

GOVERNANCE PRACTICES AND POPULAR
LEGITIMACY OF THE JIHADIST GROUPS IN MALI
A framing analysis of propaganda materials

Hajar Anbar

Master's thesis

Political Science

Department of Social Sciences and Philosophy

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

University of Jyväskylä

Spring Term 2019

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	2
1. AIM OF THE STUDY	3
2. CONTEXTUALIZING THE STUDY CASE	6
2.1 Tuareg separatism and the upsurge of Jihad in Mali	6
3. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND	9
3.1 Conceptualization of Legitimacy	9
3.1.1 Legitimacy and Terrorism.....	11
3.1.2 Popular support and Compliance	12
3.2 An alternative perspective: Collective action frames	14
3.2.1 A Framing approach to the study of Jihad	16
4. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STUDY	19
4.1 Data collection	19
4.1.1 Criteria of sourcing	20
4.1.2 Classification of sources	22
5. METHODOLOGY	23
5.1 Data Analysis	23
5.1.1 Justifying the methodology: Thematic Networks Analysis (TNA)	24
5.2.1 Thematic framework for analysis	26
5.2.2 Thematic coding process.....	28
6. RESULTS	32
6.1 Most used framing techniques for mobilization	33
6.1.1 Participants motivation in the propaganda.....	34
6.2 Additional analysis.....	36
6.2.1 Diagnostic frames	37
6.2.2 Prognostic frames.....	39
6.2.3 Motivational frames	40
7. DISCUSSION	46
8. CONCLUSIONS	50
8.1 Summary.....	50
8.2 Ethical dilemmas.....	50
8.3 Limitations.....	51
LIST OF REFERENCES	52
ANNEX 1	55
ANNEX 2	57

ABSTRACT

Cross border jihadist activity in Central and Northern Mali continues to pose significant security threat to the region. From 2011 until 2013, most northern parts of the country fell under jihadists control where local populations lived under strict sharia laws. This growing insecurity came as a result of socio economical injustices, particularly towards the northern population mostly composed of Tuareg people. Years of marginalization have led to several rebellions and to the expansion of jihadist factions throughout the country. While the international community acknowledges the need for a swift reaction to eradicate jihadist cells in the region, many activists and researchers call for a more durable solution, one that starts with a holistic understanding of the underlying causes for such groups to gain more power and legitimacy.

This study feeds from this rising need for more informed analysis on jihadist groups and aims at challenging the traditional perceptions by recognising that Jihad is a social movement with social and political claims. Through the lens of social movement theory, this research focused on the collective action frames presented in the jihadist propaganda. The purpose is to consider the social and identity elements in their narrative that might lead to mobilization and support from their target audience.

To reach this end, the study identified three Jihadist groups present in Mali through which a set of official propaganda materials was selected to conduct an in depth thematic analysis. The results make it evident that the three jihadist groups in Mali legitimize their claim and mobilize for support through a discourse filled with social resistance narratives drawn from past and current social struggles.

Keywords: Legitimacy, Jihad, collective action frames, mobilization, governance, Mali

1. AIM OF THE STUDY

The impetus of this research is to examine the jihadist movement in Mali as portrayed in their propaganda. Exactly looking into how these movements frame their narrative to legitimize their purpose and call for collective action. Therefore, this study is less concerned with the ideological foundation of Jihad and is more wired toward understanding how these groups exhibit their claim for legitimacy through propaganda. It is important to establish that this study views Jihad in Mali as a social movement thriving in conjunction with a set of political events and well thought out framing strategies. As with any traditional social movement, the three identified Jihadist groups in Mali seek to spread their message in a manner that would increase popular support and persuade targeted audiences to join the movement.

The practice of Jihad in Northern Mali is a manifestation of inherited social struggles passed on from generations. A population that is bound to a lifetime of suffering, betrayed by politics and where the notion of a state- nation is meaningless. What Jihadist groups aim to achieve through their propaganda is the image of a more participatory type of order or 'governance', where individuals - in this case people of Azawad¹- and the religion - here Islam- would matter.

Together, the jihadist groups mould new forms of identity and democratic rule through the Sharia law, where sovereignty belongs to the divine, and by it all notions of democracy and human rights would be transformed. This disruptive idea of a Jihad-inspired type of governance is by no means just or fair, but this same Jihad narrative gave way to new forms of legitimate wars and new kinds of enforcement in the world. Hence the pressing need to broader and more inclusive approaches to the study of Jihad.

The reach of armed jihadist groups is expanding rapidly across Sub Saharan Africa. They gain more control through a set of mixed strategy, what International Crisis Group refers to

¹ Azawad is the name by which Tuareg refer to the territory that they view as their homeland, which includes Northern Mali (Ba, 2014,1); it is also the name given to Northern Mali by Berbers Tuareg rebels, as well as a former short-lived unrecognised proto-state. Its independence was declared unilaterally by the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) in 2012, after a Tuareg rebellion drove the Malian Army from the region. It re-joined Mali in February 2013, after less than a year of independence. Source: <http://www.mnlamov.net/>

as a calibrated mix of coercion and co-option. Some insurgent movements are so powerful that they destabilised states and proved able to control territories, some would even suggest more effectively than the state in power (Bøås,2015,312). Overcoming this treat is particularly challenging for Sahel states. Although, they remain formally united against Jihadist groups, their challenges lie in the weakness of governments, neglected peripheries and inability to provide security and respond to insurgent forces.

These challenges form a fertile ground for jihadist groups to gain control and legitimacy: “Conditions that enabled both crises – underdevelopment, distrust of the state in its hinterlands, traditional elites’ declining authority, readily-available weapons and clumsy, heavy-handed and ineffective security forces – blight many other states, in Africa and elsewhere”(Exploiting disorder: Al-Qaeda and the Islamic state, 2016,12); “Conditions must be awful before communities accept them or are forced to do so to survive – illustrating again how war and state collapse create settings in which jihadists thrive.” (Exploiting disorder: Al-Qaeda and the Islamic state, 2016, 32).

What was originally a quest for independence, freedom and social justice led by Tuareg collation groups has been quickly appropriated by former Tuareg movement supporters with a Salafist Islam ideology. The main Tuareg separatist movement gave way to the Islamist groups that have been proved operationally more effective in taking control over Northern Mali (International Crisis Group, 2012). More precisely, Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) has employed a gradual strategy of integration and penetration into local communities (Bøås, 2015) based on military, religious, economic and humanitarian means.

It is commonly debated that Jihadist groups manage to gain initial support from local communities by bringing basic law and order, especially for the improvised and neglected communities in Northern Mali. Thus, jihadists’ increasing prominence in these territories and the treats that come with them gaining more ground in Mali, makes it important to monitor the changing narratives from their most reliable mobilization platform: online propaganda. Through this analysis, this study attempts to contribute to the ongoing controversial debate on Jihad, viewing jihadist groups as structured, well strategized social movements with socio-political claims.

Studying these movements should consider the social, economic and political aspects that encourage a well contextualized understanding of Jihadist movements. This research will attempt to understand and deconstruct the Jihadist narrative in Mali and unpack the groups' governance practices through the lens of social movement theory.

The study will attempt to discuss the following questions:

How is legitimacy defined in this context? What government models are these Jihadist groups promoting in their propaganda? What do they want to achieve, particularly related to the state system in Mali? How do they construct their discourse to mobilize for support and call for collective action?

2. CONTEXTUALIZING THE STUDY CASE

2.1 Tuareg separatism and the upsurge of Jihad in Mali

The current trouble in Mali is entrenched in a long history of political struggles. Political integration of central and Northern parts of Mali has been hindered by cyclical patterns of rebellions since independence (International Crisis Group, 2012). The most agitated ones occurred in 1963, 1990s and 2006-2008². The first rebellion in 1963 reflected the aspirations of the Tuareg population in Northern Mali to split from postcolonial state, as a result of severe marginalization from the transitional government and post-colonial ruler (International Crisis Group, 2012, 2). Both sides (Malian central government and Tuareg communities) held strong prejudiced views of each other, which further fractionated interactions and inhibited greater cooperation between Tuareg areas of Northern Mali (Thurston & Lebovich, 2013).

The rebellion lasted only a year after being harshly repressed but the nascent Malian government (Ba, 2014). Tuareg rebels were then chased out of Mali with their families mostly to neighbouring countries and the Malian government declared the end of the rebellion in 1964 (Thurston & Lebovich, 2013, 21). This episode of rebellion, even though short, marked the start of the upcoming rebellion: ‘Renewed instability indicates that no definitive settlement has been found for these structural problems. Each new episode had its own dynamics but was related to the previous one’. (International Crisis Group, 2012, 2).

In early 1990s a new rebellion started. This time, a wide range of Tuareg communities and to a lesser extent other regional communities, took part of the rebellion (International Crisis Group, 2012,2). This rebellion marked a far more concrete political goal, claiming an independent state in the Sahara (Azawad) encompassing parts of Mali and Niger as it reflected the growing political acumen of groomed generations³ of Tuareg men (Ba, 2014).

Shortly after, independence demands translated into a series of ambitious negotiations led by Algeria as a mediator and Iyad Ag Ghali as one of the most influencing Tuareg

² International Crisis Group. (2012). *Mali: Avoiding escalation*. International Crisis Group.

³ As mentioned in (International Crisis Group, 2012): These fighters were the heirs of two decades of activism among exile circles in Algeria and Libya, formed by those who had fled from government repression and drought in Mali.

leaders. The first round of these negotiations led to the *Tamasheq accords*, which called for a series of measures to give more autonomy to the Northern Mali and create a new administration in the Kidal area (previously run by the Goa region).

Soon enough these accords steamed tribal divisions as consequence of different ambitions among Tuareg rebels (International Crisis Group, 2012). Despite divisions, the rebellion coordination front along with the Malian government negotiated a more formal peace plan known as le Pacte National (National Pact). This pact had three ambitious promises: First, the demilitarisation of the north and the complete integration of the rebels into national forces (Thurston & Lebovich, 2013, 23). Second, a ten-year economic recovery plan to overcome the development gap between the north and the south (Ba, 2014,11). The third and most unsuccessful component, included important constitutional changes to transfer a number of state powers to the region and open up opportunities for decentralised international cooperation (Thurston & Lebovich, 2013, 23). A lack of financial resources delayed the integration part several times. Shortly after severe periodic droughts, feelings of social frustrations started to spread among Tuareg soldiers leading to a new a series of rebellion in 2006: “Hassan Ag Fagaga and Ibrahim Bahanga, both young officers, expressed institutional frustrations and denounced discrimination within the army” (International Crisis Group, 2012, 3).

In early May 2006, two former members of the Popular Movement of Azawad (MPA) and integrated armed forces, attacked army posts in the north joined by Tuareg rebels: Iyad Ag Ghali and Ahmed Ag Bibi under which the Democratic Alliance of 23 May for change (ADC) was organized (International Crisis Group, 2012, 40). After dozens of soldiers lost their lives and the increased international attention on the conflict, a new Algerian sponsored accord was signed aiming at resorting the flawed national pact, notably by the creation of a north- Malian security force – the Saharan Security Units (International Crisis Group, 2012, 1). Also, the 2006 rebellion marked a new trajectory for Iyad Ag Ghali⁴, who was rewarded by the government of Mali (GoM) for his efforts to conclude the recent peace accord. As a peace agreement was reached in Alger, the ADC formally only lasted a few months but never

⁴ Few years later he founded Ansar Al Dine an armed Jihadist group present in Northern Mali. (Thurston & Lebovich, 2013)

ceased to exist as fighters such as Ag Bahanga continued to resist the Malian state (Thurston & Lebovich, 2013, 24). This situation escalated in 2012, where what appeared to be a minor insurgency turned to a Salafist Jihad sponsored insurgency, drastically transforming the conflict in Northern Mali (Raleigh & Dowd, 2013).

The 2012 crisis deepened as Armed Jihadist groups: Ansar Al Dine, Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJWA), took over much of the North. Although these groups are commonly viewed as self-funded with criminal activity and banditry due to their non-Malian origins, some scholars still acknowledge that these groups are active actors in the conflict with a strongly established political agenda (Morgan, 2012). On January 2012, the National Movement for the Liberation of the Azawad (MNLA) launched a successful attack in Northern Mali, leading to a military coup that deposed the president Amadou Toumani Toure (Ba, 2014,1). The Malian democracy model quickly abruptly:” Within two weeks of the start of the rebellion, the MNLA was able to conquer the three Northern Malian regions of Timbuktu, Gao, and Kidal, and declare the independence of the “Republic of Azawad”, which they view as their “homeland” (Ba, 2014, 1).

Long before the crisis, jihadist groups established a presence in Mali and other parts of the Sahara through kidnaping, smuggling and raids (Thurston & Lebovich, 2013,26). Their leaders married into notable families, they conducted preachings and humanitarian activities (Thurston & Lebovich, 2013). Although the French led military operation in January 2013 liberated some part of the North from Jihadist control, these are still present in small dispersed areas of the Northern desert. The threats, although neutralised, seems to still cause profound security challenges.

3. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 Conceptualization of Legitimacy

A discussion on the dominant meanings of legitimacy used in the study of emerging terrorist threats helps identify alternative conceptualisations of legitimacy, in view to produce new interpretations and bridge between the various relationships and actors involved in the process of legitimization. Special reference is made to the relationship between legitimacy and service delivery, institutions, international interventions, social media and religion/ideology (McCullough, 2015).

According to previous scholarship, there are two dominant approaches to assessing legitimacy. The first one is concerned with normative models to which an actor (Population, State, Insurgent groups), institutions or a political order must conform to in order to be considered legitimate (Podder, 2017); (Masters & Hoen, 2012). “Using this approach entails that there is a right way to exercise authority, which typically understands a legitimate state as a state that features democratic elections and the respect for human rights” (McCullough, 2015,7). This generalized understanding of legitimacy doesn’t apply to certain contexts.

To illustrate this difficulty, the increasing presence of Jihadist groups in Mali’s Northern region was a result of cumulative historical events (Raineri & Strazzari, 2015) that, in correlation with what was initially a separatist movement demanding the complete independence of Azawad⁵, was hijacked by the Jihadist groups that had already established strong ties with the local communities and took over the movement⁶. Additionally, the Northern part of Mali is mostly regarded as an ungoverned space, a deserted area with limited resources, high levels of unemployment and an overall suffering population with meagre access to basic services. Over time, Jihadist groups managed to claim legitimacy, take control over state territories (Northern Mali) and govern in parallel to existing

⁵ Azawad is the name given to Northern Mali by Berbers Tuareg rebels, as well as a former short-lived unrecognised proto-state. Its independence was declared unilaterally by the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) in 2012, after a Tuareg rebellion drove the Malian Army from the region. It re-joined Mali in February 2013, after less than a year of independence. Source: <http://www.mnlamov.net/>

⁶ As mentioned in International Crisis Group. (2012). *Mali: Avoiding escalation*. (). International Crisis Group. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/mali/mali-avoiding-escalation>

government structures and not in a power vacuum (Bøås, 2015). Hence, the importance of a more pragmatic approach to the study of legitimacy, especially in such conflict dynamics.

This takes us to a second empirical approach as it provides appropriate analytical tools to reach an inclusive understanding of legitimacy and violence. This approach” assesses legitimacy through the perceptions and acts of consent by both the governed and the authorities in a given society” (McCullough, 2015,3). Such studies can be exemplified in the work of (Benford & Snow, 2000b) introducing the concept of collective action frames as a resource for mobilization and popular support within a social movement; in (Masters & Hoen, 2012) research focusing on measuring state performance to demonstrate the conditions under which state legitimacy could be threatened. Reasons for identifying how each approach is used by different scholars is tied to the fact that any entity (be it a terrorist group or the state) could be described as both legitimate and illegitimate depending on which normative or empirical approach is being used.

Prior to engaging in a detailed discussion on the type of relationships between legitimacy, armed groups and other actors, a note on terminology is due. Legitimacy for Weber derives from people’s beliefs which can transpire from traditional, charismatic or legal sources. With this definition, although it brings forward the rationale behind legitimacy, it still remains difficult to explain what people acknowledge as legitimacy at a specific time and places and not another (Therkildsen, 2010).

Other scholars pursued the conceptualisation of legitimacy not in terms of its sources but in terms of its dimensions. Beetham, draws certain limits to what constitutes a legitimate power and introduces the notion of consent. His analysis considers different levels of legitimate power, centred around its conformity to the established rules and whether these rules can be justified to the beliefs shared by both the dominant and the subordinate. Evidence of consent by the subordinate is key to recognise these established rules.

3.1.1 Legitimacy and Terrorism

Studies on terrorism have often overlooked the question of legitimacy as a central concept to grasp different patterns and reactions of political violence in conflict areas (Masters & Hoen, 2012). This observation is the starting point for Master and Hoen's quest to find a comprehensive model for the analysis of terrorism. The argument is presented in a manner that highlights two key actors: the State and terrorist groups. More precisely, the scholars choose to confine the analysis to particularly examine the issue of state legitimacy and how it might contribute to halt or exacerbate terrorist activities in their territories. Interestingly, this argumentative strategy finds its roots in the work of Ehud Sprinzak, who was first to address the issue of legitimacy in terrorism where he hypothesised that terrorism is the outcome of a process of delegitimization (Masters & Hoen, 2012).

What this entails is that legitimacy is tied to what people think of the State's ability to transform ideals into actionable outcomes. Master and Hoen's argument is clearly articulated in the following passage: "... States are best able to secure their legitimacy when their institutions perform well in the interests of the population. The onset of terrorism is likely related to subgroup perceptions regarding the low legitimacy of the state." (Masters & Hoen, 2012,338).

The innovation behind this approach underlines the performance of State institutions, the value of public opinions and advances the component of trust between the State and its constituents. Each of these perspectives can form a base for a more informed analysis of the State legitimacy and terrorism nexus. Although, it remains relatively difficult to measure legitimacy based on public opinions, the adopted perspective by Masters and Hoen emphasises on the performance of the state.

To refocus the study of terrorism around the issue of legitimacy, Sprinzak's hypothesis asserting that terrorism is the outcome of a process of delegitimization of the state (Sprinzak, 1991), addresses the relation between legitimacy and terrorism by looking into performance: "... The way a state responds to terrorist threats can enhance or damage their legitimacy. If the state's legitimacy is damaged, it can embolden the terrorist group, resulting in more attacks" (Masters & Hoen, 2012, 338).

Here, the issue of legitimacy is challenged by the abilities of the state to translate ideas into policies or actions to maintain popular legitimacy. In other words, the issue of legitimacy is linked to the moral and instrumental dimensions of the state and how the populations perceive these ideas as they turn into actions that benefit them. This perspective narrows down the nexus of analysis to State and Population. The State, has to develop factional instruments to protect its *raison d'être* and the Population, being the subject of state policies, can either grant or retreat legitimacy from state power.

As we progress away from the different conceptualizations of legitimacy and how it is constituted/received either by the governing power or the population, a relational dimension becomes more apparent and thus questions on the type of emerging connections between the different actors start to form. The following section will explore the multiple analytical routes to frame the concept of legitimacy in the context of armed groups versus a local community.

3.1.2 Popular support and Compliance

Within this theoretical framework, two analytical notions come into play: popular support and compliance. In the abundance of research on armed groups legitimacy, Podder's relational approach highlights the community and armed group nexus. This applied perspective is deemed particularly relevant to study the pathways through which legitimacy of armed groups is constructed in conflicted states. With this strategic focus, Podder's approach recognises if such groups enjoy legitimacy in an empirical context and avoids a normative analysis where these groups are viewed as pathological, which therefore excludes sociological dynamics in a given context.

This alludes to consider how much of legitimacy affects the strategy and self-conception of armed groups, and that them to too, just like states, have to react and resist to domestic and international pressures to maintain and sustain their legitimacy: "Like states, armed groups have to accept or resist pressures from the domestic and international audience, to uphold their legitimacy" (Podder, 2017, 687). Conditions for state formation might be different to those of non-state armed groups but strategies and reactions to internal and international pressure can be quite similar.

To bridge between these complementary notions (Popular support and compliance), legitimacy for armed groups could be regarded as: “the rightful wielder of power, maker and interpreter of rules or user of force and who thereby warrants support and compliance” (Podder, 2017, 687).

Analysing armed groups legitimacy under a sociological lens rather than ontological, offers a more efficient analysis, focused on armed groups practices and the relations leading to constitute their legitimacy: “A relational approach offers key insights into the process of construction and deconstruction of armed group legitimacy vis-à-vis key domestic, national and international audiences” (Podder,2017,701). The discussion on popular community support entails a dependant relation, meaning that non state armed groups (NSAGs) feed on this support to uphold their legitimacy. However, this conclusion suggests a degree of flexibility that communities enjoy to either support or denies NSAGs, which remains dubious when it comes to the NSAGs groups present in Northern Mali. To put this gap in context, what jihadists conceive as free activity by choosing sharia as a way of governance is not necessarily reflective of how the local population in Northern Mali is choosing to be governed by. The question of coercive action and fear is suggestive of how these groups maintain their control.

Podder’s study recognises this gap and suggests a clear distinction between popular support and compliance. As previously stated above, popular support suggests a degree of fit between an armed group and the community. Conversely, compliance entails a willingness to obey to rules set by an armed group. The particular importance in this distinction is that compliance is constantly guided by a belief in the appropriateness of the rules being enforced. As stipulated by Podder: “Compliance links with people’s second order of beliefs about legitimacy, that is the justifiability of an armed group and its governance practices as necessary for legitimacy (Podder, 2017,688).

Many reports⁷ suggest existing historical and cultural ties between Northern communities in Mali and jihadist groups in the area, specific reference to Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and Movement for the Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJWA)

⁷ Thurston Alexander, & Lebovich Andrew. (2013). *A handbook on Mali's 2012-2013 crisis*. Taylor and Francis.

in Timbuktu and Gao respectively. Few have been able to prove that compliance to their commands was voluntary by local population: Compliance with commands is voluntary when they are seen to be in the interest of the community as a whole (Podder,2017,688). To ensure voluntary compliance, in the case of jihadist groups in Mali, they use similar current and past struggles to justify acts of violence against the near enemy (France & Mali) and build popular support amongst the local population. These tactics are confirmed in Podder's findings: ...” To secure voluntary compliance, rebel groups must adapt their practices to historically contingent values, norms and beliefs. In addressing the preferences of local populations, symbolic and cultural or ritualistic norms that are contextually valued can create the necessary t between the armed group's goals and the community's expectations from legitimate political authority “(Podder, 2017,688).

However, many episodes of violent governance practices have been registered in Northern Mali, where Jihadist groups used strict sharia laws to govern the territories under their control. Often, local communities submit to commands fearing for their lives or the harsh sentences from the applied laws. Certainly, it's been hard to document traces of what Podder refers to as voluntary compliance in Mali. Elements of coercive practices used by Jihadist groups are important in order to understand their grip over the controlled areas.

3.2 An alternative perspective: Collective action frames

“The central utility of collective action frames is their ability to sort and categorize how organizations employ different ideas, beliefs, myths, and traditions to mobilize movement adherents.” (Page, Challita, & Harris, 2011, 154).

In addition to the traditionally appreciated value of resource mobilization and political opportunity as key components in any social movement, past scholarships indicated that framing processes are deemed equally pivotal in understanding the character and the course of social movements (Benford & Snow, 2000a).

The concept of frame was applied in many disciplines throughout history; in sociology (Goffman, 1974); Cognitive psychology (Bateason 1972 and Kaheman 1981); Communication (Pan & Kosicki 1993 and Scheufele 1999); Political science (Schon & Rein 1994, Triandafyllidou & Fotiou 1998) and discourse analysis (Taneen 1993 & Van Dijk

1977). Within sociology scholarship, the concept of framing was largely discussed as part of the construction of a social movement. Many scholars found issue with the lack of interest in the meaning construction of social movement work, that brings values and translates movement ideals. This entails that social movements aren't merely carriers of ideals and values that grow as a results of structural conditions: "Rather, these movements and their participants are viewed as important agents actively engaged in the production and maintenance of meaning for constituents, antagonists, and bystanders or observers" (Snow & Benford, 2000, 613).

Gamson et al 1982, Snow et al 1986 and Snow & Benford 1988 conceptualize this construction of meaning as framing that reflects agency and contention: ... "It entails agency in the sense that what is evolving of social movement organizations or movement activists; "And it is contentious in the sense that it involves the generation of interpretive frames that do not only differ from existing ones but that may also challenge them" (Benford & Snow, 2000, 614). The results of framing activity are called collective action frames.

Following this stream of thought, it is evident that these Jihadist groups act strategically, where reasonable amount of time, money and human resources are allocated to mobilize for support and maintain legitimacy over their actions. A particular focus on militancy framing suggests that Jihad for instance, is not irrational. Jihadist groups spend time to develop their identities and figure out ways to best appeal to their communities and target audience: "Militants constantly engage in framing to justify their actions and articulate their goals" (Beck, 2008, 1576). Jihadist groups are then subjected to similar dilemmas as those of other social movements.

Goffman's research identifies framing as a term employed to describe the justifications and appeals used by movements to mobilize support. Through a process called frame alignment, social movements make claims that resonate most with the wider social narrative and political environment (political opportunities) to gain popularity and then achieve legitimacy. Therefore, the meaning transcribed through this framing process is crucial to the group's mobilization: "Framing has been found to be an important aspect of many instances of collective action including mass riots (Snow et al. 2007), and Islamic militancy (Bayat, 2005).

They spend time and resources to forge their identity, justify and explain their actions through ideological manifestos, speeches, press releases and propaganda videos. Colin Beck's (2008) research on the contribution of social movements theory to understanding terrorism also suggests that framing theory fills a gap that most studies considering resource mobilization and political opportunities have failed to fill. The main criticism remains that existing research is overly structural, leaving out cultural and relational factors (Beck, 2008, 1571). Cultural perspectives can have important implications on political violence research.

