Communication Dissertations   Department of Communication

Fall 12-10-2018

Dissecting Visual Conflict: A Comparative Analysis of ISIS and the Egyptian Military's Photographs in 2016-2017

Kareem El Damanhoury

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.gsu.edu/communication_diss

DISSECTING VISUAL CONFLICT: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ISIS AND THE

EGYPTIAN MILITARY'S PHOTOGRAPHS IN 2016-2017

by

KAREEM EL DAMANHOURY

Under the Direction of Carol Winkler, PhD

ABSTRACT

Non-state actors can now easily spread their visual messages and directly communicate with their publics online. ISIS is a prime example for a militant group that has built a relatively robust structure for its visual campaign both at the central and provincial levels. In response, numerous states have been complementing their military operations against militant groups with a visual media component. In Sinai, ISIS's local province (Wilayat Sinai) and the Egyptian military have used photography to project their contesting messages over the past few years. In this dissertation project, I conduct content and visual framing analyses on a sample of 1905 images to examine the interactions between military conditions and photographic output, opposing visual frames, and visual semiotic constellations. An interactive model of visual contestation emerges from this case study to map the key contextual factors, image components, and visual message prongs necessary to understand visual contestation in the online environment.

INDEX WORDS: Visual Conflict, War Photography, Image Framing, Semiotics, ISIS, Sinai

DISSECTING VISUAL CONFLICT: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ISIS AND THE

EGYPTIAN MILITARY'S PHOTOGRAPHS IN 2016-2017

by

KAREEM EL DAMANHOURY

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

Doctor of Philosophy

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2018

DISSECTING VISUAL CONFLICT: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ISIS AND THE

EGYPTIAN MILITARY'S PHOTOGRAPHS IN 2016-2017

by

KAREEM EL DAMANHOURY

Committee Chair: Carol Winkler

Committee: Cynthia Hoffner

Shawn Powers

Hyun-jin Seo

Electronic Version Approved:

Office of Graduate Studies

College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

December 2018

DEDICATION

I praise Allah for His grace and I thank Him for giving me the best life partner, parents, brother, and son one could wish for. You have all had my back as I sailed through the toughest journey in my life thus far. I love you beyond words and I dedicate this dissertation to you, to the Egyptian soldiers who sacrifice their lives to protect their country and its people, and to the victims of terrorism everywhere. May Allah guide me to use what I have learned over the past years and what I will learn in the future for the betterment of humanity.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

1   INTRODUCTION

State and non-state actors strive for presence in the public space. In today's networked society, however, communication constitutes the public space where the power relations are shaped and decided (Castells, 2007). States have attempted to control the mainstream media and means for public communication, which pushed social movements to use small, alternative, and participatory media tools that are harder to control (Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi, 1997). Khomeini and his followers, for example, used audiocassettes of lectures and photocopying to spread their ideas in the lead up to the 1979 Iranian revolution. The Polish opposition movement used typewriters and carbon copies to disseminate its messages leading up to the 1989 uprisings (Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi, 1997). Indonesian students used mobile phones for mobilization against Suharto in 1998. Protestors used text messaging in the Philippines in 2001 leading up to the ouster of Estrada and e-mail in the 2006 Belarusian protests (Shirky, 2011). Activists used social media in the Arab Spring uprisings to prepare, coordinate, and garner the world's attention (Howard & Hussain, 2011).

New media technology has led to a highly contested communication space, where non-state actors can compete with state actors. Using social media and encrypted group messaging applications, non-state actors can embolden their presence, spread their messages, and interact with target publics. Such practices have led to what Shirky (2011) calls the Conservative Dilemma, or states' loss of monopoly in the public space and inability to fully control and censor new media. The percentage of American adults using social media rose from 5 percent in 2005 to 69 percent in 2016 (Pew Research Center, 2017), with the number of global social media users reaching 2.8 billion (Kemp, 2017). Further, new media technologies facilitate the participation of media users in the production process. Using smart phones, digital cameras, and editing tools,

anyone can shoot and then disseminate their photographs and videos on social media platforms. Hence, activists, social movements, non-governmental organizations, and militant groups have taken advantage of such technologies and platforms to increasingly compete with state actors in the marketplace of ideas (Powers & Armstrong, 2014). In response, states and government institutions, including presidencies, embassies, ministries, and armies, have also increased their social media presence over the past decade to maximize the channels through which they can interact with receptive publics and overcome other political players during times of conflict.

1.1 ISIS's Media Campaign

ISIS is a prominent example of how a non-state militant actor appropriates new media technologies and messaging applications to disseminate its messages. Building on a history of militant groups' media operations since the Soviet war in Afghanistan, ISIS has established a relatively robust structure for its media campaign. ISIS's media campaign involves producing and disseminating centralized multi-lingual media products (i.e., publications, videos, infographics, posters, leaflets, books, audio news bulletins, and hymns) and localized, provincial multimedia output (i.e., provincial photo reports and videos). ISIS has also encouraged its followers to wage media jihad, which involves reposting, creating, and curating content as well as participating in hashtag campaigns and Twitter raids. For ISIS, media jihad is as important as carrying guns to fight enemies on the ground (Al-Himma Library, 2016).

Online campaigns are key to ISIS's efforts to magnify disrupting message frames and radicalize/recruit supporters. The widespread use of the internet generally allows militant groups to overcome their resource disadvantages (Ingram, 2016; Welch, 2014) and shift the balance of power in conflicts (McCauley, 2015). It also serves as a substitute for communication forms, a behavioral catalyst, a source of information and inspiration, and a facilitator of violent

radicalization (Carter, Maher, & Neumann, 2014; Dragon, 2015; Gill & Corner, 2015). In his

book, *Leaderless Jihad*, Sageman (2008) argues that the role of global militant groups has

become more of an inspiration to local individuals that are virtually connected in internet chat

rooms. In that sense, the internet becomes a "source of nonrelational, vertical diffusion of

movement ideology" that is then horizontally diffused via social media (Hafez & Mullins, 2015,

p. 969). This diffusion allows ISIS and its supporters to often circumvent governments'

surveillance on physical recruitment or training sites. Further, empirical studies reveal that

convicted terrorists use the internet as a key source of information, communication, exposure to

militant groups' media products, and preparation for attacks (Behr, Reding, Edwards, &

Gribbon, 2013; Gill et al., 2017; Gill, Horgan, & Deckert, 2013).

ISIS's media campaign has endured for over a decade despite military pressure and

territorial losses. Between 2007 and 2009, the surge of American troops in Iraq along with the

Awakening Sunni tribal movement rolled back the Islamic State of Iraq's physical presence and

put the group on the brink of complete destruction. That military defeat, however, did not

eliminate the group's media campaign. Instead, ISIS disseminated textual and visual products

and even declared two ministry cabinets in 2007 and 2009 to project an image of itself as a

functioning state despite the military setbacks and loss of territory (Al-Furqan Media, 2007,

2009). By 2018, ISIS had lost almost all its territorial grounds in Iraq (e.g., Falluja, Mosul, Tal

Afar, Ramadi, and al-Hawija) and Syria (e.g., Manbij, Palmyra, al-Bab, and Raqqa). Five months

before the onset of the Mosul and Raqqa operations in late 2016, ISIS's spokesman Abu

Muhammad al-Adnani reiterated that losing Mosul, Raqqa, or any other city would not defeat a

group that had once lost its lands in Iraq and retreated to the deserts before returning as a

caliphate (Al-Furqan Media, 2016a). The subsequent territorial losses have decreased ISIS's

media output, but again the group's media campaign is still enduring at the time of this writing. ISIS continues to disseminate its centralized and provincial media products almost daily, with provinces outside Iraq and Syria becoming more active (Winter, 2017). ISIS's media presence is crucial to its global brand as it returns to its insurgent roots. In such transitional periods, social media becomes a much more important battlefield and a site of interaction with the group's supporters to offset its military, territorial, and human losses.

To fight ISIS on the group's social media turf, several state and non-state actors have shifted to the same platforms and technologies that the group itself uses. The Iraqi, Syrian, and Egyptian security forces, for example, have used social media to present an alternative image to what ISIS depicts in its claimed provinces in Iraq, Syria, and North Sinai. The Iraqi Federal Police disseminated images and videos almost daily to about 350,000 followers on its official Facebook page during the 2016-2017 Mosul operation. Over the past few years, the Syrian army has been active in disseminating visual images of the fight against ISIS to a total of about 200,000 followers on its official accounts on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Telegram. Similarly, the Egyptian military spokesperson's social media accounts—with a total of over seven million followers on Facebook and Twitter—have become the main official source of news on the fight against ISIS in Sinai.

Others have also launched media campaigns on social media, including the U.S. Department of State's *Think Again Turn Away* campaign (Katz, 2014) and the French Ministry of Interior's "Stop Djihadisme" (Giovanni, 2015). These campaigns used still imagery, infographics, videos, and written tweets to counter ISIS's messages. Several militant groups have also taken part in the social media warfare against ISIS, ranging from *al-Hashd al-Shaabi* (Popular Mobilization Front) and the Kurdish Peshmerga in Iraq to *Jabhat Fath al-Sham* in

Syria. In addition, a number of non-governmental organizations have launched counter-messaging campaigns to combat ISIS in the social media battlefield and fight violent extremism (e.g., The Carter Center, 2017; Women Without Borders, 2016). Taken together, most actors now appear to agree that military battles are insufficient on their own to respond to ISIS; engaging on the media battlefield is also necessary.

This study examines the Sinai visual media campaign between ISIS's Wilayat Sinai and the Egyptian military in 2016 and 2017. As the following will demonstrate, the strategic importance of the militant groups' visual media campaigns, Sinai's location, and the Egyptian media strategy in Sinai combine to warrant a close analysis of this online site of visual contestation.

1.2   The Importance of Visual Media Campaign

Visuals are increasingly dominating the contemporary media landscape, serving as important catalysts of presence in today's networked society. Displacing the preceding linguistic turn, scholars have signaled a "pictorial turn" in the 21st century (Mitchell, 1994) which installs sight as the leading sense (Mcluhan, 1969), turns viewers into picture-minded people (Finnegan, 2015), transforms the real world into images well-trained spectators can perceive (Azoulay, 2008; Debord, 2002), and hails images as the "dominant modes of activist engagement" (Brunner & Deluca, 2016, p. 287). The historic adage "seeing is believing" captures the perspective that viewing something usually implies some proximity to the truth (Messaris & Abraham, 2001). Moreover, offline and online publications have incorporated photos in recent decades to compete for viewers, increase selective attention, and motivate reading of the accompanying text (Gibson & Zillmann, 2000; Knobloch, Hastall, Zillmann, & Callison, 2003; Zillmann, Knobloch, & Yu, 2001).

Although each of these findings concerning the impact of visual images emerge from studies of western visual culture, statistics point to a rise in visual persuasion and interest as global phenomena. Worldwide consumers take over one trillion digital photos a year, with at least 75 percent of which using cell phone cameras (Heyman, 2015). On Facebook, photos account for 75-90 percent of advertising effectiveness and performance (Osman, 2017), with an average of 300 million new photos uploaded daily (Zephoria, 2017). Instagram users upload another 52 million photos on an average day (Statistic Brain, 2017). As a result, online communicators seeking to engage and interact with the public often consider utilizing images as a key communication tool.

Recognizing the existence of such a global context, Islamist militant groups are increasingly using visuals as a key element in their media campaigns to achieve several goals. As early as the 1980s, the Afghan Mujahideen leader Abdullah Azzam incorporated photography in his publications, including *al-Jihad* and *al-Bunyan al-Marsus* (The Impenetrable Edifice) magazines as well as *Laheeb al-Maaraka* (Flames of the Battle) weekly newsletter (e.g., see Islamic Union for the Afghan Mujahideen, 1985; Mujahideen Services Burreau, 1988). The Afghan Mujahideen also used video cameras to document some of their military operations. In the 1990s, the prominent Chechen rebels leader Commander Khattab described visuals as a means to multiply the impact of killing Russian soldiers by showcasing operations and spreading fear among Russians (Intel Center, 2005). The Chechen rebels introduced ultraviolence as a salient feature in their videos, transforming beheadings and executions of Russian soldiers into media spectacles (Friis, 2015). In the 2000s, al-Qaeda leader Abdelaziz al-Muqrin expressed his regrets for not recording the 2000 USS Cole attack and called on the group's followers to visualize their operations (Al-Muqrin, 2008).

Today, al-Qaeda and its successors are no longer dependent on mainstream media's visual coverage. Each group has their own cameras, operators, and editors to document their attacks and transform them into media events (Dauber, 2009). These visuals can create imagined communities that comprise smaller communities (Han, 2009; Rabin, 2012), transform the viewer into a virtualized citizen (Mi, 2005), and allow him or her to virtually witness constructed scenes (Jaguaribe & Lissovsky, 2009; Noble, 2010). Islamist militant groups use visuals in an attempt to inoculate their followers against opposing media or state frames, maintain the loyalty of their members, and inspire new attacks (Winkler, Damanhoury, Dicker, & Lemieux, 2016).

Although al-Qaeda's use of visuals has expanded beyond its predecessors' visual media products, its photographic campaign has been largely segmented. Al-Qaeda exhibited a clear understanding of the differences between Western visual culture (Deluca, 2006; Freedberg, 1989) and Arabic oratory culture (Jones, 2012). Al-Qaeda was highly dependent on written text in its Arabic magazines, including *Sada al-Malahem* (Echo of the Battles) and *Dhuruat al-Sinam* (The Pinnacle) to reach Arab readers, compared to its visually dominated English-language magazine targeting western readers. In its last issue of *Sada al-Malahim* in 2011, for example, the magazine editors used a total of 30 images (Al-Malahim Media, 2011). Similarly, the group used only about another 30 images in its ninth and latest issue of the Swahili-language magazine *Gaidi Mtaani* (Al-Kataib Media, 2017). On the other hand, the 17th and most recent issue of the same group's *Inspire* exhibited 170 images (Al-Malahim Media, 2017). *Inspire's* Open Source Jihad sections illustrate the use of ample photographs to call for and facilitate attacks in the West.

ISIS, however, has taken militant groups' photographic campaigns to new levels since the self-declaration of the caliphate in 2014. Still imagery has played an integral role in the group's

media campaigns and played a key role in the targeting of various audience groups (Milton, 2016; Winter, 2018a; Zelin, 2015). Expanding on the approach of al-Qaeda, ISIS embedded its photographs in its Arabic newsletter *al-Naba'*, its English-language magazine *Dabiq*, its French-language magazine *Dar al-Islam*, its Russian-language magazine *Istok*, its Turkish-language magazine *Konstantiniyye,* and its multi-lingual magazine *Rumiyah*. Further, taking advantage of advanced commination technologies and accessible social media platforms, the group also introduced new ways of packaging its photographs into daily provincial news briefs and photo reports. Between October 2014 and October 2015, for example, ISIS claims to have disseminated 14,523 images and 1,787 photo reports (Joscelyn, 2015). It also disseminated around 52,000 images between January 2015 and August 2016 on Twitter (Milton, 2016) and almost another 50,000 images in the second half of 2017 on pro-ISIS Telegram channels (GWUPOE, 2017). Despite the sharp decline in ISIS's media products after its defeats in Mosul and Raqqa, photographs remain the group's favored medium (Winter, 2018a). ISIS's much refined and rigorous photographic campaign is the outcome of years of development in its media operations and advancements in communication technologies.

Ample evidence points to the role of visual media products as potential catalysts for engagement in violent action. Following the Manhattan truck attack that killed eight civilians in October 2017, for example, the federal criminal complaint revealed the ISIS-inspired driver had 3,800 images and 90 videos featuring ISIS productions on his cell phone (Chavez & Levenson, 2017). Another federal criminal complaint revealed that an ISIS-inspired man who detonated an explosive device in a New York subway tunnel in December 2017 acted on ISIS video materials calling for attacks in the West (U.S. Department of Justice, 2017). These recent incidents are not anomalies. Half of the individuals prosecuted for terrorism-related offenses in the United States

between 2001 and 2011 had visual media products in their possession at the time of arrest (Winkler, 2015). Similarly, the British law enforcement agencies recovered almost 350 videos produced by al-Qaeda, ISIS, and other groups on the digital devices of 48 convicted terrorists between 2004 and 2017 (Holbrook, 2017). Further, law enforcement agents associated the 33 images displayed in al-Qaeda's *Inspire* article "Make a Bomb in the Kitchen of your Mom" with several attacks including the Boston Marathon bombings in 2013 (O'Neil, 2015).

1.3   The Importance of Studying Sinai

The value of non-state actors' online campaigns varies, however, based on localized conditions that viewers experience in their day-to-day lives. For ISIS, Sinai in particular has emerged as a critical site for audience targeting. Sinai's religious weight, contemporary political significance, and geographic location render it a distinctive location for ISIS's military and media operations. Sinai's religious significance spans across the three Abrahamic religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. In the Hebrew Bible, Sinai is one of the four sacred places on earth (Brooke, 2008) and the revelation site of the Mt. Sinai covenant to Moses (Kugel, 2008). Jesus and Mary passed through Sinai in their journey to Egypt, an event which later played a key role in the establishment of Christianity (Batanouny, 1985). In Islam, the Qur'an explicitly mentions Sinai by name twice and Mt. Sinai 10 times with the name, *al-Tor*. During the leadership of the second Caliph Umar ibn al-Khattab (634-644 AD), Sinai was also the gate for the Arab conquests in Egypt and North Africa (Al-Qudsy & Rahman, 2011). Islamist militant groups have built on Sinai's religious significance in Islam to strengthen rhetorical and ideological appeals associated with the defeat of Israel across the border and liberation of Palestine.

Sinai's contemporary political significance arises from its history as a site of contention and collaboration in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Sinai was the battlefield of a prolonged war between Egypt and Israel that culminated with the 1973 war, leading up to the full liberation of Sinai from Israeli forces in 1982. Nonetheless, the Camp David Treaty between Egypt and Israel restrained the Egyptian military presence in Sinai, allowing only civil police and the United Nations forces in Zone C, or eastern Sinai alongside the border ("Camp David Accords," 1978). This military annex has played a role in weakening the Egyptian state presence in Sinai over the years. Only recently has Israel allowed the deployment of Egyptian military forces in Zone C to assist Egypt in fighting the Sinai insurgency (Miller, 2014). Further, Israel has reportedly conducted several drone strikes against militants in Sinai since 2013 ("Israeli drone strike kills suspected Islamic militants in Egypt," 2013; Wainer, Ferziger, & Feteha, 2016). The shifting relationship between Egypt and Israel in relation to Sinai has created political tensions and served as a primary factor to justify violent action against Egyptian security forces.

In addition, Sinai's unique location as an intercontinental bridge to Asia and the Levant has provided local insurgent groups with a launch pad to repeatedly attack their enemies. Israel has indeed been a target of the Sinai insurgency for over a decade. When the Sinai-based *Jama'at al-Tawhid wal-Jihad* (Monotheism and Jihad group) carried out three bombings on South Sinai resorts in October 2004, it mainly targeted Israeli tourists, killing over 20 of them ("Al-Qaeda 'behind Egypt bombings,'" 2004). When the Sinai-based militant group *Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis* (Supporters of Jerusalem) made its debut in 2011, its militants bombed the Egyptian pipelines exporting natural gas to Israel 13 times in the first year only (Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis, 2012). It also claimed responsibility for at least five rocket cross-border attacks on Eilat between

2012 and 2014 (Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis, 2014b). Sinai's border with Gaza and Israel renders it a hotspot for militant insurgency with regional aspirations.

Thus, Sinai has been of special importance to ISIS's ideological resonance and military goals since the group decided to expand beyond Iraq and the Levant in 2014. ISIS has claimed its status as an Islamic Caliphate fighting off crusaders represented by the U.S.-led coalition and its collaborators. Sinai, on the other hand, gave ISIS a strategic foothold closer to Israel and boosted its anti-Jewish rhetoric. In its official pledge of allegiance to ISIS in November 2014, *Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis* (2014a) vowed to keep fighting the Jews, describing them as Islam's biggest enemy. Four days after that pledge, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, in his first official audio speech as the so-called Caliph, mentioned the word "Jews" 12 times and accepted *Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis's* pledge of allegiance in a bid to fight the Egyptian security forces, support Jerusalem, and terrorize Jews (Al-Furqan Media, 2014). Over a year later, ISIS released another audio speech in which al-Baghdadi mentioned the word "Jews" 11 times and explicitly warned Israel. The ISIS leader proclaimed:

> We haven't forgotten Palestine for a second, and we will not forget it...We are getting closer to you day after day and you'll be harshly punished. You'll never feel blissful in Palestine, oh you Jews. It will never be your land or home. And Palestine will not be but a grave for you (Al-Furqan Media, 2016b).

Operating under the ISIS banner, Wilayat Sinai claimed to have targeted al-Ouga border crossing with Israel, the Eshkul Israeli settlement, and the Egyptian military forces stationed closer to the border with Israel at least 10 times. The Egyptian security forces, however, were ISIS's primary target in most of the 700 attacks in Sinai between November 2014 and March 2017 (TIMEP, 2017a).

By way of justification, Wilayat Sinai has highlighted Egypt's collaboration with the Israeli military, the aftermath of airstrikes on the civilian population in Sinai, and the status of the Egyptian security forces as apostates. In 2016 and 2017, the group also claimed that Israeli air fighters and helicopters launched airstrikes in North Sinai over a dozen times. Subsequently, Wilayat Sinai stepped up its intelligence operations in the peninsula, as evidenced by the killing of the military commander of Bir al-Abd city and the assassination attempt against both Ministers of Defense and Interior in their secret visit to Arish in December of 2017 (Mourad Higazy, 2017a, 2017b).

Sinai has also received much attention in ISIS's media operations. In May of 2016, ISIS launched a coordinated visual campaign, in which 14 Iraqi, Syrian, and Libyan provinces released videos of support to praise Wilayat Sinai militants. The videos highlighted the Egyptian-Israeli military collaboration and reiterated Sinai's importance as the gate to liberate Jerusalem (Okail, 2016). Wilayat Sinai has also served as one of the most productive provinces beyond Iraq and Syria in terms of media products in the past few years (Milton, 2016). As ISIS suffered territorial losses in 2017, Wilayat Sinai's media products were relatively more prevalent (Winter, 2017a). Following President Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, ISIS chose Wilayat Sinai's video release "The Religion of Abraham" as the main platform for its first media response, condemning Hamas, the Palestinian authority, and Egypt for the decision (Wilayat Sinai, 2018).

Taken together, Sinai offers ISIS a rich environment to attack the strongest Arab military, threaten Israel, and bolster its own ideological resonance. By tapping into the Crusades and the 1948 Nakba (Catastrophe) master narratives in Islamist thought (Halverson, Corman, & Goodall, 2011), ISIS uses Sinai to foreground Israel as a target and the liberation of the third holiest

Muslim site (Jerusalem) as a goal. With the announcements of Syria and Iraq's liberation in December 2017 (Iraqi PM Media Office, 2017b; Russian MoD, 2017), United States' military leaders have discussed ISIS's aspirations to establish a larger presence in Sinai and Libya as the next phase (U.S. Department of Defense, 2017). By May of 2017, about 80 percent of Wilayat Sinai militants were foreigners, according to the spokesman of al-Tarabin tribe that fights alongside the Egyptian military in North Sinai (Mikhail, 2017). With smuggling networks connecting Sinai to Libya, Sudan, and Gaza (Awad, 2016; Sabry, 2016), more foreign fighters could be joining Wilayat Sinai. Further, the escalating tensions surrounding the status of Jerusalem after the U.S.'s recognition of the city as Israel's capital adds to Sinai's relevance as a new frontline for ISIS foreign fighters. Thus, focusing on the visual campaign of Wilayat Sinai as a key ISIS province is imperative to understanding how the group's media campaign is moving and adapting in this transitional period after major territorial losses in Raqqa and Mosul.

1.4   The Importance of Egyptian State's Media Response

In response to the rise of ISIS in Sinai, Egypt has broadened its censorship methods to control the information coming out of the peninsula. Egypt imposed a media blackout on North Sinai, where the clear majority of the state's counterterrorism security operations have taken place. Since the end of 2013, reporting from North Sinai has become a risky endeavor for Egyptian and foreign journalists, as security forces have assaulted some reporters, arrested others, and even accused a few of acting as agents of terrorism (Marroushi, 2013; Shilad, 2017; "The Journalists and Reporters in North Sinai condemns the arrest of 'Al-Shorouk' Journalists," 2013). To bolster the country's grip on the information flow during the war on the Sinai insurgency, Egyptian President Abdelfattah al-Sisi approved an anti-terrorism law in August 2015, which punishes journalists for false news on terrorist attacks and counterterrorism

operations (Kamel, 2015). The law imposes a fine of between 200,000-500,000 Egyptian pounds (equivalent to 11 to 28 thousand dollars) and can bar the offending journalist from practicing the profession for up to one year. The law identifies false news as "contradicting the official statements released by the Ministry of Defense" (*Transcript of Counterterrorism Law*, 2015, p. 12).

In the aftermath of the new law, Egyptian military's reporting on Sinai has become indisputable. The media's reporting on such operations has sharply decreased (TIMEP, 2017a). Journalists have become largely unable to verify the number of counterterrorism operations, militant groups' attacks, and deaths as well as the scale of military activity. Instead, Egypt-based media outlets typically rely upon the military's information and figures as officially presented. The only exceptions to the Egyptian military's frames are a few media outlets operating in Turkey and Qatar, such as *al-Sharq, Mikamilin*, and *al-Jazeera Arabic*. The result of the reconstituted media context is that the Egyptian military spokesperson's Facebook page has become the main source of news on the Sinai conflict, disseminating statements, images, and videos to almost seven million followers.

Nonetheless, Egypt's censorship methods have not hindered accessibility to Wilayat Sinai's online media products. Wilayat Sinai continues to disseminate its visuals on ISIS's official Telegram channels, which then recirculate in pro-ISIS channels and on other social media platforms. In fact, Egypt ranks third amongst Arab countries for accessing ISIS online content, only after Saudi Arabia and Iraq (Frampton, Fisher, & Prucha, 2017).

Thus, the Egyptian government is now engaged in a media war between the state-controlled media apparatus and ISIS. The Egyptian state consistently vows to eradicate the "enemies of the nation and religion" in Sinai (News24, 2017, p. 1). ISIS, on the other hand,

produces ample media products celebrating attacks against Egyptian soldiers, whom it also deems apostates and enemies of the religion (O. Ashour, 2016). Putting out an abundance of contradictory information during war can magnify both sides' opposing narratives and result in a much more dangerous conflict (Powers & O'Loughlin, 2015). Examining the Sinai visual war between Wilayat Sinai and the Egyptian military will yield an understanding of how opposing visual messages compete in a polarized digital media environment. It will also highlight visual strategies and techniques in this localized, mediated conflict that can guide the government, NGOs, grassroots initiatives, and communication respondents in future efforts to develop alternative frames and narratives.

1.5 Outline of Dissertation Chapters

Chapter two will identify the study's three main research questions explaining how they add in important ways to the existing literature on the relationship between military activity and media output, on visual framing of conflicts, and on western frameworks of visual semiotics. Then, it will explain the study's methodology by defining the project's scope and describing the two components of the study's mixed-methods approach.

Chapter three will highlight the situational context of the Sinai conflict between the Egyptian government and ISIS. It will trace the origin of violence in the Sinai Peninsula to the three waves of attacks in 2004, 2005, and 2006. To elaborate on the context, the chapter will discuss the role of social and economic conditions in North Sinai, security repercussions of the 2004-2006 attacks, political developments amid the 2011 revolution, former President Muhammad Morsi's ousting in 2013, and the government's crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood supporters in the emergence and growth of the Sinai militant insurgency.

Chapter four will examine the relationship between local and regional military conditions and Wilayat Sinai and the Egyptian military's photographic campaigns. First, it will discuss the frequency and scope of the state and the militant group's photographs in conjunction with claimed attacks and counterterrorism operations in 2016 and 2017. Second, it will underscore the relationship between media output and visual messaging strategies, on the one hand, and other contextual military factors at the local and regional levels, including loss of leaders and introduction of new groups to the battlefield. The chapter will present a review of the key military events that corresponded to surges or declines in the photographic response in the Sinai visual conflict.

Chapter five will explain the context-specific visual frames Wilayat Sinai and the Egyptian military utilized in their photographic campaigns. The chapter will describe the militant group and the military's recurring visual frames in 2016 and 2017. It will utilize Entman's four framing associations as a framework to examine how the frames on each side cohered around a unique message. The chapter will then identify emerging interactive strategies through which the opposing visual frames contested in the online environment.

Chapter six will discuss the applications of visual semiotics in the Sinai visual conflict. It will lay out Wilayat Sinai and the Egyptian military's use of viewer distance, camera angle, direct eye contact, facial expressions, and subjective shots in the portrayals of different character types. The chapter will juxtapose these applications with the assumptions about western standards of visual grammar. Then, it will present the interactive strategies that both groups adopted at the level of semiotic constellations.

The concluding chapter will propose an interactive model of visual contestation by state and non-state actors. It will discuss the key variables in this model: situational context,

immediate context, image components, visual frames, and semiotic constellations. The chapter

will end by highlighting future areas of research that can expand our understanding of visual

contestation.

2 SIGNIFICANCE AND METHODOLOGY

To examine the Sinai visual conflict between the state and non-state actors, this study intersects

with three bodies of scholarly literature that relate to subject. The first involves previous research

examining how the quantity and nature of media campaigns correspond to changes in the level of

military activity on the ground in conflict. The second involves studies investigating how

mainstream media, states, and non-state actors visually frame conflicts. The third involves

research exploring how media players incorporate visual semiotics to create symbolic meaning in

cross-cultural settings.

2.1 Relationship between Photographic Output and Military Activity

The quantity of photographic output is an important determinant of presence in the online

sphere. Presence is "the perceptual illusion of nonmediation," which involves social richness,

realism, transportation, and immersion (Lombard & Ditton, 1997, p. 8). Presence in the

individual's mind requires media appearance (Castells, 2007). The frequency and repetition of

images exhibit the displayed issue's importance and salience (Bruce, 2014; Y. Huang & Fahmy,

2013; King & Lester, 2005), accumulate meaning (Boyd, Boyd, & Kerr, 2015; Hall, 1997),

facilitate comprehension of complex details (Jewitt & Oyama, 2008), create and reinforce

stereotypes (Batziou, 2011), render particular interpretations more memorable (Entman, 1991),

overshadow alternative or fuller perspectives (Griffin, 2004), and set the boundaries for the

discourse (Entman, 1993). Hence, the scale of the photographic output and image frequency are

key factors in visual campaigns.

During conflicts, military activity often influences state actors' photographic output. State actors have typically increased the incorporation of photography in their media efforts during war. In WWI and WWII, for example, a large pool of official war photographs appeared in illustrated newspapers, magazines, and exhibitions in Europe and North America (Cookman, 2009; Goldstein, 2009; Jolly, 2003; Zelizer, 1998). Today, tens of thousands of WWI and WWII photographs are in London's Imperial War museum, the United States Library of Congress, the Australian War memorial, and the British, German, Russian, Canadian, and Austrian National Archives (Green, 2015; Roberts, 2014; The Library of Congress, 2018). In the 2012 Gaza War, the Israeli military tweeted an image per day on average (Seo, 2014). In the Syrian Civil War, the Syrian Presidency posted over two images per day on Instagram at times of escalated tensions (Holiday, Lewis, & Labaugh, 2015). Across both time and place, state actors tend to complement their military operations with photographs during conflicts.

Militant groups in contrast do not conform to a set media response during conflicts. Studies indicate an increase in ISIS's operational and celebratory photographs in post-attack Twitter campaigns (Melki & El-Masri, 2016; Melki & Jabado, 2016; Vitale & Keagle, 2014), but they point to a decline in the group's photographic output over extended periods of military pressure (Milton, 2016; Winter, 2018a). For example, ISIS's photographic output dropped substantially between summer 2015 and late 2016, when several military operations were underway to liberate ISIS-controlled towns and cities (Milton, 2016). At the local level, however, ISIS's Ninawa and Sinai provinces disseminated more photographs when facing intensified military pressure (Damanhoury, 2017; Damanhoury, Winkler, Kaczkowski, & Dicker, 2018). Ninawa's photographic output tripled upon the onset of the east Mosul military operation.

Further, Hamas's al-Qassam Brigade was tweeting almost three times the number of Israel's images per day amid the mounting military pressure on Gaza (Seo, 2014).

This study will expand on the existing literature to better understand the relationship between military activity and the photographic campaign. State actors invest money and time to produce and distribute war photographs during conflicts. Although several states have launched photographic campaigns to complement their military actions against ISIS, no study has yet investigated how they compete with ISIS in the media space nor how their outputs interact with the on-ground military conditions. This study intends to fill that gap in the literature by investigating how a state actor's photographic campaign complements its military efforts and interacts with a militant group's activity on the ground. Additionally, the contemporary militant groups like ISIS enjoy an expansive, intercontinental presence through affiliated groups in several countries. Military pressure on the group's strongholds and media operation centers may influence its media response elsewhere. Nonetheless, existing studies underscore the quantity of ISIS's photographic output in response to either local military operations (e.g., Damanhoury, 2017; Damanhoury et al., 2018) or the overall military pressure in the region (e.g., Milton, 2016; Winter, 2018). This study will compare the impact of both local and regional military conditions on the state and non-state actors' photographic campaigns.

The study's first research question asks: what is the relationship, if any, between local and regional military factors and the frequency of both the photographic output and visual messaging strategies in the Sinai conflict? To answer the question, I will begin by examining the quantity of photographs and scenic elements in ISIS's Wilayat Sinai and the Egyptian military's campaigns in relation to the localized military conditions (e.g., the militant group's claimed attacks and the military's counterterrorism operations in Sinai). Then, I will examine the quantity

of photographs and scenic elements in both campaigns in relation to ISIS's key regional military conflicts.

2.2   Visual Frames

Framing is a key approach to understanding how actors construct their messages. The message frame is "a central organizing idea…that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events" (Gamson & Modigliani, 1987, p. 143). A frame also highlights certain aspects of a communication text which can impact the individual's attitudes, opinions, and information processing (Entman, 1993). A powerful frame will usually exemplify Entman's four framing associations: problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation (Tewksbury & Scheufele, 2009). As a result, powerful frames can tell stories that impact how people understand and evaluate an issue, achieve frame alignment between the communicator and the individual(s), and/or influence behaviors. As Shah, McLeod, Gotlieb, and Lee (2009) rightly point out, frames can apply to various topics (context-transcendent) or encompass only a particular topic or issue (context specific). Determining the most salient frames requires an examination of the words, sentences, photographs, captions, headlines, leads, and/or related quotations (James W. Tankard, 2001).

Framing applies to images due to their inherent characteristics that render them key devices in message construction. Messaris and Abraham (2001) lay out three distinctive properties of photographs that make them less intrusive and more effective framing tools for messages than their verbal counterparts. First, the analogical relationship between the image and its meaning makes the visual depictions appear more natural. Second, the indexicality, or the true-to-life quality of the photograph, renders it more effective than other types of text. Third, unlike verbal language, the photograph lacks an explicit propositional syntax and thus depends

on contextual and verbal cues. Visual framing usually operates through the frequency of the images, the related textual information, and the selection, exclusion, and presentation of depicted people and objects (Y. Huang & Fahmy, 2013). The related text often serves as anchorage that "directs the reader through the signifieds of the image" (Barthes, 1977, p. 156). Hence, the image along with the title, caption, and/or other accompanying text constitute the visual frame (Rodriguez & Dimitrova, 2011). Photo captions are the most common key framing devices that can indicate the elements in the scene (Barthes, 1977), tell a story (Green & Dill, 2013), establish the immediate verbal context (Birdsell & Groarke, 1996), and reinforce or undermine the frames (Parry, 2010). Taken together, visual frames can reflect political inclinations and critical choices (K. Greenwood & Jenkins, 2013), promote preferred readings (Batziou, 2011; Y. Huang & Fahmy, 2013), influence perceptions and reinforce stereotypes (Saleem & Anderson, 2012), elicit strong emotional responses (Brantner, Lobinger, & Wetzstein, 2011), and serve as pegs for larger narratives (Zelizer, 2004). Each of these factors help explain the wide scope of studies examining visual frames at times of conflict.

Studies examining the visual framing of conflicts fall under four research areas: framing by the media, state actors, non-state actors, and both state and non-state actors comparatively. The media framing of conflicts is the most prevalent. Many visual studies find differences in how international newspapers, magazines, wires, and TV channels visually frame conflicts, such as the first Gulf War (Griffin & Lee, 1995); the 9/11 attacks and the 2001 Afghan war (Fahmy, 2010; Fahmy, 2004, 2005; Griffin & Lee, 2002), the 2003 Iraq invasion (Fahmy & Kim, 2008; Fahmy, 2007; Parry, 2011), the 2004 Beslan school siege (Patridge, 2005), the 2006 Israel-Lebanon conflict (Parry, 2010), the 2008 anti-China/Olympics protests (Y. Huang & Fahmy, 2011, 2013), the 2008-2009 Gaza War (Fahmy & Neumann, 2012), the 2009 Sri Lankan civil

war (Neumann & Fahmy, 2012), the Arab Spring uprisings (Bruce, 2014), and the Syrian

conflict (K. Greenwood & Jenkins, 2013). These studies either identify the existence of context-

transcendent frames (e.g., peace and war frames in the Sri Lankan and Syrian Civil Wars and the

human-interest frame in the 9/11 attacks, the Afghan War and the Arab Spring) or generate

context-specific frames that relate to the conflict under study (e.g., Israeli and Lebanese

perspective frames in the 2006 Israeli-Lebanon conflict and the Tibetan independence frame in

the 2008 Olympic torch relay protests). Besides the identification of visual frames, Parry (2010)

uses Entman's four associations as a backdrop to map each group of frames under their

respective function. Many also analyze the photo captions as the key accompanying text to help

identify the salient visual frames, unclear elements, and/or context.

