</b>	<b>Zooming</b>
<b>Private Execution</b>	1.95 (1.35)	0 (0.20)	0 (0.98)	0 (0.07)	1.95 (2.45)	1.95 (0.37)	0 (0.44)
<b>Public Execution</b>	0 (0.011)	0 (0.002)	0.023 (0.008)	0 (0.001)	0.023 (0.019)	0 (0.003)	0 (0.003)
<b>Military Revenge Acts Against the Enemy</b>	9.8 (10.29)	1.76 (1.54)	8.41 (7.47)	0.5 (0.54)	19.31 (18.68)	1.28 (2.82)	3.81 (3.34)
<b>Punishment</b>	0.04 (0.010)	0 (0.001)	0.12 (0.007)	0.12 (0.001)	0.12 (0.018)	0 (0.003)	0.02 (0.003)
	$\chi^2 = 300.5$	p-value = < 0.001	* Expected values are in parentheses **Values are Duration in Minutes				

In Military Revenge Acts Against the Enemy, AQAP prefers to film at a Long Shot and almost equally utilizes High Angle and Straight Angle, with both techniques having 9.8 and 8.4 minutes respectively. This result stands in similarity to both ISIS and the Taliban, indicating that each group unsurprisingly utilizes similar Cinematographic Techniques when filming Military Revenge Acts Against the Enemy.



*Figure 4.3.4 Difference Between Observed and Expected Values in AQAP Videos*

Looking at *Figure 4.3.4*, the expected value of Medium Shot in Military Revenge Acts Against the Enemy, so Medium Shots were not significantly utilized in AQAP Retributive Justice videos, despite the group's heavy reliance on the theme. This finding is in line with ISIS foreign language videos and the Taliban, who also share a higher expected value of Medium shot in the expected value of Medium Shot in Military Revenge Acts Against the Enemy. All three groups tend to prefer other shot lengths than Medium Shot when utilizing this theme. Finally, when viewing a Private Execution video, one would expect to see High Angle and Medium Shot used. As stated above, the expected value is higher than the observed value for Straight Angle in Private Execution, which sets AQAP apart compared to ISIS, which heavily utilizes this technique to create an emotional bond between the victim and the audience.

#### ***4.3.5 Similarities Between ISIS Videos and Other Extremist Groups***

One of the hypothesized questions is whether the Taliban and AQAP drew inspiration from ISIS' ruthless yet successful communication strategy. Based on the results of this study, there is little evidence that indicates ISIS changed or heavily inspired the media output strategies of AQAP or the Taliban. Following ISIS' rise to power and the reemergence of vicious execution and beheading videos, there were zero execution videos found to be released by AQAP. Two Taliban videos featured executions after 2015, but the techniques featured such as Long Shot indicate that ISIS' style was not being replicated. Following 2015, AQAP and the Taliban show a preference for displaying themes of Retributive Justice through Military Revenge Acts Against the Enemy, which were moderately used in ISIS English and foreign language videos. However, AQAP and the Taliban used these themes in their content long before ISIS rose to prominence. While it's certainly possible ISIS' communications strategy inspired AQAP and the Taliban in other ways, there appears to be little influence from ISIS' most widely disseminated videos. These findings certainly confirm that notion that AQAP and the Taliban strongly desired to distance themselves from ISIS and the brutal tactics they used. al-Qaeda's leader publicly denounced ISIS's extreme violence, and the results of this study confirm that AQAP did not try to replicate ISIS' media strategy despite its success (Lister, 2017). A key takeaway from this study is that AQAP and the Taliban's media strategy followed a more traditional, military path in their retributive justice videos instead of copying ISIS' violent yet effective strategies.

## 5 CONCLUSION

This thesis has analyzed the employment of retributive justice themes throughout the video productions of the Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham, the Taliban, and al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. To study the usage of the themes of execution, revenge, and military revenge acts in 66 extremist videos, this thesis explored the prominence of these themes and the techniques used these groups utilize to project messages for a specific audience and craft a self-image. While contributing to the scholarly understanding of English ISIS videos, this study informs how different extremist groups present themselves and how they influence online viewers. Through comparatively examining three extremist groups, this study highlights the complexity and diversity of messages projected in retributive justice videos. From this study, it becomes abundantly clear that extremist organizations do not use certain cinematographic techniques by accident. Extremist group filmmakers utilize certain techniques in a deliberate, calculated way to project power, evoke emotions of fear or sympathy in the audience, and craft their self-image as power, authoritative, or honorable. By making an original contribution to the scholarly literature about the utilization of cinematography in extremist videos, the motives and intentions of different extremist groups become clearer.