To further this argument, we look at the work of Jihad worldwide, founded under the complete and total obedience of god (*Allah*) as the only sovereign of all creators. This complex relation of love, fear and sacrifice is clearly stipulated in the jihadist propaganda. The very idea of sovereignty in a form of a state or a monarchy is aggressively rejected in Jihadist propaganda and so, an attempt to weigh the extent of such power is essential to understanding the kind of society Northern Malians live in. In this scenario, the use of religion as a governing resource comes less as a surprise.

Consequently, identity statements can be more powerful than cultural expressions as they link potential supporters to a cause. The commitment that identity politics by jihadist groups spawns and may help explain the persistence of Jihad, even if its traditionally interpreted as irrational or ineffective.

3.2.1 A Framing approach to the study of Jihad

Most of the studies on Jihad that adopted a framing approach, illustrate the different ways in which Jihadist groups arrive at building popular support and mobilize for collective action.

Manuel Soriano's study on the evolution of Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)'s discourse offers a distinctive examination of the content found in the propaganda material. Although his study aimed at demonstrating whether AQIM's affiliation to Al Qaeda has had an impact on the group's evolution from 1998 until 2009, the findings still illustrate the role of propaganda in the jihadist strategy. The propaganda material was divided into two periods: before and after the merger with Al Qaeda and for each period the following themes

were picked for analysis: Treats and responsibility for attacks; Political and religious discourse and Interpretations of current affairs. Even though the findings show that AQIM has a clear focus on a local agenda rather than just violence (Soriano, 2011), the study overlooks the contextual meaning of social resistance in Mali and how it is used to build popular support within local communities.

Adding to the rather limited research published on Jihadist framing strategies, Joana Wesphan's recent study on the framing process approach applied to the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) highlights the social dimensions of the group and provides a more solid examination of the group's rationale, which helped advance the academic understanding on ISIS. Wesphan's research focused on clarifying the group's ideology and the group's effort to legitimize violence. Her main argument is that ISIS's construction of a collective action frame creates a social reality that grants the group with a rationale for action. To advance her argument, she uses a discursive framing analysis to explore the relation of IS's ideology to structural events. The results show that IS's ideology legitimizes its existence and conceals struggles of power, territory and wealth through reference to a divine authority.

Another study using a similar analytical approach to identify the framing techniques these groups employ to mobilize sympathetic audiences to action, is illustrated in Leonard C. Robinson work on ISIS's framing strategies. He claims that IS uses three framing strategies to convince its target audience. This analytical application originates in Snow and Benford's description of collective action and it supports the main argument that views strategic framing as the ideal basis to become a jihadist militant leading to commit acts of violence. The three framing strategies are Diagnostic framing; which identifies several threats to the Salafist doctrine (West, apostate, Shiites); Prognostic framing and motivational framing.

Diagnostic framing is the first step for a movement or a group to identify the issues and problem they seek to address. It is a diagnosis of the main struggles that would later on form a basis for action and mobilization. Once the issues and their sources have been identified, literature on framing processes suggest that *prognostic frames* are intended to proffer clear tactics and solutions to achieve the set objectives (Page et al., 2011).

The final core framing task is *motivational framing*, an application of this task entails the presence of what Gamson (1995) refers to as the agency component of collection action frames. This is when a movement/group provides a rationale to call for action including the construction of appropriate vocabularies to motivate: “These socially constructed vocabularies provided adherents with compelling accounts for engaging in collective action and for sustaining their participation” (Benford & Snow, 2000,617).

In light of recent studies on Jihadist propaganda by Manuel R. Torres; Joana Wesphan and Leonard C. Robinson, this thesis will attempt to merge between the few available studies to understand jihadist framing techniques, via an application of the concept of collective action frames to analyse three identified jihadist media outputs.

4. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STUDY

4.1 Data collection

To support the scheme of this research, an in depth analysis was conducted following a process of coding of twenty sources of propaganda materials from Jamaat Nusrat al-Islam wa al-Muslimin' ⁸(JNIM), Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and Ansar al-Din (AAD). The chosen approach based on applying a thematic coding system provided the opportunity to reach accurate findings rich in qualitative analysis.

The first encounter with the selected sources was during my internship placement with the International Crisis Group in Dakar, Senegal. The second wave was after writing the internship report and having identified a terrorism tracking database called Terrorism Research and Analysis Consortium (TRAC). A full access to the database required a subscription. Given the quality of the archived material in this database, it was decided to include some of these sources for analysis. With the support of JYU's library a temporary access to the Database was granted for 15 days.

All materials were drawn from online Archives. Including Aaron Zelin's 'Jihadology Blog (Jihadology.net) and the existing online sources in the TRAC Database, all have provided a rich repository of Jihadist Propaganda. The material includes: Audio statements, Videos, written declarations and published interviews. The TRAC database was particularly useful as the materials were conveniently searchable by group and country. There was no specific timeframe applied for the selected material.

⁸ English Translation: Group to Support Islam and Muslims (GSIM).

4.1.1 Criteria of sourcing

A total of 79 sources were gathered comprising, 23 JNIM propaganda sources, 37 AQIM sources and 19 AAD sources. Due to restricted timeline and resources, these sources were narrowed down to a smaller sample (20) used in this study following a guided selection process (*more details below*), the rest were kept for reference (*Annex2: Data classification*). This sample was collected during my internship with International Crisis Group, all the material was verified and found authentic by the senior analysts.

The selection process was guided with a set of questions that ensured a diversified, representative and verified set of materials for the purpose of this study:

- **Is the jihadist group clearly represented in the sample?** By an official indication of the groups media production name in the material or if the designated leader confirms the name of the group;
- **Is the material made for a specific key target?** (Islamic Umma, Muslims in Mali, the enemy or a mixed target). Evidence for such target had to be clearly pronounced/stated by the group delivering the message;
- **Is every type of material represented in the sample?** Audio tapes, Videos, Declarations and Interviews had to be represented by each jihadist group;

Additional considerations were taken into account to solidify the selection process:

- **Timeframe:** The study is not limited to a specific time. All the officially published materials by the jihadist groups were taken into account regardless of their publication date. The study is not focused on the chronological evolution of the jihadist discourse in Mali but rather on the reasoning behind the construction of such narratives. In other words, the purpose was to understand the “how” and the “why” behind the release of such media outputs. By this end, it was deemed crippling to constraint the scope of analysis to a specific timeframe.
- **Language:** It was important to select materials that were produced in the original language of the group (Classic Arabic/Fosha) or in some exceptional cases

materials were accepted if they were translated by the publishing entity itself. Being a native Arabic speaker it was natural to get a sense of what the material was meant for. Although, all of the original Arabic material was translated into English, it was still useful to understand the original meaning while reading it.

All of the above mentioned conditions had to be identified in the material to be cleared for selection. If **more than one** condition was not found in the material, the latter was not eligible for the coding process with NVIVO software (*more details in chapter 5: Methodology*). However, all of the remaining materials were scanned through and referenced in the *Annex2: Data classification*.

This sample included primarily propaganda materials, in efforts to reflect the central position out of the specific identified topic (mobilization) and themes. The sources of jihadist information are significantly informal and widely available across social media; it is then primordial to distinguish official sources from the unofficial ones. Overall, for the purpose of this research, only official materials have been selected to provide the most verified outlets in view to analyse and represent jihadist movements in Mali and how they use specific framing techniques for mobilization and support.

A framework was applied based on the established research questions to better include the selected materials (*More on Methodology*). The official sources selected in this sample only feature material produced and disseminated by recognized media outlet associated with the groups. The sample included materials from five different official media outlets.

Table 1: Identified propaganda outlets in collected group materials

Group	Official Media Outlets
Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wa al-Muslimin' (JNIM)	Az-Zallaqa Foundation and Al Masra
Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)	Al Andalus
Ansar al-Din (AAD)	Jamaat Ansar al-Din and RIMAAH

4.1.2 Classification of sources

Once collected, the sources were imported to an excel file and were organized by title, group, type of material, date of publication, media outlet and indented target. Each item was accorded a reference code as follow: **A** for Audio material, **V** for Videos, **D** for written declarations and **I** for Interviews. The goal was to have them all translated and transcribed from Arabic to English. Once translated and transcribed in a word document, the materials were titled by their given reference code and saved in a folder to avoid confusion and serve as a preparation for the thematic coding step.

To identify the target audience, each material was carefully examined following the established framework analysis for this research (*details in the next chapter*). Three main targets audience were identified: Umma (Muslim Nation); Muslims in Mali; The enemy (The French and allies) and one for Mixed audience. Key indications that lead to this categorization are different from a target audience to another. Material intended for the Umma or the mujahedeen [the ones engaged in Jihad] included numerous Qur'anic references and a softer, violence free narrative. The ones for the enemy included clear warnings or declarations of war. The mixed category was the one that required greater nuances. Few features identified in this category were, a combination of intimidation and mobilization techniques mainly used in Videos to engages multiple audiences, hence the high quality production effort allocated to make these videos.

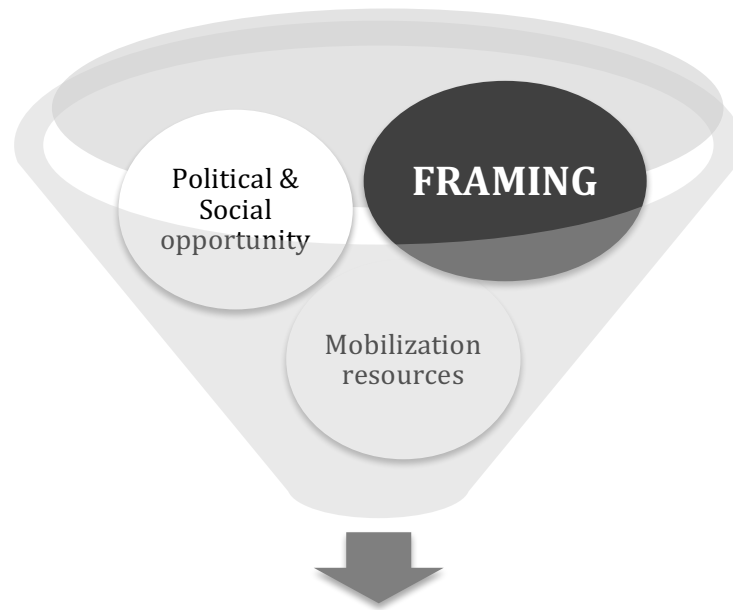
5. METHODOLOGY

5.1 Data Analysis

Research on political violence is marked by fundamental disagreements on what truly constitutes terrorism as most of case studies lack generalizability which results in a lack of theoretical concepts tools for analysis (Beck,2008). Thanks to its integrative and interdisciplinary nature, social movements theory provides the necessary conceptual framework for the study of political violence.

Political violence is often conducted by organized groups that undertake collective actions based on common purposes and social solidarities (Tarrow 1998, 4). Jihadist groups are movements with political and social claims and should be studied beyond the structural description that merely discusses members' commitment and recruitment methods: Thus the implications of framing groups as terrorists and spoilers without an informed analysis of the context can result in limited engagement (Podder, 2013,32).

Conceptualizing Jihad as a social movement underlines the dominant social dynamics within these groups and it encourages a more informed view on the efficacy of Jihad. The study of terrorism and political violence through social movement theory has revolved around a three-fold framework of theoretical perspectives (Beck,2018,1567) called: mobilizing resources, political opportunities and framing. This study will largely touch on the first two concepts but the overall focus will be on the rhetorical and symbolic side of political contention through the concept of framing in order to understand Jihadist groups' legitimacy in Northern Mali, as it is most suited to interpret the collected data for this research.



Jihad as a Social movement

Figure 1: Theoretical Framework

5.1.1 Justifying the methodology: Thematic Networks Analysis (TNA)

Global salafi Jihad is a social movement that consists of a set of formal and informal organizations all linked in patterns of interactions ranging from centralized to decentralized degrees of cooperation resulting in more or less connected terrorist operations (Sageman, 2004).

Similarly, social networks (connections) get stronger in accordance to the number and strength of existing links. Although this research will not focus on how these Jihadist networks are established but would rather concentrate on the nature of the established links. More precisely, study the implications and effectiveness of new communication technology used by Jihadist groups present in Northern Mali. The study of political violence generally and Jihad specifically has tended to focus on elements that rarely unpacked the social dynamics within these groups. To illustrate this, conventional research assumed that the cause of violence often preceded the formation of violent groups, which is particularly wrong for Mali. New evidence has found that involved networks engaged in terrorism, existed long before they become formally involved in terrorist activity (Thurston & Lebovich, 2013).

The goal is to identify a method of analysis that adds a social dimension to the basic sociodemographic profile of Jihadi networks. Through the social network analysis (SNA) method, the study of jihadist groups in Mali will provide important information about the characteristics of the groups' structure, uncover the groups dynamic, activities and motives. SNA, assumes that to comprehend a social phenomenon it is better to map out and analyse the systems of ties amongst the various actors and the ways in which these relational patterns shape actor's activity and decision making (Perliger & Pedahzur, 2011).

