Counternarratives in the War on Terror: Jihadi and Western Media in the 21ˢᵗ Century

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Introduction

I say to you: that we are in a battle, and more than half of this battle is taking place in the battlefield of the media

-Ayman al-Zawahiri

Our enemies have skillfully adapted to fighting wars in today's media age, but for the most part, we, our country, our government, has not adapted.

-Donald Rumsfeld

Theoretical and Practical Significance

- The current theoretical approaches to Jihadi media have been insufficient

- The ongoing struggle in the War on Terror has been a an important topic of discussion in the 21st century.

- The anti-terrorist community has consistently undervalued the importance of Jihadi communication strategies.

- In general, media and representation are overlooked as new sites of conflict.

- Few steps have been taken to effectively slow the continual production and dissemination of Jihadi media.

The Need for a New Theoretical Approach

- The current state of scholarly research on the topic is insufficient.

- There is a need for broader theorizing on the topic, as well as new analysis based on more than anecdotal or macro-level findings.

- A new conception of jihadi media can be articulated by using literature pertaining to media, technology, and representation.

Use of Media:
Framing and Medium Theory

The shape of the jihadi movement:
Netwar and Chronopolitics

Toward a Conception of jihadi media

Representation as Weapon:
Mimetic War on Images

Methodology:
Why *Inspire* magazine?

- What is *Inspire* magazine?

- Well-suited to granular analysis and a single case study.

- While *Inspire* is not a perfect case, its value still outweighs its limitations.
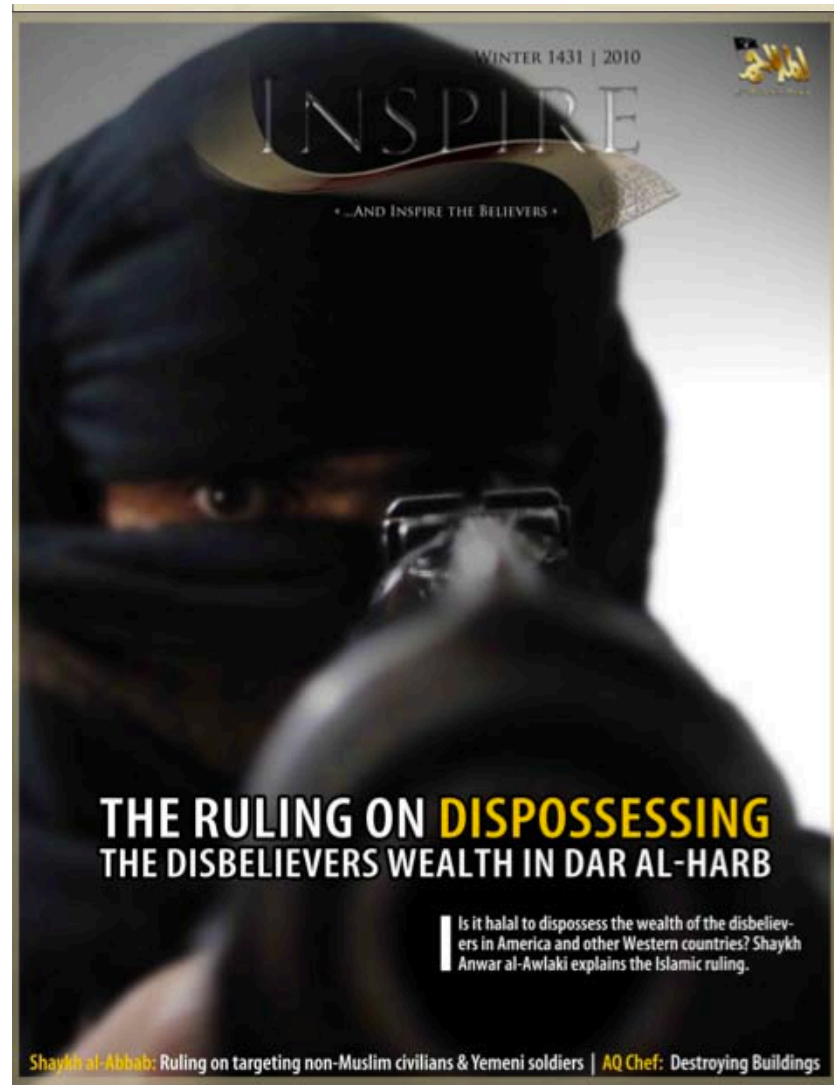
Methodology:
The Use of Poststructural Discourse Analysis

- Discourse Analysis is an effective tool for this thesis.