*Table 5.1 Summary and Interpretation of Results*

	<b>Retributive Justice Theme</b>	<b>Distance of Shot</b>	<b>Camera</b>
<b>ISIS Foreign Language</b>	Violent subjugator of their territory. Heavy use of public executions to strike fear the people ISIS rules.	Creation of emotional, sympathetic bond between audience and subject.	Strategic use of Low Angle and High Angle to make the victim seem weak. Heaviest use of Straight Angle to create equality between victim and audience.
<b>ISIS English Language</b>	Intimidating, powerful group that poses an existential threat to the West.	Creation of emotional, sympathetic bond between audience and subject.	Strategic use of Low Angle and High Angle to make the victim seem weak. Heaviest use of Straight Angle to create equality

			between victim and audience.
<b>The Taliban</b>	Defender of Afghan People and honorable organization.	Prominent use of Long Shot to convey information.	Use of High Angle to indicate triumph over enemy.
<b>AQAP</b>	Powerful military organization with an aversion for overtly violent tactics.	Prominent use of Long Shot to convey information.	Use of High Angle to indicate triumph over enemy.

Clearly, ISIS most heavily creates an image as a ruthless, powerful group, and it uses certain techniques to indicate this power and strike fear into all audiences. By heavily utilizing techniques that emotionally connect the audience to the victim while sending the message that the viewer could find themselves at the wrong end of a blade, this study confirms that ISIS uses certain techniques to evoke fear. Throughout its rise and fall from power, ISIS attempted to conquer territory, build an Islamic state, and have an apocalyptic showdown with the West. The findings of this paper resonate with the goals of ISIS, as the techniques predominantly used indicate a desire to be seen as strong, aggressive, and imposing, while victims are weak and powerless. ISIS desired to rule its Islamic territory with an iron fist, which is confirmed by the study through the heavy usage of public executions in foreign language (Arabic) videos. Throughout the analysis of ISIS retributive justice videos, the general public image the group constructed through their actions are supported by the types of videos produced and the cinematographic techniques used.

While the Taliban and AQAP try to appear less brutal than ISIS, the groups do actively attempt to create an image of military might that can exact revenge against their enemies. While all three groups attempt to show strength, they pursue this in different ways. The Taliban chooses to avoid a violent image strongly, and instead tries to create a self-image as a fair, tolerant group whose main goal is defending Afghan people from outside enemies. This is seen throughout



Taliban videos, where they censor deceased enemies and treat hostages equitably. This is strongly opposed to ISIS that show hostages living in brutal conditions and exhibited the detail of every execution. Throughout its history, the Taliban has viewed itself as the alternative to the American-supported Afghan regime. The results of this paper confirm that through relying primarily on exacting revenge against the “regime” through military operations, the Taliban views itself as the true defender of the country. Lastly, the comparative analysis of Taliban, AQAP, and ISIS videos addresses the question of whether other groups were inspired by ISIS’ bombastic, shocking execution-style videos, and evidence found this was not the case. AQAP and the Taliban rarely rely on execution videos, which sets them apart from ISIS. In the past, al-Qaeda’s leader condemned the brutal tactics of ISIS (Lister, 2017). The results of this study confirm this notion that AQAP strongly desires to differentiate itself from ISIS and opt to avoid using a violent media strategy.

Through this study, the question of whether ISIS’ uniquely savage media strategy is successful should be considered. This study confirms that AQAP and the Taliban prefer to release more traditional videos that focus on military revenge acts as opposed to brutal executions. By focusing on the aspect of pure terror and executions, did ISIS undertake a defeatist strategy that ultimately led to the group’s swifter demise? Based on the longevity of AQAP and the Taliban’s strategy as military opponents against the West and Afghan regime respectively, it appears that ISIS’ communications strategy was unsuccessful. While ISIS’ heavy use of public and private executions rocked the world and challenged global media norms (Barr & Herfroy-Mischler, 2018), retaliation from the outside world was swift and devastating. This is evidenced by the media output of ISIS drastically decreasing in late 2015 and 2016 (Qi, 2020). From my sample of ISIS videos (English and Foreign language), 75% were released in 2015, and

the number of videos in each following year dwindled. This would indicate that ISIS' heavy use of retributive justice in the form of executions and punishment was a poor communication strategy compared to the more traditional military revenge approaches of AQAP and the Taliban.