One method of analysis was identified to guide the process of Jihadist network analysis is *Thematic networks*, which aims to explore the understanding of an issue or the significance of an idea, rather than to reconcile conflicting definitions of a problem (Stirling, 2001). Applying thematic networks is simply a way of organizing a thematic analysis of qualitative data. It seeks to unearth the themes salient in a text at different levels, and to facilitate the structuring and depiction of these themes (Stirling, 2001,3). Attride stirling's method views the web-like network as an organizing principle and a representational means, and it makes explicit the procedures that may be employed in going from text to interpretation. It simply provides a technique for breaking up text, and finding within it explicit rationalizations and their implicit signification.

5.2.1 Thematic framework for analysis

While the Jihad ideology is strongly interconnected, it is not the baseline that drives the movement (Sageman, 2004). This ideology could be described as a system of beliefs that magnify the movement's narrative in a manner that would resonate and persuade potential supporters. It might be used to align the group's messaging and to fulfil a sense of common identity but it certainly doesn't -on its own- form a foundation of the Jihad narrative transmitted through its propaganda.

The identified materials instigated a selection of mobilization themes illustrating current and past social struggles to justify the Jihadist groups' actions and promote the movement's legitimacy in Northern Mali. In order to refine the findings, a framework for analysis was developed⁹, to bridge between the established conceptual concerns of framing and the identified 'mobilization themes'. These themes were then placed under five categories (global themes): Resistance, Religious Compass, Purpose, Group Conduct, Group Values. Each theme was assigned appropriate coding as details in *Figure2* below:

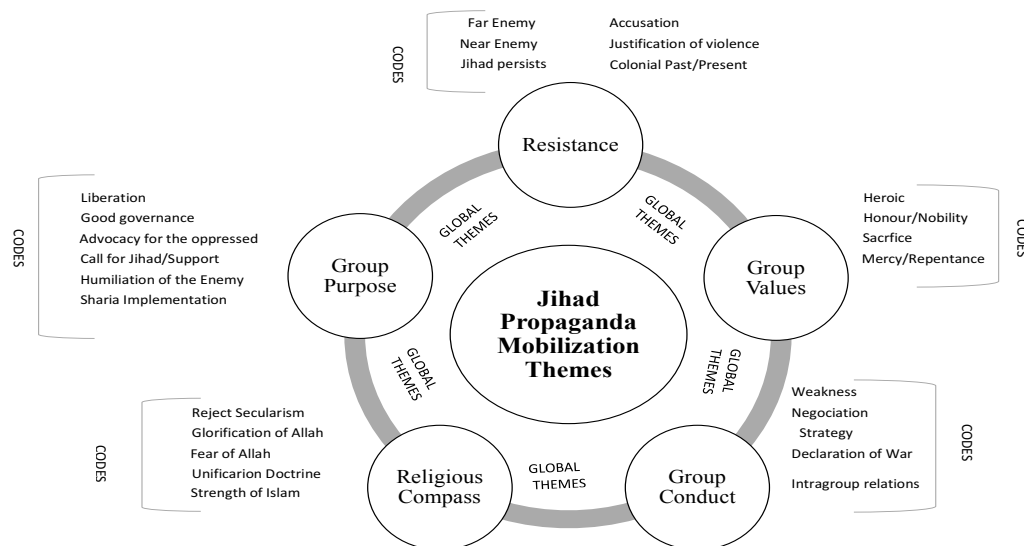


Figure 2: Detailed thematic framework for analysis

⁹ The inspiration behind this framework was drawn from (El-Badawy Emma, Comerford Milo, & Welby Peter, 2015) remarkable report: Inside the Jihadi Mind Understanding Ideology and Propaganda.

Resistance

This theme is used to establish the groups' legitimacy by justifying acts of violence and drilling on Mali's colonial history, past and current struggles to convey a position of resistance. The theme was highly present in Videos and Interviews.

Religious Compass

The codes under this theme form the religious foundation under which the groups operate. Almost acting as a source of inspiration and motivation. The identified passages translate profound mixed emotions of love, adoration, fear and respect towards the divine (Allah). The references under this theme present the ultimate reason for Jihad, regardless of its location be it Jihad in Mali or in the Middle East, the religious compass remains intact. It describes the intimate relation and unconditional loyalty between the Mujahed and the creator (Allah). An unequal relation of power where Allah is the commander, the provider of guidance and the one worth sacrificing life for. This relation is unique and unbreakable. This theme is strongly present in interviews and Audio tapes, materials used to introduce and explain the group's purpose history, strategy and other clarifications. Audio tapes are usually used as preaching materials often directed toward the Mujahideen or the Islamic Umma to call for Jihad and support.

Group Values

This theme reflects the brand of each Jihadist group. The behaviours that the movement seeks to encourage. While certain actions display clear acts of violence and in some cases raw images of executions or intense battles, the groups aim to reconciliation these actions with values that might humanize the nature of their actions and resonate more with potential supporters, some might even strive to live by these values. Here, we identified references of the honour and nobility in Jihad, displays of loyalty and sacrifice associated with it. In some cases, the groups show a certain leniency and mercy towards the population of Azawad or even towards Hostages.

Group Conduct

Just as the group's values and religious compass are focused on Jihad, the groups' conduct is also centred around it. The difference here is that the groups seek to present the strategic thinking behind Jihad and its functionality in Northern Mali. Passages included detailed internal strategies, be it military conduct, relations with other groups, more details on negotiation processes lead with other parties and some honest considerations of the group's weaknesses and limitations. Through these narrative, the groups seek to defy the image of a Jihad that is blind and unrealistic. The religious ideology is key, as explained above but, a sound understanding of the realities is clearly translated in the sample of this study. The majority of the codes under this themes are found in interviews.

Purpose

This is what the group strives to achieve by following a religious compass and a set of values. This theme is what makes Jihad in Mali a social movement rather than a simple gathering of fanatics. In accordance with the social movement theory, this theme is what describes the political opportunity and the complex context under which these groups strive to build momentum. Codes under the themes are equally distributed amongst identified materials, slightly more present in Videos and Interviews

5.2.2 Thematic coding process

The coding process was twofold. First step involved a meticulous reading of each text and systematically taking notes of any reflection. This allowed a more precise reading of the text, also it helped rule out some of the preconceptions that might have unduly swayed the findings. At this point, it was important to take account of any possible biases and give way for additional relevant analysis. The second step was coding in accordance with the established framework for analysis (*Figure 2*). An Initial coding of the text was performed, then a final coding was done through *NVIVO*, a qualitative analysis software to help quantify and visualize the findings. Given the nature of the material, many passages were accorded multiple codes.

In pursuit of a bias free understanding of the selected propaganda materials, it was important to constantly keep my thoughts in check. The purpose was not to devalue these

reflections or to cancel them, rather putting aside any analytical reflection point proved very fruitful through this process. An extract from the initial textual analysis is presented as such:

The coding steps are presented as follow:

O followers of Christians, return to your Lord, return before you face the destiny of your ancestors. Before you stand at hellfire and say: {Now we have no intercessors, nor a true friend}. I swear to Allah, France, and the UN will not serve you in this world nor the hereafter. They will not protect you from the torment of hellfire, the same way they did not protect you from the torment of bombings in this world.

Anbar, Hajar
Complimentary advice before the warning.
Rather short. Might indicate that the narrator doesn't not really care to have them back on the right path

Anbar Hajar

Table 2: Example initial coding from text

*Extract from *New video message from al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb's Shaikh Abu 'Abd al-Rahman 'Ali al-Shahnaji: "In the Wake of the Raid of Gao" January 20, 2017*

Selected Passage	Codes	Basic themes	Organizing themes	Global themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Fond of what Allah wants ⇒ He cannot be challenged or questioned; Supplicate to Allah; ⇒ Allah's word to remain supreme ⇒ People must glorify him ⇒ Worshipers to surrender ⇒ Allah guided the mujahedeen ⇒ To know Allah's commands, judgement, power; Fear only him; Be humble enough to worship him; To not use secular phrases; ⇒ Noble goal 	<p>Adoration Submission in fear The mission Command to glorification The right path Secularism Nobility</p>	<p>Allah's words are adored and to be kept supreme; His supremacy is to be feared and his rule to be followed; The mission is to protect and spread his supremacy The nobility in Jihad as the right path; Secularism challenges Allah's command</p>	<p>Jihad as a noble mission</p>	<p>Religious Compass</p>

Table 3: Example final coding with NVIVO 12

Global Themes	Thematic codes	Coded reference extract	Total number of coded references in the text	Percentage of Coverage in text
Resistance	Justification of violence	Files\\A10: <i>...They are strangers to our nation; They did not come in peace; ...Came to loot; To ruin our religion; ...Spread sins and corruption.</i>	6	1,76%
Purpose	Advocacy for the oppressed	Files\\A10: <i>...Lift injustices; Bring justice to people; Feed the poor; Teach the uneducated; ...Providing basic needs to people such as security, livelihood, electricity, water, healthcare and so on;</i>	6	1,39%
Group Conduct	Strategy	Files\\I1: <i>Formulate new strategies and military plans; We have no doubt, logically and religiously in the benefits of unity; These matters depend on the circumstances and resources available; No contradictions between the global and regional Jihad; Which options of jihad is better, is a matter of debate and depends on the true circumstances on the ground; Our stand may change...</i>	28	8,20%
Religious Compass	Adoration/Glorification of Allah	Files\\A10: <i>...We ask Allah the almighty to put us under his mercy and love; Fear only him; Fond of what Allah wants</i>	9	3,07%
Group Values	Honour/ Heroic	Files\\D3 & D10: <i>"... by the heroes of Islam to the Crusaders occupiers, three knights from the proud "Glan" tribes managed to infiltrate in the touristic resort."</i>	5	7,67%

	Mercy/Repentance	Files\\V26: “Around 560 soldiers have been imprisoned in Jalhook-Tasaleet- Kidal battles. We let them all go free after they vowed, never to fight Islamic sharia again”	4	25,61%
--	------------------	--	---	--------

By the end of this coding process the overall direction of the selected propaganda become more apparent. The upcoming section will present and discuss the overall findings after a quantitative coding through NVIVO.

6. RESULTS

Table 4: Coded mobilization themes

Mobilization Themes	Thematic Codes	Number of References
RESISTANCE	(Enemy)Accusation	40
	(Legitimacy) Justification of attack	44
	Colonial Past/Present	29
	Far enemy	6
	Near enemy	17
	Jihad persists	22
	Total	158
	Frequency	24,5%
GROUP PURPOSE	(Good) Governance Practices	21
	Advocacy for the oppressed	45
	Liberation	29
	Call for Jihad	34
	Call for support	12
	Humiliate/Expel the Enemy	22
	Implement Sharia	30
	Total	193
Frequency	30%	
RELIGIOUS COMPASS	Adoration of Allah	36
	Fear of Allah	3
	Unification Doctrine	32
	Strength of Islam	19
	Reject Secularism	16
	Total	106
Frequency	16.45%	
GROUP VALUES	Honour	10
	Heroic	16
	Loyalty	6
	Nobility	5
	Sacrifice	12
	Mercy/ Repentance	14
	Total	63
Frequency	9.78%	
GROUP CONDUCT	Movement Strategy	38
	Intergroup Relations	29
	Negotiation	7
	Recognition of Weakness	20
	Declaration of war	30
	Total	124
	Frequency	19.25%
	Σ CODES = 29	Σ NR = 644

6.1 Most used framing techniques for mobilization

The table reveals the most used mobilization themes by the jihadist groups in Mali. A great deal of passages reflects the groups' purpose and the apparent social resistance that lead to the consolidation of multiple Jihadist fronts in Mali. Out of five identified mobilization themes, the groups' purpose and resistance account for 30% and 24,5% respectively. This shows how the jihadist movement in Mali capitalizes on the post-independence context of the country and the accumulation of a series of social and economic struggles very specific to the Northern region.

To legitimize their resistance agenda, the groups relied on a series of accusation directed towards their enemies. Often, these accusation trace back to the countries colonial past and its consequence on the Muslim people, specifically in Northern Mali. The total of references between enemy accusation and justification of attack are almost equal, which shows how often the propaganda combines these two realities to legitimize their claim for a Sharia governance system. As illustrate in the table, there is less focus on the Far enemy and more emphasis on the Near enemy. The Far enemy is what constitute the ultimate, commonly shared enemy of all Jihadist groups, being the Jew and Christians. Interestingly, the Jihadist groups in Mali follow a more contextualized pursuit, the French and Malian government are their main target to eliminate.