The second research area exhibits how state actors themselves use media products to

visually frame their conflicts. Studies indicate an evolution of state actors' visual campaigns

during conflicts since the mid-nineteenth century. In the 1853-1856 Crimean War, mainly

Britain's commissioned photographers depicted soldiers together behind the frontlines in static

shots and concealed deaths (Cookman, 2009), but the American Civil War photographs

subsequently showed scenes of death and atrocity on the battlefield (Trachtenberg, 1985). In

WWI, the Anglo-American visual campaigns introduced the progressive, hero narrative by

depicting military victories, staged battle action, and only enemy corpses (Chouliaraki, 2013;

Jolly, 2003; Kazecki & Lieblang, 2009) and demonized Germany by showcasing its atrocities in

Belgium (Green, 2015). In WWII, American visuals maintained the hero-soldier narrative by

censoring depictions of dead Americans (Goldstein, 2009), demonized Nazis in post-war

photographs of concentration camps (Zelizer, 1998), and created an epic war frame using

dynamic and dramatic scenes of battle (McClancy, 2013). The media's horrific images of the

atrocities in Vietnam, however, undermined the American visual frames of epic war and hero soldiers (Hagopian, 2006). Subsequently, states shifted to "techno war" images, illustrated in photographs of missiles and shells in the sky during the First Gulf War (Sontag, 2003, p. 52) and drone imagery in the twenty-first century conflicts (Ohl, 2015). State actors have recently complemented depictions of military technology with humanitarian aid and societal support visual frames and censorship of death imagery (Chouliaraki, 2013; Holiday et al., 2015).

With the increasing presence of non-state militant actors on social media and the rise of al-Qaeda as a threatening security challenge around the turn of the century, a third research area has emerged seeking to understand how such groups visually frame violent conflicts. Some studies examine videos disseminated by the Chechen rebels, al-Qaeda Central, al-Qaeda in Iraq, the Islamic Army in Iraq, the Islamic Front of the Iraqi Resistance, Partisans of the Sunna Army, and Supporters of Islam, among others (Intel Center, 2005; Arab Salem, Reid, & Chen, 2008; Weisburd, 2009). These studies break down the videos by visual frames, such as suicide attacks, beheadings, hostage taking, brotherhood, tributes, honoring the dead, training, and rewards for membership. More recent studies narrow the focus only on ISIS's execution videos by delineating nuanced frames (e.g., unity of the Ummah, justified violence, and grotesque, abject, and sublime horror) and/or highlighting recurring visual elements (Barr & Herfroy-Mischler, 2017; Chouliaraki & Kissas, 2018; Friis, 2015; Kraidy, 2017). However, studying ISIS's photographs remains the most prevalent (e.g., Damanhoury, 2017; Damanhoury & Winkler, 2018; Damanhoury et al., 2018; Stratcom Centre of Excellence, 2016; Tan, O'Halloran, Wignell, Chai, & Lange, 2018; Wignell, Tan, & O'Halloran, 2017; Wignell, Tan, O'Halloran, & Lange, 2017; Winkler, Damanhoury, Dicker, & Lemieux, 2018; Winkler et al., 2016). These studies reveal a wider range of recurring military and state-building visual frames (e.g., combat, near

enemy, far enemy, heroes, and state-building) and bonding icons (e.g., monotheism hand gesture, Qur'an, communal prayers, fighters, weapons, and flags). They also point to the about-to-die visual trope as a salient component of ISIS's visual campaigns to depict impending deaths and destruction. At times, Entman's four associations classify the identified visual frames. For the most part, framing studies of militant groups like ISIS apply transcendent frames to different conflicts and locales and they use photo captions and on-screen texts to identify unclear contextual information.

The fourth and least prevalent research area relates to the comparative visual framing of both state and non-state actors in a single conflict. The increasing social media presence of state institutions and militant groups allows scholars to gauge the online visual contestations in contemporary conflicts. In the 2012 Gaza conflict, the Israeli military constructed its message on Twitter using unity and resistance as the main visual frames, while Hamas mostly depicted civilian casualties and icons of resistance, such as Hamas leaders, soldiers, and projectiles (Seo, 2014). In the Syrian Civil War, the Syrian government mainly used solidarity, humanity, and victory visual frames on Facebook, while the opposition used threats of the Syrian regime, casualties, and military victories as the most prominent visual frames (Seo & Ebrahim, 2016). These studies indicate that non-state militant actors adopt a more emotional approach, compared to an analytical framework by state actors. In the U.S.-led coalition's fight against ISIS, killing Muslims, killing journalists, and treatment of women emerged as the recurring frames in the U.S. Department of State's *Think Again Turn Away* videos, compared to Levant as the starting point, media war against ISIS, role of martyrs, and benefits for believers visual frames in ISIS's video (Allendorfer & Herring, 2015). Using these frames, ISIS casts a wide net of initiating messages,

while the U.S. Department of State defensively emphasizes a singular underlying theme that ISIS is the enemy.

This study builds on the fourth and most recent research area to comparatively examine how both sides compete over the visual framing of the same conflict. With the ability of Sinai's political actors to bypass the mainstream media and interact directly with their target audience, understanding how they construct their own messages has become as important as investigating more commonly studied media frames. Most framing studies, however, neither investigate state actors' visual frames in contemporary conflicts nor inspect the contestation and interactions between the frames of state and non-state actors. Moreover, militant groups have established localized media centers to represent their affiliates and provinces that operate in different contexts. ISIS claims to operate in over 30 provinces, each with its own media office (Al-Furqan Media, 2016c). The existing studies examining militant groups' visuals mostly sample media products of several groups together (e.g., Salem et al., 2008; Weisburd, 2009) or focus on ISIS's centralized media (e.g., Kraidy, 2017; Wignell, Tan, & O'Halloran, 2017). This study intends to narrow the focus on ISIS's provincial media to generate more context-specific visual frames. Further, different actors may shift their content over time for multiple reasons. Cross-sectional analyses are less likely to identify shifts and interactions in the visual framing of prolonged conflicts. This study examines the visual framing of a prolonged conflict over an extended period to account for such shifts in content and the interactions between individual frames to develop coherent messaging.

Accordingly, the study's second research question will ask: How do the state and the militant group construct visual frames in their photographic campaigns in the Sinai conflict? To answer the question, I will examine the visual frames that Wilayat Sinai and the Egyptian

military used over two years. I will also investigate the role of photo captions and other accompanying text as framing devices in both photographic campaigns. Then, I will analyze the recurring human characteristics, bonding icons, and visual tropes and how those functioned within the identified frames. Finally, I will explore the interactions between the individual visual frames on each side and how they engage with the opposing messages.

2.3   Visual Semiotics

Visual semiotics can play an important role in the viewer's perception of the image. Visual semiotics, or what Barthes (1978) calls photogenia, are devices that have "corresponding signified[s] of connotation sufficiently constant to allow incorporation in a cultural lexicon of 'effects'" (p. 23). Such devices include the viewer's perceived distance, camera angle/viewer position, eye contact, subjective shots, size, focus, color, and lighting, among others. Visual semiotics constitute a key visual framing device that reveals the stylistic and connotative representation (Rodriguez & Dimitrova, 2011). As an integral part of all images, the semiotic elements may often appear random and unintentional. Nevertheless, they can function in strategic ways. Together, visual semiotics compose a visual grammar that helps understand the image, prompt character involvement, and convey symbolic meaning (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996; Rose, 2001).

Most studies examining visual semiotics and/or their impact have their roots in western culture. First, studies analyzing visual semiotics often examine message construction as it appears in western media, ranging from American and British publications to newswires (e.g., Borah, 2009; Fahmy, 2004; Hardin et al., 2002; Parry, 2011; Parry, 2010; Shin, Fahmy, & Lewis, 2012). Second, most overarching frameworks explaining the construction and composition of visuals are limited to the United States and Western Europe. Hall's (1966) proxemics framework

and his breakdown of distance into four zones, for example, is developed after observations and interviews with middle-class American adults living in the northeast coast. Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) stress that their proposed grammar for visual design is not universal, but rather confined their analysis to the contemporary western culture. In fact, they trace a shared history of visual semiotics to the rise of perspective and subjectivity as social values in the European Renaissance. Branigan's (1984) theory of subjectivity and his discussion of point-of-view as a visual semiotic source follow a set of rules and assumptions based mainly on American, French, and Italian films. Developing subjective shots further into a typology, Ortiz and Moya (2015) sample GoPro videos on YouTube and Vimeo that were mostly shot at the United States. Third, the experimental studies examining the impact of visual semiotics mostly involve American/western European college samples (e.g., see Baron-Cohen, Wheelwright, & Jolliffe, 1997; Cummins, Keene, & Nutting, 2012; Kraft, 1986; Mandell & Shaw, 1973; McCain, Chilberg, & Wakshlag, 1977; Wanta, 1988).

Nonetheless, recent studies have begun to indicate that Arab media apply visual semeiotics to a limited extent. Mainstream Arab media use visual techniques in their coverage to convey symbolic meaning and subjectively depict news stories. In its coverage of the Palestinian children during the second intifada, for example, al-Jazeera was more likely to depict the children at a close-medium distance and from low-angle shots, compared to NBC (Aqtash, Seif, & Seif, 2004). In its coverage of the 9/11 attacks, al-Hayat newspaper used long shots of the rubble to dehumanize the other, in contrast with its coverage of the Afghan War victims (Fahmy, 2010). In the 2010 Iraqi elections, Baghdad (Sunni), Furat (Shiite), and Hurria (Kurdish) television channels exhibited bias by portraying their respective candidates at a close distance and from an eye-level (Al-Rawi & Gunter, 2013). Further, in the coverage of the Arab Spring,

Arab networks (al-Arabiya, al-Jazeera, BBC Arabic, and al-Hurra) were all likely to use

subjective camera shots (Bruce, 2015).

Media campaigns of Arab-based militant groups are also utilizing visual semiotics to

bolster the messaging in Arabic-language products. Between 2001 and 2010, Al-Qaeda videos,

for example, increasingly incorporated direct eye contact between its leaders (e.g., al-Zawahiri

and Adam Gadahn) and the viewer to complement its calls for action (Martin, 2011).

Subsequently, ISIS utilized direct eye contact, close-medium distance, and positive facial

expressions in its martyr images in *al-Naba'* newsletter (Winkler et al., 2018), differential

camera angles to convey power in its centralized video productions (Kraidy, 2017), and

subjective camera shots in its provincial imagery and video output (Damanhoury, 2017; Lesaca,

2015; Perlmutter, 2016).

This study will add to these studies focusing on media outlets and Arab-based militant

groups by examining the comparative use of viewer distance, camera angle, eye contact, facial

expression, and subjective shots as visual semiotic tools in the two opposing photographic

campaigns. These five visual semiotic sources play differential roles in conveying power and

symbolic meaning.

2.3.1 Viewer Distance

The perceived distance between the photo subject and the viewer relates to the

humanization of the photo subject. When shots are snapped from a closer distance, they tend to

prompt a connection with the photo subjects and depict them as individuals; when shot from a

comparably longer distance, they tend to characterize the photo subjects as "types" and "others"

rather than familiar individuals (Cohen, 2009; Jewitt & Oyama, 2008; Silva, Rodriguez, Banares,

& Talavera, 2017). Edward Hall's (1966) theory of proxemics posits that intimate, personal,

social, and public distances have respective roles in differentiating between intimates, friends, acquaintances, and strangers. To illustrate, immigrants appeared at a distance in the photographs of Spanish national newspapers between 2013 and 2014, representing them as the distant other (Silva et al., 2017). A similar social distancing of immigrants from the viewer in other Spanish and Greek newspapers reinforces the same conclusion (Batziou, 2011). In the meantime, the majority of close up and medium shots appearing on the covers of *Times* and *Newsweek* magazines in the United States between 1991 and 2004 showed American political figures significantly more than foreign leaders, creating a more comfortable relationship with those sharing the American identity (Kang & Heo, 2006). Hence, the choice of shot sizes and distance can be deliberately made to create or avoid the viewer's connection with the photo subject.

2.3.2   *Camera Angle*

The camera angle can depict the symbolic power of the photo subject. These connotative meanings are mainly analogical, "translating a spatial relationship into an evaluative one" (Kraft, 1986, p. 305). In that sense, looking down at a person typically prompts lower evaluations in terms of power, dominance, and credibility compared to looking up to a person in the image, while eye-level shots suggest visual parity and equality. For example, Mandell and Shaw (1973) find that respondents positively evaluated the person photographed from a low camera angle, placing the viewer looking up at the photo subject, in terms of power within a news item, compared to that photographed from a high camera angle where the viewer looks down on the photo subject. Similarly, Kraft (1986) reports that respondents judged a basketball player as better and bolder when depicted from a low angle. Further, the Associated Press photographs after the fall of the Taliban regime increasingly portrayed Afghani women at the eye level prompting symbolic equality and visual parity, compared to their portrayal as symbolically

powerless using high angles before the fall of Taliban (Fahmy, 2004). In the same sense, looking down at Iraqi civilians gathered around Allied troops to receive aid is likely to prompt lower evaluations of Iraqis in terms of power (Parry, 2011), while looking up to a perpetrator with bloodstained hands after killing a soldier conveys symbolic power (Kampf, 2006).

2.3.3   Eye Contact

Eye contact between the viewer and the photo subject relates to evaluations of human connection and status. Baron-Cohen, Wheelwright, and Jolliffe (1997) show that viewers can interpret the photo subject's mental state whether they are exposed to an image of the full face or just an extreme close-up shot of the eyes. Direct eye contact often establishes an imaginary connection between the photo subject and the viewer, through which the former makes a demand (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996), calls for action (Martin, 2011), and conveys hierarchy and status (Tang & Schmeichel, 2015). However, to better understand the photo subject's message, one must take the immediate visual context into account as well, including human characteristics (e.g., age, gender, and body position) and the surrounding elements (e.g., other humans, weapons, and destruction). In that sense, an adult hostage in an orange jumpsuit looking directly at the camera as he kneels in the desert in front of a standing, masked ISIS militant holding a knife sends an entirely different message than a toddler hugging her wrapped gift and looking directly to the camera as she stands next to a Christmas tree. Meanwhile, the avoidance of eye contact between the photo subject and the camera helps reinforce the relationships of social inequality when it comes to the representation of the other in mainstream media (Batziou, 2011).

2.3.4   Facial Expressions

Facial expressions are important visual elements that can influence the viewer's perception in many ways. Facial expressions draw attention (Vuilleumier, 2000), self-present

individuals (DePaulo, 1992), reflect their emotions (Adolphs, 2002; Carroll & Russell, 1996), overrides situational information (Ekman, 1972; Fridlung, Ekman, & Oster, 1987), and create empathy (Buck & Ginsburg, 1997; Keltner & Bonannno, 1997). Positive facial expressions (e.g., smiling and laughing) imply happiness, positive intentions, altruism, and increased sociability (Schmidt & Cohn, 2001), generate positive responses (Sullivan & Masters, 1991), elicit less skepticism (Forgas & East, 2008), and infer higher affiliation and dominance (Knutson, 1996). To bolster the liberation frame after the 2003 Iraq invasion, for example, the *Sun* newspaper used photographs of smiling coalition soldiers as they interacted with Iraqi people (Parry, 2011). On the other hand, negative facial expressions (e.g., fear, anger, and sadness) impact the viewer's heart rate (Levenson, Ekman, & Friesen, 1990), elicit more skepticism (Forgas & East, 2008), and infer low affiliation and low dominance (Knutson, 1996). To complement its civilian casualties frame during the 2012 Gaza conflict, for example, Hamas tweeted images of weeping parents as their children's corpses laid in front of them (Seo, 2014).

2.3.5 Subjective Shots

Subjective camera shots constitute another visual semiotic source that can prompt viewer identification with the photo subject. Cohen (2001) defines identification as a process, in which the viewer merges with the character in one role. The identification process with photo subjects has been juxtaposed with the use of first person narration, through which the reader can read a novel and imagine him/herself as the character in the story. Applying the same concept to visuals, Branigan (1984) argues that point-of-view shots serve as a tool for visual subjective narration, whereby the viewer takes the character's position in the scene. Ortiz and Moya (2015) break down subjective camera shots into three types. The embodied point-of-view shot does not show the character's body (e.g., a sniper shot pointing at a target). The referentially embodied

point-of-view shot shows parts of the character's body or used props (e.g., a GoPro shot of the

photographer's rifle firing at a target). The out-embodied shot gives an external look at the

character's body (e.g., an over-the-shoulder shot of a person reading a newspaper). The interplay

between the point-of-view and reaction or reverse-angle shots indicates the main character in the

action (Rose, 2001) and further promotes viewer identification with him/her (Ortiz & Moya,

2015). Further, subjective camera shots foster a greater sense of presence in the portrayed scene

and can result in frequent arousal responses (Cummins et al., 2012). These visual techniques are

prevalent in first-person shooter-games, such as Call of Duty and Grand Theft Auto, which

appeal to many young males (Perlmutter, 2016). As a result, subjective camera shots are

potentially powerful visual semiotic sources that filmmakers, photographers, and game designers

use to prompt identification and elicit presence.

     This study will expand on the existing literature by examining the application of these

visual semiotic strategies in two opposing media campaigns in a non-western context. Although

Arab states are now active social media players, no study has systematically investigated how

they apply visual semiotics. Further, social media has provided an accessible battleground where

different actors can compete. Comparative studies, however, either focus on visual semiotics

across different mainstream media outlets (e.g., al-Jazeera vs. NBC) or in different militant

groups' media products (e.g., *Dabiq* vs. *al-Naba'*). This study moves a step further by comparing

how state and non-state actors within the same situational context incorporate visual semiotics to

convey power and symbolic meaning.

     Thus, the study's third research question will ask: what are the similarities and

differences in the Wilayat Sinai and the Egyptian military's deployment of visual semiotics in

their respective photographic campaigns? To answer this question, I will examine viewer

distance, camera angle, eye contact, facial expression, and subjective shots across the photographs that depict human beings as photo subjects. I will also compare how Wilayat Sinai and the Egyptian military used visual semiotics to depict the different human character types. Then, I will identify whether these applications align with or differ from the assumptions of existing frameworks of visual semiotics.

In sum, this study aims at building an interactive model that helps understand visual contestation as a communicative phenomenon in the online environment. It will reveal how the quantity of photographic output and the military context interact between state and non-state actors in the online environment. It will show how the two sides frame the conflict through photographic content and how those frames interact with one another. It will pinpoint the functions of visual semiotics as compositional elements and explore how those elements intersect with the choices of the other side of the conflict. The model will thus investigate the role of context, content, and form in the construction of visual messages in conflict between state and non-state actors.

2.4   Methodology

2.4.1   Scope

To obtain a better understanding of Wilayat Sinai and the Egyptian military's photographic campaigns, the study examines all 1905 Sinai-related images that both sides disseminated online from January 1, 2016 to December 31, 2017. The focus on this two-year period relates to the 175 percent surge in Wilayat Sinai's claimed attacks in 2016 (TIMEP, 2017a), the extension of the Martyr's Rights Egyptian military operation in Sinai into three stages in 2016 and 2017 (Eleiba, 2017), and the extensive military pressure on ISIS in its heartlands that led to vast territorial losses in Iraq and Syria by the end of 2017 (Iraqi PM Media

Office, 2017b; Russian MoD, 2017). The ISIS dataset comprises 395 images in 30 photo reports

and 405 images in 105 daily news briefs that Wilayat Sinai disseminated on ISIS's official

Telegram channel *Nashir*. This Telegram group has served as the main hub for dissemination

and the most reliable means for collecting ISIS's official media products since late 2015, after

the intensive crackdown on the group's activity on Twitter. The Egyptian military dataset

comprises 1105 Sinai-related images in 214 Facebook posts that the Egyptian military

spokesperson disseminated on his official page. This Facebook page is the main hub for the

military's official news on Sinai as well as various other activities, including the Minister of

Defense's meetings with foreign officials, the military chief of staff's events, military parades,

and joint training operations with foreign troops. This page is also the most reliable means for

collecting all the Egyptian military's photographs, compared to the official Twitter account and

website that post only a fraction of the Facebook photographs.

To indicate the intensity of military conditions at the local level, this study uses the Tahrir

Institute of Middle East Policy's (TIMEP) data on Wilayat Sinai's claimed attacks and the

Egyptian military's counterterrorism operations in Sinai for 2016 and 2017. TIMEP's Egypt

Security Watch reports highlight Wilayat Sinai's claimed attacks between December 2014 and

September 2017. The reports aggregate the group's official statements of responsibility released

online and in ISIS's *al-Naba'* weekly newsletter. After obtaining TIMEP's monthly figures for

Wilayat Sinai's claimed attacks between January 2016 and September 2017, I applied the same

method to acquire the figures for the remaining claimed attacks in October, November, and

December 2017. I compiled Wilayat Sinai's statements of responsibility on Telegram and ISIS's

al-Naba' issues 100-112 (issued between October 5 and December 28, 2017). In the meantime,

TIMEP's reports also contain the official number of the Egyptian military's counterterrorismism

operations in Sinai between January 2015 and July 2017. The reports aggregate the Egyptian military's official statements on the spokesman's Facebook page. After obtaining TIMEP's monthly figures for the Egyptian military's counterterrorismism operations between January 2016 and July 2017, I also applied the same method to acquire the figures for the remaining operations from August to December 2017. To complete the dataset, I compiled the Egyptian military's official statements on the spokesman's Facebook page.

To indicate the intensity of military conditions at the regional level, this study uses the Global Terrorism Database on ISIS's attacks in Iraq and Syria in 2016 and 2017, as well as the official launching date of heightened military operations against the group in its two key cities. The study limits the regional context to Iraq and Syria because they were the sites of over 90 percent of ISIS's attacks over the two years and the battleground for the major coalition military operations (GTD, 2017). Mosul was ISIS's de facto capital in Iraq for three years and the site where al-Baghdadi declared the caliphate in summer 2014. It was also one of ISIS's main media operation centers (Wilson Center, 2017). The Mosul military operation officially began on October 17, 2016 and the Iraqi Prime Minister announced the full liberation of the city on July 10, 2017 (Iraqi PM Media Office, 2017a; Sanchez, McLaughlin, & Blau, 2016). Similarly, Raqqa was the group's capital, main hub in Syria, and a key media center for years. The Raqqa military offensive officially began on November 6, 2016 and the U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces announced the full liberation of the city on October 20, 2017 (Damon, Balkiz, & Smith-Spark, 2017; Withnall, 2016). The study uses October 2016 as the breaking point that signals intensified military pressure on ISIS regionally.

2.4.2 Method of Analysis

To answer the first research question and investigate the relationship between the local and regional levels of military activity and the frequency of photographs and visual messaging strategies in the Sinai conflict, I use a mixed-method approach. Using SPSS to conduct all descriptive statistical tests, I first utilize Pearson coefficient analyses to test the correlations between Wilayat Sinai and the Egyptian military's photographic outputs, respectively, and the level of local military activity as indicated by the claimed attacks and counterterrorism operations. The test demonstrates the linear relationships at different data points. Second, independent sample t-test analysis compares the Wilayat Sinai and the Egyptian military's monthly photographic outputs before and after the onset of regional military pressure on ISIS in Iraq and Syria in October 2016. The test determines the differences between the means at different periods of military activity. Then, I further examine the shifts in recurring scenic elements as they relate to military events, using Pearson coefficient, t-tests, and chi square analyses. Finally, a qualitative analysis of the military events corresponding to surges and declines in photographic output complement the statistical tests.

To answer the second research question and identify how each side framed the content of its photographic campaign in the Sinai conflict, I use a qualitative grounded theory approach to generate context-specific visual frames in Wilayat Sinai and the Egyptian military's photographs. The Straussian approach to grounded theory involves the inductive, bottom-up development of categories, subcategories, and/or conceptual codes from empirical indicators (Grbich, 2007). To understand the role accompanying text as framing devices, I qualitatively examine how the photo captions and other related text convey complement the photographs in conveying visual frames. To investigate the role of visual elements that previously complemented identified ISIS frames in

other photographic samples (see Damanhoury et al., 2018; Wignell, Tan, & O'Halloran, 2017;

Winkler et al., 2018), I include religious symbols, flags, weapons, state-building, death and the

about-to-die categories in the content analysis coding instrument. I then expand on Parry's

(2010) approach by mapping Entman's (1993) four framing associations: problem definition,

causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation to better understand how

the individual frames on one side interact together to constitute an overarching message. Further,

I examine how the frames from the two opposing sides interact together to define the Sinai

conflict.

To answer the third research question and identify how Wilayat Sinai and the Egyptian

military incorporated visual semiotics in their photographic campaigns, the study conducts a

quantitative content analysis of key semiotic elements in the dataset. The image serves as the unit

of analysis, and building on Patridge's (2005) methodology, photo captions and/or other

accompanying text determine contextual information. Prior to the coding process, I assigned a

number, date, and source to each image and determine whether its incorporates textual

information or not. The study adapts a 21-item coding instrument first created to examine *Dabiq*

imagery (Winkler et al., 2016), and later applied to images in ISIS's Arabic-language publication

(Winkler et al., 2018) and its provincial campaigns (Damanhoury, 2017; Damanhoury et al.,

2018).

Five items appearing on the modified coding instrument serve as the basis of the analysis

to identify how each side depicts the human characters through semiotic elements. The viewer

distance variable examines the perceived distance between the viewer and human character(s):

intimate, personal, social, public, or mixed. The camera angle variable determines the camera's

position in comparison to the character(s): low, high, eye level, or mixed. The eye contact

category reveals the level of interaction between the human character(s) and the viewer: direct eye contact, looking away/mixed, eyes closed/mangled, or not applicable. The facial expression category further elucidates the nature of interaction by examining the emotions exhibited by the human character(s): positive, negative, neutral/mixed, or not applicable. Finally, the subjective shots category determines the use of identification-inducing techniques: embodied POV, referentially-embodied POV, out-embodied shots, or not applicable.

The remaining 11 items on the modified coding instrument identify the immediate visual context of the images by noting recurring features of depicted human characters and the photographs. Two coders examined each photograph for the number of humans (one, 2-10 small group, 10 or more large group or no human), age (infants, children, adults, mixed, or not applicable), gender (male, female, mixed, or not applicable), and body position (on knees not praying, sitting, standing, laying down, praying, mixed, or not applicable). To examine the previously identified visual elements in ISIS's visual campaigns, the coders examined the presence of death (yes or no), destruction (ongoing fire/explosions, destroyed infrastructure, or not applicable), use of the about-to-die trope (possible death, certain death, presumed death, or not applicable), state-building (social services, law enforcement, economy, city/natural landscapes, media distribution, mixed, or not applicable), infrastructure (buildings, bridges, vehicles, military weaponry/equipment, mixed, or not applicable), religious symbols (monotheism finger gesture, Qur'an, prayer, religious shrine, mixed, or not applicable), and the presence of flags (ISIS, United States, Egypt, other, mixed, or not applicable).

I analyzed the entire dataset and a second trained coder coded 10 percent of the dataset to calculate inter-coder reliability. Due to the large dataset (N=1905) in this study, testing inter-coder reliability on a subsample of 190 images met the minimum acceptable size requirement of

10 to 20 percent and no less than 50 units (Neuendorf, 2002). The study used Cohen's kappa as a

sensitive reliability coefficient that goes beyond the simple percentage agreement and considers

the expected agreement and the possibility of agreement due to chance (Bell, 2008). The overall

Cohen's Kappa value of the two coders was 0.95, indicating strong inter-coder reliability (see

Table 2.1).

Table 2.1 Inter-coder Reliability for Coding Variables in Content Analysis

Variable	Percent Agreement	Cohen's Kappa
Human	98.96%	0.98
Age	98.96%	0.97
Gender	99.48%	0.99
Body Position	96.37%	0.94
Distance	96.89%	0.95
Camera Angle	96.89%	0.94
Eye Contact	97.92%	0.96
Facial Expressions	98.96%	0.98
Subjective Shots	98.44%	0.86
Death	100%	1
Destruction	95.33%	0.87
About to Die	96.89%	.94
State-Building	96.37%	.92
Infrastructure	98.96%	.98
Religious Symbols	100	1
Flags	98.96	.94

3   THE SINAI CONFLICT

Sinai is the name of an Egyptian Peninsula that connects Africa and Asia. Historians differ on

the origin of the name Sinai, with some linking it to Sin the God of the Moon in the Sumerian

civilization and others tying it with the word *Sen* (tooth) in reference to the shape of its

mountains (N. Greenwood, 1997). A greater consensus exists on its geographical boundaries.

Despite being part of Egypt, the Sinai Peninsula is in west Asia, lying alongside the Red Sea and

the Suez Canal, which mark the northeastern border of the African continent. In 1906, a British-

Ottoman agreement created the border that demarcates Sinai from Palestine and the Levant

(Shuqair, 1991). The total area of Sinai is 61,000 square kilometers, or over six percent of

Egypt's total area (Egypt's Information Portal, 2018) and 30 percent of the country's coastlines

(Hussein, 1996). Sinai spreads from the Mediterranean Sea in the north to Ras Mohamed in the

south, as well as from the Gulf of Aqaba, Israel, and Gaza in the east to the Gulf of Suez and the

Suez Canal in the west (see Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1 Map of the Sinai Peninsula. Source: Library of Congress/Central Intelligence
Agency, 1988.

The governmental divisions of the Sinai Peninsula changed over the years. In 1960, the

Egyptian government established a local, civilian administration in each of the border

governorates, except for Sinai that remained under military rule. When Israel occupied the Sinai

after the 1967War, it divided the peninsula into two military government units: North Sinai with

its headquarters in al-Arish and South Sinai with its headquarters in Sharm El Sheikh (A.

Roberts, 1990). In the wake of the 1973 Egyptian-Israeli War, however, former Egyptian

President Sadat declared Sinai a single governorate, with al-Arish as its capital, and appointed its

first civilian governor in 1974 (Hussein, 1996). Five years later, Sadat issued a decree breaking

the peninsula into two distinct administrative units, with al-Arish as the capital of the North and

al-Tor as the capital of the South. The 1979 decree also attached the small parts of Sinai west of

the Suez Canal to Suez, Ismailiya, and Port Said governorates (Hussein, 1996). Ever since, Sinai

has spanned across the five different governorates, with the vast majority of the peninsula falling

in the North Sinai and South Sinai governorates.

Sinai is home to a heterogeneous mix of people, including a wide range of Bedouin

tribes, Egyptians of the Nile Valley, Palestinians who moved to Sinai after 1948, and Bosnians.

Egypt's official figures indicate a total population of 455,000 people in North Sinai and 173,000

people in South Sinai (CAPMAS, 2017). Bedouins, in particular, constitute the most distinctive

collective in the Sinai social demographic (Ammar, 2014). The word "Bedouin" is derived from

the Arabic word "Badu," which refers to nomadic people of the desert who originated in the

Arabian Peninsula and the Levant. Many Bedouin tribes moved to and settled in the northern and

southern parts of the peninsula over the centuries (Stewart, 1991). The population figures,

however, do not truly reflect the number of the Bedouins, as thousands hold identification papers

but do not enjoy full citizenship rights (Bradley, 2008). Despite the lack of definitive official

figures on the Sinai Bedouin population, contemporary press figures range from 200,000 to

380,000 (ICG, 2007; Morrow & Al-Omrani, 2007), up from a population of 40,000 Sinai

Bedouins in 1906 (Shuqair, 1991). For Bedouins, tribal loyalties, land rights, and communal

agreements take precedence over national identity and state borders (Bradley, 2008). Today, the

Sinai Bedouins' culture and Arabic dialects remain closer to their brethren in the Arabian

Peninsula and the Levant than to Egyptians of the Nile Valley.

Nonetheless, the Sinai Bedouins are not a single homogenous group. Tribal agreements indicate that at least 15 major Bedouin tribes constitute a "mosaic of populations" that share Sinai (ICG, 2007, p. 10). Al-Sawarka and al-Rumaylat comprise two key tribes settled in al-Arish, Sheikh Zuwayid, and Rafah in the North. Al-Sawarka is the strongest and most populous tribe in Sinai with about 70,000 members (Sabry, 2015) and up to 13 different clans (Hussein, 1996). Another powerful Bedouin tribe in Sinai is al-Tarabin, which mainly spans across North Sinai, Nuwaiba in South Sinai, Palestine, and Negev desert in South Israel (Shuqair, 1991). Al-Masa'id, al-Dawaghra, and al-Bayyadiyya tribes settle in the West (Mubashir & Tawfik, 1978). Al-Tayaha, al-Ahywat, and al-Azazma tribes reside in Central Sinai, with al-Azazma extending to lands in Palestine and Jordan (Bradley, 2008). In the South of the penisula, al-Towara, named for al-Tor mountain, is a confederation of several tribes, including al-Alayqat, Muzayna, Awlad Sa'id, al-Sawalha, and al-Jibaliyya. Although the ethnicity of al-Jibaliyya tribe has its origins in the Bosnian and Wallachian slaves that the Roman emperor sent to Sinai in the sixth century, it has now become a part of South Sinai's Bedouin tribes and a member of the Towara confederation (Glassner, 1974; Shuqair, 1991). The South Sinai tribes live in the Sharm Sheikh and Dahab regions as well as in the inner mountains (ICG, 2007).

3.1   Understanding the Origins of the Sinai Conflict

The lands of Sinai serve as an important site of contestation in the current conflict between Egyptian security forces and Sinai insurgents due to both economic and national security considerations. Economically, the Sinai Peninsula is vital for Egypt because it borders the Suez Canal, a key source of the country's income since former President Nasser nationalized it in 1956 (Suez Canal Authority, 2018). With tourism serving as another key pillar of Egypt's economy, the Sinai Red Sea resorts in South Sinai generate a crucial part of tourism revenue

(Hassan, 2015). Recently, the Egyptian and Saudi governments announced that a total of 1000 square kilometers in South Sinai will become part of the transnational, megacity project NEOM ("Saudi's Bin Salman talks about megacity project in South Sinai," 2018). Militarily, Sinai is key to Egypt's national security as it has always been the gate for Egyptian rulers expanding eastward or outside forces marching to North Africa over the centuries (Himdan, 1993). For the past 70 years, Israel has fought four wars against Egypt in Sinai in 1948, 1956, 1967, and 1973.

To better understand the situational context of the present-day conflict between the Egyptian Military and Wilayat Sinai, this chapter analyzes the unstable relations between Bedouins and the changing Sinai rulers since the late 1960s and the precipitating events that have contributed to the emergence of violence in the North. After highlighting the strategic division between North and South Sinai and the role of Bedouins in Egypt's military struggle against Israel during the occupation period, I will discuss multiple contextual factors, including social alienation, waning economy, and the emergence of the smuggling industry in the North in the post-occupation period. Then, I will trace the origins of the Sinai insurgency to the three waves of attacks in South Sinai, the subsequent security crackdown, and the human rights violations during the initial rebellion period in the early twenty-first century. I will identify the role of the political context after the 2011 revolution, including the ouster of former President Mohamed Morsi in 2013 and the government crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood supporters, in the evolution of the Sinai insurgency and the intensification of conflict.

3.2   The Occupation Period 1967-1982

On June 5, 1967, Israel attacked Egypt, destroying almost the entire Egyptian air force on the tarmac (Bradley, 2008). Subsequently, the Israeli ground forces marched to Sinai and fought with the Egyptian military in both the northern and southern parts of the peninsula. During the

fighting Sinai Bedouins provided Egyptian officers and soldiers with food, water, and aid. They also created volunteer rescue groups to treat and transport the injured. After Israel defeated the Egyptian military, Bedouins also hid the officers and soldiers from the Israeli forces in al-Arish homes, gave them fake North Sinai identification cards, and worked with the Egyptian military intelligence to establish an evacuation center in Beer al-Abd (Hussein, 1996). The war resulted in an Israeli occupation of the entire Sinai Peninsula that humiliated, expelled, and terrorized many Sinai Bedouins, pushing about half of the pre-war population westward to the Nile Valley (Himdan, 1993).

The Israeli occupation between 1967 and 1982 had a differential impact on the North and the South. The North Sinai population suffered the most. Israel saw the building of settlements in the North as an opportunity to create a Jewish buffer zone between Sinai and Gaza that would divide the region and disrupt the flow of weapons (Gorenberg, 2006). To build such settlements, the Israeli army expelled thousands of Bedouins from their tents and lands. On January 14, 1972, for example, the then military commander Ariel Sharon ordered "the destruction of the orchards, the blocking up of the water wells and the deportation of the villagers" to build the Yamit settlement on the Mediterranean and surrounding agricultural settlements in the Rafah area (Weizman, 2007, p. 98). Later, the Israeli forces admitted to expelling nine tribes and almost 5000 Bedouins in that single incident, while tribal leaders put the number closer to 20,000 (Gorenberg, 2006).

By contrast, the Israeli occupation came with some benefits for the Bedouins of South Sinai. Prior to the 1967 War, Bedouins in the South were living in poverty and isolation in sparsely populated areas under Egyptian military rule (Hussein, 1996). Israel spent billions of dollars to build roads connecting South Sinai with the coast of Eilat, establish civilian ministries,

introduce water, telephone, and electrical lines, and transform the region into a source of wage labor to thousands of Bedouins (Claiborne, 1982; Shipler, 1982). The Israeli Ministry of Defense also employed about 1200 Bedouin men to work in oil fields, construction, and tourism in the South, with job openings outnumbering Bedouin men in Abo Rodeis during 1972 (Glassner, 1974). In addition, the Ministry of Labor provided vocational courses, the Ministry of Education worked with Bedouins to build more schools, and the Ministry of Health established clinics (Glassner, 1974). The main economic development in the South, however, was in tourism. Israel built the Ophira key resort town and its airport, as well as the Di Zahav and Neviot settlements. The new settlements and tourism resorts in the South similarly opened new employment opportunities for the Bedouins. In sum, the Israeli occupation resulted in higher standards of living for the South Sinai Bedouins.