- Poststructural Discourse Analysis (PDA) is well suited to this thesis's emphasis on the importance of identity and representation.

- While PDA is not perfect, it is well-tailored to the aims of this study.

Findings:
Inspire Magazine

Findings:
Media and New Technologies

- Using the Internet to connect a global audience.

- Harnessing this audience to respond to events on a global scale.

Reaching out to al Qaeda is possible through following simple rules

- Anything useful from Wikileaks
- Discussions or articles on jihadi forums (or any forum as a matter of fact)
- Useful books whether it be in the field of Islam, Politics, Economics, Military, Technology, Medicine, Engineering, Sciences and so on

2. Hear the world

As you know, our *Hear the world* section is dedicated to interesting quotes that were made in recent. We are looking for quotes specifically related to major political events that are related to the mujahidin or anything in general that fall under political. Humor is a plus. Make sure to include an image of the person associated with the quote.

3. Your articles

This magazine is for the ummah. We want the ummah to participate in this and share the great *ajr* that is involved. We are always open to article submissions.

We keep a few rules when it comes to writing articles:
a) Professionalism. Sentence structure, grammar use, spelling and so on should be polished.
b) Relevancy. The topic should be relevant to our times.
c) Usefulness. No matter what the topic, there should be something within it that conveys something helpful, constructive or thought-provoking to the Muslims and general readership. In other words, avoid bland topics and writing.

To see what type of articles we are interested in, see the Archiving section aforementioned. In addition to that, advice to the Muslims in the West is always productive.

4. News Flash

The News Flash is another regular section we devote to the magazine. These are events that are of major significance of recent. Include a good quality image of the event as
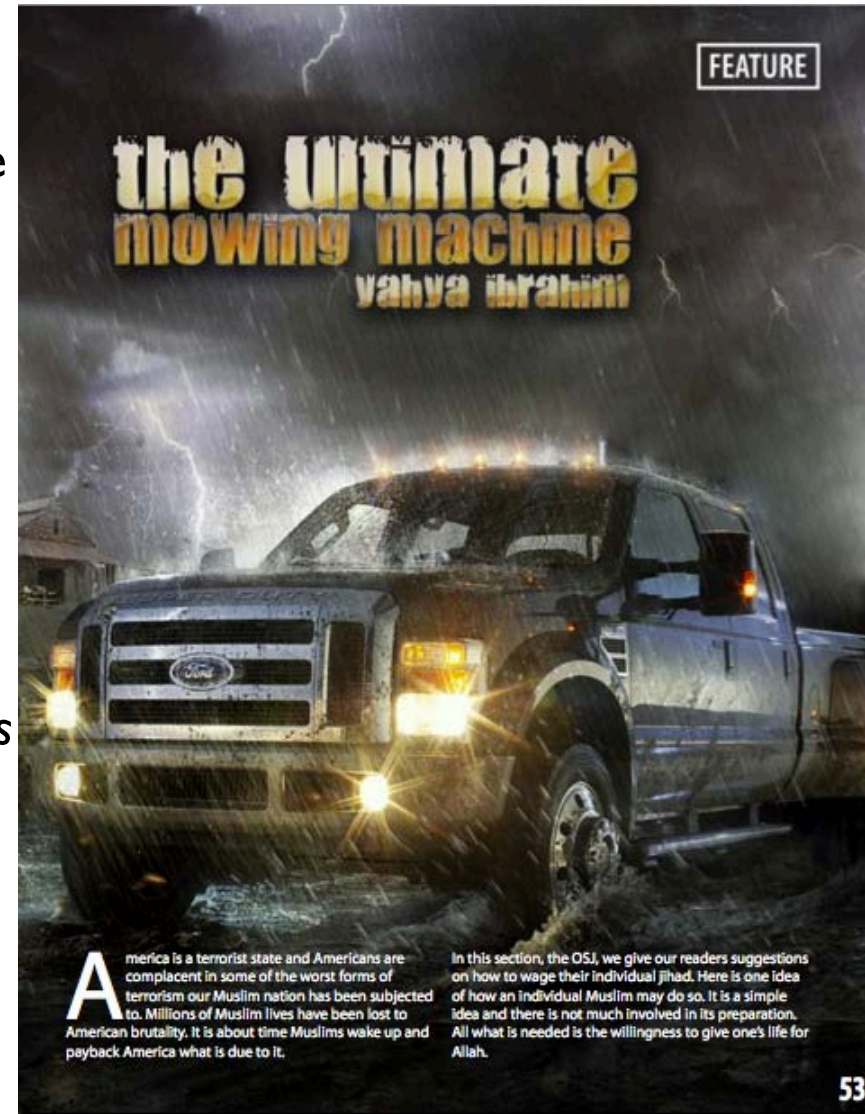
WHY QUOTES?