As can be seen in the table, the propaganda stands on a well-built purpose geared towards advocacy for the oppressed and a promise for liberation through a full implementation of the Sharia. Accordingly, the propaganda creates an ideal channel to call for mobilization and support. The graph below illustrates the correlation between texts mentioning both advocacy, declarations of war and call for Jihad:

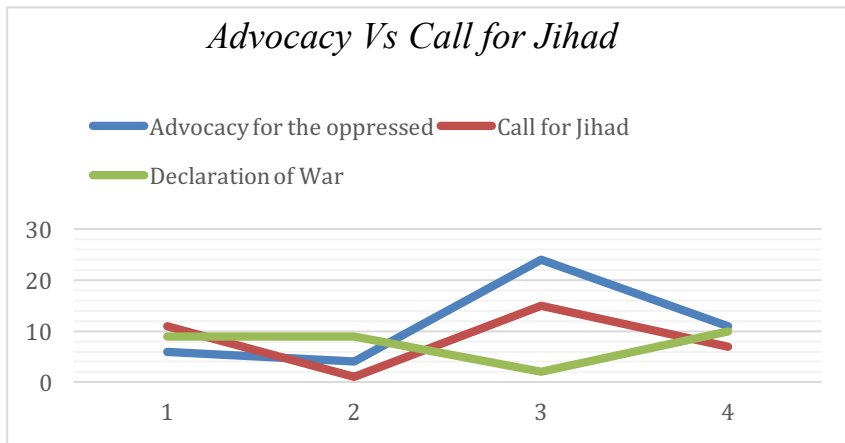


Figure 3: Reference to three thematic codes in the propaganda

The graph makes it evident to understand that the groups utilize past and current social struggle to advance their advocacy claims. More so, they use this claim to prepare for a clear call to join Jihad but rarely to express a declaration of war. In other words, the use of advocacy for the oppressed is stronger when it's for a call to action but less so when its use to declare an act of war against their enemy. This narrative, mostly identified in Interviews, appears to be framed for potential participants of Jihad and not for the near enemy.

6.1.1 Participants motivation in the propaganda

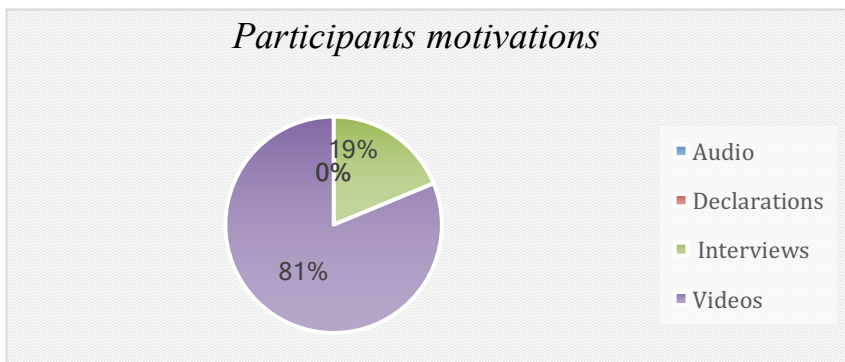


Figure 4: Percentage of Participant motivation occurrence per propaganda material

As previously discussed, the propaganda relies on a diverse communication portfolio, through different types of materials (More on *Additional analysis*). Most indication from engaged jihadist motivation is found in Videos where participants clearly explain what drives their commitment to Jihad in Mali. Most references have hateful and aggressive connotations; the collected testimonials are often from a battlefield following a successful raid on a military base. One of the identified Mujahideen goes on to state in a Video: *I*

swear to Allah, only Allah knows how much hatred we have towards them. (Files\\V4). Although some passages indicating participants' motivation are present in Interviews, the groups rely exclusively on Videos to create a dramatic portrayal of such commitment. It is as if, the purpose is to impress whomever looks at this footage. They want to show strength, motivations and most importantly their militants' capacity to fight this war.

6.1.2 Target audience in the propaganda

Table 5: Number of references to target audience per material

Target Audience	Coded material			
	A	I	V	D
Direct address to Muslims	4	1	3	1
Direct address to enemy	2	2	5	2
Direct address to Malians	3	1	4	1
Direct address to Mujahideen	2	2	2	1

Table 6: Number of references to target audience per Jihadist group

Jihadist Group		
JNIM	AQIM	ADD
13	3	1
19	0	2
7	3	1
2	1	3

While the examined Jihadist propaganda focuses on strengthening its proclaimed right to live by the Sharia and fight their enemies, each published material has its target audience (see *annex 2: data classification*). The tables above detail the occurrence of mentions to a specific target audience as per material and Jihadist group. Numbers in Table 5 show that Audio materials are framed to address the Islamic Umma and the Muslims in Mali. This might be explained by the fact that Audio messages are easier to share (smartphone or by radio) and don't require a production budget. They are often used in forms of preachings to reach as many Muslims as possible. Table 5 also indicates that most of the Videos address the enemy. This clearly shows how invested these groups are to reach this target audience, mostly for warning or a display of power and military strength.

To take the analysis further, Table 6 shows the number of references to specific target audiences by each jihadist group in Mali. The most striking findings within this sample, is AQIM's nil focus in producing specific materials directed towards their enemy. However, the group is primary focused to reach the global Islamic Umma and the Malians. Although surprising, but the materials produced by AQIM quickly negates this lack of interest, especially when it comes to hostage videos (more on *additional analysis*).

Additionally, numbers from table 6 clearly show JNIM's vast communication outreach. Mostly focused towards the enemy and Muslims in Mali as well as the ones abroad. These results confirm that the recent alliance of jihadists groups under one leadership (JNIM) is working and it is expanding. What that also tells us is that JNIM has acquired more resources and is willing to spend more on its communication.

6.2 Additional analysis

During the analysis process, few mobilization techniques have been identified in the material. A discussion on the groups editing techniques and messaging, especially in their videos is due. This section will reveal the plethora of techniques used in the groups video propaganda. Including their format, narrative, purpose, visual and sound effects.

Military strength

The jihadist groups in Mali are invested in displaying an image of military strength by the use of high level video productions. Here, the videos are mostly shot right after a successful raid. They often start with satellite images of the ground battlefield followed by jihad Nasheed [chants]. The footage showcases their weaponry and fighters, each scene from the videos included Arabic subtitles to describe the scene. The alleged Jihadists wear what appears to be a common men attire in the Azawad community, most of them wear a veil and hide their appearance. If it's a successful raid, the video will also include unedited footage – most of the time displaying sensitive content - of wounded or dead soldiers or casualties. These type of videos usually end with a strong message to their target audience, be it a promise for more attacks and violence or call for support.

Hostages and captured spies

Many of the identified videos are used by the Jihadist groups to demand ransoms to free captured hostages or to unveil the repercussions of treason. When it comes to videos of hostages, the content is focused on the captured individuals, most probably following a pre made script for the video- calling their home governments or families to come for their rescue and answer to the demands of the jihadist groups. The hostages often speaking in either French or in English, hold a calm appearance and look in

decent shape. This seems to be of great importance to the kidnappers, making sure the hostages look somewhat presentable and healthy before the camera. Judging from the footage, one could conclude that these videos are meant to sensitize the target audience to answer to their demands. Unofficial channels of communication are most probably the way to negotiate for hostage release.

Videos of captured spies also referred to as traitors, show a different approach. The purpose out of these videos is to set an example for others, be it current Mujahideen or the local community of Azawad. Such videos often start with qur'anic references following by preaching's from group commanders, there is less use of special effect in comparison to the videos on hostages. Although, what is different in these type of videos is the use of testimonials from captured spies. The Jihadist groups provide a platform for them to explain how they were turned, what pushed them to commit treason and advice young Muslims in the region to join Jihad and stay faithful to their people. Footage from *V4 by JNIM: And Whoever Warns He is Excluded*, shows the verdict after having confessed to treasons. The captured spies are sentenced to death by shotgun, executed publicly.

As discussed in the literature review, *collective action frames* are used by social movements to identify the issues they aim to address, propose solutions and develop motivational narratives to sensitise target audiences. In the context of our study many of the presented themes (*framework for analysis*) were found to be collective action frames used by the three jihadist groups identified in this research. The following section will examine each of these frames in detail.

6.2.1 Diagnostic frames

❖ Remembrance of colonial struggles and an identification of the enemy

The overall conclusion from the text adheres to the primary argument that confirms existing resistance nuances in the Jihadist narrative. The three groups share similar portrayal of current and past struggles using this particular technique to justify acts of violence against the near enemy (France & Mali) and build popular support amongst the local population. Through this material, the groups justify their legitimate right to fight the enemy by

condemning their actions in history and thoroughly describing the group's struggle to resist the occupation clearly demonstrated in the passages below:

"...Because they are all secretions of the colonialism that invaded our country in the last two centuries, and enabled those regimes to govern. Therefore, they started governing for its account and on behalf of it. They implement its programs and protect its interests and fight Islam on its behalf. It's never going to be possible for this region to stabilize unless its people start enjoying freedom and dignity and security under Islam";

"...After half a century since independence, there is a clear deliberate action from the agents of colonialism in creating this rupture." (Files\\I4).

Most of the texts under the resistance theme aggressively condemn African states: *"... but your leader, this Buhari¹⁰, is supporting your arrogance with his lies and this so called Buratai you have certainly been lured you into his sedition... (Files\\A11); .." the apostate Mauritanian government now it is resorting to spies... (Files\\V3), including Mali's central government and France: "...Your longstanding enemy intends to corrupt our religions and steal away your wealth" (Files\\I1). The precise description of actions against the Muslim population in Mali is often violent and carries hateful connotations. The group intentionally moves from historical facts of oppression to providing justifications for past or future attacks targeting either the Malian- French armies' coalition or UN peacekeeping missions. This almost serves as a preparation to acts of wars and to mobilize as many supporters as possible.*

Although the three groups lead different media campaigns, they share a similar narrative when it comes to justifying acts of violence. This analogy was represented in separate files. An extract from a video by an AQIM commander highlights some of the accusations against the Malian and French armies:

"..." Their armies collaborating in this crusade against Islam and its people and killing innocent Muslims and arresting people and driving out hundreds..." (Files\\V5);

¹⁰ Muhammadu Buhari is a Nigerian politician currently serving as the President of Nigeria, in office since 2015.

Recognizing their right to fight oppression:

..”the Muslims get together to defend themselves, they blame them for getting together and accused them with mass-grouping (Files\\I4); ..We are at war with the French, We have the right, religiously and logically to defend ourselves.. (Files\\I1).

These transitional passages are vital to the Jihadist propaganda, as they provoke feelings of grievance amongst the local population. Common sentiments of injustice and social frustration bring people together as a form of resistance. It is essentially important for the Jihadist groups to position themselves as a legitimate representative for these communities. Legitimate, because they share the common struggles, they are geographically closer to them than central government (based in Bamako, Southern Mali) and they can bring people together under shared religious values.

6.2.2 Prognostic Frames

❖ Jihad as a solution to end oppression

In addition to efforts to legitimize their actions, the identified groups also substantiate their strength and display a sense of reassurance to their target audience. Beyond the common struggles and shared religious values, the groups convey a straightforward image that of which Jihad is the only way to stand up against the oppressors, more than that, it is according to them, the only structure still standing against their enemies. Jihad persists against efforts to demise Sharia:

The reconciliation program that [Algerian President] Bouteflika promotes has failed badly, and the matter of Jihad is still alive. (Files\\I4) “; Showcasing persistence and heroic actions from movement participants “...for the brothers (mujahedeen) always persist in fighting the crusaders until all the land is ruled by Sharia or you are martyr trying to do so” (Files\\V6); Display of success: “...We were blessed with large conquests and we are in the process of implementing Islamic law. Continues in what is assumed to be Tamasheq” (Files\\V26);

Reassurance and unity: ... *“Message to our Scholars and our heroic Mujahideen behind bars, we haven’t forgotten you and we won’t forget you. Your brothers always place your freedom at the top of their demands, we won’t let the enemy’s stubbornness halt our efforts to free you. Reply of Allah and be patient, your patience is giving us strength. May Allah accept your Jihad and give your relatives patience.”* (Files\\A7).

It is apparent that these groups need to prove their legitimacy through their messaging. Moreover, it was important for them to humanize their propaganda which suggests a form of flexibility when it comes to addressing their different target audiences. A limited attention to a display of violence reflects poorly on their positioning in Northern Mali. These findings make it evident that the Jihad narrative in Mali is refined and contextualised to specific aims. This does not reduce their frame of actions to peaceful aims, however, it certainly shows some degree of adaptation to the context, which makes their presence much more dangerous and less likely to be challenged. They know how to address their target, however, it remains difficult to prove the correlation between a more adapted propaganda and actual mobilization to Jihad (recruitment).

6.2.3 Motivational frames

❖ Religious discourse to motivate

A statement shared by Mitchel Dean, asserts to the fact that there’s is nothing surprising in the use of faith as a resource to the exercise of power (Mitchell, 2007,69). Now, before embarking in examining how these groups plan to governing with Sharia, it is important to get a sense of the imagine they try to build on their true sovereign and to what extent is his adoration worthy of sacrifice. This section will look into the motivational frames used in the propaganda, precisely looking into the wording and the construction on their main messages used to sensitise and lure their target audience.