Despite working alongside the Israeli administration during occupation years, the Sinai Bedouins played a key role in the resistance movement. In the years leading up to the 1973 War, the Sinai Bedouins created popular resistance groups, such as the Sinai Arab Organization, that carried out military operations against the Israeli forces, including the targeting of Israeli jets in al-Arish airport, the destruction of the headquarters of the Israeli military ruler and the Military Intelligence building in the same city, the kidnapping of Israeli soldiers, and the confiscation of weapons (Hussein, 2010; Sabry, 2015). Further, the Bedouin tribes reportedly refused Israel's offer to declare Sinai a state and asserted their allegiance to Egypt and Nasser in a publicized press conference in al-Hasna, North Sinai in October 1968 (Abdelazim, 2013; El-Kouny, 2013). In the 1973 War, the Bedouins also sided with the Egyptian military, serving as guides in the desert and providing intelligence on the locations of Israeli army units (Hussein, 1996).

The Camp David Accords laid the groundwork for the end of the Israeli occupation. Less than a year after Sadat gave a historic speech at the Knesset in November 1977 calling for the establishment of peace based on justice, he took part in the Camp David summit with the then Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and U.S. President Jimmy Carter in September of 1978. Both the Egyptian and Israeli leaders negotiated the terms for a peace treaty, which they later signed in March 1979. In compliance with the Camp David Accords, Israel gradually withdrew its forces and settlers from Sinai, culminating in the full liberation of the peninsula on April 25, 1982. The only exception was that Israeli forces and settlers remained in Taba until 1989.

Israel's withdrawal from Sinai, however, further reinforced its preferential treatment of the South over the North. The Israeli forces razed Northern settlements to the ground as they evacuated Sinai, including the coastal town of Yamit and its surrounding agricultural lands (Claiborne, 1982). In his autobiography, the then newly-appointed Minister of Defense Ariel Sharon describes the destruction of the infrastructure in Yamit and surrounding settlements as a necessity to prevent the creation of an Egyptian population center of at least 100,000 people alongside Israel's border (Sharon & Chanoff, 2002). By contrast, the withdrawal from South Sinai and the evacuation of its settlements did not result in similar levels of destruction. The infrastructure in Ophira, Neviot, and Di Zahav settlements were left intact for Egypt to expand in subsequent years (Weizman, 2007).

The occupation period resulted in lasting suspicions of the Sinai Bedouins. Despite the role that the Bedouins played in the resistance movement, some did collaborate with the Israeli forces (Hussein, 1996). Bedouins also lived in Sinai under an Israeli administration that established schools, ran hospitals, managed the tourism industry, and controlled trade. Thus, many Egyptians in the Nile Valley perceived the Bedouins as traitors for accepting occupation

and collaborating with the Israeli administration in Sinai for about 15 years (ICG, 2007). The better socioeconomic conditions for some Bedouins during the occupation fueled the distrust even further and triggered security concerns (Pelham, 2012). These suspicions increased the isolation of the Sinai Bedouins and widened their schism with the rest of the Egyptian population.

3.3   The Post-Occupation Period 1982-2003

The return of Sinai to the Egyptian state triggered hopes for multiple development projects across the peninsula. In 1974, feasibility studies for development projects had already begun, as Egypt had regained control over parts of Sinai after the 1973 war (Eleiba, 2013). Amid the restoration of its authority over the entire Sinai Peninsula, the Egyptian government voiced its plans to repair roads to facilitate transportation, buy existing hotels to boost the tourism industry, install pipelines and stations for added water supply, develop power plants to deliver electricity, and build housing units to accommodate the Sinai population (Lief, 1982). The government also announced a national project in 1994 to allocate 75 billion Egyptian pounds for the development of Sinai until 2017.

But the Egyptian state did not fulfill many of its promises to develop Sinai. The multi-stage, long-term national project to develop the entire Sinai Peninsula failed. According to a Nasser Academy for Military Science study, sector-based planning and lack of a clear vision stalled this national project and signaled its failure (Al-Tahtawy, 2012). Military General Adel Suleiman, who served as an intelligence officer in Sinai, highlighted corruption as another reason behind the failure to implement other development projects in Sinai (Eleiba, 2013).

However, the Egyptian government did continue to focus on the development of the tourism industry in South Sinai. The tourism industry flourished in South Sinai in the 1990s and

early 2000s. Egypt expanded Ophira and its former Israeli airport in the South, transforming

Sharm El Sheikh into an international touristic destination. The infrastructure in Neviot and Di

Zahav laid the groundwork for Egypt's future developments in Nuwaiba and Dahab to emerge as

key towns on the Red Sea. The number of hotels increased from 17 in 1994 to 225 in in 2002,

which prompted an increase in the South Sinai population by over 70 percent (ICG, 2007).

Although the booming tourism industry provided many new employment opportunities, hotels

mainly employed migrants from the Nile Valley while forcefully removing Bedouins from the

rapidly expanding, coastal territories in South Sinai (Dentice, 2018).

On the other hand, North Sinai suffered continued economic marginalization after Egypt

regained control of the peninsula. The Egyptian regime treated North Sinai as a demilitarized

security zone (Aziz, 2016). The agricultural sector suffered in the North due to diminishing rain

water and irrigation water from al-Salam Canal not reaching lands beyond Beer al-Abd, (ICG,

2007). The government also resettled Egyptians from the Nile Valley to al-Arish and provided

them with economic opportunities to alter the North Sinai population (Pelham, 2012). As a

result, Bedouins did not benefit much from the agro-industry jobs. By the mid-1990s, some

Bedouins resorted to smuggling drugs and gold through underground tunnels (Sabry, 2015).

Following the second Palestinian Intifada in 2000, weapons became another commodity that they

smuggled between North Sinai and Gaza (Abu Mudallala & Al-Agha, 2011).

The post-occupation period deprived the Sinai Bedouins of basic human rights, especially

in the North. The Egyptian government did not only frame the Bedouins as potential spies, but

also treated them as second-class citizens (Aziz, 2016). It denied them land ownership rights

(Pelham, 2012), excluded them from government and security positions (Sabry, 2015), and

refused to grant some Bedouins citizenship (K. Ashour, 2016). Some of the Sinai-located

members of al-Azazma tribe, for example, have remained stateless for decades (Mohamed,

2016). Moreover, the entire Sinai Peninsula did not house any universities in the post-occupation

period, which partially explains why only five percent of the North Sinai population had

achieved higher education by 1996 (CAPMAS, 1996). Further, over 95 percent of the North

Sinai population had no access to the public sewage network and over 50,000 people had no

access to water by the mid-1990s.

3.4   The Initial Rebellion Period 2004-2010

Historically, Sinai had no radical Islamist movement fighting the state or attacking

civilians (Sabry, 2015). Even when militant groups such as al-Jihad and al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya

were carrying out attacks in mainland Egypt between the 1970s and 1990s (e.g., the assassination

of former President Sadat, the attack on Assyut Security Directorate, and the Luxor massacre),

Sinai did not encounter such havoc. In October 2004, however, militants carried out three

synchronized bombings in the South Sinai resort towns of Taba and Nuweiba, killing 34 people

and injuring more than 150 others. The bombings were the first major terrorist attacks in Sinai

and the first on Egyptian soil since the 1997 Luxor attack ("Al-Qaeda 'behind Egypt

bombings,'" 2004). Subsequently, militants carried out major synchronized bombing attacks in

Sharm El Sheikh in July 2005 and in Dahab in April 2006, killing over 100 people in total across

the two operations.

The perpetrators of the attacks in Sinai were from North Sinai. Following the Sharm El

Sheikh bombings, the militant group Jama'at al-Tawhid wal-Jihad Fi Ard al-Kanana

(Monotheism and Jihad in Egypt) claimed responsibility for the attack as well as the 2004

bombings ("Al-Tawhid Wal-Jihad in Egypt Claims Responsibility for Sharm El Sheikh Attacks,"

2005). The statement identified group members from al-Sawarka, Tarabin, al-Masa'id, and al-

Tayaha tribes. The Egyptian Ministry of Interior later attributed the 2006 Dahab attack to the same group (Ramadan, 2014). Khalid Musa'id, a dentist from al-Sawarka tribe, founded the group with Nasr al-Malahi, a law graduate from a Palestinian descent residing in al-Arish (O. Ashour, 2016; Pelham, 2012). They recruited Bedouins and Palestinians in areas that had suffered from unemployment and lacking infrastructure, such as Sheikh Zuwayid and Rafah in North Sinai (ICG, 2007). After the police killed Musa'id in 2005, al-Malahi assumed leadership and extended the group's ties with Salafi militants across the border in Gaza (Said, 2017).

At the local level, the 2004-2006 attacks signaled an unprecedented rebellion against the Egyptian state in Sinai. The Sinai-based group chose strategic targets in the South that would hamper Egypt's flourishing tourism industry and disrupt Egyptian-Israeli relations. The targets included hotels, campsites, restaurants, and markets in the resort towns of Taba, Nuweiba, Sharm El Sheikh, and Dahab. The group also vowed to continue the war to evict Jews and Christians from "the Zionist axis of evil and prostitution in Sinai" (Mahmoud, 2005, p. 1). Moreover, the dates of the attacks carried a clear message of defiance to the Egyptian state. The 2004 bombings that killed 12 Israeli tourists took place on October 7, one day after the 31st anniversary of the 1973 War against Israel. The 2005 bombings took place on July 23, which marked the 53rd anniversary of the 1952 revolution that overthrew King Farouk, declared Egypt an Arab republic, and installed an Egyptian military ruler. The 2006 bombings took place on April 24, on the eve of the 24th anniversary of Sinai's liberation. At the time of the attacks, the Minister of Interior Habib al-Adli asserted that the militants' choice to align these national occasions with their attacks was no coincidence (Slackman, 2006).

The Sinai attacks also revealed the expansion of al-Qaeda's ideology in the peninsula. First, the name that the North Sinai-based militant group chose— Jama'at al-Tawhid wal-Jihad

—implied a linkage to Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi's militancy in Iraq. In 2000, Al-Zarqawi was in

charge of al-Tawhid wal-Jihad training camp in Herat, Afghanistan (McCants, 2015). He then

founded Jama'at al-Tawhid wal-Jihad in Iraq to fight the American forces and subsequently

pledged allegiance to al-Qaeda in 2004 (Weiss & Hassan, 2015). Second, the rhetoric of Jama'at

al-Tawhid wal-Jihad in Egypt was pro-al-Qaeda despite any lack of official affiliation. The group

explicitly framed the attacks on South Sinai resorts as a response to Bin Laden and al-Zawahiri's

calls for jihad and a retaliation against the U.S.-led coalition's intervention in Afghanistan and

Iraq ("Al-Tawhid Wal-Jihad in Egypt Claims Responsibility for Sharm El Sheikh Attacks,"

2005).

In response, the Egyptian state cracked down on the North Sinai Bedouins. General

Habib al-Adli, who assumed the role of the Minister of Interior and began clamping down on

Islamists one day after the 1997 Luxor attacks, applied his brutal campaign in Sinai after the

Taba Bombings. The campaign involved arbitrary arrests, detentions, and torture of thousands of

Bedouins (Sabry, 2015). Human rights organizations estimated the State Security Investigations

apparatus arrested approximately 3000 people from al-Arish, Rafah, and Sheikh Zuwayid after

the Taba attacks, including family members to obtain confessions and pressure wanted persons to

surrender (O. Ashour, 2016). Several North Sinai residents claimed that interrogators tortured

them in various ways, such as stripping them naked, hanging them by the hands, and

electrocuting them (Human Rights Watch, 2005). The State Security Investigations extended its

mass arrest campaigns after the Sharm El Sheikh bombings, resulting in the detention of about

600 more people by late August 2005 (Human Rights Watch, 2006). According to the Sinai

Prisoners Defense Front, civilian courts sentenced 300 in absentia, military courts sentenced

several hundred more, and at least 100 Sinai detainees were still in prisons by 2010 (as cited in

Sabry, 2015). The crackdown fueled resentment among the Sinai Bedouins (Pelham, 2012).

Meanwhile, the booming underground smuggling industry provided economic gains for

the North Sinai Bedouins. Israel and Egypt imposed a blockade on the Gaza strip after Hamas

seized it from Fatah forces loyal to the Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in June 2007.

With the blockade severely restricting the flow of goods into Gaza, the underground tunnels

became the main source of basic goods (Abu Mudallala & Al-Agha, 2011). From mid-2007 to

November 2008, the number of tunnels linking North Sinai to Gaza soared from 20 to at least

500, increasing the scale of the illegal trade to over 600,000 dollars of goods annually (Al-

Sorani, 2008). The devastating 2008 Gaza War bolstered North Sinai's smuggling industry even

further and, by late 2010, over 1200 tunnels were operating to smuggle food, water, fuel,

construction materials, and weapons (Abu Mudallala & Al-Agha, 2011; Yaari, 2012). The

growth of illegal trade between Sinai and Gaza continued to increase, as the related Egyptian

state-imposed punishments were relatively lenient. According to Egyptian security official

Khaled Okasha, Egypt's posture towards the smuggling industry not only provided the North

Sinai Bedouins with a source of income, but it also halted armed activity in the peninsula

temporarily between the 2006 Dahab bombings and the 2011 uprisings (as cited in Sabry, 2015).

The tunnels also facilitated a Salafi militancy spillover from Gaza into North Sinai. One

key factor contributing to Sinai's Salafi militancy was crossover of Salafi preachers from Gaza to

North Sinai (Dentice, 2018). Building on existing grievances in the North, some of these

preachers called for violent resistance against the state, supporting Palestine, and denouncing the

traditional Sufi orders (McGregor, 2016). Salafism spread amongst the youth and some Bedouins

called for boycotting and fighting the government (Yaari, 2012). Another contributing factor

involved the militants escaping into northeast Sinai in 2009 when Hamas cracked down on Salafi groups in Gaza (Pelham, 2012). The relocated militants regrouped and created a number of factions, some of which eventually merged to form the Sinai-based group Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis (O. Ashour, 2016). By late 2010, Tawhid wal-Jihad, al-Salafiyya al-Jihadiyya, the Mujahideen Council, and Jaysh al-Islam were among the militant groups operating in Sinai (Aziz, 2016). Together, these groups laid the groundwork for a more refined militant insurgency that merged localized grievances with an external Salafi militant ideology.

3.5   Post-Revolution Period 2011-2013

On January 25, 2011, demonstrators took to the streets of Cairo, protesting the brutality of al-Adli's Ministry of Interior. Three days later the police forces withdrew from the streets, gave way to the demonstrators to take over the Tahrir Square in downtown Cairo, and prompted the Egyptian military to deploy its forces across the country. Further, about 24,000 prisoners were able to escape from the Egyptian jails during the revolution (Salah & Talaat, 2011). The continuous nationwide protests and escalating demands culminated in former President Mubarak stepping down and transferring power to the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces on February 11, 2011. The council then ruled the country until June 29, 2012, after which the Muslim Brotherhood candidate Mohamed Morsi took over as the first Egyptian President since the revolution.

In Sinai, violence against the Egyptian security forces increased during the revolution. Apart from sporadic Sinai protests on January 25, 2011, attacks against security compounds and the State Security Investigations buildings erupted in North Sinai after the police killed a 22-year-old demonstrator in Sheikh Zuwayid on January 27 (Sabry, 2015; Salim, 2011). Among those who escaped from Egyptian jails were Salafi militants who reportedly resorted to North

Sinai, bolstering the existing network of militant groups (Pelham, 2012). After Mubarak stepped down, the attacks against the Egyptian security forces continued in Sinai, with a total of 19 attacks under the rule of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (Al-Beheiry, 2017). One of the most notable was in July of 2011, when masked militants with black flags attacked a security facility in al-Arish that killed at least three. The incident occurred following a protest by North Sinai Bedouins demanding the release of their relatives in connection with the Taba bombings (Al-Tabarani, 2011; "Martyrdom of 3 including a Military Officer and the Injury of 19 in an attack by masked militants raising Black Flags on Al-Arish Security Facility," 2011). The militants later distributed documents, titled "al-Qaeda in the Sinai Peninsula," in al-Arish, Sheikh Zuwayid, and Rafah, "condemning the Egyptian military over the Camp David Peace Accords" (as cited in Sabry, 2015, p. 145). Reiterating their demands to release their detained relatives, armed Bedouins later besieged the Multinational Forces and Observers camp in North Sinai in March 2012 (Al-Wafd News, 2014).

Israel also became a more recurring target for the Sinai militant insurgency in the post-revolution period. By 2011, Egypt was supplying 40 percent of Israel's natural gas through pipelines in Sinai as part of the Gas Supply and Purchase Agreement between the two countries (Bar-Eli, 2012). North Sinai militants bombed a gas pipeline for the first time on February 5, 2011 (Barnett, 2014). After the 13th gas pipeline bombing in April 2012, the Egyptian state-owned gas company canceled the deal and stopped exporting natural gas to Israel ("Egypt scraps Israel gas supply deal," 2012). When the new militant group Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis publicly announced itself in an online video released July 2012, it claimed responsibility for all 13 pipeline bombings in North Sinai that al-Qaeda's leader al-Zawahiri had praised (Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis, 2012). Upon its media debut, the group also claimed a couple of cross-border attacks on

South Israel (Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis, 2014b). Another newly-formed group, Majlis Shura al-Mujahideen fi Aknaf Bayt al-Maqdis (The Mujahideen Shura Council in the Environs of Jerusalem), released a video claiming responsibility for a cross-border attack that killed an Israeli worker in June 2012 (Fursan Al-Balagh, 2012; Greenberg, 2012). The same group claimed four rocket attacks on South Israel in the following months (START, 2018). Following the revolution, the rising Sinai insurgency posed a greater threat to Israel.

Meanwhile, the Egyptian military began to increase its presence in North Sinai in the post-revolution period. In response to attacks on security compounds, gas pipelines, and Israel, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces launched Operation Eagle in North Sinai in August 2011 (Eleiba, 2011). For the first time since the Camp David Accords, the military deployed 2500 soldiers and 250 armored personnel carriers in North Sinai with the goal of restoring control and deterring militant groups (Deif, 2018). The Minister of Defense Mohamed Hussein Tantawi later announced that the military ensured complete security in Sinai by October of 2011 (Pelham, 2012).

A major attack in North Sinai after Morsi came to power on June 30, 2012 went beyond the prompting of an isolated security response. After about 35 militants attacked a Rafah security checkpoint at the border, killing 16 military officers and soldiers on August 5, the military did launch Operation Eagle II (Al-Badry, Abu Diraa, & Mubarak, 2012). The campaign aimed to reinforce security checkpoints in Rafah, Sheikh Zuwayid, and al-Arish and restore security. A military spokesman announced the results of the operation a month later, which included killing 33 militants, arresting 38, destroying 31 underground tunnels at the border, and seizing weapons and vehicles that militants use in their attacks ("Military News Conference to Announce the Results of the Sinai Operation," 2012). Meanwhile, Morsi, along with senior military officials,

visited North Sinai during the operation in the first presidential visit in decades. Morsi met with the Bedouin tribes, promised development projects, and later sanctioned foreign investments in the peninsula (Pelham, 2012). Further, he forced the retirement of the longstanding Minister of Defense and the Army Chief of Staff and appointed Abdelfattah al-Sisi and Sedki Sobhi respectively in their vacant positions.

Militant groups in Sinai apparently differed on whether to attack the Egyptian military under Morsi's rule. After the Rafah checkpoint attack, the militant groups Majlis Shura al-Mujahideen and al-Salafiyya al-Jihadiyya issued statements denying their responsibility for the attack. Despite not commenting on the attack, Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis' actions were the most hostile. The group assassinated Bedouin leaders in Rafah who endorsed the military after launching Operation Eagle II (Masrawy, 2013; Sabry, 2015). However, attacking the military was still a turning point that no militant group would afford to publicly claim. Later in May 2013, militants kidnapped six Egyptian policemen and one army border guard in North Sinai. But this time, the militants released them a week later after talks between the military and tribal leaders (Abedine & Smith-Park, 2013). Despite these major incidents, Morsi's year in power saw only 11 attacks in total, seven of which targeted security forces in Sinai ("Al-Badil Announces the Number of Terrorist Attacks in Sinai between January 2011 and January 2014," 2014; Al-Beheiry, 2017). The relative calmness in North Sinai throughout June 2013 hinted at potential negotiations between the government and Bedouins (Gold, 2013).

3.6   Post-Morsi Period 2013-2017

On June 30, 2013, anti-Morsi mass protests took place in Egypt demanding the President's resignation after one year in power and calling for a new election. The military soon released an audio statement on the next day that delivered a 48-hour ultimatum to Morsi to

satisfy the public's demands. Morsi defied the demand and stressed his legitimacy as the country's president in a televised speech. But after the end of the 48 hours on July 3, al-Sisi announced the ouster of Morsi and the installation of an interim government with Chief Justice of the Supreme Constitutional Court Adli Mansour as Acting President.

The number of attacks in North Sinai skyrocketed to over 200 in the five months after the ouster of Morsi (TIMEP, 2017a). Attacks on the military and police facilities in North Sinai killed at least 33 soldiers in the first month (Al-Quds Al-Arabi, 2013; Sabry, 2013). Five days after the Egyptian security forces dispersed pro-Morsi sit-ins in Cairo on August 14 that had killed over 600, North Sinai militants killed 25 soldiers in Rafah (N. Ali & Fakhry, 2014; Alkhshali & Younes, 2013). Clashes and attacks in Sinai killed at least another 20 individuals in the week to follow (Gold, 2013). The killing of five Sinai militants by an Israeli drone strike in August also ignited Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis' highly intensified rhetoric deeming the Egyptian government a traitor and a collaborator with Zionists (Sabry, 2015; The Guardian, 2013). Since then, Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis has become more vocal, assassinated security officials, attempted to assassinate the Minister of Interior, attacked military posts, shot down a military helicopter in North Sinai, fired rockets at South Israel, and bombed the military intelligence command in Ismailiya as well as the South Sinai, Cairo, and Daqahliya Security Directorates (Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis, 2014b). By late 2013, the group explicitly reiterated that its fight was against the Egyptian security forces and Israel (Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis, 2014b).

Five months after President al-Sisi came to power, Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis (the peninsula's strongest militant group) announced its pledge of allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in November 2014, and became Wilayat Sinai. The average number of attacks in North Sinai surged from 12 per month in 2014 to at about one per day in 2015, 2016, and 2017, killing over

2300 people over the three-year period (TIMEP, 2017a). Wilayat Sinai was the deadliest militant

group in Egypt during that period, claiming responsibility for almost 900 attacks (see Figure

3.2). After pledging allegiance to ISIS, the group mainly claimed responsibility for attacks inside

the Sinai Peninsula only, while the ISIS Egypt branch claimed responsibility for those on the

mainland.
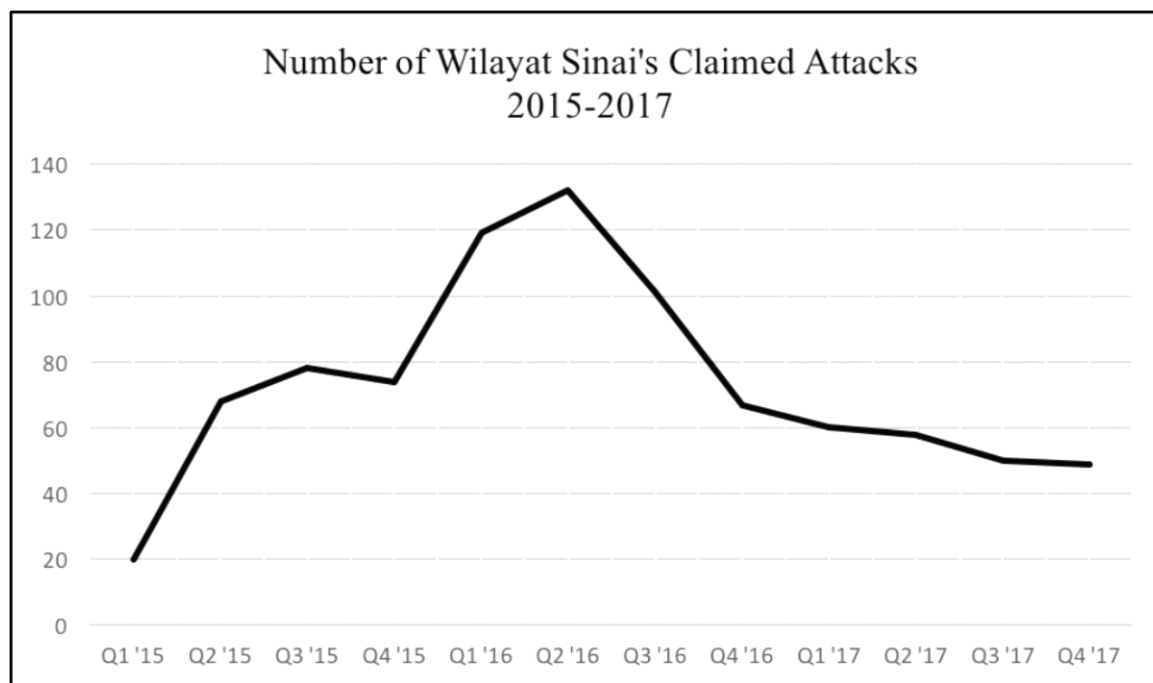
*Figure 3.2 Number of Wilayat Sinai's claimed attacks 2015-2017. Source: TIMEP's
Egypt Security Watch reports.*

Wilayat Sinai underwent major tactical shifts over time in the peninsula. In the group's

attacks in 2015, improvised explosive devices (IEDs) were the main weapon of choice with at

least 130 attacks (TIMEP, 2017b). The group's most notable attack was the downing of the

Russian airliner in October of 2015. The use of firearms and snipers against the Egyptian

security forces were also prevalent throughout the same year (Al-Beheiry, 2017). The use of

IEDs surged in Wilayat Sinai's attacks against Egyptian security forces in 2016, exceeding 220

incidents in North Sinai (TIMEP, 2017b). Most importantly, Wilayat Sinai's targets expanded beyond security forces and foreign tourists to include local civilians in late 2016. The focus on civilians in Wilayat Sinai's attacks became clear soon following an Egyptian airstrike killed the group's leader Abu Duaa al-Ansari in August of 2016 (Calderwood, 2016). After Abu Hajar al-Hashemi replaced al-Ansari, attacks against Sufi Muslims and Christian Copts increased (Al-Naba', 2016). The group beheaded two Sufi men accused of practicing witchcraft, including a 100-year old cleric in November of 2016. Coinciding with two suicide attacks on Cairo churches by the ISIS Egypt branch in December, Wilayat Sinai also started a systematic campaign targeting Christian Copts in North Sinai (Said & Naguib, 2018).

The year 2017 emboldened a shift in both the group's tactical operations and its ideological underpinnings. In the first quarter, Wilayat Sinai claimed three attacks against Christian Copts in al-Arish. By the end of February, around 250 Coptic Christians had already fled their homes seeking refuge in Ismailiya ("Egypt's Coptic Christians flee Sinai after deadly attacks," 2017; TIMEP, 2017a). Meanwhile, the ISIS Egypt branch continued its assault on churches, killing almost 50 individuals during Palm Sunday service in Alexandria and Tanta (Dentice, 2018). The use of inghimasi attacks, in which suicide fighters use small arms and explosives until they die, also increased in the peninsula. The number of Wilayat Sinai's suicide operations in North Sinai jumped from three in 2016 to eight in 2017 (Gomaa, 2018). The shift was arguably due to pressure from the Egyptian military, the increasing number of Palestinians in Wilayat Sinai, and the change in leadership (Said & Naguib, 2018, p. 6). The attack on a North Sinai Sufi mosque that killed over 300 worshippers during Friday prayer in November illustrates the extent of permissible civilian targets for the Sinai insurgency by 2017. Although Wilayat Sinai has not claimed responsibility for the attack, the Egyptian Attorney General's

public statement asserted that the militants were carrying ISIS flags as they shot the worshippers and bombed the mosque (Walsh & Youssef, 2017).

The new military strategy in North Sinai, however, signaled more constraints on the Bedouins in the post-Morsi period. A strident curfew and a shoot to kill policy governed residents of Rafah, Sheikh Zuwayid, and al-Arish since July 2013 (Abdullah, 2015; Mokhtar, 2016). The military started a forced eviction and mass home demolitions in Rafah in the same month as part of an official plan to create a buffer zone to prevent smuggling weapons from Gaza into Sinai. According to Human Rights Watch (2015), the campaign resulted in the eviction of over 3000 Sinai Bedouin families by August 2015, who reportedly received neither adequate compensation nor temporary housing. The military's campaign resumed in late 2017, resulting in the destruction of over 3000 homes and commercial buildings by May 2018 (Human Rights Watch, 2018). The military's counter-tunnel operations have also resulted in outrage due to disruptions in the profitable smuggling industry (Nichols, 2013; Sabry, 2016). Further, bringing memories of the State Security Investigations after the Taba bombings, the Second Field Army command in Ismailiya and the 101 battalion in al-Arish have purportedly become notorious among the Bedouins due to the military's mass arrest campaign in North Sinai since 2013 (Sabry, 2015).

On the other hand, the Egyptian security forces also shifted their tactics in Sinai over time. In 2015, security forces were mostly reactive, using traditional warfare tactics against the Sinai militants (Said & Naguib, 2018). They also worked to create a buffer zone at the border with Gaza. Coinciding with Wilayat Sinai's increasing number of attacks in the first half of 2015, the military and police conducted at least 60 counterterrorism operations per month and reportedly killed around 1400 in North Sinai between March and June 2015 (TIMEP, 2016b).

Nevertheless.the militants were able to briefly take over parts of Sheikh Zuwayid on July 1, 2015 (Awad, 2016). In the afternoon, the military launched airstrikes that pushed the militants out of the city and spoiled ISIS's plan to control territory in North Sinai. Two months later, the military launched the Martyr's Right Operation, which reportedly killed over 500 alleged terrorists, arrested about 600 suspects, and destroyed more than 450 IEDs in September 2015 (Tantawy, 2015). Despite reports of large numbers of casualties and arrests, Wilayat Sinai's attacks nevertheless increased between October and December 2015.

The Egyptian military gradually crippled the Sinai insurgency in 2016 and 2017. After the number of Wilayat Sinai's attacks surged in the first half of 2016, the military launched two phases of the Martyr's Right Operation in the same year, conducting almost 50 counterterrorism operations (TIMEP, 2017b). Unlike the first phase, however, the military extended its operations beyond just Al-Arish, Rafah, and Sheikh Zuwayid to include the Halal mountain in Central Sinai and other hideouts (SIS, 2017). Moreover, the military extended its policy at the Rafah-Gaza border to Al-Arish and Sheikh Zuwayid by displacing residents around key military locations and government infrastructure (Said & Naguib, 2018). It also attempted to stifle Wilayat Sinai by reportedly killing its leaders, including Abu Duaa al-Ansari and over 40 of his aides (Calderwood, 2016). Whereas the number of Wilayat Sinai's attacks dropped between mid-2016 and end of 2017, the Egyptian military continued to mount pressure on the group by tripling the number of counterterrorism operations in 2017 (TIMEP, 2017a). Further, the Tarabin tribe spearheaded an initiative in April 2017 to unite the Bedouins against Wilayat Sinai militants ("Al-Tarabin Tribe Leads an Initiative to Unite Sinai Tribes to Face the Takfiris," 2017). As a result, al-Tarabin units fought alongside the Egyptian military in North Sinai, strengthening the counterterrorism operations.

3.7   Concluding Thoughts

This chapter laid out the situation context of the ongoing Sinai conflict between the

Egyptian state and ISIS in North Sinai. The Israeli occupation of Sinai set the stage for growing

suspicions against the Bedouins and differential economic policies in the North vis-à-vis the

South. The Egyptian rule over the peninsula upon liberation carried with it social alienation,

economic deprivation, a lack of educational opportunities, and underdevelopment to the North

Sinai Bedouins. The state's crackdown on the North in the aftermath of the 2004-2006 Sinai

bombings violated the Bedouins' human rights and further exacerbated their grievances, yet

simultaneously allowed them to benefit from illegal trade with Gaza. Hence, when the 2011

revolution erupted, it presented the ideal backdrop for a North Sinai-based militant insurgency to

emerge and flourish amid political turmoil. Ever since, militants have attacked the Egyptian

security forces in Sinai, who have responded in turn with several, multi-stage counterterrorism

operations. Nevertheless, the sophistication of the insurgency's tactics, the severity of its attacks,

and the scope of its permissible targets have evolved over the years. Wilayat Sinai is the peak of

the insurgency and remains an ongoing threat to Egypt's economy and national security.

4   PHOTOGRAPHIC OUTPUT AND MILITARY ACTIVITY

The digital media sphere has been a key site of contestation between Wilayat Sinai and the

Egyptian military. Wilayat Sinai's predecessor, Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis, previously posted videos

and standard written statements on web forums, but once the group pledged allegiance to ISIS,

its media operations evolved. Wilayat Sinai has produced hundreds of high-quality images, most

of which serve as components of photo reports and daily news briefs. It has also benefited from

ISIS's official and unofficial distribution networks. Wilayat Sinai's photographic output has

achieved featured visibility in the broader group's *Dabiq*, *Rumiyah*, and *al-Naba'* publications,

as well as enhanced circulation on ISIS's centralized web forums and social networking sites. On the other hand, the military has utilized its official Facebook page as the main hub to disseminate hundreds of photographs documenting its operations in North Sinai to millions of followers since late 2012. The circulation of these images has moved beyond the millions of followers on Facebook as the state and private-owned media use them as official documentations of on-ground events in Sinai. Both sides of the Sinai conflict developed photographic campaigns to complement their military action over the past few years.

This chapter considers what, if any, relationships exist between the frequency of Wilayat Sinai and the Egyptian military's photographs and visual messaging strategies in the Sinai conflict and the local and regional military context. It explores how changes in the photographic outputs and use of scenic elements relate to the source, date, and nature of the local and regional military events. Several contextual military factors emerge as key explanatory factors for the changing photographic output and visual strategy. They include attacks by the militant group, onset of counterterrorism military operations, completion of counterterrorism operations, loss of leaders, and the introduction of participating local groups into the battlefield activities. For each military contextual factor, the chapter first examines the shifts in the two photographic campaigns using a quantitative analysis. The statistical tests pinpoint significant changes in the campaigns that coincide with military events on the ground over the two-year period. A qualitative analysis, however, further reveals the nature of the state and non-state actor's visual responses and identify other important campaign shifts that may not be statistically significant per se.

Wilayat Sinai and the Egyptian military disseminated 1905 images of the Sinai conflict in the 2016-2017 time frame of this study. Over the 24-month period, Wilayat Sinai disseminated a

total of 800 Sinai-related images on ISIS's official Telegram channel, while the Egyptian

military disseminated 1105 on its spokesperson's Facebook page. A monthly break down of the

photographic output reveals that both the Egyptian military and Wilayat Sinai did change the

number of photographs they released over time (see Figure 4.1). Taken as a whole, however, the

two group's outputs exhibited no linear relationship (r (22) = *.20, p* > .05).
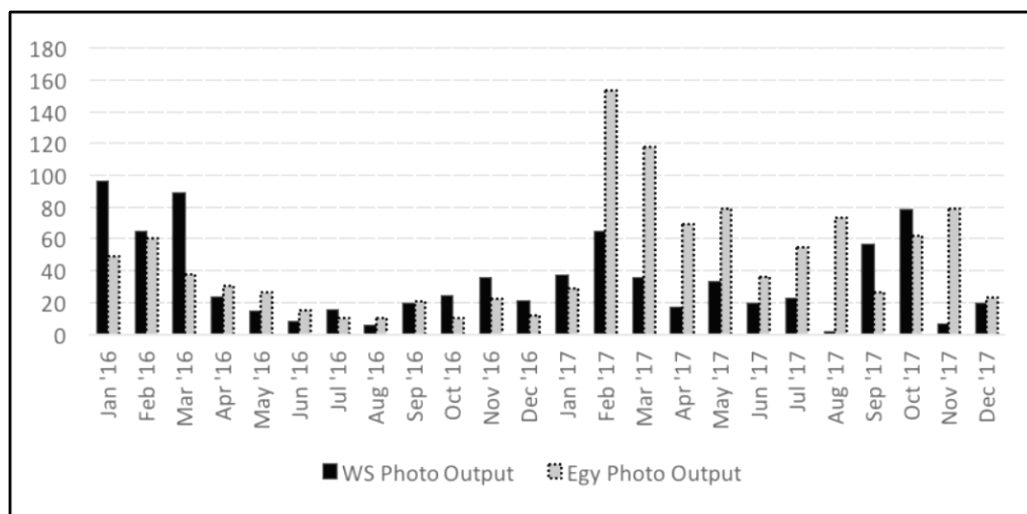
Figure 4.1 Wilayat Sinai and the Egyptian military's photographic outputs in 2016-2017.