For scholars and policymakers, this study holds an important implication. ISIS saw great success in being able to identify and manipulate a sympathetic online audience and use the video medium to push certain narratives with credibility and authority (Allendorfer & Herring, 2015). Through studying the complex techniques used in extremist organizations, more effective counter-messages can be created that have a powerful, emotional impact on the viewer. By understanding what techniques extremist organization use effectively, those same techniques can be used to sway a vulnerable audience away from supporting extremist groups. By better understanding the priorities these groups show in their content, and how they use certain techniques to manipulate their audience, more effective anti-terrorism campaigns can be crafted. This research can also assist counter-terrorism experts, academic scholars, and policymakers to more swiftly recognize the audience, intent, and impact of retributive justice videos that are widely disseminated by these groups, thus allowing the creation of more effective "strategic communications" (Glazzard & Reed, 2020, 74).

While this paper systematically explores the usage of Cinematographic Techniques in Retributive Justice videos, this paper does not draw a definite conclusion about how these themes and techniques affect the self-image and audience of these groups. This study was limited to the collection of videos within the Mobilizing Media collection, thus potentially missing important videos that could offer differing insight into how these groups portray themselves. To create a more robust analysis, an extension of this research that contains a larger sample of videos could offer more definitive answers about the effects of these techniques. While this study

offers useful insight into the ways ISIS, AQAP, and the Taliban forge their identity and affect their audience, Retributive Justice themed videos are only a portion of the media output from extremist groups. This lens could be applied to other major themes like Statebuilding and Martyrdom to offer a fuller picture of how cinematographic techniques play an important role in shaping the self-image of extremist organizations.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A

*Appendix A- ISIS Foreign Language Video Title, Date, Duration, Length in Minutes, and English*

	<b>Title</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>~Length in Minutes</b>	<b>English?</b>
1	Uncovering an Enemy Within - Al-Haya	1/13/2015	7:37	7.6	Yes
2	Execute an Apostate Sahwa leader - Wilayat al-Janub	1/13/2015	3:09	3.2	No
3	Men of the Hisbah #2 – Wilayat al-Raqqa	1/14/2015	6:28	6.5	No
4	Revenge #1 – Wilayat al-Anbar	1/18/2015	3:32	3.5	No
5	I Swear By God For Our Revenge – Wilayat al-Furat	1/19/2015	3:33	3.6	Yes
6	Bombing and Poisoning Dozens of Muslims in Mosul - Wilayat Ninawa	1/25/2015	5:19	5.3	No
7	We Swear We Will Revenge – Wilayat Sinai	1/26/2015	5:33	5.6	No
8	A Message to the Government of Japan	1/31/2015	1:06	1	Yes
9	Storming the Barracks of the Peshmerga - Wilayat Diyala	1/31/2015	6:15	6.25	No
10	The Security Apparatus Arrest of An Agent of the Jordanian Intelligence- Wilayat al-Khayr	1/31/2015	1:45	1.75	No
11	Healing of the Believers' Chests - Al-Furqan	2/3/2015	22:34	22.5	Yes
12	But If You Return, We Will Return – Wilayat Diyala	2/3/2015	4:33	4.5	No
13	Harvest of the Apostates – Wilayat al-Raqqah	2/6/2015	6:46	6.8	No
14	Establishment of the Limit Upon the Corrupt Lands - Wilayat Halab	2/7/2015	3:35	3.6	No
15	Responding to the Aggression of the Soldiers of Tyranny – Wilayat Homs	2/8/2015	2:36	2.6	No
16	Soldiers of the Nusayris in the Hands of the Islamic State #3 - Wilayat al-Khayr	2/8/2015	4:39	4.7	No
17	Extermination of a Convoy for the Army and Safavid Militias in al-	2/11/2015	7:41	4.7	No