Most of the efforts by the international community are geared towards eliminating the threats of Jihad through military intervention. Although effective, as these interventions have been successful in Mali and managed to liberate most of the territories in Northern Mali in 2013, there is still a substantial challenge to completely eradicate their presence in these territories. What still remains understood is the mere fact that a powerful arsenal of

international armies is still struggling to neutralize a group of Jihadists with an army of men, ready to sacrifice their lives for who they identify as their true sovereign.

Religious Compass is the fourth most used theme out the five identified global themes. Even though its presence is relatively shallow, it is used in way that implies an already established relationship with the target audience. It is as if these passages indicate an innate bond with either the Mujahideen [*Ones engaged in Jihad*] and Allah; the people of Azawad and Allah; the Muslims and Allah. The sample clearly shows that Allah is adored, feared and glorified at the same time:

“... we ask Allah the almighty to put us under his mercy and love”; “Since we are fond of what Allah is fond of, we aim through this speech to demonstrate, clearly and firmly, the truth of the matters. May Allah guide whomever He chooses to the right path”; “...Allah’s word to remain supreme, People must glorify him, Worshipers to surrender, to know Allah’s commands, judgement, power, Fear only him.” (Files\\A10).

The bond exists, however, there are nuances to this relationship. The ones who choose the path of Jihad are referred to in a different manner than the ones who do not, as stipulated in the following entry:

“He who fights for those noble goals and supreme objectives is true to his creator and knowledgeable about religion. He, therefore, requires no permission from the United Nations or world powers. On the contrary, the UN is at his feet. He does not give them weight and considers them more despicable than scarabs and weaker than a spider’s web. If he wins, he gives thanks to Allah and attributes his blessings to Allah, the almighty. If he fails, he will be rewarded and his deed won’t be disregarded by Allah, whom he fought for”; in contrast to: *“Those who are fighting for false idols are completely the opposite. They are fighting for this mortal world, for their own whims and desires. They are glorifying the creature more than the creator. They hide their sins from people, but not from Allah. They reject His path, spread sins and corruption, and fight virtue and righteousness. Shame on them! Allah created them, but they worship others.* (Files\\A10).

In these entries the narrator identifies the ‘he as the Mujahed [*One engaged in Jihad*] that choose this path, giving him a distinctive power and privilege that places him above the

others and establishes a tight connection between him and who he chose to fight for (*Allah*). Conspicuously, what the propaganda aims to achieve is establishing distance and hierarchy between the Mujahed and the others. More accurately, the propaganda seems to want to paint a distinctive image of the model Muslim, one that fears and loves his creator, feels the struggle of his people and demonstrates his loyalty to Allah/the cause to the extent of sacrifice. Audio materials are generally used for preaching, a fast and effective way to reach a wider audience. This material often carries less violent content in comparison with Videos. The purpose is to sensitize people, speak to the heart using faith as a persuasion tool. Creating an imagine of a *Model Muslim* is one of many identified persuasion techniques.

❖ **Governing through the sharia**

As much as capitalizing on sentiments is important, the propaganda generates a set of guidelines and policies to solidify their commitment to spread the rule of Allah in Mali. In addition to glorification, fear and love, the groups' religious compass provides guidelines to a better way of governing through Sharia law. Three codes under the overall religion theme act as societal guidelines to the nation of Azawad. The main codes are "Strength of Sharia" and 'reject secularism', predominantly used in propaganda videos but also found in Audio tapes and detailed Interviews.

This is used to point out to everything wrong with secularism as a governance system, currently implemented in Mali, as exemplified in the following passages:

"It is a misguidance, it came to impose your surrender to the apostate government and its crusader master France..." (Files\\V31); "...The government in power does not represent its people 's reality. Ruling according to blasphemous laws to please the west, the infiltrator" (Files\\V3); "...France does not want our governments to be a true representative of their people, as they have been given by the Sharia, but they want governments to follow to their orders, and these are some of their goals by exporting democracy to our country" (Files\\V31).

These passages intelligently illustrate the country's colonial past with France and the religious guidance of Sharia being overthrown by democracy which in their words, is not

representative of their people. Also, the groups announce a total rejection of borders in the text referred to as artificial or colonial borders:

“Our belief according to the Sharia is that accepting these borders is a consecration of the new blasphemous colonial world order, which is based on the war on Islam and weakening the Muslims, and dividing the people of Islam on ignorant basis not recognized by Islam and not accepted by Muslims” (Files\I3).

Moreover, the groups seek to present themselves as an entity that is religiously driven but also acts on the problem of ineffective governance in Mali. They want their target to recognize their religious commitment to their sovereign but also present earthly proof to the decline of the Malian nation state and its capacities. One cannot simply go by these passages without acknowledging how the material can be used for pure propaganda but also acts as a political campaign, similar to the ones in legitimate States. They are driven by both the religious and the political.

❖ Union is power

One of the most powerful tools used by the propaganda, is a constant reminder for unification: ‘Unification doctrine’. In more precise words, this calls for the merger and unification of Jihadist fronts present in Mali:

“Message to the Mujahideen: Until when do you stay separated and scattered? Did you become so egoistic and oblivious to choose separation over union? Don’t we all preach Allah’s words: “(4:61): Truly Allah loves those who fight for his cause in battle array, as if they were a solid cemented structure”. Why do we then insist on leading the same fight separately? we are no solid cemented structure. After Allah, you are the only hope for the orphans and the weak in satanic prisons.” (Files\A7); *“Allah ordered us to be united, to be allied, to cooperate and fight against the idolaters, fight under one flag and one leadership in order to get ready for the confrontation. We realized a condition and a reason for victory , Unity is a reason of strength and victory. This is a universal norm that even the infidels are aware of.”* (Files\I4).

Reasons for such hefty use of the Unification doctrine in the propaganda is very evident to the context in which these groups operate. Up until 2011, when the three groups officialised their merger under one leadership (Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin), there were at least four factions of Jihad, in addition to the recent establishment of the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara. It was only a matter of time until these groups realized their weakness in leading the same fight separately. One strong unified front is more appealing to their target audience than a multitude of players, who at times have been accused of fighting against each other. This would make it easier for potential participants to join, to consolidate more financial resources and also to expand Jihadist violent activity throughout the country.

❖ **Display of positive conduct**

The least utilized theme from the sample is *Group Values*, it does not however diminish its importance in the propaganda. Reference to the nobility of Jihad often promoted as a heroic act that displays honour and sacrifice to the Islamic Umma. This theme could be perceived as the groups' brand, how they want to unravel themselves to the world and what kind of behaviour they encourage within their participants. Mentions of hateful and violent speech was widely present, predominantly in videos but what was surprising is the groups deliberate attention to the display of positive conduct. Although the analysis is limited to propaganda, a mention of unexpected conduct from a Jihadist group still falls under the scope of this research.

Right after heroic references, mentions of merciful acts or invitations for repentance take the lead. A testimonial from a video by a captured member of the Malian army states:

"I am one of the nine survivors of Aghalgook. Since the 24 January, we have been taken by the Mujahideen until today. We confirm that we have been well treated by the Mujahideen. We have not been tortured nor violence until our liberation. Amongst the nine elements, there were five elements from ground military forces and four from the national guard"
(Files\\V26).

This kind of statements are usually communicated shortly after a successful attack on their enemy, here a military base in Kidal. Also, such statements are found in hostage videos, using the platform to sensitize home countries or families to pay the ransoms.

Much of the reference on Mercy is also designed to characterise the kind of values these groups encourage in their control territories. They seek to describe the lost values of today's Malian society: “

...They must follow His commands; obey his messenger; lift injustices and bring justice to people; spread Islamic values, virtues, and ethics; fight immorality, corruption, and bad behaviour; show mercy to the young; respect the elderly; feed the poor; teach the uneducated, and supplicate to Allah. This is what it means for Allah's word to remain supreme. This noble goal is what Allah guided the Mujahideen towards, and what they chose to die for” (Files\A10).

Or give a way for repentance and simultaneously warning whoever refuses to reconsider: “*At the end, we would like to inform all fronts, movements, and coalitions that we are keen on your repentance. We call on you to reconsider your positions and those you chose to follow” (Files\A10).*

Much of what has been discussed in this section leans towards considering a different perspective of how a modern day society might be governed. One of Mali's biggest and most pressing issues revolve around the rise of Jihad in its Northern areas. Not only in regards to the security situation that comes with the expansion of Jihadist groups throughout the country and the region, but most importantly in relation to how these groups utilize the country's historical background and failed governance practices to gain control over the local population.

7. DISCUSSION

❖ Legitimacy and the use of collective action frames

Bringing the concept of *legitimacy* at the centre of Jihad studies supported the purpose of this research in grasping the rationale behind the social construction of jihadist movements, specifically in Northern Mali. Even though, recent general studies on social movements have used frame analysis to understand how they reproduce legitimacy, such link has not been sufficiently explored in the studies on jihadist movements. This research aimed at filling this gap and brings forward an analysis that connects legitimacy to jihadist mobilization efforts.

Throughout this study, the findings clearly join Ehud Sprinzak's argument on the issue of legitimacy being an outcome of a process of delegitimization. The collective action frames examined in the propaganda material continuously stress on government failures to provide equal services and opportunities to the population in Northern Mali. The discourse carries heavy accusations to the previous colonizing power and to other African states. This process of delegitimization has started long before these jihadist groups (as mentioned in the context section), when the people of Azawad came together to denounce these injustices and founded a secessionist group. Clearly, this provided a fertile ground for the expansion and popular support of Jihadist groups in Northern Mali.

As portrayed in the results section, the jihadist group deploys immense efforts through their media presence to channel *popular support* and mobilize for action. This observation supports Podder's argument that highlights the similarities between an armed group and a State to uphold their legitimacy. The notion of compliance, although it remains important in understanding a movement's legitimacy, was not examined in the course of this study. Podder proposed to define legitimacy for armed groups *as the rightful power that makes the rules and therefore warrants support and compliance*. The findings make this definition partially evident, since we cannot talk of compliance without discussing how any way of ruling is perceived by the population. An example from Ould Bouamama's Interview with the New York times clearly stipulates how the jihadist movement views its claim for legitimacy:

..”But the Jihadi movement Alhamdulillah[Thanks to God] is increasing day after day, and today it overpasses the battle of Sharia so today no one denies the obligatory of jihad and its legitimacy except an idiot, but the real battle is the battle of the empty stomachs, weak hearts and ignorant minds, the battle today is the battle morals, good dealing and governing people with justice and fairness..” Files\I3.

❖ **Similar arts of government**

The common knowledge has established a frame for Jihadist activity, mostly labelled as criminal and illegitimate grouping of fanatics seeking to spread violence and instability. Without undermining this common understanding, as it does highlight the prominent global threat linked to such activities, considering the apparent paradox that Jihadists and Liberals both draw on similar 'arts of government' could impart a novel stance on Jihadist governance practices. Both appeal to their constituents' capacity to improve themselves (to be closer to Allah or to be more responsible citizens) as a ploy to invoke loyalty (or subservience), and portray themselves as effective facilitators of such virtues.

Following this stream of thought, it could be interesting, however disruptive, to consider Jihad practices in Northern Mali as a form of alternative government operating as a result of adequate political opportunity, to eventually promote what is perceived, by the Jihadist groups, as suitable habits.

In this case the Jihadist groups' intervention to introduce strict sharia reforms falls in the realm of what a liberal government would implement as general reforms. To illustrate this resemblance, the following passage states: *“By focusing on the urgent aspects like the field of Sharia judiciary, Education, Dawah [Missionary work] and Guidance, and raising the generations on Islamic morals, correcting the Aqeedah [Creed] and actions of the Muslims, protecting them from the callers to Kufr [Infidels] and misguidance, spreading security in the urban and rural areas, and filling the minimum needs of the people's living. Engaging the people in the making of that project and convincing them that contributing in it, is an obligatory worship in which the Muslim should do what he is capable of from it. (Files\A11)”*;

“... we have put in all our efforts in implementing sharia in our country and eliminating Muslims oppression from Muslims and providing them with security which triggers rage among western crusaders and aggravated their wrath so came their aggressive unjust horde accompanied by alliances and mobsters devastating the earth with corruption.” (Files\\V6).

What constitutes suitable habits in the above referenced passages from the propaganda, are a set of values guided by the Sharia law. Consequently, introducing Islamic morals and education is the pathway to eliminate oppression, expel the Westerners and achieve liberation. At this level, a full implementation of sharia is seen as a powerful instrument to establish a strong governance structure. In an interview with Iyad Ag Ghali, leader of JNIM, he explains in detail what constitutes an implementation of the sharia law.