4.1   Local Attacks by the Militant Group

When grouped together in one unit of analysis, the number of Wilayat Sinai's claimed

attacks did not correspond to shifts in the photographic output of the ISIS province or the

Egyptian military in 2016 and 2017. No relationship existed between the group's monthly attacks

and output (r (22) = .10, *p* > .05). Even when Wilayat Sinai's claimed attacks dropped by almost

half from 2016 to 2017, its photographic output remained relatively the same. An independent-

samples t-test revealed no significant difference in Wilayat Sinai images in the 2016 (*M* = 34.42,

SD = 31.13) and 2017 (*M* = 32.25, *SD* = 23.45) conditions (*t* (22) = .19, *p* > .05). Similarly, no

relationship existed between the group's monthly attacks and the Egyptian military's output (*r*

(22) = -.18, $p > .50$). But as Wilayat Sinai's attacks dropped from 2016 to 2017, the Egyptian military's photographic output increased. An independent-samples t-test revealed a significant difference in the Egyptian military images in the 2016 ($M = 25.25$, $SD = 16.42$) and 2017 ($M = 66.83$, $SD = 38.75$) conditions (t (22) = -3.42, $p < .05$). At the broadest level, the frequency of Wilayat Sinai's claimed attacks by itself did not associate with either increases or decreases in the group or the Egyptian military's photographic outputs (see Figure 4.2).
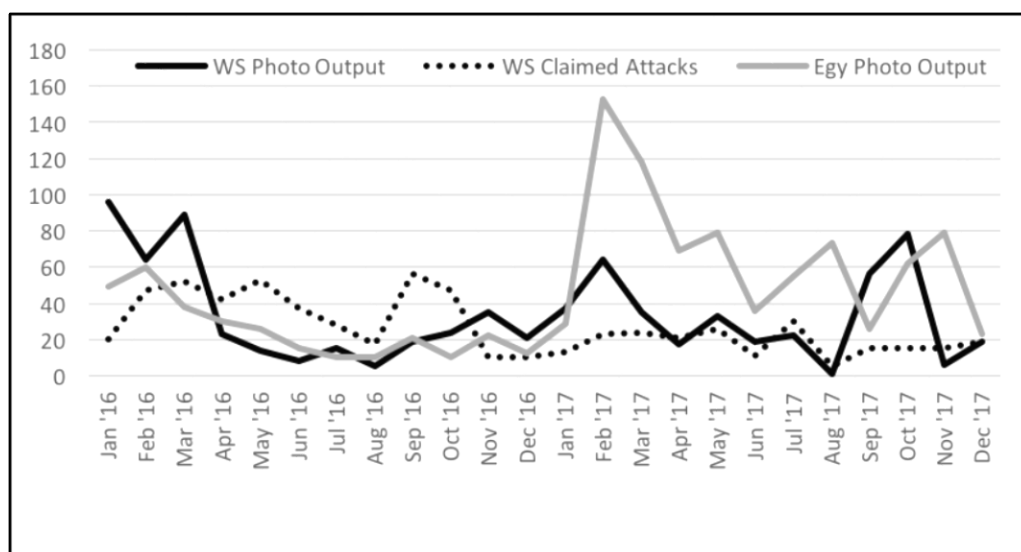
Figure 4.2 Wilayat Sinai's claimed attacks and the group and military's photographic outputs in 2016-2017. Source for number of attacks: TIMEP's Egypt Security Watch reports.

The number and nature of Wilayat Sinai's claimed attacks, however, did correspond to a tactical shift in one of the provincial group's visual messaging strategies. The possible death visual trope correlated with the claimed attacks (*r* (22) = *.50, p < .05*). The display of possible death also dropped from 25 images in 2016 to 10 in 2017, coinciding with the simultaneous drop in Wilayat Sinai's attacks from 419 to 217. Almost all the possible death images in the first year depicted Egyptian soldiers in the field positioned next to detonating IEDs. The shots hinted at the possibility of fatal outcomes but provided no textual or visual confirmation of any deaths (see

Figure 4.3). In 2017, however, not one image of possible death appeared in the context of IED

attacks. Instead, they mainly showed Egyptian soldiers at the crosshairs of snipers, running from

approaching car bombs, or suffering injury after firearm attacks. The content of possible death

images over the two-year period was specifically in alignment with the surge in Wilayat Sinai's

IED attacks in 2016, after which the group shifted to suicide attacks and use of firearms in 2017

(Said & Naguib, 2018; TIMEP, 2017b). Thus, the possible death visual trope reflected the

group's frequency of attacks and its changing weapon of choice over the study's two-year

period.

Figure 4.3 The detonation of an IED south of Sheikh Zuwayid; disseminated March 2, 2016.

Although the overall quantitative analysis revealed no relationships between the attacks

and Wilayat Sinai and the Egyptian military's outputs over the two-period, a closer look at major

attacks occurring in the same time period adds more nuance. Examining the Egyptian military

and Wilayat Sinai's use of visual elements and tropes after the major attacks also provides a

deeper understanding of the visual battlefield of the media campaigns. A summary of the key

Sinai attacks appears in Figure 4.4.
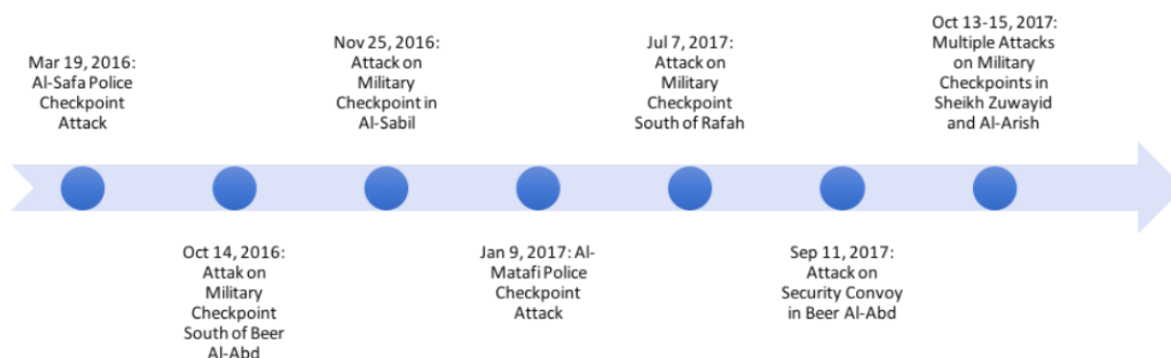
Figure 4.4 Timeline of several key military attacks in North Sinai in 2016 and 2017.

Two of the major Wilayat Sinai attacks bore virtually no resemblance to noticeable changes in photographic output or the visual messaging strategies in the competing online media campaigns. The first was the al-Safa police checkpoint attack, which killed 15 policemen in March 2016 (Official Page of Ministry of Interior, 2016). Immediately after the attack, Wilayat Sinai released an 11-image news brief depicting the militants getting out of a pickup truck, shooting at the checkpoint, and confiscating weapons and IDs. Despite the posting of the extended news brief, the incident did not signal a significant shift in the total output of the group's March photographic campaign. While Wilayat Sinai's photographic output did rise from 64 images in February to 89 in March 2016, the images constituted only eight percent (3 of 36) of the images the group used to portray ongoing destruction in in March. The Egyptian military's images in the immediate aftermath of the al-Safa attack also remained relatively constant and did not include any images showing the military's retaliation for the attack.

The second attack that had no correspondence with a change in the visual media campaigns was the Beer al-Abd military checkpoint attack in October 2016, which killed 12 security personnel (Official Page of Armed Forces Spokesman, 2016e). The next day, Wilayat

Sinai released a four-image news brief showing Egyptian soldiers and flags at the checkpoint, gunfire, and the body of a soldier on the ground. The four images were Wilayat Sinai's only depiction of an armed attack in October 2016 and did not signal a major shift in October's photographic campaign. Wilayat Sinai's output had steadily increased between August and November of 2016. In October, the provincial group distributed 24 images, in which the inclusion of the four Beer al-Abd attack images did not make much difference. The Egyptian military's output in the immediate aftermath of the attack fell within the regular monthly ebbs and flows that occurred from August to December of 2016. The military's 10 images in October displayed no military operations serving as retaliation for the attack. Instead, they showed stationed security forces, a school opening, and confiscated explosive materials. Subsequently, Wilayat Sinai's major attacks in November 2016 onward gave a different picture.

4.1.1   Al-Sabil Checkpoint Attack

The attack on the al-Sabil military checkpoint in North Sinai did correspond to a shift in Wilayat Sinai's photographic output. The attack killed eight military personnel late in November of 2016 (Official Page of Armed Forces Spokesman, 2016d). Wilayat Sinai released a 21-image photo report on November 27 depicting the attack. This one photo report made up 60 percent of the group's November output, marking a surge from October and the highest point in the group's output since March 2016.

The attack also corresponded to a shift in Wilayat Sinai's visual messaging strategy. The provincial visual campaign presented the group as a devout, destructive, and lethal fighting force. Three images in the al-Sabil attack photo report displayed militants pointing the index finger to the heavens signaling monotheism (see Figure 4.5). The number of displays of this religious symbol in the photo report alone was higher than in any month in 2016 and 2017. All six

displays of ongoing destruction in November, up from three in October, appeared in this photo report, showing the checkpoint in flames and an Egyptian tank under gunfire. Further, seven out of all nine images displaying deaths in November were in the photo report, thus marking the peak in the display of deaths in Wilayat Sinai's photographic campaign in 2016-2017. These images focused on the display of dead corpses of military personnel, who reportedly died in the attack.

Figure 4.5 A militant making the monotheism gesture as he speaks to others before the operation; disseminated November 27, 2016.

4.1.2   Al-Matafi Checkpoint Attack

Another attack on al-Matafi police checkpoint in North Sinai accompanied a subsequent shift in Wilayat Sinai's photographic output. The January 9, 2017 attack killed eight and injured 12. Perhaps because the attack targeted a police checkpoint, the military soon reinforced the al-Matafi checkpoint among others in Sinai (Sakr, 2017). Wilayat Sinai released a 26-image news brief on January 11 displaying the attack, starting with images of a car bomb, followed by the militants carrying firearms and shooting at security forces, the destruction of an armored vehicle, police building reportedly under the militants' control, and a dead corpse of a policeman. This

single news brief made up 70 percent of the group's monthly output, marking the highest level by Wilayat Sinai over 10 months.

The attack corresponded with a shift in Wilayat Sinai's subsequent visual messaging strategy. After the successful attack, the provincial group reinforced its visual identity as a destructive and deadly fighting force. In January of 2017, Wilayat Sinai put out 12 images of ongoing destruction, up from seven such images in December 2016. Ten of the twelve appeared in the al-Matafi attack news brief, showing the explosions and fire at the checkpoint. The two January images displaying dead bodies were also in this brief, reportedly showing the corpse of a policeman. Further, the only display of possible death in the entire month was in this news brief, reportedly showing a policeman under gunfire as he tried to escape.

The al-Matafi checkpoint attack also coincided with a shift in the Egyptian military's output. The military disseminated 29 images in January 2017, with 20 of these images distributed after the al-Matafi attack. The images showed corpses, confiscated weaponry, and destroyed hideouts. They also displayed the former Army Chief of Staff Major General Mahmoud Hijazy visiting Egyptian special forces and the Minister of Immigration visiting the injured soldiers. Perhaps as a result, January marked the highest output of Egyptian military's images since April 2016.

The attack also corresponded with a slight shift the military's visual messaging strategy. After the occurrence of the al-Matafi attack, the military placed some greater emphasis on presenting itself as a destructive fighting force against the militant insurgency. All three displays of ongoing destruction in January, which constituted the largest number of such Egyptian military images since September 2016, appeared after the al-Matafi attack. The examples of ongoing destruction showed hideouts and motorcycles in flames.

4.1.3 Military Checkpoint Attack Near Rafah

The attack on a military checkpoint in the south of Rafah corresponded with an increase in Wilayat Sinai's photographic output. The July 7, 2017 attack killed and injured 26 checkpoint personnel (Official Page of Armed Forces Spokesman, 2017a). Two days later, Wilayat Sinai released a 22-image news brief displaying the attack. The brief began with images showing a suicide attack on the checkpoint and followed those photographs with ones of explosions, militants running, gunfire, destruction, a soldier's dead corpse, air jets dropping missiles, and two militants praying after the attack. This brief made up Sinai Wilayat's entire July output and represented an increase from the 19 photographs the group distributed in June 2017.

The attack also coincided with a shift in the provincial group's visual messaging strategy. After the attack, Wilayat Sinai placed a greater emphasis on presenting itself as a destructive, pious fighting force. The ISIS province displayed seven shots of ongoing destruction at the checkpoint, up from six in June 2017, in one news brief distributed in July. Further, an image showing the militants praying after the attack was one of only five displays of this act of worship over the 2016-2017 time period.

The same Wilayat Sinai attack corresponded with a shift in the Egyptian military's photographic output. The military disseminated 55 images in July 2017, which came after only distributing 36 images in the previous month. Despite no presence of images in the week after the attack, the military's output bounced back with 39 images in the last 15 days of July, making up a full 71 percent of the military's monthly output.

The attack on the military checkpoint south of Rafah also coincided with a shift in the military's visual messaging strategy. In the aftermath of the attack, the military underscored its identity as a deadly fighting force. Later on the same day of the attack, the military disseminated

seven images showing the corpses of five militants who had attacked the checkpoint. All seven of the military's July death images appeared as part of the same Facebook post showing the attack aftermath. This post marked the second highest total of death images in the military's 2016-2017 photographic campaign.

4.1.4   Beer Al-Abd Security Convoy Attack

The attack on a security convoy in Beer Al-Abd corresponded with a shift in Wilayat Sinai's photographic output. The September 11, 2017 attack killed 18 and injured six policemen (Murad Higazy, 2017). Two days later, Wilayat Sinai disseminated a 26-image photo report displaying the unfolding attack and aftermath. The photo report began by showing a militant before he set out on a suicide attack. The subsequent shots showed a car bomb on the highway next to four armored vehicles, explosions, militants shooting, policemen's dead corpses, and confiscated belongings. This photo report made up about half of Wilayat Sinai's September 2017 output marking the highest point in the group's photographic output in seven months. The output represented a surge from the distribution of only one image in the previous month.

The Beer al-Abd attack also coincided with a shift in Wilayat Sinai's visual messaging strategy. The provincial group again highlighted itself as a destructive, deadly, and pious fighting force. Reversing the complete absence of ongoing destruction shots in August of 2017, Wilayat Sinai displayed 19 images of ongoing destruction in September, the month of the attack. Eighteen of the 19 images appeared in the Beer al-Abd attack photo report showing explosions, gunfire, and the police vehicles in flames. All seven death images distributed in September also appeared in this photo report, marking the second highest display of deaths in Wilayat Sinai's 2016-2017 photographic campaign. Further, the only image displaying the monotheism gesture

in the month of the attack was in the Beer al-Abd photo report, showing a suicide attacker pointing his index finger to the heavens before attacking the police.

4.1.5   *Multiple Military Checkpoint Attacks in North Sinai*

Multiple attacks on military checkpoints near al-Arish and Sheikh Zuwayid corresponded with another shift in the level of Wilayat Sinai's photographic output. Together, the three attacks killed 12 personnel between October 13 and 15, 2017 (Official Page of Armed Forces Spokesman, 2017f, 2017d). Wilayat Sinai disseminated two attack images on October 14 and a related14-image news brief two days later. The first news brief showed two militants who carried out a suicide attack in al-Arish. The second presented an array of images showing the Wilayat Sinai militants marching, gunfire, rockets, explosions at the checkpoints, the beheading of a soldier, a dead corpse, a checkpoint in flames, and the soldiers' confiscated belongings. Together, the two briefs made up over one-fifth of October's output, marking a surge from 56 images in September to 78 in October. The increase also resulted in the highest output level in Wilayat Sinai's photographic campaign over a 19-month period.

The checkpoint attacks in Northern Sinai also corresponded with a slight shift in Wilayat Sinai's visual messaging strategy. The provincial group faced a public challenge of maintaining its image as a destructive and deadly fighting force in the wake of the three attacks. Six of the 13 images displaying ongoing destruction from explosions, gunfire, and flames in October were in the second news brief. One of the two death images distributed in October appeared in the same brief showing a dead soldier in the aftermath of one of the attacks. However, the displays of death and ongoing destruction in the group's monthly photographic output dropped.

Similar to other major attacks on checkpoints, the multiple checkpoint attacks in al-Arish and Sheikh Zuwayid corresponded with an increase in the level of the Egyptian military's

photographic output. In response to the attacks, the military disseminated 23 images in three Facebook posts appearing on October 14 and 16, 2017. These posts made up 37 percent of the military's total October photographic output, marking a surge from 26 images in September to 62 in October.

These Northern Sinai checkpoint attacks also corresponded to a shift in the military's visual messaging strategy. The military presented itself as a lethal fighting force that could effectively counter the militant forces. Out of 29 death images the military distributed in October, 23 appeared in the three Facebook posts between October 14 and 16. These posts only focused on the dead corpses of militants, marking the height of monthly death images in the Egyptian military's photographic campaign in 2016 and 2017.

In sum, Wilayat Sinai's major attacks at the local front did not uniformly correspond to shifts in the provincial group and the Egyptian military's photographic campaigns. The type, target, and death toll of the attacks, however, do not explain why some major attacks corresponded with changes in output and messaging strategies, while others did not. All of the perpetrators of the major attacks were a group of militants, all targeted Egyptian security forces albeit military or police, and each attack resulted in approximately the same level of fatalities. The notable remaining difference between the major attacks was the date of their occurrence. The two attacks that did not correspond to changes in the photographic campaigns happened prior to November in 2016; the attacks that did correspond with changes occurred thereafter.

What changed in November of 2016 that might account for the apparent shift in the role of the major attacks? Wilayat Sinai's attacks dropped to a low of 10 in November for the first time in 2016, down from 47 in October 2016. The frequency of attacks never returned to the pre-November levels. The corresponding surges in Wilayat Sinai's photographic output following

each major attack served to maintain a virtual presence in response to military pressure. The increasing display of ongoing destruction, death, and religious symbols worked to reinforce a spectacle that exaggerated the group's prowess. The upticks in the Egyptian military's output in response, along with the displays of ongoing destruction and death, emphasized the military's ability to obliterate the insurgency in retaliation after a few of the major attacks.

4.2   Regional Attacks by the Militant Group

ISIS's attacks in Iraq and Syria did not correspond to shifts in Wilayat Sinai or the Egyptian military's photographic campaigns in 2016-2017. According to START's global terrorism database (GTD), ISIS conducted 2653 attacks in Iraq and Syria in 2016 and 2017 (GTD, 2017, 2018b). Comparing the regional military activity with the localized visual contestation in Sinai revealed no relationship between ISIS's monthly attacks in Iraq and Syria and Wilayat Sinai's photographic output (r (22) = -.07, p > .05). As ISIS's claimed attacks slightly dropped from 1376 in 2016 to 1277 in 2017, Wilayat Sinai's photographic output fell by 60 percent from 294 images to 119. Similarly, no relationship existed between ISIS's monthly attacks and the Egyptian military's photographic output (r (22) = .02, p > .05). Meanwhile, the number of attacks did not correspond to any shifts in visual elements or tropes on both sides. In short, ISIS's regional attacks did not interact with Wilayat Sinai and the military's outputs and visual messaging strategy (see Figure 4.6).
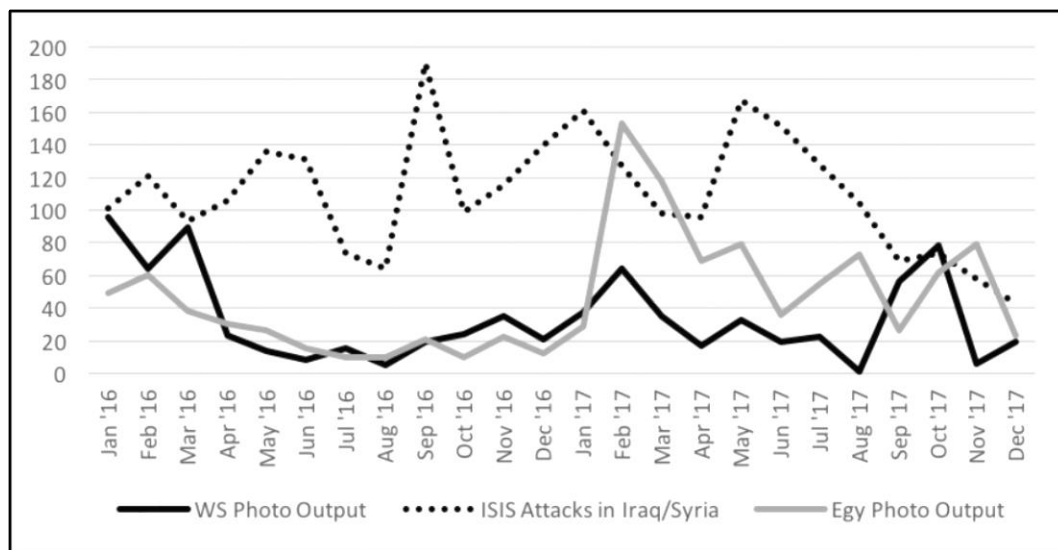
Figure 4.6 ISIS's attacks and Wilayat Sinai and the military's photographic outputs in 2016 and 2017. Source for number of attacks: Global Terrorism Database.

A qualitative examination of the relationship further reinforces the results. First, an ISIS suicide bomber carried out the deadliest attack for the group in Iraq over the two-year period, killing nearly 400 in al-Karrada neighborhood in Baghdad on July 3, 2016 (Basu, 2017). Two days later, Wilayat Sinai was disseminating its typical IED attack images at the time. The July images did not exhibit any major shifts and the output was within the typical range of summer 2016. The Egyptian military's output in July was also consistent with the following month, with the recurring images of key figures visiting injured soldiers. ISIS's deadliest attack in Iraq did not correspond with any notable shifts in Wilayat Sinai and the Egyptian military's photographic campaigns.

Second, ISIS's deadliest attack in Syria, which killed at least 120 members of the Syrian regime forces in Palmyra on December 10, 2016 ("Islamic State militants return to Syria's ancient Palmyra ruins," 2016), did not correspond with any major shifts either. The six images Wilayat Sinai disseminated in the 21 days after the attack showed two martyred members of the

group and one rocket attack. The only unusual thing about the images did not relate to ISIS in Syria. The group put out an image of a martyred militant who had conducted an attack on a Cairo church on December 11 that ISIS Egypt, not Wilayat Sinai, claimed. Following the Palmyra attack, the Egyptian military also continued to disseminate its typical images showing the destruction of tunnels, injured soldiers, and dead corpses of militants. None of the images on both sides reflected, addressed, condemned or celebrated any ISIS attacks in Syria or Iraq. Although the outputs of Wilayat Sinai and the Egyptian military declined in December 2016, they were both within the typical range of the fourth quarter of 2016. Unlike the local attacks in Sinai, ISIS's regional attacks did not coincide with any changes in the Sinai visual contestation.

4.3   Onset and Completion of Local Military Operations

The Egyptian military's claimed counterterrorism operations corresponded to shifts in Wilayat Sinai and the military's photographic outputs in at least one year. Although no relationship existed between the Egyptian military's monthly counterterrorism operations and Wilayat Sinai's output in 2016 and 2017 (r (22) = .06, p > .05), the two positively correlated in the first 12 months (r (22) = .66, p < .05). For the most part, the shifts in counterterrorism operations aligned with the group's output in 2016, but did not sustain into 2017. A significant correlation also occurred between the Egyptian military's photographic output and its counterterrorism operations in 2016-2017 (r (22) = .56, p < .01). As the military's counterterrorism operations increased from 46 in 2016 to 142 in 2017, its photographic output also jumped from about 303 to 802 images. Hence, the relationship between the Egyptian military's claimed attacks and both the group and the military's photographic outputs exhibited some set patterns (see Figure 4.7).
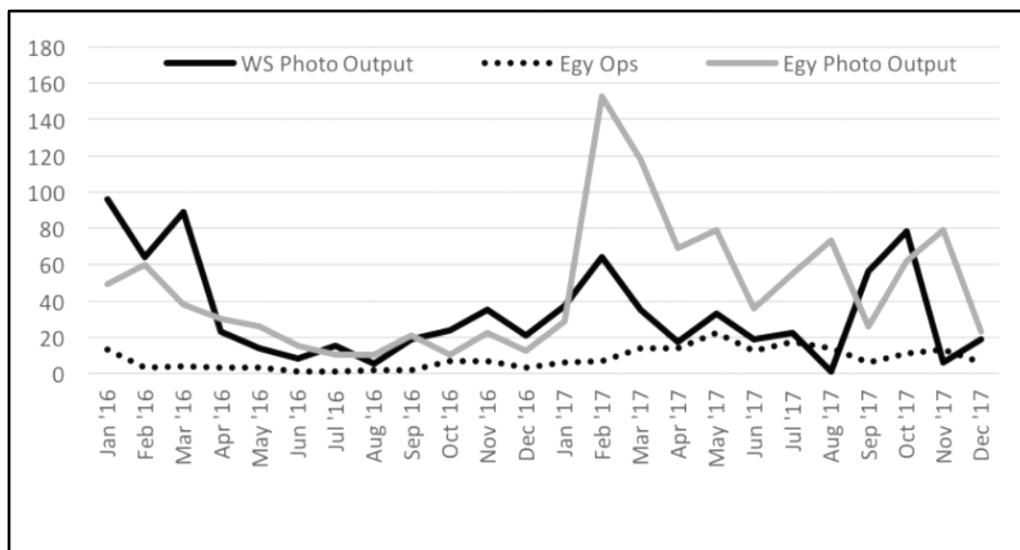
Figure 4.7 Monthly 2016-2017 Egyptian military's counterterrorism ops and photographic output levels. Source for claimed counterterrorism ops: TIMEP's Egypt Security Watch reports.

The Egyptian military's counterterrorism operations did correspond to shifts in the military's visual messaging strategy. The display of ongoing destruction in the military's images, for example, underwent tactical changes. Ongoing destruction images correlated with the monthly operations (r (22) = .62, p < .01). The presence of fire and explosions also surged from 2016 to 2017, coinciding with the increase in the claimed counterterrorism operations. An independent-samples t-test revealed a significant difference in the Egyptian military ongoing destruction images in the 2016 (M = 1.97, SD = 2.75) and 2017 (M = 14.83, SD = 9.68) conditions (t (22) = -4.45, p < .001). The display of ongoing destruction in the Egyptian military's photographs reflected the changing intensity of counterterrorism operations in Sinai.

The military's counterterrorism operations further corresponded to a tactical shift in the display of human beings in the photographic campaign. Images showing no humans at the scene correlated with the counterterrorism operations (r (22) = .65, p < .01). The number of images displaying no humans also spiked from 120 in 2016 to 428 in 2017 (40 versus 53 percent),

coinciding with the surge in operations (see Table 4.1). A chi-square test of independence

revealed a significant difference in the exclusion of humans in 2016 and 2017, $\chi^2_{(1, N} = 1105) =$

16.82, $p < .001$). All these images showing no humans focused on the counterterrorism

operations and their immediate aftermath. For the most part, the Egyptian military limited the

photographic display of its increasing on-ground operations in 2017 to scenes of destruction,

tunnels, and confiscated illegal materials, rather than human engagement.

Table 4.1 Display of Human Beings in the Egyptian Military's Photographs 2016-2017

	2016	**2017**	**Total**
Human Beings	183	373	556
No Human Beings	120	429	549
Total	303	802	1105

The Egyptian military launched the Martyr's Right operation as its major

counterterrorism offensive in September 2015. It added three more phases of the same operation

in 2016 and 2017, with no specified dates identifying the completion of each phase. Although the

quantitative analysis demonstrates significant correlations between the monthly operations and

both Wilayat Sinai and the military's outputs, a closer look at the onset of the three major phases

provides more understanding regarding the potential interactions between the military activities

and the online photographic campaigns. Examining the visual messaging strategies at the

beginning of each phase also provides a better understanding of the grounds for the Sinai visual

contestation.

4.3.1   *Second Phase of the Martyr's Right Operation*

The onset of the second phase of the Martyr's Right operation signaled a shift in Wilayat Sinai's photographic output. The military extended its second phase of the operation on January 3, 2016 (Official Page of Armed Forces Spokesman, 2016b). In the first week after the announcement, Wilayat Sinai distributed 42 images, showing IED attacks, rocket launchings, helicopters shootings, alleged spy executions, militants trainings, and reported aftermaths of the Egyptian military's airstrikes. The images posted in this week made up 44 percent of the group's output for January 2016 and marked the highest point in the two-year period with a total of 96 images. Viewed a bit more broadly, the first quarter of 2016 was the most productive for Wilayat Sinai in its online photographic campaign.

The onset of the second phase of the Martyr's Right operation also signaled a shift in Wilayat Sinai's visual messaging strategy. After the operation began, the provincial group placed a greater emphasis on its identity as a destructive and devout fighting force. The display of ongoing destruction images was at a peak in January with 42 images, 27 of which visualized the immediate aftermath of IED attacks against the security forces in North Sinai. A total of 43 percent of all ongoing destruction images in 2016 and 2017 appeared in the first quarter only, with 52 such images appearing in February and March. Further, the display of religious symbols was at its highest point in January with nine images showing armed militants making the monotheism gesture, a militant reading Qur'an during his break, a destroyed mosque, and a dusty Qur'an after airstrikes.

The same phase of the operation corresponded to a shift in the Egyptian military's output. The military's January output was the second highest in terms of monthly output in 2016. January's 49 Egyptian military images showed the confiscation of the militants' weaponry and

explosive materials, the destruction of drugs and vehicles, the discovery of underground store houses, the Minister of International Cooperation visiting sites of Sinai development projects, the Minister of Defense visiting injured soldiers, and top security officials present at the funeral of an officer who died in operations. Viewed a bit more broadly, the first quarter of 2016 was the most productive for the Egyptian military in its online photographic campaign in the first year.

The second phase of the Martyr's Right operation also signaled a shift in the military's visual messaging strategy. The military presented itself as a war machine against the militants in Sinai. It disseminated 31 images displaying no humans in both January and February, marking the highest point of images erasing human engagement in 2016. In a 13-image post on January 21, for example, 12 images showed the confiscation of rockets, rifles, ammo, IEDs, electric circuits, motorcycles, and black flags, but showed no humans at the various scenes of the military operations.

4.3.2   Third Phase of the Martyr's Right Operation

The onset of the third phase of the Martyr's Right operation corresponded with another shift in Wilayat Sinai's output. The military announced the start of its third phase of the operation on May 25, 2016 (Official Page of Armed Forces Spokesman, 2016c). For almost three weeks after the announcement, Wilayat Sinai disseminated no images. From June 13 to 30, Wilayat Sinai disseminated eight images showing two IED attacks on armored personnel carriers and the confiscated belongings of policemen. Declining from 15 images distributed in May 2016, the group's output dropped by almost half in June.

The third phase of the Martyr's Right operation also coincided with a shift in Wilayat Sinai's visual messaging strategy. The provincial group appeared to struggle in an effort to maintain its identity as a destructive and deadly fighting force. The group's June photographic

campaign broke from its practices in earlier months by displaying no death or possible death images. Further, only four images displayed ongoing destruction, down from six in May.

The same phase of the operation corresponded with a shift in the Egyptian military's photographic output. In first five days after the third phase began, the military put out 11 images in four different posts showing tanks, armored vehicles, and soldiers on the battlefield, as well as the Minister of Defense visiting the Second Field Army. The output increased temporarily, before dropping from 26 images in May 2016 to 15 in June.

This phase also signaled a shift in the military's visual messaging strategy. The military deemphasized its image as destructive war machine, and instead presented its leadership as infused with a caring attitude towards their soldiers. Only three of the May images showed military's tanks on the battlefield, a dead corpse of a militant, or confiscated rifles, books, and cell phones. Dropping from the 17 images displaying no humans at the scene of on-ground operations in May, not one image of a human appeared in June. Further, none of the images displayed ongoing destruction in the immediate aftermath of the start of Phase III operations. The remaining images in the military's June output mainly displayed the Minister of Defense as he visited the soldiers at military bases and at a hospital.

4.3.3 *Fourth Phase of the Martyr's Right Operation*

The onset of the fourth phase of the Martyr's Right operation corresponded with a sharp shift in Wilayat Sinai's output. Wilayat Sinai's attack on a military checkpoint on July 7, 2017 was the deadliest of the 30 attacks the group claimed responsibility for in the same month. Subsequently, the military soon announced a fourth phase of the Martyr's Right operation on July 17. For about a month and a half after its onset, Wilayat Sinai released only one image, thus marking its lowest level of photographic output for the group in 2016-2017.

Similarly, the fourth phase corresponded with a shift in Wilayat Sinai's visual messaging strategy. The disruption of the provincial group's output apparently hindered its ability to maintain the image of a destructive and deadly fighting force. Instead, the group attempted to present its members as courageous in the face of military escalations. The only Wilayat Sinai image appearing during this low point eulogized a martyr without disclosing how he died.

The fourth phase simultaneously corresponded to a sharp increase in the Egyptian military's photographic output. In contrast to the one image that Wilayat Sinai disseminated between July 17 and September 2, the Egyptian military disseminated over 100 images, displaying airstrikes, arrested suspects, destroyed hideouts, burnt drug plantations, newly-discovered underground tunnels, and confiscated vehicles, weaponry, and other belongings. Four of the military's images specifically highlighted the targeting of Wilayat Sinai's media infrastructure, by reportedly displaying the group's confiscated computers, cameras, scanners, and photocopiers (see Figure 4.8).

Figure 4.8 Confiscated camera and computers; disseminated July 27, 2017.

The fourth phase also corresponded to a shift in the military's visual messaging strategies. With the onset of the fourth phase, the military presented itself as a destructive war machine against the Sinai militancy. The display of ongoing destruction of tunnels, vehicles, and

hideouts peaked with 41 images. Further, a total of 75 images emphasized the immediate outcome of the Martyr's Right operation, while excluding humans from the scene.

In sum, the Egyptian military's counterterrorism operations corresponded in differential ways with Wilayat Sinai's photographic campaign over time. The temporary alignment between increases in the military's operations and increases in the provincial group's output in 2016 may well relate to the latter's dissemination of ample images of roadside IED attacks dependent upon the presence of military vehicles and personnel on the ground. This interaction explains the surge in Wilayat Sinai's output and displays of ongoing destruction with the onset of the second phase of the operation as the number of IED attacks hit an all-time high in North Sinai with 74 different incidents in the first quarter of 2016 (TIMEP, 2016b). With the decline in IED attacks in later months, however, Wilayat Sinai's output and displays of ongoing destruction dropped amid intensified military pressure in the third and fourth phases of the operation. Such drops, along with the declining displays of death and religious symbols, temporarily fractured the provincial group's spectacle.

The counterterrorism operations, however, had a much more consistent interaction with the military's increased use of its online photographic campaign. The alignment between the monthly operations and photographic output was likely the result of the military's efforts to visually complement its on-ground actions to help set the narrative for the Sinai conflict. The military's dissemination of more images in the immediate aftermath of each of the three phases of the Martyr's Right operation in 2016 and 2017 reinforced the ability of the Egyptian military to control the conflict. The increasing displays of ongoing destruction and caring leaders, along with the exclusion of human engagement in the operations, bolstered a positive narrative in the military's online presence.

4.4   Onset and Completion of Regional Military Operations

The escalation of military pressure on Mosul and Raqqa corresponded with a shift in the Egyptian military's photographic output, but not with Wilayat Sinai. The regional military pressure on ISIS in both of its strongholds and main media centers increased dramatically with the onset of the Mosul operation on October 17, 2016, followed by the Raqqa operation on November 6. On the one hand, Wilayat Sinai's output slightly dropped in the post-escalation period. An independent-samples t-test, however, revealed no significant difference in Wilayat Sinai images in the pre-escalation ($M = 37.00$, $SD = 35.90$) and post-escalation ($M = 31.13$, $SD = 21.10$) conditions (t (22) $= .51$, $p > .05$). The Egyptian military's output, on the other hand, doubled in the post-escalation period. An independent-samples t-test revealed a marginally significant difference in the Egyptian military images in the pre-escalation ($M = 28.78$, $SD = 17.44$) and 2017 ($M = 56.40$, $SD = 40.65$) conditions (t (22) $= -1.92$, $p = .07$). At the broadest level, the relationship between the regional military pressure and the military's output exhibited a set pattern.

The Mosul and Raqqa operations corresponded to a content shift in Wilayat Sinai's visual messaging strategy. The display of death in the group's campaign almost tripled in the post-escalation period (see Figure 4.9). But an independent-samples t-test revealed no significant difference in the group's death images in the pre-escalation ($M = 1.11$, $SD = 1.27$) and post-escalation ($M = 2.67$, $SD = 2.82$) conditions (t (22) $= -1.53$, $p > .05$). Notwithstanding, the range of permissible targets broadened in the post-escalation period with over 40 dead corpses of military personnel, policemen, alleged spies, and al-Tarabin tribal fighters to Sufi clerics as well as a Wilayat Sinai martyr.
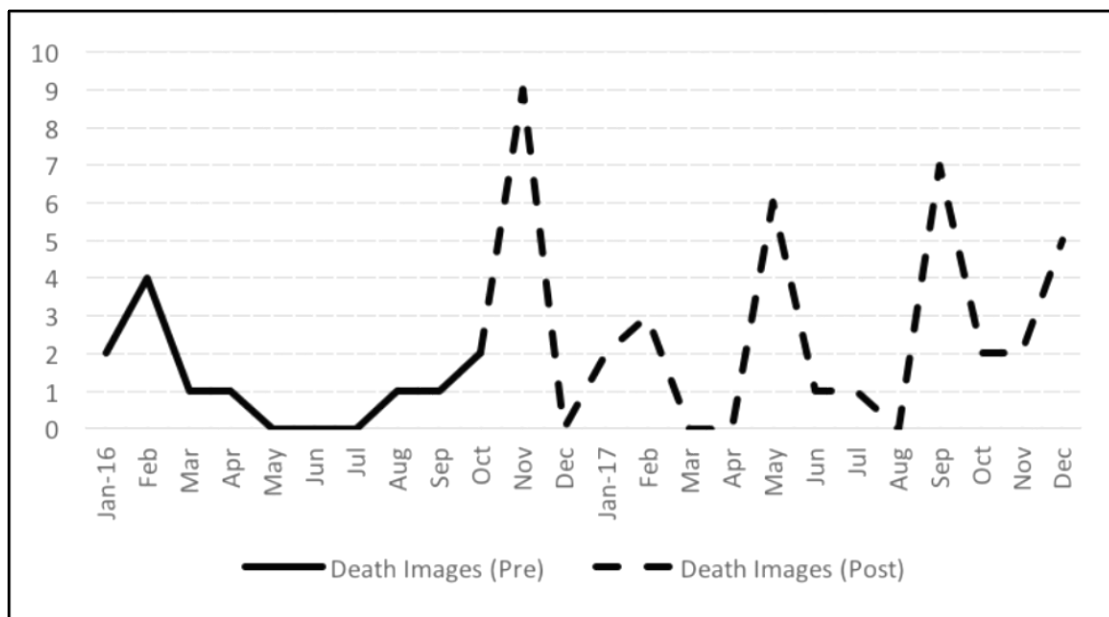
Figure 4.9 Wilayat Sinai's Death Images in 2016-2017.