Appropriate quotes help expand the understanding of people on various issues related to the jihad and mujahidin from perspectives they never thought of before.
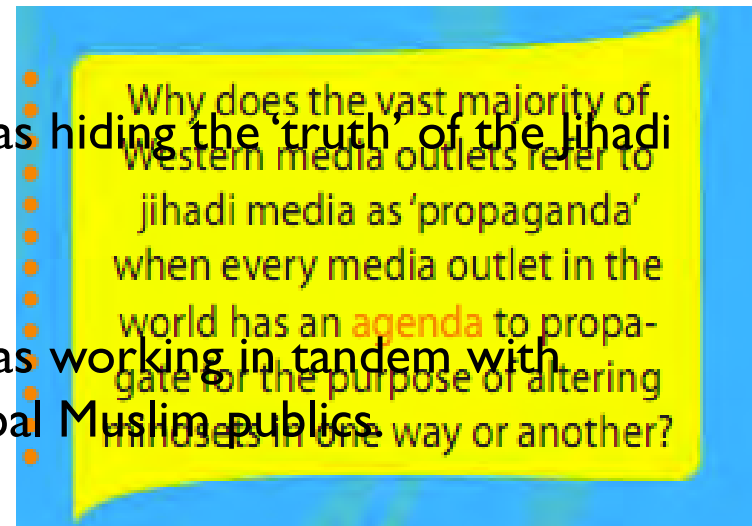
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Findings: Mimesis and Appropriation

- Images from Western news agencies are used throughout the magazine.

- *Inspire* mimics and subverts images associated with Western media.

- These actions strengthen *Inspire's* messages while weakening Western narratives.

FEATURE

the ultimate mowing machine
yahya ibrahim

America is a terrorist state and Americans are complacent in some of the worst forms of terrorism our Muslim nation has been subjected to. Millions of Muslim lives have been lost to American brutality. It is about time Muslims wake up and payback America what is due to it.

In this section, the OSJ, we give our readers suggestions on how to wage their individual jihad. Here is one idea of how an individual Muslim may do so. It is a simple idea and there is not much involved in its preparation. All what is needed is the willingness to give one's life for Allah.

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Findings:
Media Criticism and Identities

- *Inspire* inverts Western conceptions of self and other in the War on Terror.

- *Inspire* constructs Western media as hiding the 'truth' of the Jihadi movement from its audience.

- *Inspire* constructs Western media as working in tandem with Western governments against global Muslim publics.

Why does the vast majority of Western media outlets refer to jihadi media as 'propaganda' when every media outlet in the world has an agenda to propa-gate for the purpose of altering mindsets in one way or another?

INSPIRE FEEDBACK
a chance for the world to respond

"With the current media under control of the Jews, it is a great change to have news that are from the ummah to the ummah"

Findings:
Media Coverage

- Media coverage of the first issue of *Inspire* was mixed.

- Both American and British news coverage became less critical with regards to subsequent issues.

- *Inspire* incorporates Western coverage of the magazine to further legitimacy claims for current and potential supporters.

INSPIRE REACTIONS
government & media responses

"It was an unfortunately well-done magazine and a virtual how-to guide for becoming a terrorist."

Implications of this thesis

- Suggests new practices in fighting Internet radicalism.

- Places Jihadi media in a rigorous theoretical context.

- Ample opportunities for further research.

- Potential applicability to other opposition movements in the 21st century.

Conclusions

- We must acknowledge previously overlooked tools of the Jihadi movement.

- We must look past physical actions in the War on Terror.

- Media and representation should no longer be overlooked as elements of conflict in the 21st century.