He conveys an image of collaboration and free will, where the population has a choice in the matter:

*“...Ruling people **by their religion** and implementing the most possible we could of the components of Sharia; ...Conducting Da’awah [missionary work] and mobilizing people through religious and military meeting and conferences; Opening, supporting and supervising schools, religious and regular, with some alteration to their curricular; **Involving the people in governance** and getting their help in implementing Sharia...” (Files\\I1).*

Moving away from the conundrum of Jihad, this study examined what it means to govern a society for jihadist groups. In Mitchell and Lausten’s view, governing society might be about achieving or maintaining freedom but it can also mean deploying undemocratic means to protect it. Mitchell suggests to approach the project of ‘governing society’ as a grand vision which can be found in today's contemporary dream of radical Islam and Christian fundamentalism or in the ideals of good governance and cosmopolitan democracy (Mitchell, 2007,7). These visions, as proposed by Mitchell, aim to define a specific role in governing society be it the social movement itself, the law, education systems or the police and armed forces.

Regardless of what these visions seek to achieve, governing societies should be viewed for its concern to secure a particular form of life as something that is normal, in such exercises it controls what is outside the limits to that life, Mitchell goes on : “ ..It tries to

stabilize relations of power, resistance and confrontation into states of domination that are accepted, whether for their wisdom or their naturalness, their taken-for granted character or legality, as incontestable; It tries to create a certain minimum necessary level of homogeneity and identification among its members. It does this by forming bonds and creating solidarity among individuals and citizens, and establishing harmony between classes and groups” (Mitchell, 2007, 13).

This view of governing society is intrinsically tied to what jihadist groups in Mali seek to achieve. To promote, spread and normalize the use of the Sharia within their controlled territories. What particularly serves the object of this study is less of a focus on the State as the primary subject of political analysis and the shift to non-state actors with similar aim to governing a society. The problem of the term State, is that it could be an obstacle to the analysis (Mitchell, 2007,46), there is a need to shift the analysis from state functions to governance.

8. CONCLUSIONS

8.1 Summary

The practice of a governance apparatus can take all stances towards freedom. According to the propaganda, freedom for these Jihadist groups is found in the practice of the Sharia, fighting a former colonial powers and everyone standing against the rule of their sovereign. These groups specify the content of what individual freedom entails in a Sharia society and twist it to give it a particular form with various goals. Surely, leaving this discussion without acknowledging the coercive or obligatory dimensions of such way of governing is a misrepresentation of reality.

The image of a Jihad that relies on ancient methods of communication and recruitments quickly fades away throughout the analytical stages of this study. With that in mind, the Jihad apparatus is changing and so should be the discourse associated to it. This conclusion is endorsed by Larner and Walters pointing out to the importance of making sense of a changing world: “But a second factor has to do with how we make sense of a changing world. The proliferation of discourse concerning globalization, global governance and post-Westphalian politics are surely symptoms of serious transformations in the form and content of economic, political and social relations.” (Larner & Walters, 2004,4).

8.2 Ethical Dilemmas

This thesis deals with a highly debated topic and even more controversial jihadist movements. One could not conduct such research without a run through the ethical considerations. As previously mentioned, this research is not concerned with ideological foundation of Jihad, however, the examined material drifted the course of the analysis towards questions on the religious foundation of such movements. That being said the first ethical issue is this paradox between what the research aims to focus on and what the research ends up considering. Mentions of religious or ideological inspirations were presented during the course of this study, howbeit minimum but still lead to an ethical dilemma.

This lead us to a second ethical consideration which is the use of Jihadist instead of Terrorist. Many studies using this terminology were referenced in this research but it was

primordial for me as researcher to avoid using the term Terrorist, given its mainstream misuse in the media and in some studies. I preferred the use of the terminology that was reflected in the propaganda to keep the translated messages as authentic as possible and protect the aim of this study.

The third ethical concern was the ‘lost in translation’ risk. All of the Arabic material was translated into English. Since I am neither a certified translator, nor a linguistic expert there was great concern in losing the meaning of the message after translation. This risk was deemed rather minimum, specially in the analysis part, given the fact that I am a native Arabic speaker and had a natural understating of qur’anic references found in the propaganda.

The last and most important ethical concern for this study is it being perceived as supportive of Jihadist movements. By no means this research aims at giving legitimacy to movements that use violence in their actions and discourse but rather, this study wants to consider the resistance and social dimensions behind the foundation of such groups. Such perspective supports an understanding of jihadists activity that might encourage durable solutions to eradicate such movements. Ignoring the real sources of violence and opting for military interventions, will only give more space and opportunity for such movements to grow powerful.

8.3 Limitations

Although this study aimed at challenging the common understanding on Jihadists groups through an examination of their media outputs, this research failed to address the violent and coercive practices by the jihadist groups in Mali. In recognition of these major limitations, this study also overlooked the receiving end of the propaganda: the local population. A proper understanding of what the local population endures on the daily basis and whether or not they are supportive of the implemented governance practices by the jihadists groups, had to be explored in the field. Given the limited resources and the imminent security threats in the region such contact with local communities could not be established.

LIST OF REFERENCES

- Aoife McCullough. (2015). The legitimacy of states and armed non-state actors. Topic guide. (Birmingham, UK: GSDRC, University of Birmingham).
- Ariel I. Ahram. (2008). Symbolic frames: Identity and legitimacy in Iraqi islamist discourse. *Rhetoric and Public Affairs*, 11(1), 113-132.
- Armborst, A. (2010). Modelling terrorism and political violence. *International Relations*, 24(4), 414-432.
- Bayat, A. (2005). Islamism and social movement theory. *Third World Quarterly*, 26(6), 891-908.
- Beck, C. J. (2008). The contribution of social movement theory to understanding terrorism. *Sociology Compass*, 2(5), 1565-1581.
- Bøås, M. (2015). Crime, coping, and resistance in the Mali Sahel periphery. *African Security*, 8(4), 299-319.
- Bøås, M., & Torheim, L. E. (2013). The trouble in Mali—corruption, collusion, resistance. *Third World Quarterly*, 34(7), 1279-1292.
- Chandler, J. (2005). The explanatory value of social movement theory.
- Clionadh Raleigh, & Caitriona Dowd. (2013). Governance and conflict in the Sahel's 'Ungoverned space. *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development*, 2(2), Art. 32.
- D'Amato, S. (2018). Terrorists going transnational: Rethinking the role of states in the case of AQIM and boko haram. *Critical Studies on Terrorism*, 11(1), 151-172.
- Desrosiers, M. (2012). Reframing frame analysis: Key contributions to conflict studies. *Ethnopolitics*, 11(1), 1-23.
- Droogan, J., & Peattie, S. (2018). Reading jihad: Mapping the shifting themes of inspire magazine. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 30(4), 684-717.
- El-Badawy Emma, Comerford Milo & Welby Peter. (2015). Inside the jihadi mind understanding ideology and propaganda.
- Exploiting disorder: Al-Qaeda and the Islamic state. (2016). International Crisis Group.
- Ferree, M. M., Flacks, R., Ganz, M., Goodwin, J., Gould, D. B., Jasper, J. M., . . . Jasper, J. M. (2003). *Rethinking social movements*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- International Crisis Group. (2012). Mali: Avoiding escalation. International Crisis Group.

- Larner Wendy, & Walters William. (2004). Global governmentality.
- Leonard C. Robinson. (2017). Just terror: The Islamic state's use of strategic "Framing" to recruit and motivate.
- Marc W. Steinberg. (1998). Tilting the frame: Considerations on collective action framing from a discursive turn. *Theory and Society*, 27(6), 845-872.
- Masters, D., & Hoen, P. (2012). State legitimacy and terrorism. *Democracy and Security*, 8(4), 337-357.
- Mitchell, D. (2007). *Governing societies* (1. publ. ed.). Maidenhead: Open Univ. Press.
- Morgan Andy. (2012, Feb 6.). The causes of the uprising in Northern Mali. Think Africa Press.
- Oumar Ba. (2014). Tuareg nationalism and cyclical pattern of rebellions: How the past and present explain each other.
- Page, M., Challita, L., & Harris, A. (2011). Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula: Framing narratives and prescriptions. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 23(2), 150-172.
- Perliger, A., & Pedahzur, A. (2011). Social network analysis in the study of terrorism and political violence. *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 44(1), 45-50.
- Podder, S. (2013). Non-state armed groups and stability: Reconsidering legitimacy and inclusion. *Contemporary Security Policy*, 34(1), 16-39.
- Podder, S. (2017). Understanding the legitimacy of armed groups: A relational perspective. *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 28(4-5), 686-708.
- Raineri Luca, & Strazzari Francesco. (2012). Jihadism in Mali and the Sahel: Evolving dynamics and patterns. *European Union Institute for Security Studies*, 12(8).
- Raineri, L., & Strazzari, F. (2015). State, secession, and jihad: The micropolitical economy of conflict in Northern Mali. *African Security*, 8(4), 249-271.
- Raineri, L., & Strazzari, F. (2017). Jihadism in Mali and the Sahel: Evolving dynamics and patterns. *European Union Institute for Security Studies*.
- Robert D. Benford, & David A. Snow. (2000). Framing processes and social movements: An overview and assessment. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 26(1), 611-639.
- Sageman, M. (2004). *Understanding terror networks*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Sprinzak, E. (1991). The process of delegitimization: Towards a linkage theory of political terrorism. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 3(1), 50.
- Sukanya Podder. (2017). Understanding the legitimacy of armed groups, A relational

perspective. *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 28(4-5), 686-708.

Thurston Alexander, & Lebovich Andrew. (2013). *A handbook on Mali's 2012-2013 crisis*. Taylor and Francis.

Torres Soriano, M. R. (2011). The evolution of the discourse of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb: Themes, countries and individuals. *Mediterranean Politics*, 16(2), 279-298.

Westphal, J. (2018). Violence in the name of god? A framing processes approach to the Islamic state in Iraq and Syria. *Social Movement Studies*, 17(1), 19-34.

Wiktorowicz, Q. (2004a). Framing jihad: Intramovement framing contents and al-Qaeda's struggle for sacred authority. *International Review of Social History*, 49, 159.

Wiktorowicz, Q. (2004b). Framing jihad: Intramovement framing contests and al-Qaeda's struggle for sacred authority. *International Review of Social History*, 49(S12), 159-177.

ANNEX 1

Transcribed, translated, coded and analysed sample

N°	Title	Group	Type of Material	Release or publishing Date	Responsible Media Production/outlet	Intended Target Audience
1.	Attack on a Malian gendarmerie in the city centre	JNIM	Declaration	16/04/2017	Az-Zallaqa Foundation	Mixed
2.	Al-Masra Interviews Sheikh Abu-Alfadl Iyad Ag Ghali	JNIM	Interview	Unknown	Al Masra	Mixed
3.	And Whoever Warns, He Is Excused	JNIM	Video	07/10/2017	Az-Zallaqa Foundation	Mixed
4.	The Raid of Bintagoungou	JNIM	Video	28/08/2017	Az-Zallaqa Foundation	Mixed
5.	Abu Abd Errahman Assanhadji on Elections	JNIM	Video	/02/2018	Az-Zallaqa Foundation	Muslims in Mali
6.	And with Patience, You win	JNIM	Audio	17/03/2018	Az-Zallaqa Foundation	Muslims in Mali
7.	Repulsion of the Transgressors”	JNIM	Video	17/05/2017	Az-Zallaqa Foundation	Mixed
8.	Jihad France vs Mujahideen	AQIM	Video	Unknown	Al Andalus	Mixed
9.	South African and Swedish Hostages in Mali	AQIM	Video	23/06/2015	Al Andalus	Mixed
10.	Shaykh Abū al-Ḥasan Rashīd al-Bulaydī - “‘Īd al ‘Aḍḥā Sermon”	AQIM	Audio	24/09/2015	Al Andalus	Umma
11.	Call for Jihad Abu Abd ar-Rahman	AQIM	Audio	07/12/2015	Al Andalus	Mixed

	Sanahaji					
12.	The Traitors	AQIM	Video	07/12/2015	Al Andalus	Mixed
13.	“Condolences to the Nation on the Martyrdom of the Commander and Leader Abū Muhammad al-Dagestanī and His Brothers”	AQIM	Declaration	12/08/2015	Al Andalus	Umma
14.	Shaykh Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Alī al-Ṣahnājī: “In the Wake of the Raid of Gao”	AQIM	Audio	20/01/2017	Al Andalus	Umma in Mali
15.	Conquest of Azawad in 4 languages	Ansar al-Din	Video	Unknown	Jamaat Ansar al-Din	Mixed
16.	Iyad Ag Ghali	Ansar al-Din	Audio	25/10/2015	Jamaat Ansar al-Din	Umma, Muslims in Mali
17.	“Still Weakening the Enemies of God of the Continuing Occupation”	Ansar al-Din	Declaration	08/04/2016	RIMAAH	Mixed
18.	Advocacy and Support	Ansar al-Din	Video	12/06/2016	RIMAAH	Umma in Kidal
19.	Interview with Sanda Ould Bouamama	Ansar al-Din	Interview	Unknown	Jamaat Ansar al-Din	Mixed
20.	An Interview with Abdelmalek Droukdal	The New York Times	interview	01/07/2008	An Interview with Abdelmalek Droukdal	Mixed