Meanwhile, the two major regional operations corresponded with a different shift in the Egyptian military's visual messaging strategy. The number of images displaying ongoing destruction increased in the post-escalation period. An independent-samples t-test revealed a significant difference in the Egyptian military ongoing destruction images in the pre-escalation ($M = 2.44$, $SD = 3.00$) and post-escalation ($M = 11.93$, $SD = 10.48$) conditions ($t (22) = -2.63$, $p < .05$). A similar shift occurred from 2016 to 2017 amid the surge in the Egyptian military's counterterrorism operations.

Although the quantitative analysis revealed shifts in Wilayat Sinai and the Egyptian military's photographic campaigns between the pre- and post-escalation periods, some had already taken place in relation to other factors. Hence, a closer look at the visual messaging strategies during the regional operations adds more nuance on the relationship between regional military conditions and the Sinai visual contestation. Unlike the Egyptian military's three phases,

the east Mosul, west Mosul, and Raqqa operations had set dates marking the end of each and the liberation of the respective city. This facilitates the identification of any output and visual strategy shifts following the completion of each operation. Here, I pinpoint major regional military operations and investigate their visual aftermath (see Figure 4.10).

Figure 4.10 The 2016-2017 timeline of the key major military operations in Iraq and Syria.

4.4.1   East Mosul Operation

The onset of the east Mosul operation corresponded with a shift in Wilayat Sinai's photographic output. The group's output generally increased between October 2016 and January 2017, except for the month of December. Even with the drop to 21 images in December, the output was more than in any other month in the third quarter of 2016.

The launch of the operation coincided with a shift in the provincial group's visual messaging strategy. Wilayat Sinai presented itself as a deadly and destructive fighting force that stands on the side of the Sinai Muslims. One week after the operation started, Wilayat Sinai disseminated an 11-image photo report showing destroyed buildings and fields that the group claimed was a result of the Egyptian military's airstrikes. This was the first time since January 2016 to put out such images that reportedly highlighted the outcome of the military's airstrikes

on Sinai residents. As the east Mosul operation continued and the Raqqa operation started in November, Wilayat Sinai's display of deaths reached the highest point in the two-year period with nine images showing the dead corpses of two beheaded Sufi clerics, six soldiers, and one of the group's militants. The display of ongoing destruction also gradually increased from only three in October 2016 to 12 in January 2017, showing gunfire, explosions, and artillery and buildings in flames as part of Wilayat Sinai's attacks.

The completion of the east Mosul operation corresponded with another shift in Wilayat Sinai's output. Upon the announcement of the full liberation of east Mosul in late January 2017, the group's output further leaped from 37 images in January to 64 in February, reaching the highest point since March 2016. It also corresponded with a shift in the group's visual messaging strategy. Wilayat Sinai presented itself as a deadly and devout fighting force that is also capable of organizing workshops and distributing media products on the ground. In less than a month after the liberation, the group put out a total of 12 certain death images, compared to 20 in all of 2016. Five of the certain death images depicted several military personnel looking up to the armed militants right before they shoot them and the confiscated pictures of about 20 others whom Wilayat Sinai identified as dead. The remaining seven certain death images eulogized seven Wilayat Sinai militants by depicting them with their weapons and/or cameras before death. Another three possible death images in February depicted two Egyptian soldiers at the crosshairs of the militants' snipers and then falling, which hinted at the possibility of their death without confirming it. In the meantime, Wilayat Sinai's visualization of non-military activities appeared for the first time in a couple of months. A total of 17 images in February depicted a first aid workshop, the distribution of al-Naba' newsletter, and a group of militants praying together.

On the other hand, the fall of east Mosul coincided with a shift in the Egyptian military's output. The output leaped by over 500 percent in February 2017, reaching the peak of the two-year period after the completion of the operation. A total of 153 images depicted various scenes ranging from the Minister of Defense First Lieutenant General Sedki Sobhi and other figures visiting the injured soldiers, the former military Chief of Staff Major General Mahmoud Hijazy checking on the forces in military bases, and the military spokesperson Colonel Tamer al-Rifai in Sinai to the aftermath of counterterrorism operations.

It also corresponded with a shift in the military's visual messaging strategy. The military presented itself as a destructive war machine and Sinai as a safe place for top security officials to visit. The military spokesperson's visit was his only public appearance in Sinai in 2016 and 2017. The five-image post on February 10, 2017 showed Colonel al-Rifai speaking with the soldiers in the field, kissing the forehead of an old woman, and posing for pictures with kids and military personnel. Meanwhile, the exclusion of human engagement in the operations peaked in February, with 85 images. Out of the 21 images of destroyed tunnels, confiscated vehicles, and burning hideouts that the military disseminated on February 26-28, for example, only two images depicted soldiers at the scene. In addition, the display of ongoing destruction in February reached the second highest point in the two-year period, with 27 images.

4.4.2 West Mosul Operation

The onset of the west Mosul operation corresponded with a major shift in Wilayat Sinai's photographic output. For nine days after the operation started on February 19, 2017, Wilayat Sinai did not disseminate any images. Subsequently, the group's output dropped by almost half with a total of 35 images in March.

The launch of the operation also corresponded with shifts in the group's visual messaging strategy. Wilayat Sinai mainly presented itself as a devout group, but faced the challenge of maintaining its image as a deadly and destructive fighting force. The display of religious symbols increased from only one image showing militants praying in February to three images in March, showing a militant calling for prayer and another reading Qur'an on the battlefield. But the displays of deaths, impending deaths, and destruction all declined.

Simultaneously, the operation coincided with a shift in the Egyptian military's photographic output. Following the peak in February 2017, the military's output dropped to 118 images in March. The images not only displayed the outcome of counterterrorism operations, but also showed security officials in North Sinai, school openings, aid distribution and public figures visiting injured soldiers.

It also corresponded with a shift in the military's visual messaging strategy. The military presented itself as a provider of social services and reinforced its image of Sinai as a safe place for top security officials to visit. A 21-image post on March 9, 2017 showed military personnel distributing food packages to civilians in North Sinai for the first time in 2016-2017. The Egyptians flags were on the food packages, in the hands of civilians, and on the outfits of military personnel. Moreover, a 5-image post on March 17 showed the Minister of Defense walking in the streets of North Sinai alongside the Minister of Interior and other top security officials, shaking hands with officers and soldiers, and speaking with civilians. This was the first time the military put out images of both Ministers in North Sinai in seven months.

Later, the completion of the west Mosul operation corresponded with a major shift in Wilayat Sinai's photographic output. Upon Prime Minister Abadi's declaration of victory over ISIS in Mosul on July 10, 2017, Wilayat Sinai ceased to disseminate any photographs for 31

days. After disseminating only one image on August 11, Wilayat Sinai's photographic campaign was dormant for another 22 days. The group's lowest productivity point between July 10 and the end of August did not necessarily equate to a lack of attacks in Sinai. After all, Wilayat Sinai claimed a total of 35 attacks in July and August 2017, at least 12 of which came after the liberation of west Mosul.

The fall of west Mosul also signaled a shift in the Egyptian military's output. From an average of one image per day in June 2017, the military's output doubled in July. A total of 55 images focused mainly on the aftermath of counterterrorism operations, followed by strikes and confiscated materials.

The liberation corresponded with a shift in the military's visual messaging strategy. The military again presented itself as destructive war machine. The Egyptian military excluded human engagement in the operations in over half of July images. In a six-image post on July 21, for example, five images depicted the destruction of IEDs and the airstrikes targeting militants' hideouts with no humans at the scene. The display of ongoing destruction also increased from seven images in June to 19 in July, showing hideouts, vehicles, drugs, and cigarettes on fire as well as explosions resulting from airstrikes and destruction of IEDs.

4.4.3   Raqqa Operation

The onset of the Raqqa operation coincided with a shift in Wilayat Sinai's photographic output. Up from 24 images in October 2016, the military disseminated 35 images in November. The shift was the same as the one that occurred during the east Mosul operation around the same time. A closer look, however, reveals that Wilayat Sinai did not disseminate any images for about two weeks after the start of the Raqqa operation on November 6. The surge in the November output was mainly due to the 21-image photo report that the group disseminated on

November 27 to visualize the al-Sabil military checkpoint attack. Hence, Wilayat Sinai's output temporarily dropped after the Raqqa operation began.

It also corresponded with a shift in the group's visual messaging strategy. Wilayat Sinai presented itself as a deadly force not only against security forces, but also against civilians. As stated earlier, the death images peaked in November. In fact, the 9-image photo report on November 18 showing the beheading of two Sufi clerics was the first thing Wilayat Sinai put out after the Raqqa operation started.

The completion of the Raqqa operation coincided with a clear shift in Wilayat Sinai's output. October 2017 was the peak of the group's output in 18 months, with a total of 78 images. Upon the fall of Raqqa on October 20, Wilayat Sinai disseminated 31 images in just 11 days. One of those images came out on the liberation day, after which the group ceased to disseminate any images for a week, the longest silence in October. The remaining 30 images came in two photo reports showing the green fields and the destruction in Sinai. Subsequently, the output declined to only six images in November, a 92 percent drop from the previous month. As in the aftermath of west Mosul's liberation, Wilayat Sinai's low productivity in November did not necessarily equate with a lack of attacks as the group claimed 15 different attacks that month.

The fall of Raqqa also corresponded with a shift in the provincial group's visual messaging strategy. Wilayat Sinai failed to maintain its image as a deadly and destructive fighting force. Instead, it emphasized the suffering of residents and the beautiful landscape in North Sinai. A 13-image photo report on October 28 showed fruits hanging on the trees in a field, which was the first display of Sinai green fields in 20 months. The other 17-image photo report on October 29 showed scenes of destruction in Rafah and residents moving out of their

homes, which the group claimed to be a result of the military's actions. This second report was also the first to depict such scenes of destruction in about a year.

On the other hand, the fall of Raqqa coincided with a different shift in the Egyptian military's output. In the 11 days following the liberation, the military disseminated 15 images showing the aftermath of its operations. Subsequently, the military's output in November 2017 reached the highest point in five months with a total of 79 images, mostly depicting the counterterrorism operations, the destruction of drugs, and the military's newly-appointed Chief of Staff Major General Mohamed Fareed visiting the security forces in North Sinai.

The liberation also corresponded with a shift in the military's visual messaging strategy. The military presented itself as a deadly and destructive war machine against militants and Sinai as a safe place for top security officials to visit. In the 11 days following the fall of Raqqa, the military disseminated six images showing the dead corpses of armed militants, a number that was higher than the overall dead images in most months. Subsequently, the display of ongoing destruction peaked in November, with 32 images showing explosions from airstrikes and vehicles, hideouts, and drugs on fire. Up from 14 in October, 54 images displayed no humans at the scenes of the operations' aftermath in November, making up 70 percent of the output that month. Meanwhile, the military documented Major General Fareed's visit in four of the images, which were the first of a senior security official in North Sinai since March 2017.

Taken together, the regional military operations had differential interactions with Wilayat Sinai's photographic campaign. The provincial group increased its output amid escalating military pressure on east Mosul and Raqqa. It strived to use its photographic output as an alternative mode of resistance. The increasing displays of death and ongoing destruction served to reinforce the group's spectacle despite the mounting local and regional military pressure. But

the full liberation of the two cities corresponded to two of the major drops in Wilayat Sinai's photographic campaign even though the group was still militarily active in Sinai. Such drops may well relate to the disruption of ISIS's media infrastructure with the fall of its two main media centers. With the failure to maintain its displays of death and destruction, the regional defeats came as a huge blow to Wilayat Sinai's spectacular image.

For the Egyptian military, the regional operations played a different role. The onset of the Mosul and Raqqa operations did not correspond to any major shifts in the military's images. The military's photographic output reflected only its local operations on the ground. Nonetheless, the output remarkably surged upon the fall of the two cities. Although the two spikes also coincided with upticks in the number of military counterterrorism operations in Sinai, they may also indicate coordination between Egypt and the global coalition to defeat ISIS concurrently in Iraq, Syria, and Sinai in 2017. The increasing displays of deaths, ongoing destruction, security officials in Sinai as well as the exclusion of human engagement bolstered the military's online presence by emphasizing its operational success.

4.5   Loss of Leaders at the Local Level

The Egyptian military claimed to have killed hundreds of militants in Sinai in 2016 and 2017. By February 2017, the chief of the military intelligence Major General Mohamed Farag al-Shahat put the number of militant deaths in Sinai at 500 since the launch of the Martyr's Right Operation in September 2015 (Al-Kadi & Shaalan, 2017). The number was much higher on the military spokesperson's official Facebook page. The total number of dead militants in 2016 and 2017 surpassed 800, according to the posts on his page. Although the spokesperson rarely cited names of dead Wilayat Sinai members, he made an exception to publicize the death of two senior leaders of the group.

4.5.1   Abu Duaa Al-Ansari's Death

The killing of Wilayat Sinai's leader Abu Duaa al-Ansari corresponded with a temporary shift in the militant group's output. On August 4, 2016, the Egyptian military spokesperson announced the killing of al-Ansari, the leader of the Wilayat Sinai group, and over 45 militants in a series of airstrikes (Official Page of Armed Forces Spokesman, 2016a). The statement neither specified the exact date of the operation nor al-Ansari's real name. About 10 days before the announcement, Wilayat Sinai's photographic output stopped, culminating in the group having a month-long period of invisibility between July 25 and August 24, 2016. For the entire month of August, the group ceased to display photos of any of its claimed attacks with one exception. It released five images on August 25, showing the execution of a guard working for the Ministry of Interior in al-Arish. Three of the images displayed the guard's impending death. These three images relied on the certain death visual trope that confirms the loss of life in the surrounding textual context of the photograph. The remaining two images showed the front and back of the guard's national ID as evidence of his involvement with the police. The killing of al-Ansari and his associated group members corresponded to the lowest point of Wilayat Sinai's 2016 photographic campaign.

The killing of al-Ansari also coincided with a shift in the Egyptian military's visual messaging strategy. After the reported killing, the military used more images to present itself as a deadly and effective force against militants and to identify Sinai as a safe place for top security officials to visit. The military moved beyond its steady rate of publicly claimed counterterrorism operations in August 2016 by adding 10 images. The military reportedly released cockpit images of the airstrikes, but then removed them (Dearden, 2016; TIMEP, 2016a). Two out of the ten images focused on the outcomes of other operations, featuring destroyed explosive devices, a

discovered tunnel, and a dead militant with an ISIS flag over his corpse. The remaining eight

images appeared on August 17 showing the Minister of Defense Sedki Sobhi and the Minister of

Interior Magdy Abdelghaffar in North Sinai checking on the security forces, handing gifts to

soldiers and officers, and posing for group pictures. These images were the first of their kind

since the two ministers met with the security forces in North Sinai in mid-May 2016.

4.5.2   Abu Anas Al-Ansari's Death

The killing of senior leader Abu Anas al-Ansari corresponded with another shift in

Wilayat Sinai's output. On April 2, 2017, the Egyptian military spokesperson announced that

Abu Anas al-Ansari was among 18 militants killed in airstrikes that had occurred on March 18.

The released announcement provided al-Ansari's real name and described him as one of the

founders of the group (Official Page of Armed Forces Spokesman, 2017c). Out of 35 Wilayat

Sinai images in March 2017, only three came out after the date of the fatal airstrikes. For nine

days, the militant group released no images. It then distributed two images visualizing the

confiscated belongings of a policeman on March 28, followed by another image eulogizing one

of the group members on the 31st of the same month. Subsequently, the output dropped by half in

April to 17 images.

The killing of Abu Anas also coincided with a shift in the group's visual messaging

strategy. After the leader's loss of life, Wilayat Sinai presented itself as strict, devout, and deadly

fighting force. Of the 17 images the group released in April, 14 appeared in one photo report that

displayed a clear warning for Sinai residents siding with the Egyptian military. Seven images

showed militants distributing written warnings on the streets and reportedly accepting

individuals who had repented from collaborating with the Egyptian military in Sinai. The other

seven highlighted the fate of those who did not repent. Using the certain death visual trope, Wilayat Sinai showed the killing of four who had reportedly collaborated with the military.

The killing of Abu Anas further coincided with a shift in the Egyptian military's output. The military distributed 80 images in the three weeks following the airstrikes of March 18, 2017. Although the airstrikes that killed Abu Anas did not appear in the photographic campaign, the military did release a video on the same day showing eight different airstrikes in Sinai (Official Page of Armed Forces Spokesman, 2017e). Out of the 80 images, 39 appeared between March 18 and 31 and showed underground tunnels, confiscated vehicles, burning drugs, militants' dead corpses, officials visiting injured soldiers, school openings, and the military's martyrs. Subsequently in the first week of April, the military put out a total of 41 images showing both First Lieutenant General Sobhi visiting injured soldier and the immediate aftermath of the counterterrorism operations in Sinai.

This incident also corresponded with a shift in the military's visual messaging strategy. Following the airstrikes that took the life of Abu Anas, the military worked to bolster its image as an effective force, its individuals as heroes, and its leaders as caring. The military disseminated 15 images on April 2 that reportedly recorded a military tour for journalists and TV reporters in al-Halal mountain after the Egyptian military had regained full control. Most notably, the only three certain death images of martyred officers that the military disseminated in 2016-2017 came in the week after the March 18 airstrikes. In addition, the military put out 12 images showing the Minister of Defense, Minister of Interior, the Chief of Staff, and politicians visiting injured soldiers, as well as the Minister of Education opening a school in Sinai.

Overall, the loss of key Wilayat Sinai leaders corresponded differentially in Sinai battlefield of online visual contestation. The killing of the two local leaders and dozens of

militants coincided with major drops in Wilayat Sinai's photographic output. The large number of reported deaths in these airstrikes rather than the loss of the leaders themselves, however, may explain the disruption of Wilayat Sinai's ability to shoot images to disseminate. Wilayat Sinai's visualization of warnings to local residents and retaliations against collaborators with the military were apparent attempts to prevent such losses and disruptions in the future. Meanwhile, the loss of the two leaders either maintained or boosted the military's output. In the aftermath of these successful operations, the increasing displays of military martyrs, top security officials, and tours in central Sinai served to reinforce the military's narrative of victory.

4.6   Loss of Leaders at the Regional Level

The Pentagon periodically released names of dead ISIS leaders in Iraq and Syria throughout 2016 and 2017. The statements identified the coalition airstrikes as the main cause of death for almost all leaders during that period. The targeted leaders for death included those in ISIS's military, financial, religious and media sectors (see Figure 4.11).

Figure 4.11 The 2016-2017 Timeline of reported ISIS leaders killed in Iraq and Syria. Source: the U.S. Department of Defense's Statements on Operation Inherent Resolve.

The reported loss of ISIS leaders in Iraq and Syria in 2016 neither hindered Wilayat Sinai nor boosted the Egyptian military's photographic campaigns. The 2016 killings of senior commander Abu Omar al-Shishani in early March, spokesperson Abu Muhammad al-Adnani in

late August, head of media Abu Muhammad al-Furqan in early September, and media facilitator Mahmoud al-Isawi in late December in Syria did not correspond with any declines in Wilayat Sinai's photographic output. In fact, the group's output increased in line with the group's typical distribution patterns in March 2016, September 2016, and January 2017. The shifts in the Egyptian military's output was also in line with the downward trend from February to August of 2016 and the regular monthly ebbs and flows that occurred from September 2016 to January 2017.

Some of the 2017 killings of media, clerical, and financial leaders in Iraq and Syria also did not hamper Wilayat Sinai's photographic campaign. The provincial group disseminated more images in May despite the death of ISIS media leaders Abu Ali al-Janubi and Abu Sayf al-Isawi in mid-to-late April and Abu Khattab al-Rawi in mid-May. Even the death of the head of Amaq media wing Rayan Meshaal, cleric Turki al-Bin Ali, and the top financier Fawaz al-Rawi between late May and mid-June did not correspond with any major declines in Wilayat Sinai's output. Simultaneously, the military's output briefly declined in June, before bouncing back in the third quarter of 2017. Further, none of the images distributed by either Wilayat Sinai or the Egyptian military addressed, mourned, or celebrated the death of ISIS leaders in Iraq and Syria. Although the loss of ISIS leaders in the region did not generally correspond with substantial shifts in the photographic output or messaging strategies in the online space of Sinai visual contestation, two incidents served as exceptions.

4.6.1   Abu Sulauman Al-Iraqi's Death

The killing of media leader Abu Sulayman al-Iraqi did coincide with a shift in Wilayat Sinai's photographic output. On July 27, 2017, the Pentagon announced the early July killing of al-Iraqi in an airstrike near Mosul without specifying the exact date (Pentagon, 2017a). The

statement described him as a senior media official who oversaw the production of ISIS media products. Between June 30 and July 8, Wilayat Sinai did not put out any images. For the next eight weeks, the group distributed only one 22-image news brief on July 9 that showed the attack on a military checkpoint south of Rafah and one other image in August.

The killing of al-Iraqi also corresponded with a shift in the Egyptian military's output. The military dramatically increased its output from 36 in June before the loss of the media leader to a total of 128 images in July and August. As the images showing death and ongoing destruction focused visually on conditions on the ground in Sinai, the visual messaging strategies appear motivated by local conditions rather than regional loss of leaders in the ISIS group.

4.6.2   Yusuf Demir's Death

The killing of media leader Yusuf Demir corresponded with another shift in Wilayat Sinai's output. On November 14, 2017, the Pentagon announced the October 26th killing of Demir near al-Qaim, Iraq (Pentagon, 2017b). The statement described Demir as a media official who had links to ISIS's networks in the Middle East. For about two weeks between October 29 and November 13, Wilayat Sinai did not disseminate any images. Having distributed 78 images in October before Demir's death, the group only put out six images in November.

In contrast, the ISIS media leader's death corresponded with a sharp increase in the Egyptian military's output. The military reached one of its highest output points in the two-year period with 79 images in November. None of these images, however, addressed the loss of Demir or any other leader outside Egypt. The November shifts in the display of ongoing destruction and top security officials in North Sinai in the military's images instead reflected the local on-ground conditions.

Unlike apparent reactions to the deaths of local Wilayat Sinai leaders, the loss of regional ISIS leaders did not play an equally important role in the online visual contestation space related to events in Sinai. Although the loss of Abu Sulayman al-Iraqi and Yusuf Demir corresponded to shifts in output, the majority of the other killings did not. The differences between the loss of al-Iraqi and Demir and the other regional leaders did not relate to the nature, location, or target of the attacks. After all, the regional leaders usually died in airstrikes in Iraq and Syria. Among the leaders whose death did not coincide with any shifts in the Sinai visual contestation were senior media officials like al-Iraqi and Demir. The only difference was the date. The loss of the two media leaders that did correspond to shifts in photographic output and strategy occurred in early July and late November 2017, respectively. The two periods coincided with other factors on both the local and regional fronts, such as the launch of the fourth phase of the Martyr's Right operation in Sinai and the full liberation of Mosul and Raqqa. Hence, the shifts in output corresponding to the loss of al-Iraqi and Demir may have more to do with the disruption of Wilayat Sinai's media infrastructure and ISIS's central media hubs that disseminate provincial images online or to a conflation of other concurrent factors.

4.7   Introduction of Groups to the Local Battlefield

Al-Tarabin Bedouin tribe spearheaded an initiative to join the Egyptian military fight against Wilayat Sinai militants in the North. In mid-April 2017, militants reportedly shot at a truck that was smuggling cigarettes in North Sinai, which spurred clashes between Wilayat Sinai and local tribal members (Sweilam, 2017). The local Bedouins then kidnapped three of the group's members, after which militants kidnapped tribal leaders ("Kidnappings lead to heightened tensions between militants and North Sinai tribes," 2017). Tensions further escalated when a Wilayat Sinai suicide attacker detonated a car bomb at al-Tarabin tribal checkpoint in

Rafah, killing at least four (Shams El-Din, 2017). As a result, al-Tarabin tribe declared war after

releasing a statement on April 29 that stressed its ability to forcefully respond to terrorists and

called on other North Sinai tribes to stand up and join the fight (see Figure 4.12).
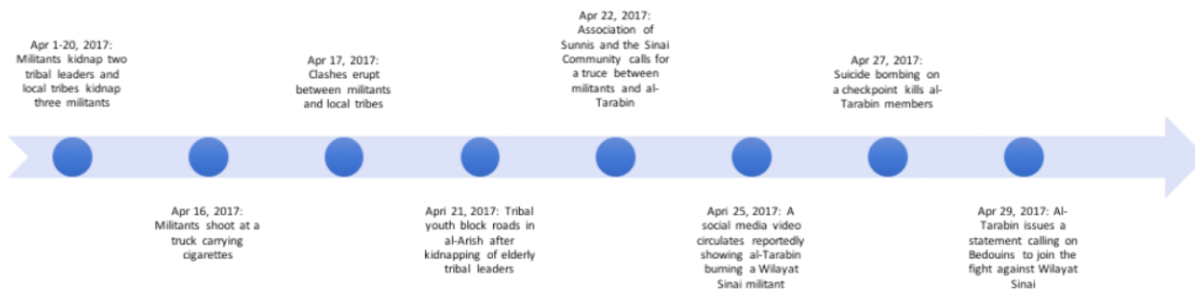
Figure 4.12 The Timeline of key tensions between Wilayat Sinai and local tribes in April 2017.

4.7.1   Al-Tarabin Tribe Allies with the Military

The introduction of al-Tarabin tribe into the ongoing fight against Wilayat Sinai

corresponded with a shift in Wilayat Sinai's photographic output. With the assistance of al-

Tarabin tribesmen, the Egyptian military's counterterrorism operations peaked in May 2017. In

response, Wilayat Sinai's photographic output almost doubled to 33 images in May, 18 of which

showed the fight against al-Tarabin tribe and its destructive outcome.

The involvement of the al-Tarabin tribe also corresponded with a shift in Wilayat Sinai's

visual messaging strategy. After the new alliance, Wilayat Sinai reinforced its identity not only

as a deadly and destructive fighting force against the security forces, but also against al-Tarabin

tribe. The display of images showing dead bodies in May was the highest in six months, showing

the corpses of two soldiers and five al-Tarabin tribal fighters. Further, images depicting ongoing

destruction increased, with seven images showing gunfire and explosions following the

detonation of a car bomb at a joint military-tribal barricade and at a roadside IED on military vehicles.

Al-Tarabin's fight with Wilayat Sinai coincided with a shift in the Egyptian military's photographic output. The military's output surged to 79 images in May 2017 from 69 the month before. The images displayed the arrest of suspected militants, the seizure of weapons and explosive materials, and the destruction of drug plantations, hideouts, and tunnels at the border. Whereas the Egyptian military did not show images of al-Tarabin's collaboration on the field per se, its May photographs reflected the intensity of military operations by choosing not to show other images of school openings, field visits, or aid distribution that were common in previous months.

Al-Tarabin's alliance with the Egyptian military also corresponded with a shift in the military's visual messaging strategy. After al-Tarabin become involved in the conflict, the military showcased itself as a destructive war machine against the militants. Images displaying ongoing destruction increased from 9 in April to 17 in May 2017. The destruction related images showed explosions after airstrikes as well as motorcycles, hideouts, and drugs in flames. May served as the month with the second highest point in the military's photographic campaign in terms of visualized exclusion of human engagement in the operations. A total of 58 images featured no human beings, but rather focused solely on the direct outcome of the operations.

The introduction of local groups to the on-the-ground battlefield played an important role in the online visual contestation space related to Sinai. Despite the surge in both Wilayat Sinai and the Egyptian military's outputs, the two sides in the conflict communicated different messages. Wilayat Sinai's photographic campaign sent a warning message by stressing on retaliatory acts against tribal members who had collaborated with the Egyptian security forces.

Meanwhile, the military's photographic campaign communicated a message of victory and dominance by emphasizing the positive outcomes of the counterterrorism operations. The changing dynamics of the local battle may have the Sinai visual contestation, with both sides using the engagement of al-Tarabin tribe as a pretext to bolster their conflicting messages.

4.8   Introduction of Groups to the Regional Battlefield

The major regional military operations involved different dynamics from those taking place in the Sinai Peninsula. First, the Iraqi army launched the east Mosul operation in coordination with several local groups on board from the very beginning. Armed shiite militias and factions under the banner of the Popular Mobilization Front, the Kurdish Peshmerga fighters, and Sunni tribal units were all part of the operation to liberate east Mosul ("The Participating Sides in the Mosul Offensive," 2016). Nonetheless, to avoid civil and sectarian strife, a political agreement made prior to the onset of the east Mosul operation dictated that only the Iraqi army would enter the city. The other local groups operated outside Mosul to encircle the city and cut supply routes. Between the beginning of November 2016 and late January 2017, the Iraqi army fought ISIS militants at the frontlines inside east Mosul (Bergen, 2017). The west Mosul operation saw a similar pattern except for the Peshmerga fighters not taking part in it (S. Ali, 2017). By late February 2017, the Iraqi army and security forces entered west Mosul and fought ISIS until they liberated the city in July. Hence, unlike the introduction of al-Tarabin fighters into an ongoing fight in Sinai, the local Iraqi groups began the fight alongside the Iraqi army in this major operation. Such an on-the-ground context prevents examination of the composition of the opposing forces from an evolutionary perspective.

Second, the Raqqa operation did not involve a leading state military force like the operations in Mosul or Sinai. The U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces was an alliance of

different local groups, ranging from Arab and Kurdish to Turkman fighters prior to the onset of

the battle for Raqqa (Al-Hamed, 2016). The anti-ISIS alliance launched the operation to encircle

and eventually liberate Raqqa. With support from the international coalition, the Syrian

Democratic Forces successfully liberated the city after almost one year. Here, the local groups

were already the initiators of the military operation rather than newcomers joining the fight.

Again, this context does not allow for a comparable examination of the interaction between the

introduction of groups to the regional battlefield and the online space of Sinai visual

contestation.

4.9   Concluding Thoughts

This chapter demonstrates that competing sides battling online with photographs to

control the Sinai narrative in 2016-2017 were not simply responding to one another. In fact, no

consistent, identifiable patterns existed between Wilayat Sinai and the Egyptian military's

photographic outputs when considered exclusively within the media context. Instead, the visual

battlefield closely interacted with military conditions happening on-the-ground. To examine

what relationship existed between Wilayat Sinai and the Egyptian military's posted photographs

and the military contexts, the chapter identified five key factors that correspond with shifts in the

photographic output and visual messaging strategies—attacks by militant groups, onset and

completion of counterterrorism military operations, loss of leaders, and the introduction of local

group alliances with the state military forces.

In today's mediated conflicts with militant groups, a focus on the local without the

regional context would distort our views of the relationship between photographic output and on-

ground military conditions. Major attacks by the local militant group played a role in maintaining

Wilayat Sinai's online presence. The onset of the Egyptian military's counterterrorism operations

coincided with disruptions of Wilayat Sinai's photographic campaign. Further, the loss of local leaders corresponded with drops in the local militant group's output, while the introduction of a participating local group into the battlefield activities coincided with a surge in the photographic campaign. In the meantime, the completion of regional operations and the loss of two media leaders in Iraq corresponded with major drops in Wilayat Sinai's online presence.

The local and regional military contexts also interacted with the Egyptian military's photographic campaign. As local military pressure intensified in Sinai, the onset of counterterrorism operations, the loss of Wilayat Sinai's local leaders, and the introduction of a local group into the Sinai battlefield all corresponded with upticks in the Egyptian military's photographic campaign. Meanwhile, the fall of Mosul and Raqqa coincided with major surges in the Egyptian military's output. The focus on the local and regional military conditions on the ground is important to better understand visual contestations between militant groups that had pledged allegiance to a regional force and state actors that are part of a broader, international military coalition.

An accumulation of factors helps contextualize shifts in Wilayat Sinai's photographic output. For example, a surge in Wilayat Sinai's output in May 2017 coincided with an amalgamation of factors: the increase in the number of attacks by the local militant group, the peak of the Egyptian military's counterterrorism operations, and the engagement of al-Tarabin tribe on the side of the military. When Wilayat Sinai disseminated only one image in almost two months in the summer of 2017, the drop also corresponded to a conflation of factors: the killing of an ISIS senior media leader near Mosul in early July, a deadly military checkpoint attack by Wilayat Sinai on July 7 that sparked retaliation from the military, the full liberation of Mosul on

July 10, and the onset of the Egyptian military's fourth phase of the Martyr's Right operation on July 17.

A collection of on-the-ground events also helps contextualize shifts in the Egyptian military's photographic output. The surge in the military's output in November 2017, for example, corresponded to several factors: a couple of deadly attacks by Wilayat Sinai in mid-October, the uptick in the number of counterterrorism operations in Sinai, and the full liberation of Raqqa. The drop in the military's output in April 2017 also coincided with more than one factor: the successful killing of one of the founders of Wilayat Sinai, the lack of major attacks, and the escalating tensions between the provincial group and the local tribes. Hence, an exclusive focus on the number of militant group attacks or military operations can eclipse other key factors in the military-media nexus. Instead, a collective approach to analyzing on-ground events allows state actors and researchers to identify the changing military dynamics and their corresponding shifts in media.

Further, the visual messaging strategies are key to understanding the differential interactions between the photographic campaigns and military context. Wilayat Sinai's depiction of ongoing destruction, for example, dropped as the group's attacks declined in Sinai, the weapon of choice shifted, and the local and regional military pressure increased. The provincial group started to circulate more death images, however, after select major local attacks at times of mounting pressure on Mosul and Raqqa. In the meantime, all the spikes in the Egyptian military's display of death were directly addressing and/or responding to Wilayat Sinai's major deadly attacks in North Sinai. The military's depiction of ongoing destruction increased as the local and regional military pressure intensified. After the fall of east Mosul and Raqqa, the Egyptian military were disseminating images of top security officials safely visiting North Sinai.

A quantitative approach that only counts the images would treat all output as equal. Thus, examining the content using a set of relevant visual elements and tropes helps identify the shifting visual strategies in the photographic campaigns in relation to military conditions.

Finally, the photographic format can yield a better understanding of the shifts in output. The print media restrictions on the quantity of photographs on paper no longer apply to state and non-state actors competing in the digital media battlefield. Both sides engaging in a visual contestation can easily disseminate an entire photo album in one post on Telegram, Facebook, or other platforms. Wilayat Sinai's output of 22 images in July 2017, for example, was higher than the group's total photographic output in 11 other months included in the two-year period. However, this previous statement would be misguiding without knowing they all made up one photo report focusing on a single incident. Similarly, the Egyptian military often disseminated multiple images per Facebook post, sometimes exceeding 20 images. By itself, counting the monthly visual output can misrepresent the intensity of an actor's photographic output in relation to on-ground military conditions. Thus, examining the format can clarify the magnitude of online photographic campaigns more accurately.

The Sinai case study conclusions presented here derive from some data limitations that suggest caution moving forward. Counting ISIS's attacks in Iraq and Syria posed a problem because the available online datasets exhibit stark methodological differences. START's global terrorism database (GTD) draws from open-source materials— news articles, journals, books, and legal documents— to provide longitudinal data on terrorism incidents per group, country, and month between 1970 and 2017 (GTD, 2018a). Jane's Terrorism and Insurgency Centre (JTIC) also draws from open source materials, such as articles and government reports, to provide an annual global attack index on the attacks per group and country since 2009 (JTIC,

2018). JTIC's publicly available data, however, does not provide a breakdown of the attacks per month. Other organizations employ a less reliable methodology than GTD and JTIC. The PeaceTech Lab NGO, for example, uses crowdsourced data from Wikipedia to map terrorism incidents both per group and country since 2016 (PeaceTech Lab, 2018). The controversial website The Religion of Peace (TROP) uses public news sources to provide a list of attacks since 2002, but the list neither specifies the perpetrator group nor includes incidents related to combat (TORP, 2018). For the purpose of this chapter, I used the GTD dataset to extract ISIS's attacks in Iraq and Syria in 2016 and 2017. However, GTD counts the attacks that security officials believe ISIS perpetrated even if the group did not claim responsibility. Such a methodology can skew the data when compared against Wilayat Sinai's claimed attacks. With the precise error rate from these data sources unknowable, the conclusions here nonetheless suggest variables that deserve consideration in debates about the media-military nexus.

Moreover, some aspects of the Egyptian military operations were also difficult to ascertain. This chapter used the Egyptian military's statements as the main source of information on counterterrorism operations and loss of leaders. But, the military may have also conducted covert operations in Sinai that did not count toward their publicly reported counterterrorism operations. The military may have also killed more influential leaders in Wilayat Sinai, but not publicized those results. Further, unlike ISIS in Iraq and Syria, Wilayat Sinai did not govern cities in Sinai for the Egyptian military to liberate. Accordingly, the second, third, and fourth phases of the Martyr's Right operation did not have end dates to mark the liberation of land. These factors made it impossible to investigate shifts in the visual contestation relating to the completion of local operations or other unpublicized developments on the ground.

This chapter took a first step in examining the relationship between competing photographic campaigns and a range of local and regional military factors in times of conflict. Future studies can apply this approach to other conflicts to understand visual contestation beyond the Sinai Peninsula. In addition, the chapter used a case study that involves two main players: the state and one militant group. Other conflicts, however, may involve more than two competitors on the military and media battlefields. Researchers can build on this approach to examine the visual contestations among multiple actors and utilize time series analysis as an indicator of shifts over time.

5   VISUAL FRAMES

Wilayat Sinai and the Egyptian military's media efforts indicate a willingness on each side to exert control over its image content. Using their photographers and online platforms, the two communicators can create, emphasize, and ignore different messages about Sinai. To assess the content of the two photographic campaigns, this chapter examines how the militant group and the military constructed their own visual messaging frames in 2016 and 2017. Then, it provides an overview of how the individual frames in each campaign work together to present a unique picture of the Sinai conflict. The chapter concludes with a discussion of how the opposing visual frames interacted with each other and how the study's findings contribute to previous research examining images of militant groups and state actors in times of conflict.