	Dabitiyyah Area - Wilat Shamal Baghdad				
18	A Message Signed with Blood to the Nation of the Cross	2/15/2015	5:01	5	Yes
19	And Heal the Chest of a Believing People - Wilayat Kirkuk	2/15/2015	9:18	9.3	No
20	A Considerable Warning to Anyone #2 -Wilayat Halab	3/1/2015	3:40	3.7	No
21	And Wretched is that Which They Purchased	3/10/2015	13:26	13.4	Yes
22	Slaughtering of One Individual of the Awakening of Apostasy 'Ra'd 'Ali Jasim' - Wilayat al-Janub	3/11/2015	1:25	1.4	No
23	I Swear By God For Our Revenge – Wilayat al-Furat	3/12/2015	6:14	6.2	No
24	Strike Their Necks – Wilayat Ḥamah	3/28/2015	4:15	4.25	No
25	Message to Nusayri's Soldiers – Wilayat Ḥoms	4/2/2015	2:20	2.3	Yes
26	Amputation of the corruption with the judgment of the lord of mankind #1 - Wilayat ninawa	4/6/2015	7:27	7.5	No
27	A Message - Wilayat Sinai	4/10/2015	8:30	8.5	No
28	Here is my warning so you have no excuse - Wilayat al-khayr	4/20/2015	7:52	7.9	No
29	Defiant Response Upon the bombings of the tyrant #2 - Wilayat ninawa	4/28/2015	7:49	7.8	No
30	Deterring of the Spies #1 - Wilayat Dijlah	6/14/2015	4:12	4.2	No
31	And For You a Punishment of Life, Oh Men of Understanding - Wilayat al-Jazirah	6/16/2015	3:03	3	No
32	Indeed, It Was Evil That They Were Doing - Establishment of the Limit of Apostasy Upon a Client for the Nusayri-Crusader - Wilayat Ḥamah	6/16/2015	4:22	4.4	No
33	06-30-2015_Harvest of the Spies #2 – Wilayat al-Furat	6/30/2015	3:36	3.6	No
34	Kill Them Wherever You Find Them	1/24/2016	26:45:00	26.75	Yes
35	The Most Evil Creation - Wilayat Salah al-Din	1/30/2016	18:52	18.9	No
36	Liquidation of the Apostates - Wilayat Ninawa	1/30/2016	7:53	7.9	No

37	And Had Enough of the Falsehood – Wilayat Ḥalab	2/4/2016	16:59	17	No
38	Alert When There is Danger - Wilayat al-Furat.mp4	4/5/2017	21:00	21	No
39	And God and His Messenger Spoke the Truth - Wilayat al-Raqqah	4/22/2017	22:46	22.75	No
40	06-24-2017_Apostates Killed- Revenge for the Monotheists	6/24/2017	10:12	10.2	No
41	We Will Surely Guide Them to Our Ways - Wilayat Ninawa	7/17/2017	44:40:00	44.6	
42	The Religion of Abraham - Wilayat Sayna	1/3/2018	22:05	22.1	No
43	Answer the Call	1/26/2018	2:31	2.5	Yes
44	Slaughtering A Spy For Tunisian Security - The Apostate Muhammad al-Akhdar Makhluḥi in Jabal Maghīlah	3/16/2019	4:01	4	No

## Appendix B

### *Appendix B- The Taliban Video Title, Date, Duration, Length in Minutes, and English*

	<b>Title</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>~Length in Minutes</b>	<b>English?</b>
1	Siyah Gerd Tragedy and Revenge	03/15/2014	32:12	32.2	No
2	Conquest of Marjah	01/01/2016	22:15	22:25	No
3	Indeed is Falsehood [By Nature], Ever Bound to Depart	04/04/2017	8:12	8.2	No
4	Operation Mansuri	04/29/2017	8:13	8.2	No
5	Detained American University Professors Pleading Their Governments For Release and Prisoner Exchange	06/21/2017	10:18	10.3	Yes
6	Umari Army 5	06/21/2017	1:12:56	72.9	No
7	The Continental Heroics	04/04/2018	36:38	36.6	No
8	Clearing Da'ish from Darzah	08/19/2018	4:40	4.7	No
9	Convoy of Conquest #12	08/19/2018	1:12:18	72.3	No

10	Enemy Helicopter Shot Down in Farah	09/15/2018	3:26	3.4	No
11	From the Battlefronts of Faryab	04/01/2019	53:42	53.7	No
12	Kllna alqool, Colonel Inam execution by TTP	Unknown	0:45	0.75	No

## Appendix C

### *Appendix C - AQAP Video Title, Date, Duration, Length in Minutes, and English*

	<b>Title</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>~ Length in Minutes</b>	<b>English?</b>
1	Shade of the Swords	02/15/2007	24:23	24.3	No
2	Wa-Yataketh-Menkom-Shohadaa	07/2010	54:41	54.6	No
3	Msr3-khwnh 2	02/2012	17:49	19.8	Yes
4	HQ Mrt 2	07/2012	12:44	12.7	Yes
5	Liberation of Waqār City From the Gangs of ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Sayyid-Wilāyat Abyan	2015	24:49	24.8	No
6	al-QAcc Idah in the Arabian Peninsula 22- Guardians of Sharicc	08/12/2015	58:35	58.6	No
7	America and Its Latest Trap 2	04/20/2017	20:17	20.3	No
8	Repulsion of Aggression 9	04/20/2018	30:53	30.9	No
9	Brief Messages to a Victorious Nation Part 9- Tel Aviv is also a Land of Muslims	05/13/2018	4:43	4.7	No
10	The Thorns of Hatred- The Disgraceful Strategy of T-Rambo 'The Awful'	05/22/2018	38:27	38.5	Yes