ANNEX 2

Data Classification

Code	Title	Group	Type of Material	Release or publishing Date	Responsible Media Production/ outlet	Intended Target Audience
<u>D1</u>	Attack on a Malian gendarmerie in the city centre	JNIM	Declaration	16/04/2017	Az-Zallaqa Foundation	Mixed
<u>D2</u>	Refutation et dementi	JNIM	Declaration	26/05/2017	Az-Zallaqa Foundation	Umma
<u>D3</u>	Attack on MINUSMA Camp Kidal	JNIM	Declaration	09/06/2017	Az-Zallaqa Foundation	Mixed
<u>I1</u>	Al-Masra Interviews Sheikh Abu-Alfadl Iyad Ag Ghali	JNIM	Interview	Unknown	Al Masra	Mixed
<u>D4</u>	Jamā'at Nuṣrat al-Islām Wa-l-Muslimīn- “Fulfilling the Covenant and Revenge for the Martyrs	JNIM	Declaration	16/12/2017	Az-Zallaqa Foundation	Mixed
<u>D5</u>	Warning	JNIM	Declaration	05/03/2018	Az-Zallaqa Foundation	Mixed
<u>V1</u>	Attack Targeting Timbuktu Military Airport	JNIM	Video	22/05/2017	Az-Zallaqa Foundation	Mixed
<u>D6</u>	Double operation against international forces in Aguelhock	JNIM	Declaration	23/05/2017	Az-Zallaqa Foundation	Mixed including Tchadinen forces
<u>V2</u>	Repulsion of the Transgressors	JNIM	Video	26/05/2017	Unknown	Mixed
<u>V3</u>	And Whoever Warns, He Is Excused	JNIM	Video	07/10/2017	Az-Zallaqa Foundation	Mixed
<u>V4</u>	The Raid of Bintagoungou	JNIM	Video	28/08/2017	Az-Zallaqa Foundation	Mixed
<u>V5</u>	Abu Abd Errahman Assanhadji on Elections	JNIM	Video	/02/2018	Az-Zallaqa Foundation	Muslims in Mali
<u>A1</u>	And with Patience, You win	JNIM	Audio	17/03/2018	Az-Zallaqa Foundation	Muslims in Mali
<u>V6</u>	Repulsion of the Transgressors”	JNIM	Video	17/05/2017	Az-Zallaqa Foundation	Mixed

<u>V7</u>	“Save Old Sophie”	JNIM	Video	01/03/2018	Az-Zallaqa Foundation	Mixed
<u>V8</u>	“Appeal by the Colombian Nun to Pope Francis”	JNIM	Video	29/01/2018	Az-Zallaqa Foundation	Mixed
<u>D7</u>	Support for the Place of al-’Isrā’ of the Muslim Prophet of God”	JNIM	Declaration	11/12/2017	Az-Zallaqa Foundation	Umma
<u>D8</u>	“Support for the Initiative ‘And Settlement Is Best”	JNIM	Declaration	27/10/2017	Az-Zallaqa Foundation	Umma
<u>V9</u>	Announcement of the new alliance group	JNIM	Video	14/03/2017	Az-Zallaqa Foundation	Mixed
<u>D9</u>	Aqc issued a statement in which it states full support to the new coalition	JNIM	Declaration	28/02/2017	Az-Zallaqa Foundation	Mixed
<u>D10</u>	Tombouctou Region" statement regarding the Nebkit Elik checkpoint	JNIM	Declaration			Mixed
<u>D11</u>	Attack on a Malian gendarmerie in the city centre	JNIM	Declaration	27/04/2017	Az-Zallaqa Foundation	Mixed
<u>D12</u>	Attack on the Malian Army elite unit barrack in Tagharost	JNIM	Declaration	18/04/2017	Az-Zallaqa Foundation	Mixed

<u>A1</u>	Recording of the French Prisoners of Niger	AQIM	Photos and Audio records	30/09/2010	Al Andalus	Mixed
<u>V10</u>	Introduction to Our Sharī’ah - Fulfilment and Steadfastness Until Victory	AQIM	Video	05/12/2012	Unknown	Mixed
<u>V11</u>	Jihad France vs The Mujahideen	AQIM	Video	Unknown	Al Andalus	Mixed
<u>V12</u>	French, Dutch hostages	AQIM	Video	18/11/2014	Al Andalus	Mixed
<u>V13</u>	Leader from AQIM in a festival at Azawad	AQIM	Video	02/12/2015	Al Akhbar	Mixed
<u>V14</u>	South African and Swedish Hostages in Mali	AQIM	Video	23/06/2015	Al Andalus	Mixed
<u>A2</u>	Preaching on prophet’s battles	AQIM	Audio	12/06/2015	Al Andalus	Mixed
<u>A3</u>	Preaching on Al bounian Al marsouss	AQIM	Audio	04/12/2015	Al Andalus	Mixed

<u>V15</u>	Blessed Incursion Chatter Control	AQIM	Video and Audio		Al Andalus	Mixed
<u>V16</u>	The Raid of Aguelhok - A Reminder of the Mujahidin Champions in the Greater Saharan Area and the Revival of Their Exploits	AQIM	Video	15/05/2015	Al Andalus	Mixed
<u>A4</u>	Shaykh Abū al-Ḥasan Rashīd al-Bulaydī - “‘Īd al ‘Aḍḥā Sermon”	AQIM	Audio	24/09/2015	Al Andalus	Umma
<u>V17</u>	Shaykh Abū Muhammad ‘Abd al-Nāṣir - “True to What They Promised God #1	AQIM	Video	29/10/2015	Al Andalus	Mixed
<u>A5</u>	Shaykh Abū al-Ḥasan Rashīd al-Bulaydī - “‘Īd al-Fiṭr Sermon for the Year 1436 H	AQIM	Audio	25/07/2015	Al Andalus	Umma
<u>V18</u>	Celebration of the liberation of 7 Mujahideen against the liberation of Serge Lazarevic	AQIM	Video	07/12/2015	Al Andalus	Mixed
<u>A6</u>	Those who fulfil the promise for Allah	AQIM	Audio	29/10/2015	Al Andalus	Mixed
<u>A7</u>	Call for Jihad Abu Abd ar-Rahman Sanahaji	AQIM	Audio	07/12/2015	Al Andalus	Mixed
<u>V19</u>	The Traitors	AQIM	Video	07/12/2015	Al Andalus	Mixed
<u>D13</u>	“Condolences on the Death of the Mujāhid Mullā Muḥammad ‘Umar”	AQIM	Declaration	05/08/2015		Umma
<u>D14</u>	About the Rumor of the Allegiance of Katībat al-Anṣār to the ‘State Organization	AQIM	Declaration	05/09/2015	Ifriqia AL Muslima	Umma
<u>D15</u>	“Condolences ‘Ḥamīd al-Shā’irī’ and His Comrades from the Martyrs of Darnah”	AQIM	Declaration	27/11/2015	Al Andalus	Umma
<u>D16</u>	“Condolences to the Nation on the Martyrdom of the Commander and Leader Abū Muhammad al-Dagestanī and His Brothers”	AQIM	Declaration	12/08/2015	Al Andalus	Umma
<u>D17</u>	And Verily Upon the Departed Oh ‘Haroon’ For the Low-Spirited”	AQIM	Declaration	27/10/2015	Al Andalus	Umma
<u>D18</u>	“On the Ongoing Fighting in the City of Darnah, Libya”	AQIM	Declaration	07/07/2015	Al Andalus	ISIS

<u>D19</u>	“The Raid of Jebel al-Lūh - The Destruction of 14 Soldiers and Spoils of Their Weapons”	AQIM	Declaration	18/07/2015	Al Andalus	Mixed
<u>D20</u>	“The Question of the Ruling on Zakat al-Fiṭr for the Mujāhid”	AQIM	Fatwa Declaration	29/06/2015	Al Andalus	Umma
<u>I2</u>	A Section of the Phone Call Between Al-Andalus Media and the Inghamāsī Brothers in the ‘Splendid’ Hotel in the Capital (Ouagadougou)	AQIM	Phone Interview	15/01/2016	Al Andalus	Mixed
<u>A8</u>	Adoption of the Kidnapping of the Australian Eliot Arthur Kenneth and the Release of His Wife Josephine Kenneth”	AQIM	Audio	05/02/2016		Mixed
<u>V20</u>	From the Depths of the Desert #1	AQIM	Video	06/01/2016	Al Andalus	Mixed
<u>V21</u>	“From the Depths of the Desert #2	AQIM	Video	13/02/2016	Al Andalus	Mixed
<u>V22</u>	Just Like (You) Capture, (You) Also Will Be Captured - Appeal of the Swiss Citizen ‘Beatrice Stockly	AQIM	Video	16/06/2016	Al Andalus	Mixed
<u>D19</u>	Message from the Knights of the Base of Jihad to the Invading Occupiers - Storming the Headquarters of the ‘MINUSMA’ Forces in Timbuktu”	AQIM	Declaration	05/02/2016	Al Andalus	Enemy
<u>V23</u>	Message to the South African and Swedish Governments	AQIM	Video	09/01/2016	Al Andalus	Mixed
-	Pictures from Azawad #2	AQIM	Pictures	26/05/2016	Al Andalus	
<u>V24</u>	The Issue of our Captives	AQIM	Video	26/01/2016	Al Andalus	
<u>A9</u>	Message to our Muslim people in Mali	AQIM	Audio	Chawal 1437	Al Andalus	Umma in Mali
<u>A10</u>	Shaykh Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥman ‘Alī al-Ṣahnājī: “In the Wake of the Raid of Gao”	AQIM	Audio	20/01/2017	Al Andalus	Umma in Mali
<u>V25</u>	“Shades of Swords #5”	AQIM	Video	08/09/2007	Unknown	Mixed

<u>V26</u>	Conquest of Azawad in 4 languages	Ansar al-Din	Video	Unknown	Jamaat Ansar al-Din	Mixed
<u>V27</u>	An Akiimo Adin	Ansar al-Din	Video	Unknown	Jamaat Ansar al-Din	Mujahideen
<u>V28</u>	Released 500 Soldiers from the Malian Army That Had Been Held with Anṣār al-Dīn	Ansar al-Din	Video	25/06/2012	Sahara Media	Mixed
<u>V29</u>	Abū al-Faḍl Iyād Ghālī - “Statement to the Islamic Umma”	Ansar al-Din	Video	05/08/2012	Jamaat Ansar al-Din	Umma
<u>V30</u>	Attack against MNLA outpost	Ansar al-Din	Video	25/06/2012	Jamaat Ansar al-Din	Mixed
<u>A11</u>	Iyad Ag Ghali	Ansar al-Din	Audio	25/10/2015	Jamaat Ansar al-Din	Umma, Muslims in Mali
<u>D20</u>	Ansar al-Din revendique IED contre véhicules armée malienne, route Douentza	Ansar al-Din	Declaration	29/03/2016	RIMAAH	Mixed
<u>D21</u>	Ansar al-Din revendique l’attaque contre les forces françaises à Beira 2 et 4 juin 2016	Ansar al-Din	Declaration	07/06/2016	RIMAAH	Mixed
<u>D22</u>	Ansar al-Din revendique le bombardement de la base d’Amshash le 1er avril avec 15 roquettes	Ansar al-Din	Declaration	03/04/2016	RIMAAH	Mixed
<u>D23</u>	In Eulogy of the Muḡāhid Abū Fāris al-Sūrī”	Ansar al-Din	Declaration	04/04/2016	Ansar Al Din Front	Mixed
<u>D24</u>	“A Jihādī Operation Against the French Crusaders”	Ansar al-Din	Declaration	10/03/2016	RIMAAH	Mixed
<u>D25</u>	“And Following the Victories of the Muḡāhidin in the Islamic Maghreb”	Ansar al-Din	Declaration	29/03/2016	RIMAAH	Mixed
<u>D26</u>	“Still Weakening the Enemies of God of the Continuing Occupation”	Ansar al-Din	Declaration	08/04/2016	RIMAAH	Mixed

<u>D27</u>	“The Lions of Islam Still Weakening the French Crusaders and Their Stooges”	Ansar al-Din	Declaration	03/04/2016	RIMAAH	Mixed
<u>V31</u>	Advocacy and Support	Ansar al-Din	Video	12/06/2016	RIMAAH	Umma in Kidal
<u>D28</u>	Attack Ansar Al-Din 2 et 4 Juin 2016	Ansar al-Din	Declaration	07/06/2016	Jamaat Ansar al-Din	Mixed
<u>V32</u>	TRAC Insight Jihadist Counter Strategy Against French Influence in the Sahel (AQIM Ansar Dine Mourabitoun and MCF) Chatter Control	Ansar al-Din	Video		Jamaat Ansar al-Din	Mixed
<u>D29</u>	Ansar Eddine attack on Gatia	Ansar al-Din	Facebook Post	21/01/2017	Jamaat Ansar al-Din	Mixed
<u>I3</u>	Interview with Sanda Ould Bouamama	Ansar al-Din	Interview	Unknown	Jamaat Ansar al-Din	Mixed
<u>I4</u>	An Interview with Abdelmalek Droukdal (AQIM leader)		Interview	01/07/2008	The New York Times	Mixed