5.1   Wilayat Sinai's Photographic Campaign

Wilayat Sinai presented 800 online images in 2016 and 2017. At the bottom of each image, the superimposed caption described and highlighted various aspects of both the displayed scene and the conflict at large. The Wilayat Sinai logo on the bottom right of each image consistently identified the source of the images. The full array of posted images fell into two

main categories: military and non-military activities. The military images made up two-thirds of Wilayat Sinai's photographic campaign, while the non-military images constituted the remaining one-third of the dataset (see Figure 5.1).
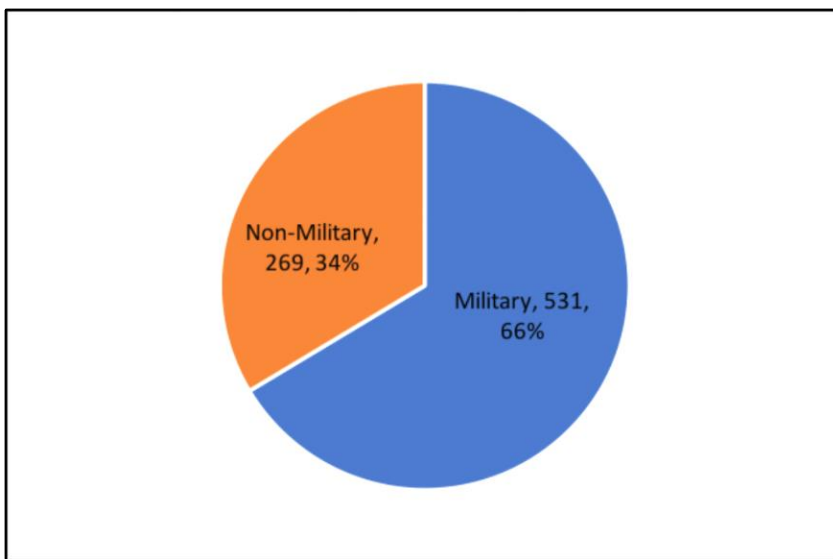
Figure 5.1 Wilayat Sinai's Visual Content Frames in 2016 and 2017.

5.1.1   Military Images

The military images focused on Wilayat Sinai's use of force. They comprised four visual frames: combat, battlefield aftermath, martyrdom, and military training (see Figure 5.2). The combat visual frame involved the actions on the battlefront. The battle aftermath visual frame focused on the fighting outcomes. The martyrdom and military training visual frames highlighted the militants' physical and spiritual preparations before the actual battles.
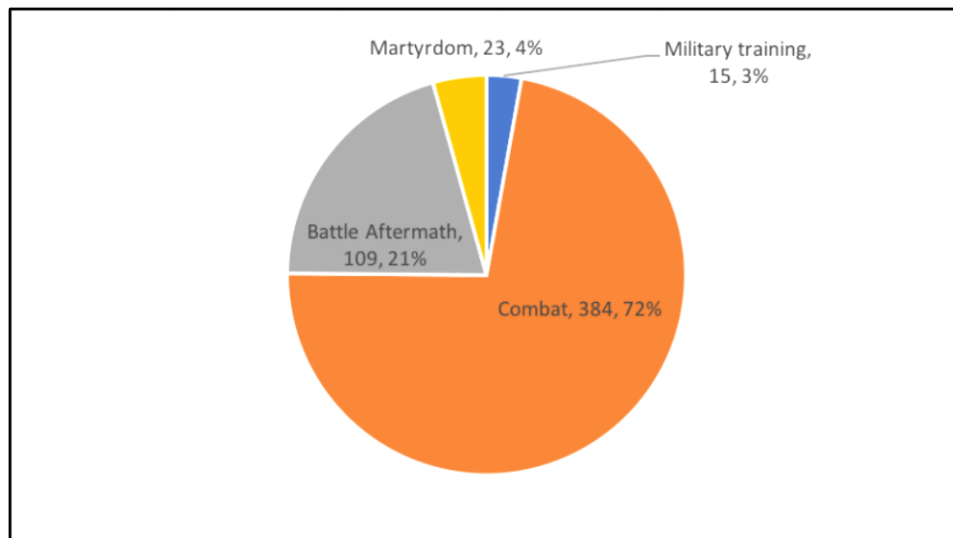
Figure 5.2 Wilayat Sinai's Military Visual Frames in 2016 and 2017.

Combat

Combat was the most recurring visual frame in Wilayat Sinai's photographic campaign. Combat images made up over 70 percent of the group's distributed military-related photographs in 2016 and 2017. These images depicted the group's ability to use various means to attack the Egyptian security forces in Sinai and, to a lesser extent, to target Israel across the border. The types of military actions in the combat frame included IED attacks, suicide bombings, group-based militant assaults, sniper shots, rocket attacks, and assassinations. Wilayat Sinai generally portrayed the armed militants engaged in both individual and group actions, the Egyptian soldiers and vehicles as targets of the attacks, and the ongoing destruction and impending death of those targets as recurring battlefield features. The photo captions of the images in the combat frame offered a theological justification for the attacks by labeling the militants as caliphate soldiers, the Egyptian security forces as apostates, and Israelis as the Jewish enemy. Photographs of roadside IED attacks constituted the most frequent attack form that Wilayat Sinai displayed in its combat visual frame. Frequently, the images depicted the group's ability to target

the security forces without engaging in direct confrontation. A total of 141 images, or 37 percent

of all combat images, showed the detonation of IEDs on Egyptian armored vehicles, tanks,

personnel carriers, minesweepers, Humvees, and foot soldiers. The images often appeared in

news briefs and photo reports that were solely focused on this type of attack. However, each

image did not always constitute a unique incident. Instead, Wilayat Sinai covered every IED

attack with a visual sequence of at least two images. A news brief displaying three images posted

on March 4, 2016, for example, detailed an IED attack against a vehicle that the group described

as belonging to "the apostate military."[1] The brief started with an image of a military vehicle

carrying several soldiers on a highway. It followed up by displaying an image of an explosion

that engulfed the vehicle, and then concluded with a shot of the explosion intensifying around the

vehicle on fire (see Figure 5.3).

Figure 5.3 The detonation of an IED in central Sinai; disseminated March 4, 2016.

The images of IED attacks emphasized impending death and destruction of the enemy.

Wilayat Sinai implied that its explosions were causing the deaths of the Egyptian soldiers. The

IED-related combat images comprised sixty percent of the possible death images where neither

the textual nor visual context confirmed the fate of these soldiers in the group's entire

---

[1] Wilayat Sinai's captions are superimposed on the images. No URLs to cite for the news briefs and photo reports since they appear in encrypted channels on Telegram.

photographic campaign. Fires and explosions added to the spectacle, as 43 percent of the

ongoing destruction images in the group's photographic campaign showed an IED attack in

progress. Wilayat Sinai militants were always missing from the displayed scene of the IED

attacks, suggesting that fighters could safely watch the targets from a distance as the explosive

devices detonated. The visual frame juxtaposed the vulnerability of the military in Sinai with the

militants' ability to covertly and safely attack its enemies.

Aside from IED attacks, the remaining types of combat actions often appeared in tandem.

The non-IED attack images diversified the means through which Wilayat Sinai attacked its

adversaries. A total of 243 images, or 63 percent of all combat images unrelated to IED attacks,

showed suicide bombings, group attacks, sniper shots, and rocket attacks. Many news briefs and

photo reports combined these actions to characterize Wilayat Sinai's offensive and defensive

operations. A 29-image news brief posted on January 14, 2016, for example, mixed group attack

actions with sniper and rocket attacks to block what the group called an offensive operation by

"the Egyptian apostate military." Another 22-image photo report posted on July 9, 2017

combined group assaults and suicide attacks at a military checkpoint south of Rafah.

The non-IED attack images often added a human element to the displayed spectacle.

Militants often appeared on the frontlines as they confronted Egyptian security forces (see Figure

5.4). Other non-IED attack images emphasized death as a likely outcome for adversaries,

comprising over one-third of the entirety of the photographic campaign's cache of possible death

images. One image in a 14-image photo report posted on May 22, 2016, for example, showed

gunfire and a soldier in the crosshairs of a sniper attack to imply his death without confirming it.

The images also stressed destruction as another fateful outcome awaiting Wilayat Sinai's

opponents. Forty percent of all displays of ongoing destruction in the group's entire 2016-2017

photographic campaign appeared in the non-IED attack images. By way of illustration, two images posted on February 22, 2017 showed two flaming Katyusha rockets in the air aimed at what the group labeled "the settlements of the Jews." The collective fusion of these different types of attacks reinforced Wilayat Sinai's strength in the conflict.

Figure 5.4 Militants attacking al-Matafi checkpoint; disseminated January 11, 2017.

The images appearing in the combat frame relate to two of Entman's general framing categories. The photo captions defined the problem as the existence of apostates and Jews in and around the Islamic caliphate in Sinai. Wilayat Sinai's combat images also identified the treatment recommendation as entering the battlefield to fight, kill, and destroy the Egyptian security forces and Israel by every means possible, including IEDs, rocket launchers, AK47s, snipers, and suicide attacks, among others.

Battle Aftermath

The battle aftermath visual frame was also prominent in Wilayat Sinai's photographic campaign. The aftermath images made up over one-fifth of the group's military images in 2016 and 2017. They presented Wilayat Sinai as victorious militarily against the Egyptian security forces and their collaborators. The group exhibited confiscated military belongings, armored vehicles in flames, and soldiers and tribal fighters' casualties. As with the combat visual frame, the photo captions highlighted a theological justification for the attacks, attributing the losses of the apostates to victories of the mujahidin and soldiers of the caliphate.

The battle aftermath images suggested that Wilayat Sinai's combative action had already and would continue to result in a standard costly outcome for the group's opponents. The group highlighted its war spoils, showing 49 images that displayed the acquisition of the opponents' weaponry, vehicles, and personal belongings. Four images posted on May 13, 2017, for example, depicted five pickup trucks, rifles, pistols, identification cards, and cell phones that the group claimed to have confiscated from apostate, pro-government, al-Tarabin fighters (see Figure 5.5). Presumed death exhibiting implements of violence and destruction recurred in two-thirds of the

Figure 5.5 Confiscated weaponry and personal belongings; disseminated May 13, 2017.

battle aftermath images. One of the images in a photo report posted on November 27, 2016 reportedly showed a military tank on fire fleeing the battlefield. In other images Wilayat Sinai presented death as the definitive outcome awaiting its enemies. Fifteen images show dead corpses. Three of the images in a photo report posted on September 13, 2017 combined the destructive and fatal outcomes of the group's attacks by showing dead corpses of policemen on the road as flames engulfed the police armored vehicles displayed in the background. The war booty and death images in the aftermath frame combined to emphasize the superiority of Wilayat Sinai in battle.

The images appearing in the battle aftermath frame relate to two of Entman's framing categories. The photo captions redefine the problem by expanding the pool of the Islamic caliphate in Sinai's apostates to include rebellious tribes, such as al-Tarabin. The provincial group's battle aftermath images also added another treatment recommendation, namely to kill the

Egyptian security forces and al-Tarabin tribal fighters, as well as confiscate their artillery and personal belongings.

Martyrdom

The martyrdom visual frame appeared in only 23 of the military images. The martyrdom images eulogized the group's fighters, suicide attackers, and media operatives who died while defending the caliphate. Wilayat Sinai portrayed its martyrs holding weapons, carrying media equipment, and displaying religious symbols. The photo captions stressed the spirit of camaraderie among members by labeling every individual a brother, often hailing the individual as part of broader movement labeled "The Martyrs' Caravan." The captions also rendered martyrdom a goal and a way of pleasing God by always including the prayer "May Allah Accept Him."

Wilayat Sinai elevated the status of its group members who appeared in its martyrdom images. In 82 percent of its martyrdom images, the group celebrated most of the martyrs by highlighting only one individual per photograph. In sharp contrast to its depictions of the Egyptian soldiers and al-Tarabin fighters' casualties, the group always presented its martyrs as alive and in a position of strength. Twenty-two of the martyrdom images used the certain death visual trope where accompanying text confirms the pictured individual's subsequent death. The group posted one exception to that pattern on November 27, 2016. The image showed the clean face of a bearded young man laying down in peaceful repose; its caption clarified his death and hailed him as "the martyr of the raid." Wilayat Sinai showed the martyrs with rifles in their hands or next to them in 16 images and displayed religious identity symbols in three. When eulogizing a suicide bomber who attacked a church, for example, Wilayat Sinai showed a masked individual in military fatigues facing the camera, holding a rifle in his left hand, and

making the monotheism gesture with his right hand. The image displayed strength and

religiosity. Nonetheless, the group did not reserve this level of praise for its fighters only. Three

martyrdom images also displayed the group's media martyrs holding their production gear before

their deaths (see Figure 5.6). Together, the martyrdom images stressed the individuals' sacrifice,

strength, and moral superiority.

Figure 5.6 Two martyred media operatives; disseminated February 8, 2017.

The images appearing in the martyrdom frame relate to two of Entman's framing

categories. The images and captions presented piety, brotherhood, and sacrifice as moral ground

for the group and its members. The frame also highlighted fighting on both the military and

media battlefields as an honorable treatment for the problems at hand.

Military Training

Appearing in only 15 images, military training was the least prevalent visual frame that

Wilayat Sinai distributed. The frame depicted the physical and tactical preparedness of militants

for future battles. The group showed the militants wearing facial masks and holding their

weapons while they trained. Photo captions described the militants training in its camps as the

soldiers or lions of the caliphate.

Unlike the focus on individual sacrifice present in the group's martyrdom images, the

military training visual frame emphasized group efforts. Almost all training images showed the

militants working together in the combat scene. The one exception displayed a militant flying in the air during the course of doing a backflip. A 14-image photo report posted on February 6, 2016, for example, celebrated the graduation of a new cohort from a Wilayat Sinai training camp. All masked militants appeared in groups while exercising and boxing, as well as participating in weapons training, military drills, and simulated securing of buildings (see Figure 5.7). The militants always held their weapons unless they were exercising. The military training images emphasized the group's ability to organize training camps in Sinai and the results of the training were that the militants emerged with the joint discipline and strength to carry out effective combat operations.

Figure 5.7 Militants training; disseminated February 6, 2016.

The images appearing in the military training frame relate to only one of Entman's framing categories. The images recommended group efforts as a treatment recommendation for successfully defending the proclaimed caliphate. It also pointed to physical and tactical preparedness prior to combat operations on the frontlines as part of the appropriate treatment.

5.1.2   Non-Military Images

Wilayat Sinai's non-military images focused on the life in Sinai away from the battlefield. They revealed five visual frames: law enforcement, victimhood of Sinai Muslims, In-

group lifestyle, Sinai landscape, and healthcare (see Figure 5.8). The law enforcement visual frame focused on the maintenance of order. The victimhood of Sinai Muslims visual frame highlighted the consequences of the Egyptian military actions on the Sinai citizenry. The in-group lifestyle frame involved the activities members chose to perform in their spare time. The Sinai landscape frame depicted the land, while the healthcare provision frame featured an independent social service available to care for the sick and injured in the province.
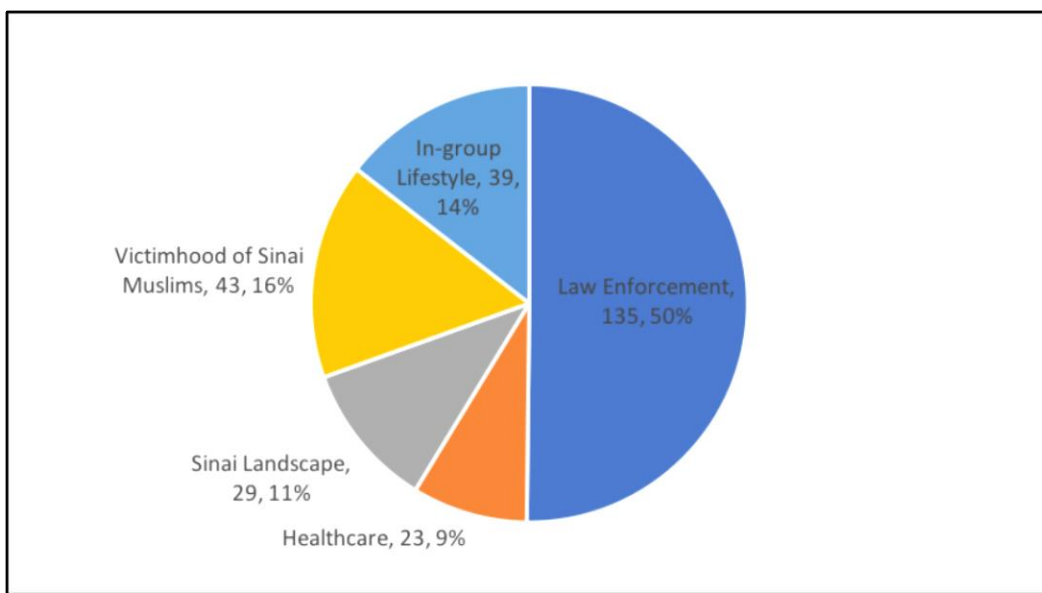
Figure 5.8 Wilayat Sinai's Non-Military Visual Frames in 2016 and 2017.

Law Enforcement

The law enforcement visual frame was the most recurring type Wilayat Sinai used in its non-military images. Law enforcement images made up about half of the non-military images. These images depicted the provincial group's ability to maintain order and implement punishments in Sinai through shari'a law. To display its law enforcement capabilities, Wilayat Sinai showed the death or impending death of soldiers and collaborators, as well as the destruction of outlawed materials, such as drugs and cigarettes. The photo captions utilized in the

law enforcement frame laid out the crimes (e.g., espionage, sorcery, and advocating Sufism), described the acts of punishment as implementations of the rulings of Allah, and presented Wilayat Sinai's representatives on the streets as the Islamic Police and men of hisba (moral policing).

In many of the law enforcement images, Wilayat Sinai stressed that capital punishments awaited individuals working with the Egyptian security forces, spying for the Israeli Mossad, or practicing Sufi Islam in Sinai. Such executions appeared in 74 (55 percent) of the law enforcement visual frame images. As in the group's strategy of presenting IED attacks in visual image sequence, the group displayed most executions in at least two consecutive images. A three-image news brief posted on January 4, 2016, for example, showed the execution of two blindfolded individuals that the group labeled "spies for the Egyptian apostate military." The news brief started with an image of the two individuals in orange jumpsuits kneeling on one side of the road with two armed militants behind them. The second image in the sequence showed the two militants lifting their rifles up toward the back heads of the two individuals. The final image displayed both hostages lying dead in their own blood.

The execution images emphasized death as the unescapable consequence for crossing Wilayat Sinai's normative behavioral expectations. Unlike the favorable image of the group's own fallen fighters in the martyrdom visual frame, Wilayat Sinai depicted all of the photographed hostages as helpless, whether they were about to die or laid breathless in their own blood. In 59 certain death images with accompanying textual confirmations of the deaths of the photo subjects, the provincial group displayed civilians who had collaborated with the military, police guards, al-Tarabin tribal members, and Sufi clerics with a militant ready to shoot or severe their heads. Dead corpses appeared in the remaining 15 images, reinforcing the fate of Wilayat

Sinai's enemies. Further, Wilayat Sinai stressed the weakness of its foes by displaying the

hostages in orange and red prison jumpsuits in 28 images. For example, a nine-image photo

report posted on November 18, 2016 depicted the beheading of two clerics, a punishment that the

group described as "the implementation of the shari'a ruling on two soothsayers." Twenty

militants first stood in the desert with one of them reading aloud from a document the photo

caption identified as the shari'a ruling. The remaining images broke down the beheading of the

clerics into two paired three-shot sequences. First, a masked militant dressed in black held up a

sword next to the blindfolded cleric kneeling in an orange jumpsuit with his chin fixed on a

wooden log. In the following shot, blood spilled as the head flew in midair on its way to falling

to the ground. The final shot displayed the dead corpse of the cleric laying on the ground. The

gore and ultraviolence in the execution images presented the group as the unwavering dispenser

of the most severe punishments available under shari'a law.

Beyond the display of execution images, Wilayat Sinai focused its law enforcement

frame on moral policing efforts. The images depicted preventive actions designed to protect the

community from vice and punishment. The photographs mostly appeared in photo reports

displaying a wide range of moral enforcement efforts. A 10-image report posted on June 14,

2017, for example, showed hisba men in their standard brown uniforms standing at checkpoints

confiscating "sorcery-related" objects, burning packs of cigarettes, advising an old man to repent

from "polytheistic Sufi thought," destroying tombstones to prevent the worship of graves, and

monitoring a shop's food products to ensure freshness (see Figure 5.9).

Figure 5.9 Hisba man overseeing the burning of cigarettes; disseminated June 14, 2017.

The moral policing images also emphasized Wilayat Sinai's action plan for dealing with threats to the community. In 20 images, the group depicted confiscation and burning of contraband as the consequence for drug and cigarette possession. In another thirteen images, Wilayat Sinai showed its militants handling security threats by checking identification papers and arresting suspects at checkpoints. Perhaps most importantly, Wilayat Sinai used 17 images to emphasize the group's willingness to spare citizens from executions if they repent. A 21-image photo report posted on September 26, 2017, for example, displayed both execution and moral policing shots. The report began with multiple images of masked militants distributing by hand a document calling on pedestrians and drivers to stay away from security forces. The next photographs showed individuals who the captions claimed were spies who had repented sitting and listening to the militants (see Figure 5.10). The report ended with 10 execution images of individuals who apparently had not repented. Taken together, the moral policing images served as a counterbalance to the gore of executions by showing other law enforcement actions aimed at protecting rather than punishing the community.

Figure 5.10 A group of spies who repented; disseminated September 26, 2017.

The images appearing in the law enforcement frame relate to three of Entman's categories. The photo captions emphasized that the causal explanations for apostasy and polytheism involved any ties to the Egyptian security forces and the practice of Sufi Islam. Recommended treatments for safeguarding the community included executions and the destruction of forbidden contraband. Finally, law enforcement images underscored the moral responsibility of Wilayat Sinai to apply shari'a law and protect the community from vice and treason.

Victimhood of Sinai Muslims

Victimhood of Sinai Muslims constituted the second most recurring visual frame in Wilayat Sinai's non-military images. A total of 43 images focused on the misery of civilians resulting from the Egyptian military's airstrikes and the Rafah eviction policy. To emphasize citizen grievances, Wilayat Sinai exhibited the destruction of houses and religious shrines. The photo captions attributed these damaging acts to the Egyptian military, while labeling the action's victims as Muslims.

The victimhood images emphasized the consequences of the Egyptian military's actions in North Sinai. Wilayat Sinai implied the death or eviction of residents by excluding all humans from 40 of the victimhood images. Instead, the images displayed the aftermath of military

airstrikes and house demolitions. An 11-image photo report posted on October 24, 2016, for example, showed only destroyed houses and plantations with no residents in the vicinities. The group described the scenes as the outcome of "the Egyptian apostate military's airstrikes on the properties and houses of Muslims." The only three images that displayed humans appeared in a photo report posted on October 2017 that showed the tragic loss of residents due to Rafah evictions near the border. All three involved children at the scene. One showed a man and a boy searching through the rubble of a destroyed building as a woman and a little girl watched from a distance (see Figure 5.11). The others showed children watching their families as they packed up belongings in anticipation of leaving their homes. All five pictures of mosques anywhere in Wilayat Sinai's photographic campaign related to the victimhood frame, as each appeared in a state of destruction. The victimhood visual frame presented Muslim civilians as the military's main target.

Figure 5.11 A destroyed house in Rafah; disseminated October 29, 2017.

The images appearing in the victimhood of Sinai Muslims visual frame relate to two of Entman's categories. The photos with accompanying captions emphasized that the causal explanations for apostasy involved resident evictions, house demolitions, and destruction of Muslim lands. The images further presented these acts by the Egyptian military as morally outrageous.

In-group Lifestyle

The in-group lifestyle frame encompassed 39 of Wilayat Sinai's non-military images. The images depicted the daily lives of the group members in their spare time after they had finished fighting or training for the day. To display their habits, Wilayat Sinai showed the militants cooking, eating, reading, practicing their religion, and holding their weapons. The photo captions described the photo subjects as soldiers of the caliphate striving in the path of God.

The lifestyle images emphasized the spirit of camaraderie present among Wilayat Sinai members. The militants shared different activities, ranging from eating and praying to watching videos. Two images posted in September 2016, for example, showed the group members as they hugged one another and prepared food as part of their feast celebration. Even in the more relaxed lifestyle images, Wilayat Sinai underscored the preparedness of its group members by showing 21 images that displayed their weapons. Highlighting the lifestyle as Islamic, eight images depicted the group members making the monotheism gesture, praying, or reading the Qur'an (see Figure 5.12). Moreover, the lifestyle visual frame highlighted alternative media sources that the group members consumed. Fourteen images showed individuals reading *al-Naba'* newsletter or watching provincial video releases. A two-image news brief posted in September 2017 showed several group members watching a new video on a laptop that al-Barqa province in Libya had released earlier. Wilayat Sinai further reinforced the connectedness to ISIS by showing the group members raising ISIS's black flag in three images. Together, the visual frame depicted the life of Wilayat Sinai members as one that involved sharing with and caring for the other.

Figure 5.12 A militant reading Qur'an during his break; disseminated March 5, 2017.

The images appearing in the in-group lifestyle visual frame relate to one of Entman's categories. The images defined the moral ground for Wilayat Sinai and its members. Specifically, the photographs stressed piety, a spirit of camaraderie, preparedness, and connectedness to one mission as the moral obligations of group members.

Sinai Landscape

The Sinai landscape frame encompassed 29 of Wilayat Sinai's non-military images. The images depicted the serenity and pristine nature of the natural lands in Sinai. The accompanying photo captions identified Sinai as the location, specified the names of the displayed fruits, and linked the scene to the Islamic faith. A 13-image photo report posted on February 28, 2016, for example, showed the dew on plants after rainfall, green fields, and water streams. Wilayat Sinai used a pertinent Qur'anic verse, "When We send down upon it rain, it quivers and swells and grows [something] of every beautiful kind," as the headline for the same report. Another 13-image photo report posted on October 28, 2017 displayed Sinai's different fruits handing from the trees, including pomegranates, peaches, apples, figs, mangos, grapes, and dates. The images visualized the beauty of Sinai in stark contrast with the more recurring and familiar scenes of fighting and destruction.

The images appearing in the Sinai landscape visual frame relate to one of Entman's categories. The images emphasized the moral obligation to preserve and protect the sacred land of Sinai by reverting to a natural, picturesque state of the Sinai land. The fruits displayed the rich potential of the embodied lands.

Healthcare

The healthcare frame encompassed 23 of Wilayat Sinai's non-military images. These images depicted the provincial group's ability to establish clinics and treat patients. Wilayat Sinai showed its medical facilities, equipment, and training workshops to demonstrate the group's capacity to provide adequate healthcare. The photo captions described the nature of the medical activity and incorporated a religious component into the health mission. For example, a 10-image photo report posted on March 27, 2016 showed medical equipment, medicine, herbs, a blood specimen, and a blood pressure meter in a health clinic. Wilayat Sinai headlined the photo report through the use the Qur'anic verse "And when I am ill, it is He who cures me" and described the location as one of the mujahidin's health clinics inside the province. The other 13-image photo report posted on February 4, 2017 displayed a first aid workshop for Wilayat Sinai members depicting lectures, written pamphlets, CPR training, setting fractured bones, and carrying the injured (see Figure 5.13). The images highlighted the group's efforts to sidestep the existing government-run healthcare facilities and establish an alternative system.

Figure 5.13 A First Aid Workshop; disseminated February 4, 2017.

The images appearing in the healthcare visual frame relate to one of Entman's categories. The pictured healthcare scenes provided a solution for illnesses and injuries. By doing so, Wilayat Sinai added its healthcare facilities and services as another facet of the treatment recommendation for the ongoing conflict.

In sum, Wilayat Sinai's visual frames exhibited all of Entman's four framing categories (see Table 5.1). The group identified the presence of apostates, spies, and the Jews as a problem. The oppression of Sinai Muslims and the collusion with security forces were the underlying causal interpretations of apostasy. Wilayat Sinai recommended training, fighting apostates and spies, conducting suicide operations, confiscating the opponents' belongings, executing spies and polytheists, and providing healthcare as the treatment recommendations needed to end the Sinai conflict. Morally, Wilayat Sinai juxtaposed its own notions of piety, camaraderie, and protection of the community with their enemies' airstrikes and evictions of Muslims in Sinai. Together the sum of all categories presented Wilayat Sinai as the only side in the conflict that could preserve the religion and fight oppression.

Table 5.1 Wilayat Sinai's Framing Categories in 2016-2017

Framing Category	Visual Frame	Message
Problem Definition	Combat	Apostates and Jews in and around Sinai
	Battle Aftermath	Spies helping the apostates
Causal Interpretation	Victimhood of Sinai Muslims	Egyptian security forces apostates evict Muslims and destroy their homes
	Law Enforcement	Individual Muslims act as apostates and spies help them
Treatment Recommendation	Combat	Fight and destroy the apostates and spies
	Battle Aftermath	Confiscate enemy artillery and belongings
	Martyrdom	Conduct suicide operations Fight in the media battlefield
	Military Training	Work together and prepare for battle
	Law Enforcement	Execute spies and polytheists Destroy forbidden materials
	Healthcare	Provide healthcare services
Moral Evaluation	Martyrdom	Wilayat Sinai members are pious and willing to sacrifice their lives for their cause
	Militant Lifestyle	Group members are brothers who share one mission
	Sinai Landscape	The group is morally obligated to protect the sacred land of Sinai
	Law Enforcement	The group will apply shari'a law to protect Sinai from vice and treason
	Victimhood of Sinai Muslims	The Egyptian military lacks morality as it oppresses Sinai Muslims

Results emerged from an analysis of both the photos and captions

5.2   The Egyptian Military's Photographic Campaign

The Egyptian military presented 1105 images in 2016 and 2017. Superimposed captions only appeared on 20 of the military's images to describe the scene. The images also carried no logos or identifiers of the source. Instead, the military relied on longer Facebook posts, with an average of 166 words per post, to contextualize the scene, the military's role, and the broader conflict. The pool of images encompassed two main categories: military and non-military. The military images made up 56 percent of the Egyptian military's photographic campaign, while non-military images constituted the remaining 44 percent (see Figure 5.14).
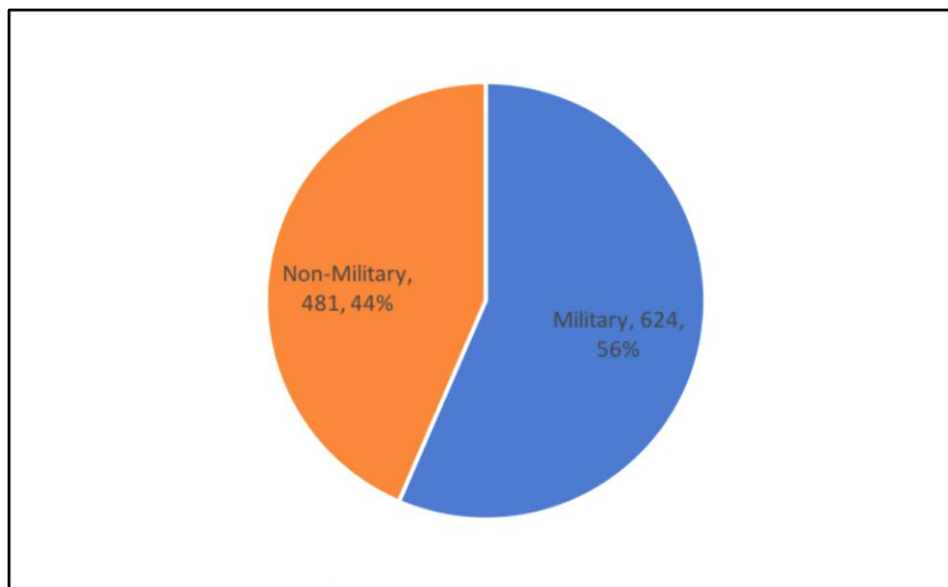
Figure 5.14 The Egyptian Military's Visual Frames in 2016 and 2017.

5.2.1   *Military Images*

The images showing the Egyptian military's use of force comprised three visual frames: combat, battle aftermath, and martyrdom (see Figure 5.15). The combat visual frame displayed military actions on the Sinai battlefront. The battle aftermath visual frame focused on the

outcomes of the military's combative action. The martyrdom visual frames eulogized fallen soldiers who gave their lives fighting the militants of the Wilayat Sinai.
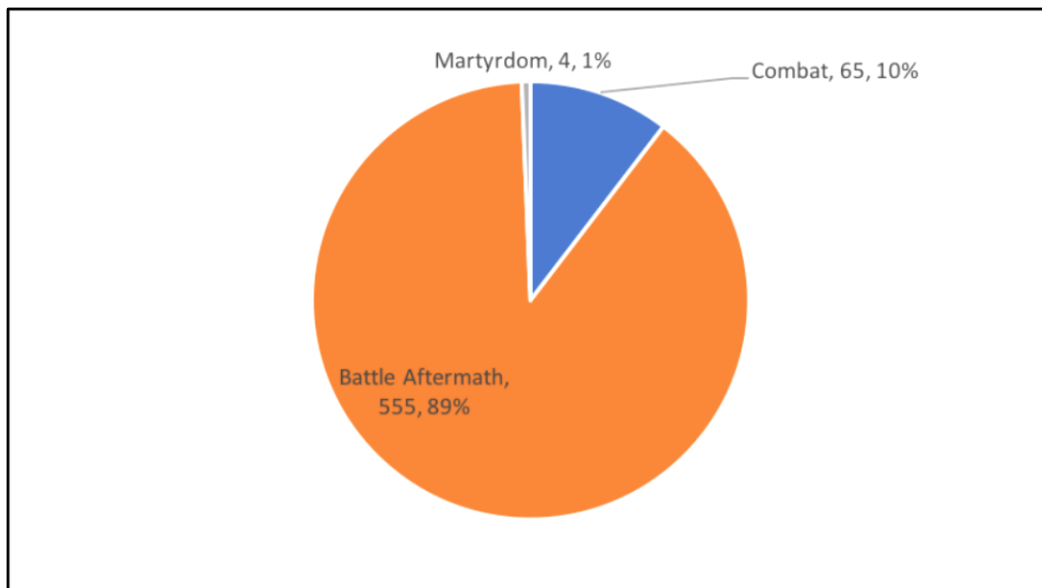
Figure 5.15 The Egyptian Military's Military Visual Frames in 2016 and 2017.

Battle Aftermath

The battle aftermath visual frame was the most recurring in the Egyptian military's photographic campaign. The 555 aftermath images made almost 90 percent of the military images. Complementing the combat images, the aftermath visual frame focused on the success of the counterterrorism operations in Sinai. The military exhibited Wilayat Sinai's burned vehicles and hideouts, confiscated weapons and flags, and dead or arrested militants. Only three aftermath images had captions, and each of these labeled the militants as takfiris or excommunicators, while the Facebook posts focused on the military's efforts to combat terrorism in Sinai.

The aftermath images emphasized various positive outcomes of the military's operations in Sinai. Unlike the combat images, the Egyptian military mostly excluded the human element from the scene, with 343 images focusing solely on property damage or military gains.

Highlighting its destructive power, the military showed the destruction of militants' hideouts,

caves and vehicles in 158 images. Out of eight images posted on April 26, 2017, for example,

five showed hideouts in flames and explosions after the Egyptian military "[destroyed] a large

amount of explosive materials used by the takfiri elements" in North Sinai (Official Page of

Armed Forces Spokesman, 2017b) (see Figure 5.16). Two hundred images also stressed the

military's ability to seize the militants' weapons, IEDs, explosive materials, computers, cameras,

vehicles, clothes, and money. The ISIS black flags, which appeared only in the battle aftermath

visual frame, indicated the identity of the owners of these lost belongings. Generally, the images

presented the military as an unseen war machine whose destructive power was manifest.

Figure 5.16 Destroying hideouts; disseminated April 26, 2017.

The military focused on the capture and death of militants in the remaining 212 images

that displayed human beings. Seventy-five of the photographs depicted the captured militants as

helpless with their hands tied behind the backs. One of the images uploaded on September 8,

2017 showed two blindfolded individuals on their knees, with the Facebook post describing them

as "two very dangerous takfiris" whom the military captured in central Sinai (Official Page of

Armed Forces Spokesman, 2017j). Further, the military highlighted the fatal outcome of the

counterterrorism operations by showing 74 images of the militants' dead corpses. Collectively,

the images presented arrest and death as the fates awaiting the militants.

The images in the battle aftermath visual frame relate to two of Entman's categories. The posts and photo captions mainly defined the problem as the presence of takfiri terrorists in Sinai. The aftermath images identified the property destruction, seizure of weapons, and the capture and killing of militants as the treatment recommendations.

Combat

The combat visual frame encompassed only 65, or 10 percent, of the military images. The images depicted the Egyptian military as the powerful adversary in the Sinai conflict. To emphasize dominance, the Egyptian military showed its soldiers taking part in counterterrorism operations on the ground and jets bombing the militants from the air. Only one combat image had a caption, which labeled the militants as takfiris, while the Facebook posts identified the military's mission as combatting terroristic activity in Sinai.

The combat images emphasized the military's control in Sinai. They depicted the Egyptian soldiers on the ground in 45 percent of the photographs displaying the combat frame. The soldiers were riding in tanks and Humvees, holding their weapons, walking together, and checking caves. A two-image post on May 30, 2016, for example, showed Egyptian soldiers riding in armored vehicles and aiming at some distant objects. The caption of the operation reported that the soldiers killed 16 of the "dangerous terrorist elements" in North Sinai (Official Page of Armed Forces Spokesman, 2016f) (see Figure 5.17). In contrast, the military generally excluded displays of the militants in the battlefield. Their only appearance was in the context of a foiled militant attack the military had stopped by killing the assailant. In the meantime the Egyptian air force was a major player in the combat images. The military displayed its airstrikes in more than half of its combat images. Thirty-three images shoed the Egyptian air jets flying over Sinai and targeting specific buildings and vehicles. With the focus on soldiers, weapons,

tanks, air jets, and missiles, the images worked in tandem to imply that militants faced a

presumption of death from the omnipresent and invincible Egyptian military forces.

Figure 5.17 Egyptian soldiers on the frontline; disseminated May 30, 2016.

The images in the combat visual frame relate to two of Entman's categories. The posts

and photo captions highlighted attacks against the military as the causal interpretation for the

threats in Sinai. The treatment recommendations for fighting the militants in Sinai included both

airstrikes and ground battles.

Martyrdom

Comprising only four images, the martyrdom visual frame was the least prevalent within

the Egyptian military's photographic campaign. The images eulogized the military officers who

died in the line of duty fighting terrorism in Sinai. The Egyptian military either showed its

martyrs individually prior to their deaths or displayed their funeral services. None of the

martyrdom images had captions, but the Facebook posts praised the officers and celebrated their

life stories.

Figure 5.18 Colonel Ahmed Al-Dardiry; disseminated March 22, 2017.

The Egyptian military emphasized the officers' patriotism and piety in the martyrdom images. It featured three of the officers in full military fatigues. One image posted on March 22, 2017, for example, depicted Colonel Ahmed al-Dardiry with the Egyptian flag in the background (see Figure 5.18). The 550-word Facebook post described him as "one of the heroes of the Armed Forces who presented an extraordinary example in sacrifice…so that his soldiers can live" (Official Page of Armed Forces Spokesman, 2017g). The post then explained the details on his background, personal life, and final moments in North Sinai, as well as his desire for his son to read the Qur'an. Other posts stressed the martyrs' devoutness and their past practices of prayer. On the other hand, the military eulogized a fourth martyr by displaying dozens of top security officials, including the Minister of Defense and the Army Chief of Staff, as they walked in his funeral. The accompanying Facebook post provided the necessary information to understand the scene, by indicating the funeral was for Colonel Ahmed Bayoumy who had died a day earlier in North Sinai. The martyrdom images served as obituaries that memorialized the fallen heroes.

The images in the martyrdom visual frame relate to two of Entman's categories. The written text highlighted the deaths of military officers as a causal interpretation of the militants' takfiri ideology and terroristic activity in Sinai. The images and the Facebook posts also presented sacrifice and religiosity as a moral ground for the Egyptian military, its personnel, and the Martyr's Right operation.

5.2.2 Non-Military Images

Non-military images focused on the Egyptian military's efforts beyond the battlefield. They comprised three visual frames: law enforcement, public figure visits, and service (see Figure 5.19). The law enforcement visual frame involved images of the activities to maintain order in Sinai. The public figures visits frame focused on the appreciation of soldiers taking part in the counterterrorism operations. The service provision frames highlighted Wilayat Sinai's aid and development initiatives.
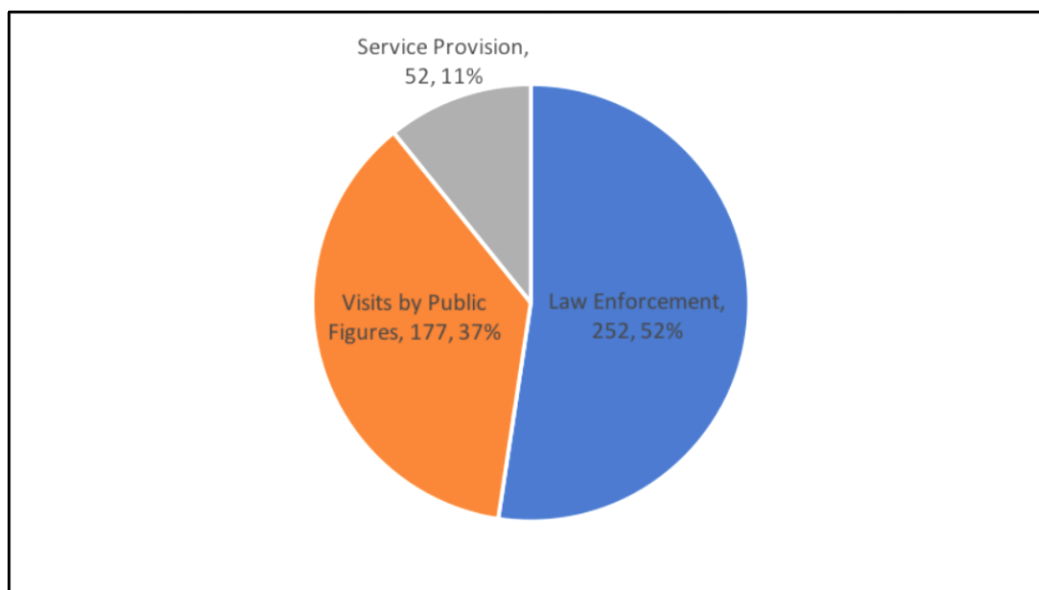
Figure 5.19 The Egyptian Military's Non-Military Visual Frames in 2016 and 2017.

Law Enforcement

Law enforcement was the most recurring visual frame appearing among the non-military images, making up 252 images (50 percent) of the non-military images. To emphasize the effectiveness of its crackdown on illegal activities in Sinai, the military showed drugs and underground tunnels. A total of 16 images had photo captions that laid out the features of the tunnels in Rafah, while the Facebook posts reiterated the military's mission to eradicate terrorism, disrupt the illegal trade with Gaza, and secure Sinai.

Three types of law enforcement activities appeared in the photographs. First, 126 images showed the underground tunnels the military discovered in Rafah. Five images posted on February 6, 2016, for example, depicted the discovery steps involved in finding the tunnels, starting with the detection of its ceiling, the digging of an opening, and the eventual unveiling of the parameters of the underground facilities (see Figure 5.20). Second, the military used 109 images to showcase its crackdown on drugs and the illegal smuggling of cigarettes. In an eight-image Facebook post on November 5, 2017, five images showed the confiscation of drugs at checkpoints and the destruction of drug plantations in central Sinai. Like the battle aftermath visual frame, the military's law enforcement frame mainly excluded humans from the scenes of drugs and tunnels, showing them only 30 percent of the time. Third, seventeen images in the law enforcement frame showed the military securing the international events in South Sinai. Humans appeared in every image showing the African Trade Investment Forum, high-level meetings of the African Ministers of Defense in Sharm El Sheikh, and the country flags of the visiting delegations. The law enforcement juxtaposed the pervasiveness of illegal activities in North Sinai with the safety of the South.

جسم النفق بإبعاد [٥.١×٥.١] م وبعمق [١٢] م

Figure 5.20 Discovering a tunnel in Rafah; disseminated February 6, 2016.

The images in the law enforcement visual frame relate to two of Entman's categories. The written text and the images defined a problem, namely the existence of underground tunnels, drugs, and smuggled cigarettes in North Sinai. The recommended treatments to this problem were the discovery of tunnels, the confiscation of illegal materials, and the deployment of more forces.

Visits by Public Figures

Another recurring visual frame among the non-military images was public figure visits. The 177 public figure visit images made up over one-third of the non-military images. These images focused on the visits by top security officials and other public figures to the soldiers in the field in Sinai or in hospitals. None of the images had photo captions, but the Facebook posts named the visitors and praised the soldiers, labeling them as the heroes of the armed forces for fighting terrorism in Sinai.

The Egyptian military emphasized the country's appreciation for the soldiers and their sacrifices in Sinai. Praising those who had suffered injuries in Sinai, the military distributed 133 images showing top security officials, as well as politicians, actors, media persons, and clerics visiting, talking with, and exchanging smiles with Egyptian soldiers in hospitals. A 10-image

Facebook post on April 30, 2016, for example, displayed Minister of Defense Sedki Sobhi next

to the hospital beds of 10 soldiers, shaking their hands, patting them on the shoulders, and

kissing their foreheads. White sheets of paper hanging behind the soldiers' beds indicated the

nature, date, and exact location of their injuries sustained in Sinai battles (see Figure 5.21).

Forty-four images in the visits frame also showed top security officials on battlefield visits

interacting with the soldiers and honoring their efforts. A six-image Facebook post on February

12, 2016 showed Minister of Defense Sedki Sobhi and Minister of Interior Magdi Abdelghaffar

with the soldiers in North Sinai shaking their hands and handing them gifts, while the

corresponding Facebook post described the soldiers as "Egypt's heroes" (Official Page of Armed

Forces Spokesman, 2016g). In both the hospital and field visit photographs, Sedki Sobhi and the

Egyptian flag were the most recurring symbols, appearing in over half of the images. The images

stressed on the military's patriotism and the leaders' constant interaction with both injured and

healthy soldiers serving in combat.

Figure 5.21 The Minister of Defense in a hospital visit; disseminated April 30, 2016.

The images in the visits by public figures visual frame relate to one of Entman's

categories. The images and Facebook posts presented the soldiers' injuries and sacrifices as

indicators of the moral responsibility the military personnel held toward their country. The

scenes of hospital and field visits also underscored the leadership's moral responsibility toward the soldiers who fought terrorism in Sinai.

Service Provision

The service provision visual frame encompassed 52 (11 percent) of the non-military images. These images focused on the government's efforts to develop Sinai and its citizenry. To emphasize these efforts, the military mainly showed its soldiers giving out food and leaders opening schools. None of the images had photo captions, but the Facebook posts provided the location, identified the participating officials, and labeled all activities part of an ongoing project to develop the Sinai Peninsula.

Figure 5.22 Food distribution in Al-Rawda; disseminated December 5, 2017.

The service provision images highlighted two main military-sponsored initiatives in Sinai. First, the military distributed 27 images to depict its personnel distributing food packages to the people of Sinai. Scenes of aid distribution often displayed elderly men, women, and children waiting or holding their packages of food. Two images posted on December 5, 2017, for example, showed a military officer handing packages to civilians in al-Rawda village, where militants had bombed a mosque two weeks earlier (see Figure 5.22). Second, the military distributed 15 images to highlight the construction of new schools and religious centers. A three-image Facebook post on March 31, 2017 showed the Minister of Education Tarek Shawky, the

military commander of the unified leadership east of the Canal Mohamed Abdel Illah, and the governors of North and South Sinai opening a school and a social unit in Sinai. Images of the Minister of International Cooperation's visits to a development project and of military personnel donating money to a Sinai public bank in support of the development projects also appeared, but less frequently. Throughout the photographs displaying these initiatives, the military used the Egyptian flag as a prominent symbol. In 34 images, the flag appeared on school building walls, military fatigue patches and food packages, as well as in the hands of those civilians receiving aid. The images reinforced the military's engagement in Sinai's humanitarian and developmental initiatives.

The images in the services provision visual frame relate to two of Entman's categories. The images and Facebook posts presented the initiatives to develop education and provide aid to citizens as necessary treatment recommendations to complement the counterterrorism military operations. Additionally, the images visualized these actions and interactions with the Sinai residents as a moral responsibility of the Egyptian military.

The Egyptian military's visual frames exhibited all of Entman's four framing categories (see Table 5.2). The military identified the presence of takfiri terrorists, contraband tunnels, and illegal drugs and cigarettes in Sinai as a problem. It highlighted the attacks against the military and the killing of officers as causal interpretations for the spread of takfiri ideology. Hence, the appropriate treatment recommendations for the Sinai conflict included fighting and killing the militants, destroying their property, confiscating their weapons, discovering tunnels, burning drugs and cigarettes, opening schools, and providing food to civilians .The Egyptian military emphasized its moral superiority by underscoring the sacrifices of its patriotic, pious troops, exhibiting appreciation for such acts, and manifesting the leadership's efforts to help the Sinai

residents. Together, Entman's categories in the Sinai context presented the Egyptian military as the sole protector of the nation against terrorism and extremist ideologies and a willing participant in the development of the territory's citizenry.

Table 5.2 The Egyptian Military's Framing Categories in 2016-2017

Framing Category	Visual Frame	Message
Problem Definition	Battle Aftermath	Takfiris and terrorists in Sinai
	Law Enforcement	Tunnels and illegal drugs and cigarettes in Sinai
Causal Interpretation	Combat	Attacking the military makes one a terrorist
	Martyrdom	Excommunicating and apostatizing officers makes one a takfiri
Treatment Recommendation	Combat	Fight the militants
	Battle Aftermath	Kill militants, destroy their property, and seize their weapons
	Law Enforcement	Discover tunnels, confiscate illegal drugs and cigarettes, and deploy more forces
	Services Provision	Open schools and provide aid
Moral Evaluation	Martyrdom	The military personnel are pious and patriotic
	Visits by Public Figures	Officers and soldiers fight for their country and the military appreciates their sacrifices
	Services Provision	The military develops Sinai

*Results emerged from an analysis of both the photos and captions

5.3   The Visual Framing War

Wilayat Sinai and the Egyptian military's visual frames implemented three interaction strategies: competition, negation, and expansion. At times, the two sides directly competed over the same visual frames to claim superiority and power. At others, they negated the messaging in the opposing visual frames by presenting different ones that claim to undermine the credibility of the opponent. Each side also expanded beyond the scope of the opponent's visual frames by constructing unique scenes presenting their perspectives.

One key area where Wilayat Sinai and the Egyptian military competed was in the display of battle combat. Wilayat Sinai mainly defined the battle through sequential scenes of combative action that implied motion on the ground. They showed IED attacks, suicide missions, group operations, and assassinations that the militants carried out on the battlefront as they fought security forces. The military instead defined the battle mostly by displaying scenes of the destructive aftermath of precision airstrikes and counterterrorism operations. The images rarely exhibited ground actions in progress or the soldiers' involvement on the frontlines. By doing so, the military presented static pictures of battle in Sinai that, when compared to dynamic scenes, are less likely to stimulate brain activity (Proverbio, Riva, & Zani, 2009) or influence attitudes (Cian, Krishna, & Elder, 2014). Showing the fight in process and highlighting the fighters' actions on the battlefield is likely to engage the viewer and trump the focus on destroyed objects in the aftermath.

Wilayat Sinai and the Egyptian military also competed over the portrayal of martyrs. The militant group treated its fallen soldiers as religious actors by showing the militants reading the Qur'an and making the monotheism gesture as they posed for the camera. The superimposed captions reinforced the message, describing them as martyrs who had died striving in the path of

God. The military instead relied on national symbols to identify those who died fighting for its side of the cause, such as the Egyptian flag and the military uniform. The Facebook texts bolstered the message by hailing the fallen officers as defenders of the nation, while also describing them as practicing Muslims. With no depictions of religious symbols, however, patriotism visually dominated the military's portrayal of martyrs. This competition drew a sharp contrast between the motivational goals of the fighters. Wilayat Sinai attempted to appeal to those wanting to fight in support of their faith against the state; the Egyptian military reached out to a much wider audience supporting or willing to protect the country against terrorism while upholding their religious ties.

Wilayat Sinai and the Egyptian military also competed over the appropriate framework for law enforcement. Both sides displayed crackdowns on drugs and cigarettes. The militant group used the captions to describe the contraband items as impurities forbidden under shari'a law. The military instead used Facebook text to describe drug plantations and smuggled substances in Sinai as illegal. It further highlighted the threat emanating from breaches to the Rafah-Gaza border through the recurring displays of underground tunnels. The competition here drew a sharp contrast between the different motives for law enforcement. Wilayat Sinai presented its actions as moral; the Egyptian military highlighted its activities as legal. In short, the displayed motivations reinforced the conflict as one between the Islamic shari'a and state laws.

Wilayat Sinai and the Egyptian military also competed over perceived capacity to offer social services to the Sinai populations. The militant group limited its depicted services to healthcare for its fighters displayed in scenes of a clinic and a first aid workshop. The military, by contrast, presented a wide array of services the Egyptian state provided to its residents. These

included food aid distribution, schools, religious centers, and other development projects. The Egyptian military highlighted the state's comparatively higher level of competence over the militant group as a provider of social services for those in need of food, education, and jobs.

Beyond directly competing over visual frames, Wilayat Sinai and the Egyptian military also negated each other's frames. Wilayat Sinai, for example, negated the Egyptian military's depiction of the outcomes of its Sinai conflict operations. The military presented visual frames emphasizing how its precision airstrikes effectively targeted terrorists, its school projects helped Sinai residents, and its crackdown on underground tunnels secured the border. The militant group negated such claims by presenting the airstrikes as having turned civilian houses, mosques, plantations, and schools into devastating scenes of the rubble. It further displayed that outcome of the military's plan of action to destroy the underground tunnels and create a buffer zone between Rafah and Gaza as children fleeing with their families from homes near the border. Wilayat Sinai's alternative outcomes attempted to discredit the state and undermine its credibility using images of innocence and destruction that are likely to personify injustice (Wells, 2007) and prompt support for a forceful response (Vail III & Arndt, J., Motyl, M. Pyszczynski, 2012).

The Egyptian military, by contrast, negated the presentation of Wilayat Sinai's fighting power featured in the militant group's combat images. In response to Wilayat Sinai's emphasis on scenes of militants' engagement in attacks that it deemed successful, the Egyptian military used part of its battle aftermath images to redefine the power dynamics in the Sinai conflict. It presented scenes of arrest, death, and destruction of militants as the actual outcomes of militants' attacks. The humiliating appearances of militants in shackles or in their own blood further magnified the punishment that the military implemented for law breakers. The Egyptian military's alternative picture attempted to debunk Wilayat Sinai's claims of success on the

battlefield using negative images that are more likely to grab attention (Pfau et al., 2008) and enhance recall (Newhagen & Reeves, 1992).

Having directly engaged Egyptian military's framing of the conflict through competition and negation, Wilayat Sinai went further to expand beyond the scope of the military's visual frames. The focus of the group's effort was on displaying life in Sinai. The militant group utilized the in-group lifestyle to emphasize the camaraderie and piety present among the Sinai militants. The images showed militants praying, eating, and living together. The Sinai landscape also highlighted the beauty of the sacred land through images of green fields, water streams, and fruit trees. Such images of a spiritual, moral, and egalitarian lifestyle that was close to nature occurred only in the militant group's photographic campaign.

The Egyptian military likewise expanded beyond the scope of the militant group's visual frames to display the interactions between leadership and troops. The military utilized its visits frame to emphasize a father-son relationship between the military leaders and its soldiers. The images mostly showed top security officials, such as First Lieutenant General Sedki Sobhi and Major Generals Magdi Abdelghaffar and Mahmoud Hijazy, standing by the soldiers' beds in hospitals and next to them in the field in Sinai. Such images displaying a morally responsible leadership that honored, directed, and worked together with its subordinates occurred only in the military's photographic campaign.

The interaction strategies revealed the nature of state and non-state actors' messaging approaches in conflict. Competition was the main strategy evident in Wilayat Sinai and the Egyptian military's counter-messages. Each side used the military, law enforcement, and social services frames in over 80 percent of the images. Negation was another strategy manifest in the two groups' counter-messages. The militant group highlighted victimhood in five percent of its

images; the state emphasized humiliation of militants in 13 percent of it images. Meanwhile, expansion was the only strategy in the alternative messages on both sides. The militant group exclusively endorsed the militant lifestyle and landscape in almost nine percent of its images; the state instead promoted leadership and societal unity in 16 percent of its images. The incorporation of counter- and alternative messaging reveals that neither approach is unique to anti-extremism or counterterrorism media campaigns. Instead militant groups like Wilayat Sinai rely on the two approaches as much as state actors for competition, negation, and expansion. In short, counter- and alternative messaging approaches can operate in tandem within state and non-state actors' media campaigns.

5.4   Concluding Thoughts

This chapter demonstrates how militant groups and state actors frame their photographic campaigns differently during times of conflict. Focusing on the Sinai conflict in 2016-2017, an inductive, grounded theory approach generated context-specific visual frames that Wilayat Sinai and the Egyptian military had constructed. The militant group and the state were generally more reliant on the visual frames pertaining to military action, such as combat and battle aftermath. However, other non-military activities such as law enforcement, social services, and visits to the soldiers made their way into the photographic campaigns,

The formats of surrounding text in the Sinai conflict presented an additional function of photo captions in the digital space. Wilayat Sinai used superimposed photo captions as framing devices and the provincial logo as its visual identifier on each of its 800 images. The militant group used the captions to tell a story (Green & Dill, 2013), contextualize the scene (Birdsell & Groarke, 1996), and reinforce the visual frames (Parry, 2010). The superimposed captions also allowed the visual frames to retain meaning as the images digitally circulate as individual media

products across platforms. The Egyptian military, on the other hand, relied on the Facebook posts as static framing devices to perform the typical functions of photo captions. But with no superimposed captions or logo in almost all the 1105 images, the association wasn't as immediate for the viewer and the meaning was more difficult to decipher. The meaning would be less clear as the images themselves circulate with no surrounding text. In visual contestations, superimposing the caption on the image can allow the visual frame to transcend its initial context and the lack thereof can result in the loss of meaning in the cluttered digital space.

The contesting visual frames in Sinai exhibited similarities and differences with image distribution in previous conflicts. Wilayat Sinai's visual frames mostly aligned with previous analyses of ISIS images (e.g., Wignell et al., 2017; Winkler et al., 2016; Winkler, Damanhoury, Dicker, & Lemieux, 2018; Winter, 2018). Like these earlier studies, the militant group emphasized its attacks in combat and battle aftermaths, highlighted state-building efforts with a particular focus on law enforcement, the Sinai landscape, and healthcare, displayed religious symbols and bonding icons in its martyrs and the everyday life of its communities, and utilized the about to die visual trope in almost all its military images. Nonetheless, Wilayat Sinai's photographic campaign strategies also diverged from those of other military groups that previous research has identified. For example, Sinai's provincial militant group omitted the display of group leaders and civilian casualties which served as key features in images of Hamas and the Syrian opposition (Seo, 2014; Seo & Ebrahim, 2016). Instead, the group stressed the victimhood of the Sinai residents through images of house demolitions and residents fleeing their homes. Wilayat Sinai's avoidance of leader depictions along with the incorporation of victimhood may well be a means to demonstrate stark differences from the Egyptian military's recurrent displays of top security officials.

The Egyptian military's visual frames mostly aligned with analyses of state actors' images in the past three decades (e.g., Chouliaraki, 2013; Holiday et al., 2015; Ohl, 2015; Sontag, 2003). Like the findings of these earlier studies, the military used images to focus on the war machine in scenes of artillery and airstrikes rather than soldiers on the battlefield, the state's humanitarian aid and social services, and the unified community as exemplified by visits from security officials, members of parliament, journalists, actors, and clerics to wounded soldiers. The only exception from these earlier studies of state actors, however, was in the portrayal of death. In Sinai, the military did not censor death like other states, but rather frequently incorporated graphic images of the enemies' corpses on the battlefield. The Egyptian military's incorporation of death may well be a reflection of Wilayat Sinai's humiliating depictions of soldiers and civilians as well as a response to the deadly attacks during that period.

Most importantly, the chapter demonstrates that understanding the media battlefield requires an examination of contested visual frames. Entman's four framing associations serve as recurrent areas of stasis that allow for insightful comparison of the visual frames of militant groups and state actors. This study found that Wilayat Sinai's visual frames work in tandem to communicate a coherent localized story that identified apostasy as a problem, oppressing Sinai residents as the problem's cause, protecting the community as a moral responsibility, and fighting the Egyptian state and its collaborators as the main treatment. Meanwhile, the Egyptian military's visual frames created a much broader story that presented terrorism as a problem, attacking the military forces as the problem's cause, defending the country as a moral responsibility, and fighting terrorists as the main treatment. Comparing the similarities and differences between the visual frames of militant groups and state actors helps understand the messages operating within the conflict.

The second level of analysis important to a full understanding of how the visual frames function in the contested online environment involves a close examination of the interactions that exist between state and non-state actors. This analysis of Wilayat Sinai and the Egyptian military revealed that the visual interactions involved competition, negation, and expansion strategies. The militant group and the state competed over the framing of similar messages, such as the nature of combative action, martyrdom, and the ability to provide services. Each side used its own images to negate the other's framing of messages. Wilayat Sinai negated the military's framing of precision airstrikes by emphasizing civilian targets. The military negated Wilayat Sinai's framing of combative action by highlighting the death and arrest of militants. They also expanded beyond the direct visual confrontation by leveraging their relative moral positions through unique messages like camaraderie, beauty, and responsible leadership. Examining the three interaction strategies helps further explicate how the state and non-state actors conduct the image war.

Future studies can apply the same visual framing approach to both photographs and videos in other conflicts. Visual messaging strategies may very well differ from one case study to another. Hence, studies should extract the applicable visual elements they need to examine from the surrounding context and the relevant existing literature. Finally, other conflicts may generate additional or different modes of interactions between the opponents' visual frames. As a result, researchers can build on competition, negation, and expansion to develop a broader framework for visual framing interactions in conflict.

6   APPLICATION OF VISUAL SEMIOTICS

The sophisticated media operations on both sides of the Sinai conflict suggest that strategic factors may well have governed the visual semiotic choices of the competing media campaigns.

ISIS's internal documents reveal that a central media office provides the local provinces with a semiotic guidebook on how to compose photographs and generate meaning (CTC, 2018; Milton, 2018), while the Egyptian military had a full Department of Morale Affairs in charge of psychological operations and media production. To assess if and how the media operations on the two sides of the conflict utilize visual semiotics in purposeful ways, this chapter examines how the militant group and the Egyptian military used these elements to depict human subjects in the photographs in their media campaigns during 2016-2017.

This chapter begins by providing a quantitative overview of the human subjects displayed in the photographic media campaigns of Wilayat Sinai and the Egyptian military. Then, it focuses on each of the five semiotic categories, mining previous research for the potential effects of the element on Western viewers, examining how the media apparatuses of Wilayat Sinai and the Egyptian military employed the element in their respective campaigns, and analyzing how the two approaches interacted with one another. Finally, it concludes with a discussion of how the Sinai conflict introduces applications of visual semiotics that align with or diverge from Western approaches and of how future studies should direct their efforts moving forward.

6.1   Human Subjects in the Sinai Visual Conflict

Wilayat Sinai portrayed human characters in 515 images or 64 percent of its total photographic output in 2016-2017. The displayed character types included militants (identified members of Wilayat Sinai group), Egyptian soldiers (military conscripts, officers, and police guards), state collaborators (civilians and other tribal members who interacted, assisted, and worked with the Egyptian security forces), and ordinary civilians (those standing in, passing by, and driving through Sinai streets) (see Figure 6.1). Seventy-nine percent of the images portraying humans displayed only one character type. Twenty-one percent showed more than one character

type. The militants were the only character type present in 267 images (52 percent). The

Egyptian soldiers were the sole character type in 113 images (22 percent). State collaborators

were the only character type in 15 images (3 percent), while other civilian characters were the

only character type in 12 images (2 percent).
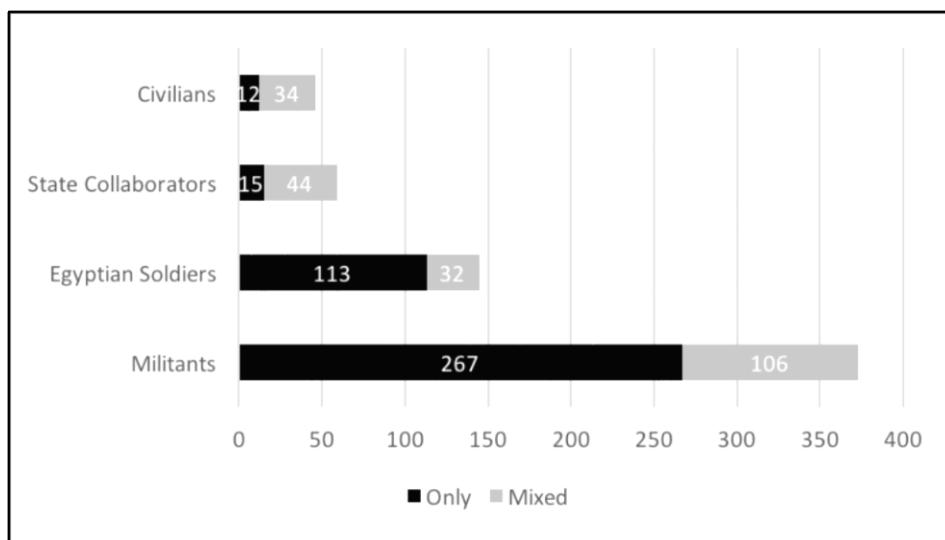
Figure 6.1 Display of Human Characters in Wilayat Sinai's Photographic Campaign in 2016-2017.

The Egyptian military portrayed human characters in 556 images or 50 percent of its total

output in 2016-2017. The character types included Egyptian soldiers (military conscripts and

officers from first lieutenants to brigadier-generals), leaders (the Army Chief of Staff and

Ministers of Defense and Interior), Wilayat Sinai militants (all identified members of Wilayat

Sinai), and civilians (see Figure 6.2). Character types appeared together in 43 percent of the

images, while the other 57 percent focused on one type. The Egyptian soldiers were the only

character type displayed in 148 images (26.6 percent). The leaders were the sole character type

in only 9 images (1.6 percent). The militants were the only type presented in 109 images (19.6

percent). Civilians alone (i.e., government officials, members of parliament, journalists, religious clergy, and Sinai residents) appeared in 53 images (9.5 percent).
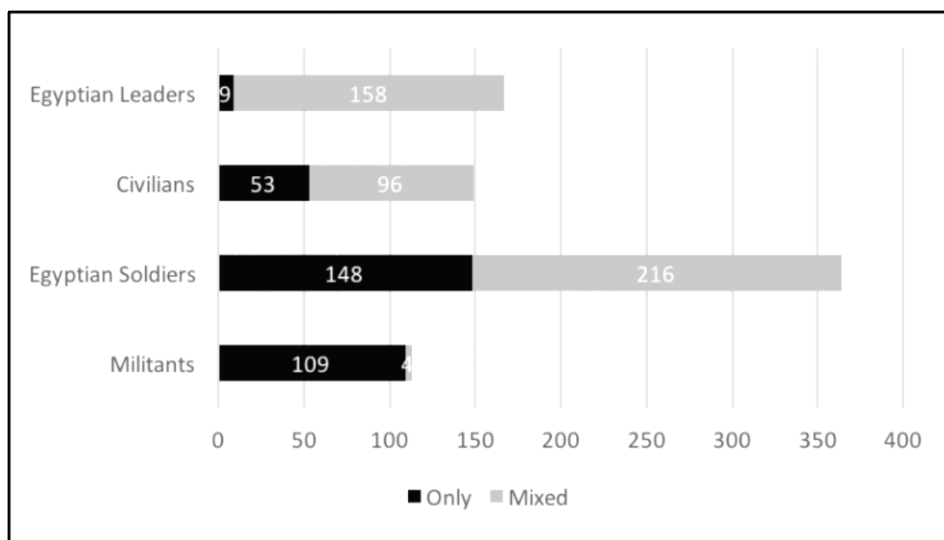
Figure 6.2 Display of Human Characters in the Egyptian Military's Photographic Campaign in 2016-2017.

The Wilayat Sinai and the Egyptian military's photographic campaigns exhibited different levels of emphasis based on the displayed character types. Each group emphasized its own members as the most frequent human photo subjects. Yet leaders, for example, constituted a unique, recurrent character type that only appeared in the military images. The two groups also differed in their relative emphasis on opponents and supporters in the Sinai conflict. In Wilayat Sinai's human photographs, the Egyptian soldiers and state collaborators were prominent, making up 40 percent of the images, while supporters were hardly present. In the Egyptian military's human photographs, on the other hand, the militants were the least visible character type with civilian supporters appearing more frequently. In sum, the militant group depicted the Sinai conflict as one involving a large group of militants fighting security forces and the civilians helping them; the military presented a large pool of soldiers backed by their leaders and the

public as they fought a small group of militants. The full import of the differences, however,

becomes more understandable with an examination of how each visual semiotics intersected with

the character types.

6.2   Viewer Distance

Studies of visual semiotics in the western context typically utilize viewer distance to

suggest a perceived relationship between the photo subject and the viewer. At a social/public

distance, the viewer has more difficulty recognizing the faces of the photo subjects (Lampinen,

Neuschatz, & Cling, 2012), is more likely to perceive the photo subject as a stranger or other (E.

T. Hall, 1966; Jewitt & Oyama, 2008), and is less threatened by the photo subjects' hostile

actions (Stamps, 2011). At an intimate/personal distance, the viewer can identify the photo

subjects' faces (Wagenaar & Van Der Schrier, 1996), recognize their emotions in some cases

(Gerhardsson, Högman, & Fischer, 2015; Hjarvard, 2000), and foster a perceived closer

relationship with them (J. Cohen, 2001; Koga-Browes, 2013). American political leaders, for

example, are more likely to appear at a close-to-medium distance on the covers of American

magazines than their foreign leader counterparts (Kang & Heo, 2006). Immigrants, on the other

hand, are more likely to appear at a long distance in Spanish and Greek newspapers than citizens

of the respective countries (Batziou, 2011; Silva et al., 2017).

6.2.1   Social/Public Distance

Wilayat Sinai and the Egyptian military displayed no significant difference in the use of

social/public distance to portray human subjects in their respective media campaigns (46 versus

42 percent respectively), $\chi_{2\,(1,\,N}= 1071) = 1.53$, $p > .05$. The human characters appeared more

than four feet away from the viewer in 237 of the militant group's images and in 235 of the

military's images. Both groups shared an interest in providing a wide view of Sinai that

positioned human photo subjects as recurrent part of the scenes. Disaggregation of the photographs by character types, however, revealed important differences between the two campaigns.

Wilayat Sinai often used social/public distance to depict its militants, particularly those engaged in combat or law enforcement activities. The battlefield images showed the militants at a distance, shooting, firing rockets, and attacking security checkpoints. Picturing an attack on al-Safa checkpoint in March 2016, for example, five images showed several militants at a public distance jumping out of a pickup truck and firing at the checkpoint (see Figure 6.3). Meanwhile, the 2016-2017 images also displayed militants from afar distributing warning documents to civilians, confiscating drugs and cigarettes, burning the forbidden materials in public for people to see, and preparing to execute state collaborators and Sufi clerics. The social/public distance emphasized that the group was serving as a trustworthy guardian of the community, both in its handling of the internal and external threats facing those living in Sinai.

Figure 6.3 Militants attacking al-Safa checkpoint; disseminated March 20, 2016.

Wilayat Sinai also used social/public distance to depict Egyptian soldiers displayed in images of combat and its aftermath. Wilayat Sinai's photographic campaign showed distant Egyptian soldiers only as targets and nonthreatening opponents, rather than as the agents of action like their militant counterparts. The Egyptian soldiers stood passively unaware of snipers

targeting them, walked or drove onto explosives unknowingly, fell on the ground or ran in response to militia attacks, and rushed to carry away their injured. Forty-one images snapped from a social/public distance, for example, showed IED attacks and their destructive aftermath for Egyptian soldiers. Taken as a whole, Wilayat Sinai's use of social/public distance emphasized the impotence of the Egyptian soldiers when they faced Wilayat Sinai militants on the battlefield.

By contrast, the Egyptian military used social/public distance to depict its soldiers competing successfully in photographs of combat, battlefield aftermath, and law enforcement activities. The photographs of the battlefield showed distant Egyptian soldiers lining up before operations, riding armored vehicles, entering caves, posing alongside confiscated belongings, and standing next to burning vehicles and hideouts. Picturing the aftermath of a counterterrorism operation on April 2, 2017, for example, four images showed the soldiers in long shots after they had confiscated explosive materials, computers, and vehicles in North Sinai (see Figure 6.4). Meanwhile, the Egyptian soldiers also appeared at a distance destroying drug plantations, confiscating contraband cigarettes, and filling the streets to secure international events in Sharm El Sheikh. The social/public distance emphasized the strength of the Egyptian soldiers by showing both the broad scope and positive outcomes of the state's Sinai operations.

Figure 6.4 Soldiers next to a confiscated vehicle; disseminated April 2, 2017.

The Egyptian military also used social/public distance to depict Wilayat Sinai militants along with local civilians in photographs of the battle aftermath and in law enforcement scenes. Unlike Egyptian military campaign photographs of soldiers who always appeared powerful and victorious, the same group's shots of militants showed them under arrest on a distant battlefield. A long shot posted on September 8, 2017, for example, showed two individuals kneeling in the desert with their hands tied behind them and faces blurred after their arrests in central Sinai (see Figure 6.5). The Facebook post identified both men as "very dangerous takfiris [excommunicators or ones who declare others disbelievers]" (Official Page of Armed Forces Spokesman, 2017j). Meanwhile, the distant shots of dead militants showed them in humiliating states with their blood spilling, their weapons next to their bodies, and/or their vehicles burning in the nearby surroundings. Some law enforcement images displayed civilians under arrest for engaging in smuggling activity from a long distance. Two long shots posted on November 12, 2017, for example, showed two blindfolded individuals with blurry faces and hands tied upon arrest along with their confiscated vehicles at a checkpoint. The Facebook post described them as drug and cigarette smugglers (Official Page of Armed Forces Spokesman, 2017h). Together, the social/public distance shots emphasized the eventual fate of separation from the rest of the Sinai community that awaited captured militants and smugglers.

Figure 6.5 Two militants under arrest; disseminated September 8, 2017.

6.2.2 Intimate/Personal Distance

Wilayat Sinai was significantly more likely than the Egyptian military to use photographs

shot at an intimate/personal distance (34 versus 21 percent respectively), $\chi^2_{(1, N}= 1071) = 22.66$, *p*

< .001. The human characters appeared less than four feet away from the viewer in 173 of the

militant group's images, but in only 115 of the military's images. Based on western conceptions

of the element's impact on viewers, the differential level of emphasis suggests that the militant

group placed more emphasis on creating a closer and more personal relationship with the viewer.

Considering the context of the media blackout in Sinai, however, the strategy could also relate to

the militant group's desire to present the on-the-ground situation to its viewers in Sinai and

beyond.

Figure 6.6 A martyred militant; disseminated January 28, 2017.

Wilayat Sinai used intimate/personal distance mainly to depict its own militants pictured

in combat and pre-battle scenes. The images focusing on the battlefield showed engaged

militants as they assembled rockets and fired gunshots at the distant, invisible enemies.

Photographs snapped away from the battlefield showed militants standing or sitting at a close-to-

medium distance holding weapons, cameras, or the Qur'an (see Figure 6.6). In these eulogy

photographs, the immediate textual context identified the militants as martyrs who had died

subsequently in attacks or suicide operations. Out of 23 eulogy images in the group's campaign, 18 depicted martyrs at a close distance. The patterned use of intimate/personal distance to show depicted Wilayat Sinai militants and martyrs suggested that viewer should feel a close personal relationship to those willing to fight and die for the group's cause.

Wilayat Sinai also used intimate/personal distance to depict Egyptian soldiers and state collaborators in shots of battlefield aftermath and executions. The use of close distances in photographed post-battle scenes showed Egyptian soldiers and tribal fighters only as dead corpses or as images shown on confiscated photo identification cards with accompanying visual and textual contexts confirming their death and defeat. Visualizing the aftermath of an attack on a security convoy in Beer al-Abd in September 2017, for example, two images showed dead Egyptian soldiers on the ground with burnt skin, torn clothes, and bloody bodies. Images displaying law enforcement scenes utilized close shots to show Egyptian soldiers, tribal fighters, and other state collaborators immediately before, during, and after their executions. The image sequences presented AK47s, pistols, and knives as the weapons of choice in these graphic scenes. Out of 50 death images in the group's entire photographic campaign, 33 depicted the militants' enemies at a close distance. This patterned use of intimate/personal distance highlighted the gruesome fates that awaited Egyptian soldiers and collaborators working to combat Wilayat Sinai's forces.

The Egyptian military, by contrast, used intimate/personal distance to depict Wilayat Sinai militants in the aftermath of the Sinai combat operations. The bulk of images with close views showed militants lying dead in stained fatigues with shattered heads and severed body parts. The only close-up shots of live militants displayed the photo subjects kneeling after their arrests. A total of 16 close-to-medium shots posted on October 16, 2017, for example, showed

disconfigured bodies of over a dozen militants on the ground with burns on the skin and blood all over their bodies. In those graphic scenes, the immediate textual context identified the dead individuals as terrorists and takfiris who had attempted to carry out attacks in Sinai. Out of 74 death images in the military's campaign, 45 depicted the militants at close distance. The intimate/personal distance emphasized the consequences that enemies of the state can expect in Sinai by bringing details of their death and arrest in closer view.

The Egyptian military also used intimate/personal distance to depict top security officials interacting with the injured soldiers lying in hospital bed or with the conscripts in the Sinai barracks. Four close-to-medium shots posted on January 26, 2016, for example, showed the Minister of Defense Sedki Sobhi shaking hands, patting shoulders, and kissing the injured soldiers (see Figure 6.7). The intimate/personal distance worked to humanize the two character types by positioning the Egyptian soldier as vulnerable in some respects and the officers as leaders who genuinely care and have concern for the men under their commands.

Figure 6.7 Minister of Defense Sedki Sobhi visiting injured soldiers; disseminated January 26, 2016.

Wilayat Sinai and the Egyptian military's use of viewer distance in the Sinai conflict aligns with existing western frameworks of expected visual semiotic outcomes. Each side utilized social/public distance to push its enemies away from the viewer and depict them as the nonthreatening other. The Sinai conflict's approach appears consistent with previous studies

conducted in Western cultures showing that social/public distance disconnects viewers and photo subjects. It also echoes the findings of earlier studies documenting that viewers perceive distant photo subjects as less threatening.

Wilayat Sinai and the Egyptian military also rely on images in ways that appear to capitalize on western expectations for the use of intimate/personal distance. Both deployed closer views as a defining feature of the militant group's martyrs and the military's injured soldiers that western studies suggest heightens the sense of closeness that viewers feel with the photo subjects. Perceived close relationships with each group's most revered warriors who had put their lives on the line may go further to help legitimize the cause and inspire supporters. Moving beyond the application of the technique to rank-and-file soldiers, the Egyptian military also used intimate/personal distance to legitimize its top commanders, a feature absent in Wilayat Sinai's campaign, perhaps as a means of protecting them from Egypt's counterterrorism efforts.

Nonetheless, the use of viewer distance in the photographs in the Sinai media conflict also suggests an expanded approach for understanding proxemics in conflict. Identifying additional uses of viewer distance to photo subjects in nonwestern contexts can suggest differential cross-cultural interpretations of the same visual semiotic element requiring experimental investigation. Neither Wilayat Sinai nor the Egyptian military in their media campaigns limited their application of social/public distance to image depictions of the other. They also utilized social/public distance to highlight the strength and success of their own members as they worked together to safeguard the Sinai community. At least in the Egyptian context, long distance shots in photographic campaigns can broaden the scope of the fighting group's own efforts and suggest their omnipresent strength in combatting the group's current or future enemies.

Moreover, Wilayat Sinai and the Egyptian military expanded the implied messaging incorporated in the non-western use of intimate/personal distance. Dozens of these shots in the Wilayat Sinai and Egyptian military campaigns brought the photo subject closer to the viewer when lying dead, facing execution, or kneeling upon arrest. Neither the militant group nor the military appeared to be suggesting intimacy and friendship between the viewer and the enemy characters per se. Instead, they restricted their proximity to the viewer to humiliating and dire situations to identify with the fear that these enemy individuals portray. In the Egyptian context, close-to-medium shots can also serve as a warning sign by magnifying the possibility of retaliation against the enemy in times of conflict.

6.3   Camera Angle

Studies of visual semiotics in the western context typically utilize camera angles to convey relative levels of symbolic power. A high camera angle pointing downward can present photo subjects as weak (Mandell & Shaw, 1973), passive (Kraft, 1986), and less significant (Zettl, 2003). At extreme height, the bird eye's view can even depersonalize the human bodies underneath (Amad, 2012). A low camera angle pointing upward can prompt positive assessments of the photo subject's authority (Greer, Hardin, & Homan, 2009; Tiemens, 1970), dominance (Mandell & Shaw, 1973), boldness (Kraft, 1986), and influence (W. Huang, Olson, & Olson, 2002). The Associated Press, for example, was more likely to use a high camera angle in its portrayals of Afghani women under the Taliban regime until its defeat at the hands of the U.S.-led coalition (S. Fahmy, 2004). When showing objects (rather than human subjects) in a scene, high or low camera angles do not usually carry the same connotations (Meyers-Levy & Peracchio, 1992); viewers prefer looking down at them for practical reasons, such as checking out their most salient parts (Sammartino & Palmer, 2012).

6.3.1 High Camera Angle

The use of high camera angles to portray human subjects was not significantly different in the media campaigns of Wilayat Sinai and the Egyptian military (21 versus 26 percent respectively), $\chi^2_{(1, N = 1071)} = 3.53$, $p > .05$. The high camera angle featured human characters from elevated positions in 110 of the militant group's images and in 146 of the military's images. The two groups shared the same approach by providing the viewer a chance to perceptually demean selected character types in their images.

Wilayat Sinai used high camera angles to depict Egyptian soldiers and state collaborators in photographs of battlefield aftermath, combat, and executions. The post-battle images used high camera angles to show Egyptian soldiers lying dead in their own blood, under attack, or with their images on display in confiscated identification card photographs. Three high angle shots posted on November 4, 2016, for example, displayed headshots of a military brigadier-general on three different identification cards, with accompanying captions confirming his assassination in al-Arish. Shots of public executions used high camera angles to show dead Egyptian soldiers and state collaborators lying on the ground or the same character types kneeling or lying on their stomach as they faced impending death. Out of 50 death images in the militant group's campaign, 36 depicted the enemies from a high angle. The high angle shots emphasized the humiliation of the dead Egyptian soldiers and collaborators by positioning the viewer to look down at their bodies.

Figure 6.8 The distribution of al-Naba' newsletter; disseminated February 7, 2017.

At times, Wilayat Sinai also used high camera angles to depict its own militants engaging in tasks in their barracks, in the aftermath of battles, and during medical activities. In images of the barracks and the battlefield, the camera positioned the viewer to look down at the militants' hands as they held food, the Qur'an, copies of the ISIS's al-Naba' newsletter, and confiscated weapons or belongings. Three high angle shots on February 7, 2017, for example, displayed ISIS's newsletter in the hands of militants as they held, read, and distributed it within Sinai (see Figure 6.8). Photographs used high angle shots of clinics and medical workshops to show viewers the hands of militants as they held medical equipment and medicine, or as they conducted first aid training workshops on prone fellow militants. The high angle shots shared details of Wilayat Sinai militants' lifestyle by offering a top view of the most salient parts of objects they use in daily activities.

As in the case of Wilayat Sinai's media campaign, the Egyptian military also used high camera angles to depict its enemies. The militants were, by far, the main character type displayed in high angle shots, predominantly those to do with the aftermath of battles. The camera positioned viewers to look down at the militants as they laid dead on the ground in the aftermath of military operations or as they knelt blindfolded after their arrests. Two high angle images posted on March 23, 2017, for example, displayed the bloody dead corpses of six militants with their faces either facing the ground or covered by their own clothes. The Facebook post described the context of the displayed scene as the outcome of a counterterrorism operation against takfiri terrorists in central Sinai (Official Page of Armed Forces Spokesman, 2017i). Out of 74 death images in the military's campaign, 71 positioned the viewer to look down at the

enemies that served as photo subjects. The high angle shots emphasized the humiliation that the defeated militants suffered in battles with the Egyptian military.

Figure 6.9 Soldiers discovering a weaponry storage unit; disseminated February 11, 2017.

The military also used high camera angles to depict its own soldiers engaged in tasks mostly during the aftermath of battlefield operations or during law enforcement campaigns. In the post-battle images, images utilizing high camera angles showed Egyptian soldiers confiscating weapons from caves, standing next to explosive materials, or clearing hideouts. Four high-angle shots posted on February 11, 2017, for example, showed soldiers inside an underground weapon storage facility retrieving rifles, rockets, ammo, and explosive materials (see Figure 6.9). Other photographs deploying high camera angles showed Egyptian soldiers as they confiscated drugs and contraband or as they destroyed underground tunnels. The high angle shots shared details of the security threats that Egyptian soldiers were handling in Sinai by positioning the viewer to look down at and scrutinize illegal objects.

6.3.2   Low Camera Angle

Wilayat Sinai was significantly more likely to use low camera angle shots than the Egyptian military in its photographs of human subjects (10 versus 4 percent respectively), $\chi^2_{(1, N = 1071)} = 18.01$, $p < .001$. Photographs using low camera angles pointing upward toward the human characters in 52 of the militant group's images, but only in 20 of the military's images. The differential level of emphasis suggests Wilayat Sinai's heightened interest in exaggerating

the power of the photographed human subjects in its campaign, perhaps in an attempt to bridge

the wide strength gap it faced in the Sinai conflict as compared to Egypt's armed forces.

Figure 6.10 Militants targeting jets; disseminated February 11, 2017.

Wilayat Sinai relied exclusively on low camera angle shots to depict its own militants.

The application of this semiotic technique mainly appeared in photographs shot in combat

settings, but also occurred in shots of fighters preparing for battle or those focusing on law

enforcement activities. Photographs of pre-battle preparations and battlefield operations utilized

low camera angles to look up at the militants as they mounted anti-aircraft guns, fired gunshots,

launched rockets, surveilled Egyptian security forces, engaged in military exercises, marched to

battle, posed with their gear on top of pickup trucks, and called for prayer. Five low angle shots

on February 11, 2017, for example, featured militants, in what the group described as an anti-

aircraft brigade that was targeting enemy jets (see Figure 6.10). In photographs of executions, the

low camera angles situated the viewer to look up at the militants as they were shooting and

beheading state collaborators and Egyptian soldiers. The low angle shots emphasized the

militants' dominance by positioning them above all other photo subjects and the viewer.

Figure 6.11 The Army Field of Staff visiting soldiers; disseminated February 23, 2017.

Similarly, the Egyptian military used low camera angle to depict its own personnel in photographs of combat, other counterterrorism operations, battlefield aftermath, and interactions with leaders. With the exception of two low angle shots showing blindfolded, arrested suspects kneeling in front of their confiscated vehicles, the Egyptian soldiers and leaders were the only character types in all the remaining low angle shots. Photographs of the counterterrorism operations used low camera angle to position the viewer to look up at the Egyptian soldiers burning hideouts on the ground, firing missiles from air force jets, and searching mountain caves. Two low angle shots posted on February 17, 2017, for example, displayed soldiers on the Halal Mountain in central Sinai clearing hideouts of weapons, explosive devices, and motorcycles. In other images not related to counterterrorism operations, the low camera angles situated the viewer to look up to top security leaders as they visited soldiers in the barracks or in hospitals (see Figure 6.11). Low angle shots emphasized the strength of the Egyptian military personnel and leaders by always positioning the viewer to look up at them.

The application of camera angles in the Sinai conflict closely aligned with visual semiotic study findings documented in western contexts. Each side utilized the photographs shot with high camera angles to imply the weakness and insignificance of dead enemies it had killed in combat operations and opponents it had arrested. In fact, the use of high camera angles was a defining feature associated with death images of enemy on both sides of the Sinai conflict. In contrast, the two groups used low camera angles to signify boldness, authority, and power by situating viewers to look up at their own fighters and leaders. Even when the militant group and

the military showed their own fighters in some of the high angle shots, the images did not

suggest their weakness, but rather exhibited a choice to focus viewer attention on select objects

(e.g., Qur'an, food, and enemy belongings, etc.). In short, Wilayat Sinai and the Egyptian

military used camera angles to bolster the image of their fighters, demean their enemies, and

highlight objects the groups wanted to emphasize in their photographic campaigns.

6.4   Facial Expressions

Studies of visual semiotics in the western context typically explore facial expressions as a

signifier of human emotions. Images displaying photo subjects' negative facial expressions have

prompted viewer assumptions that the displayed photo subjects are afraid (Öhman & Dimberg,

1978), skeptical, (Forgas & East, 2008), do not affiliate with the viewer (Hess, Blairy, & Kleck,

2000), and lack the ability to dominate their situational contexts (Knutson, 1996). By contrast,

the display of photo subjects' positive facial expressions generally implies positive intentions

(Schmidt & Cohn, 2001), familiarity (Baudouin, Gilibert, Sansone, & Tiberghien, 2000),

genuineness (Hess, Beaupré, & Cheung, 2002), high affiliation (Hess et al., 2000), and

dominance (Knutson, 1996). Some British tabloid newspapers with conservative political

leanings, for example, used photo subject's positive facial expressions to depict joyous coalition

soldiers with local civilians in Iraq after the fall of Saddam to help frame the 2003 invasion as a

liberation (K. Parry, 2011).

6.4.1   Negative Facial Expressions

Wilayat Sinai was more likely to use negative facial expressions with its photographed

human subjects than the Egyptian military (2 versus .2 percent respectively), $\chi^2_{(1, N} = 1071) =$

10.31, $p > .01$. Negative facial expressions were almost nonexistent in the military's campaign,

as only one image showed the burnt face of a dead militant staring with his mouth wide open.

The militant group used negative facial expressions a bit more frequently in 12 of its distributed images. The different level of emphasis suggests the militant group's interest in showing the emotional distress of some human photo subjects. By doing so, it can instill fear by presenting individuals' allegiance to the Egyptian government as a precursor to their negative emotional states.

Wilayat Sinai used negative facial expressions only to depict Egyptian soldiers and state collaborators prior to or during their executions. The negative facial expressions conveyed feelings of devastation and anguish on the faces of hostages in their final life moments. Three images posted on September 26, 2017, for example, displayed sadness and bewilderment on the faces of three civilian hostages that the photo captions described as apostates and collaborators with the security forces (see Figure 6.12). The subsequent images in the same photo report showed the militants carrying out their brutal shooting and beheading punishments. Negative facial expressions emphasized the emotional breakdowns of Egyptian soldiers and state collaborators as they neared death due to their acts opposing Wilayat Sinai.

Figure 6.12 An old man before being shot in the head; disseminated September 26, 2017.

6.4.2 Positive Facial Expressions

The Egyptian military was more likely to use positive facial expressions than Wilayat Sinai in photographs incorporating human subjects (26 versus 3 percent respectively), $\chi^2_{(1, N =}$

1071) = 119.14, $p < .001$. Smiling faces appeared in 146 of the military's images, but in only 13 of the militant group's images. The different level of emphasis indicates the Egyptian military had a higher interest in showing the positive emotions of human photo subjects in its campaign.

Wilayat Sinai used positive facial expressions to depict its own militants prior to their participation in deadly attacks against the state. In their campaign photographs, smiling militants stood at the ready to conduct operations for the group in Sinai. The accompanying text confirmed their subsequent martyrdom. An image posted on September 13, 2017, for example displayed a smiling suicide attacker as he stood by his concealed car bomb. He pointed his index finger to the heavens before setting out to attack a security convoy in Beer al-Abd (see Figure 6.13). The following images in the same photo report depicted the destructive aftermath of his attack and the human losses that the police suffered as a result of his martyrdom. Out of 23 eulogy images in the group's campaign, almost half depicted smiling martyrs. Positive facial expressions recorded the happiness that accompanied the individual's selection for the martyrdom operation and validated the choice to sacrifice their lives in an attack on the Egyptian security forces in Sinai.

Figure 6.13 A martyred militant before a suicide bomb attack; disseminated September 13, 2017.

Likewise, the Egyptian military used positive facial expressions to depict its own personnel in the group's distributed images. The Egyptian soldiers and leaders were, by far, the

main character types displayed with positive facial expressions. Photographs of hospital visits showed joyous faces of injured soldiers and their leaders as they met and talked with one another. Eight images posted on April 30, 2016, for example, showed First Lieutenant General Sedki Sobhi exchanging smiles with soldiers lying on hospital beds who had suffered burns and broken limbs in defense of Sinai. In images of the soldiers' barracks, the Minister of Defense, Minister of Interior, or the Army Chief of Staff also appeared positive as they shook hands with the soldiers, handed them gifts, and posed for group pictures. The positive facial expressions emphasized the unity and the positive intentions of the Egyptian military personnel to protect Sinai despite any setbacks.

Figure 6.14 A man holding a food package; disseminated March 9, 2017.

The Egyptian military also used positive facial expressions to depict its civilian supporters and beneficiaries present in both the hospitals and on the streets of Sinai. Photographs shot in hospitals showed actors, journalists, members of parliament, and religious clerics visiting and exchanging smiles with the injured soldiers. An image posted on October 6, 2017, for

example, showed a journalist handing a gift to a soldier on a wheelchair after he had lost both of

his legs in Sinai battlefield operations. Images of Sinai's streets displayed residents happily

shaking hands with military leaders and cheerfully receiving aid from soldiers. Six images posted

on March 9, 2017, for example, showed smiling men and children posing happily for the camera

after receiving food packages from the military (See Figure 6.14). The positive facial expressions

emphasized affiliation of Egyptian civilians with their state by presenting favorable emotional

outcomes of solidarity with the soldiers and the military's humanitarian operations.

The displayed facial expressions in photographs distributed during the Sinai conflict

closely aligned with previous visual semiotics research findings conducted in western contexts.

Wilayat Sinai used negative facial expressions to stimulate skepticism and suggest the low

dominance of its enemies. The group displayed agony of individual Egyptian soldiers and state

collaborators perhaps as a weapon to instill fear in viewers. The military, instead, depicted many

of the militants as dead or under arrest without displaying photo subjects with negative facial

expressions, perhaps to further detach them from the viewer by stripping away any emotional

cues. In the competing media campaigns, both sides used smiling faces to emphasize the

genuineness and positive intentions of their own fighters and martyrs. The Egyptian military also

displayed positive facial expressions to suggest familiarity and a high degree of affiliation

between its top leaders and loyal civilians. In sum, the militant group portrayed the two opposing

forces as harboring dichotomous emotional states, while the state avoided negative emotions by

focusing only on the happiness of its personnel and supporters.

6.5   Eye Contact

Studies of visual semiotics in the western context typically utilize various types of eye

contact to connect with viewers and to bolster positive character traits of photo subjects. Images

displaying an individual looking directly at the camera attract heightened levels of viewer

attention (Senju, Hasegawa, & Tojo, 2005; von Grunau & Anston, 1995). They also present the

photo subject as credible (Hemsley & Doob, 1978; Neal & Brodsky, 2008), attractive/favorable

(Ewing, Rhodes, & Pellicano, 2010; Palanica & Itier, 2012), competent (Amalfitano & Kalt,

1977; J. W. Tankard, 1970), and potent (Brooks, Church, & Fraser, 1986). Moreover, the direct

gaze can convey an imaginary demand on the viewer that is dependent on the surrounding

context (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996). Avoidance of eye contact can emphasize otherness

(Batziou, 2011), withdrawal (Tang & Schmeichel, 2015) and social anxiety of the photo subject

(Larsen & Shackelford, 1996). Recent al-Qaeda videos, for example, showed leaders looking

directly at the camera as they called supporters to action (Martin, 2011), while some European

newspapers show comparatively more immigrants avoiding eye contact in shots of them in their

new host countries (Batziou, 2011).

6.5.1   *Direct Eye Contact*

Wilayat Sinai was significantly more likely to incorporate human subjects with direct eye

contact than the military in images of the Sinai conflict (8 versus 2 percent respectively), $\chi_{2\,(1,\,N\,=}$

$_{1071)} = 20.66$, $p < .001$. Human photo subjects looked directly at the camera in 41 of the militant

group's images; they did so in only nine of the military's images. The differential usage of the

direct gaze demonstrates the militant group's heightened interest in establishing a higher level of

interaction with viewers and stronger sense of nonverbal dialogue between the selected human

photo subjects and viewers.

Wilayat Sinai used photographs incorporating direct eye contact when it depicted its own

militants preparing to enter into battlefield operations. Mainly, the pictured militants appeared

prior to their own operations targeting the Egyptian state in Sinai. Texts accompanying the

images with direct eye contact characterized the militant photo subjects as martyrs who had conducted suicide attacks and operations. Two images posted on October 14, 2017, for example, displayed two muscular militants dressed in fatigues holding rifles and wearing masks that covered their faces completely except for their eyes looking directly at the viewer. The two accompanying captions identified the individuals as suicide attackers undertaking a martyrdom operation designed to strike a military battalion in al-Arish. Out of all 23 eulogy images in the militant group's campaign, 17 showed the militants looking directly into the camera. The direct eye contact emphasized the powerful status of those vowing to martyr themselves for the group's cause.

Figure 6.15 A middle-aged man before being shot; disseminated September 13, 2016.

Wilayat Sinai also used direct eye contact when depicting Egyptian soldiers and state collaborators during times of battle and executions. The battlefield images displayed images of Egyptian soldiers appearing on the front of confiscated identification cards looking directly at the viewer. Although the soldiers were not physically present, the captured identification photographs in the militants' hands cued their defeat on the battlefield. Two images posted on June 17, 2016, for example, displayed the face of one soldier on his identification card looking straight at the viewer. The card appeared next to the soldier's pistol, credit card, and portable power bank, while the accompanying caption indicated his assassination in al-Arish. Out of the

13 images of confiscated identification cards in the militant group's campaign, 11 showed the

Egyptian soldiers and officers looking directly into the camera. In Wilayat Sinai's images of

public executions, the camera positioned the viewer to look state collaborators in the eyes as they

awaited their punishments (see Figure 6.15). The subsequent images in the photo reports always

revealed the gruesome details of the executions, with accompanying captions charging the

individuals with espionage and apostasy. The direct eye contact emphasized the vulnerability of

the captured enemies and prophesized a similar fate for others choosing to oppose Wilayat Sinai.

The Egyptian military used direct eye contact when depicting its own personnel

appearing in old personal photographs, as well as on the streets of Sinai, in hospitals, and in the

soldiers' barracks. With the exception of one image of a kneeling drug smuggler looking directly

at the viewer upon arrest, Egyptian soldiers and leaders were the remaining photo subjects

featured in direct eye contact shots. These images positioned the viewer to look directly into the

eyes of officers before they died in battle, soldiers who distributed food packages to Sinai

residents, injured soldiers on their hospital beds surrounded by visitors, and soldiers posing with

their leaders in the field. Three direct eye contact images posted in March 2017, for example,

displayed three martyred officers with Facebook posts describing them as heroes (e.g., Official

Page of Armed Forces Spokesman, 2017g). The three photographs included a "selfie" shot and

were the only instances where the military portrayed its martyred officers in the campaign (see

Figure 6.16). The direct eye contact emphasized the competence and favorability of the military

personnel who sacrificed their lives to secure Sinai and help its residents.

Figure 6.16 A martyred officer; disseminated March 24, 2017.

In sum, each side in the Sinai conflict used direct eye contact to emphasize the high status of its fighters and create a connection with the viewer in ways in line with the findings of studies conducted in the western context. Direct eye contact functioned as a defining feature in the martyrs' photographs that both sides distributed. The militant group portrayed its martyrs as potent and credible, typically before they headed off to the battlefield to die. The direct gaze highlighted intentionality that demanded praise for the martyrdom act. Although the Egyptian military showed its three martyrs looking to the viewer, the images lacked a similar pre-martyrdom visual context. Instead, the military shared personal photographs from the soldiers' past that emphasized its martyrs as favorable photo subjects who arguably justified retaliation for the Wilayat Sinai's killings.

The militant group and the military's patterned usage of eye contact in their Sinai conflict photographs, however, did suggest additional uses of the semiotic tool. Both groups utilized direct eye contact to depict enemies and smugglers looking directly at the viewer as they faced punishment. Rather than limited to the positive traits earlier findings of studies conducted in the

Western context, direct eye contact in the Egyptian context can serve as a warning sign for viewers considering the formation of connections with the humiliated other.

Furthermore, the Sinai conflict presented a setting where western findings related to eye contact avoidance may not apply. Both Wilayat Sinai and the Egyptian military avoided deploying the display of direct eye contact in the vast majority of their images. This avoidance, however, did not necessarily present the human photo subjects as socially anxious or as an exemplar of the other. In fact, both campaigns displayed this visual semiotic element across all character types, including fighters, supporters, and enemies. The military, for example, blurred or covered the faces of many soldiers, militants, and smugglers in the field, which can limit the viewer interaction with all the different characters, including its own personnel. Protecting and avoiding the distraction of fighters on the battlefield may also explain the lacking eye contact in the recurring combat images on both sides. In the Sinai visual contestation, avoidance of eye contact functioned as the norm to suggest the photo subjects' full engagement in the conflict and conceal their identities for security purposes.

6.6   Subjective Shots

Studies of visual semiotics in the western context typically associate subjective shots with attempts to identify with the viewer. The point-of-view (POV) shot is a cinematic technique that subjectively narrates the scene from the perspective of the main character (Branigan, 1984; Herbert Zettl, 2013). POV shots serve to merge the viewer with the character in action (Fabe, 2014; Lombard & Ditton, 1997), increase presence (Cummins et al., 2012), and stimulate more enjoyment (Lombard, Reich, Grabe, Bracken, & Ditton, 2000). For example, first-person-shooter games incorporate the POV technique to attract and entertain young men by immersing them in the protagonist's action (Brooker, 2009; Call, Voorhees, & Whitlock, 2012; Denisova & Cairns,

2015; Jansz & Tanis, 2007). The over-the-shoulder (OTS) shot is another subjective camera technique that positions the viewer to look over the shoulder of the character in the scene (Brown, 2012; Lombard & Ditton, 1997). Despite less reliance on subjectivity than POV shots, OTS shots can provide a more stable view of "the direct spatial relation" between the subject and other objects in the scene (Branigan, 1984, p. 110). The OTS shot is also common in video games to allow the player to follow the main avatar, see what it is doing, and know where it is heading (Nitsche, 2008). Complementing POV and OTS shots with added character reaction shots can further promote viewer identification (Ortiz & Moya, 2015; Rose, 2001).

6.6.1 Point-of-View and Over-the-Shoulder Shots in Human Photographs

Wilayat Sinai and the Egyptian military's used subjective shots of human subjects in different ways during the Sinai conflict. The militant group was significantly more likely to use POV shots than the military (5 versus 1 percent respectively), $\chi^2_{(1, N = 1071)} = 20.63$, $p < .001$. The images showed scenes from the photograph's human subject's own point of view in 24 of the militant group's images; only three of the military's images did so. Wilayat Sinai was also more likely to use OTS shots than the Egyptian military (8 versus .2 percent respectively), $\chi^2_{(1, N = 1071)} = 44.13$, $p < .001$. The image was shot from above the shoulder of the photographed human subjects in 42 of the militant group's images. The OTS element, however, was almost non-existent in the military's campaign. The one and only photograph showed the destruction of a hideout from over the shoulder of a soldier as he stood in a field talking into a handheld transceiver. The comparative emphasis that the two sides placed on subjective shots is suggestive about Wilayat Sinai's focused interest in highly engaging viewers in its photographed scenes.

Figure 6.17 A militant firing inside a checkpoint; disseminated January 11, 2017.

Wilayat Sinai used POV shots only when depicting its own militants engaged in combat against the state. The battlefield photographs positioned the viewer to take on the militant's role of attacking security forces, conducting checkpoint shootings, sniping targets, killing soldiers, and burning vehicles. Picturing an attack on al-Matafi checkpoint in January 2017, for example, seven POV shots presented the assault from the militants' visual perspectives as they held their rifles, shot a soldier in the back, took over a checkpoint, and stood victoriously over the rubble (see Figure 6.17). Other images in the same photo report served as reaction shots that confirmed the identity of the militants. The POV shots in the Wilayat Sinai media campaign virtually engaged the viewer in belligerent action against state forces by using a semiotic element to create a viewer "presence" in the scene acting on behalf of the militants.

Wilayat Sinai also used OTS shots when depicting its own militants engaged in combat or as they appeared in their barracks. With the exception of one OTS shot behind a man repenting to Wilayat Sinai for collaborating with security forces, militants were the only character type displayed in all the remaining OTS shots. The battlefield images placed the viewer over the shoulder of a militant shooting at distant targets, launching rockets, and pointing anti-aircraft guns at jets in the skies. Images away from the battlefield positioned viewers to imagine themselves peering over the shoulder of militants standing in the desert at sunset, distributing

ISIS publications, watching videos, cooking food, boiling water, or reading Qur'an. Two OTS

shots posted on February 7, 2017, for example, placed the viewer in a position to join a sitting

militant in the process of reading al-Naba' newsletter (see Figure 6.18). The OTS shots engaged

the viewer in both the fight and the leisure activities by visually "embedding" them within the

Wilayat Sinai's militants.

Figure 6.18 A militant reading al-Naba' newsletter; disseminated February 7, 2017.

The Egyptian military, by contrast, used POV shots only when depicting its own soldiers'

engaged in Sinai's law enforcement campaigns. The photograph visually placed the viewer in a

position to assume the Egyptian soldier's role of holding a rifle or a torch to clear underground

tunnels or of standing over the opening of a storage unit housing contraband explosives

discovered in North Sinai (see Figure 6.19). The POV shots encouraged the viewers to imagine

themselves involved in the military counterterrorism operations by giving them rare access to

sites associated with security threats in Sinai.

Figure 6.19 A soldier checking an underground tunnel; disseminated February 21, 2017.

6.6.2   Beyond Human Photographs

The two groups' media campaigns also utilized subjective shots in images that showed no human characters. Although the images omitted the visual presence of human photo subjects or body parts altogether, the POV technique nevertheless implied the presence of human characters at the scene closely monitoring an impending destructive act against hidden human targets. Across all the nonhuman photographs, no significant difference existed between Wilayat Sinai and the Egyptian military's use of POV shots (4 versus 4 percent), $\chi^2_{(1, N = 833)} = .29$, $p > .05$. The use of the implied character types appeared in 12 of the militant group's images and 19 of the military's images. The two groups shared the same approach, allowing viewers to fill in the missing details regarding the unseen human characters.

Wilayat Sinai used POV shots to depict many of its IED attacks. Neither the militant nor any other character type appeared in these combat scenes. The images, however, positioned viewers to imagine themselves taking on the role of a militant conducting surveillance, marking, or waiting for Egyptian military vehicles to progress toward roadside IEDs. The subsequent, associated shots always displayed explosions and fire surrounding the targeted vehicles. Three POV shots posted on May 22, 2017, for example, presented a moving military armored vehicle

and a personnel carrier at the center of red target markers before the detonation of IEDs in North Sinai. These POV shots positioned the viewer to safely witness the hidden strength of Wilayat Sinai, to recognize the vulnerability of the group's enemies, and to recognize the ways of contributing safely to the fighting effort.

The Egyptian military, by contrast, used POV shots to depict the airstrikes it conducted within the boundaries of Sinai. No Egyptian soldiers or any other character type appeared in these combat scenes. The aerial photographs, however, did position the viewer to imagine their participation as a fighter pilot in the military's air force. Collectively, the POV shots placed the viewer in the position to adjust the scope's crosshairs, strike the targets, and watch the immediate aftermath from the cockpit. Two POV shots posted on November 16, 2017, for example, recorded airstrikes on weapon storehouses and four-wheel drive vehicles in North Sinai without including human photo subjects in the photographic frame (see Figure 6.20). Out of 33 images of airstrikes in the Egyptian military's campaign, 19 used this type of subjective shots. The POV shots invited viewers to imagine participating in the destruction of Wilayat Sinai by offering a rare view from inside the military's fighter jets in action.

Figure 6.20 Airstrikes in North Sinai; disseminated November 16, 2017.

The application of subjective shots in the Sinai conflict closely aligned with the findings related to existing semiotic frameworks conducted in western contexts. Each side used POV

shots to create a perceptual alliance between the group and viewer. Each "placed" the viewer within battlefield scenes where a victorious outcome seemed assured. Photographs of military airstrikes, in particular, used POV shots as a defining visual strategy to encourage viewer participation in the operations. Unlike the Egyptian military, Wilayat Sinai used OTS shots to prompt identification with its militants as they performed mundane activities characteristic of community life. The militant group likely shared these aspects of social life within Sinai to demonstrate its ability to challenge the state as well as the Egyptian military. In one of its images, the militant group even utilized the OTS technique to prompt identification with an enemy as he shifted allegiance from the Egyptian state to Wilayat Sinai. Emphasizing such transitional moments as the group accepted more people on its side can open a new potential allegiance for the viewer to think about.

6.7   The Visual Semiotics War

While both sides in the Sinai conflict deployed the same semiotic tools to convey their intended messages, each side applied them differently to create unique visions of militants, soldiers, collaborators, leaders, and civilians. The visual semiotic war between Wilayat Sinai and the Egyptian military involved three interactive strategies for portraying human characters: competition, alignment, and expansion. At times, the two sides competed over the use of visual semiotics to depict a differential protagonist and antagonist. At others, they used the visual semiotics in ways that aligned with one another to similarly treat a given character type. Each side also expanded their use of visual semiotics beyond the depiction of human subjects to heighten engagement of the viewer's imagination.

6.7.1   Competitive Approaches to the Sinai Conflict

Wilayat Sinai and the Egyptian military competed over the depiction of the antagonist. The militant group defined the Egyptian soldiers and their collaborators as the opposing characters facing defeat in the Sinai conflict. It used intimate/personal distance, high camera angles, negative facial expressions, and direct eye contact to emphasize the humiliation of the opponent. This visual semiotic constellation encouraged viewers to watch the dead or the antagonist who was about to die up close, look down at his body as he laid or knelt on the ground, recognize his anguish, and look directly into his eyes before death. Wilayat Sinai's approach conveyed the emotional breakdown of the antagonist, identified the militants as the superior force in the Sinai conflict, and prompted fear in viewers considering opposing the group. The Egyptian military, instead, identified the militants as the antagonist they would meet defeat in Sinai. It featured the humiliation of the dead and arrested militants using intimate/personal distance and high camera angles. This visual semiotic constellation positioned viewers to look down at the dead and captured militants lying or kneeling on the ground at a close distance. The semiotic approach encouraged viewers to evaluate the militants' power negatively and reinforced such a conclusion by utilizing proximity to focus viewers' attention on the military's warning against thinking otherwise. Applied in the context of arrest photographs, however, the military's semiotic constellation omitted the use of negative facial expressions and direct eye contact, factors that could have further intensified the group's warning through heightened viewer connection and emotional recognition.

Wilayat Sinai and the Egyptian military also competed over the depiction of the protagonist. The militant group presented its own members as the heroes of the Sinai conflict. It used intimate/personal distance, positive facial expressions, and direct eye contact to humanize

the protagonist. The constellation of semiotic elements positioned viewers to have a seemingly close relationship with the militant and empathize with him before he undertook his martyrdom operation. The militant group displayed the martyrs as happy and potent fighters for the group. The martyrs often emerged as the human face of the group to inspire the group's supporters to join the militants' cause. By contrast, the military deemed its own personnel as the protagonist best positioned to protect Sinai. It used intimate/personal distance, positive facial expressions, and direct eye contact to humanize its soldiers, officers, and leaders. The military's media campaign provided viewers a look at the protagonist's eyes and his smile from a close distance. Unlike the militant group, the Egyptian military mostly applied this particular semiotic constellation to photographs featuring injured soldiers accompanied by leaders who visited them in hospitals. The approach suggested a close, imagined relationship to evoke empathy for soldiers facing death in Sinai and for the leaders who care for them in ways that might stimulate more support for a greater military response against Wilayat Sinai. In images of the battlefield, however, the military's constellation of personalized semiotic elements disappeared, perhaps in order to present the soldiers as parts of a larger assemblage focused on destroying the enemy and securing Sinai.

Another key area over which Wilayat Sinai and the Egyptian military competed in their image campaigns was in the display of the protagonist's strength. The militant group used low camera angles and subjective shots to display warriors in action on the battlefield. The images positioned the viewer to look up to or be level with the protagonist as he attacked the Egyptian security forces in Sinai. Exclusive to the militants' media campaign in the Sinai conflict, this semiotic strategy encouraged positive evaluations of group's power and viewer identification with Wilayat Sinai against the state. The first-person-shooter POV and OTS techniques in the

group's battlefield images were also notable examples of using new technologies (e.g., GoPro cameras) in popular culture to construct similar scenes. By contrast, the Egyptian military used a combined strategy of low camera angles and subjective shots to display a different protagonist. The images placed the viewer in a position to look up to military personnel or to navigate the on-the-ground scene from the fighters' perspective. The visual semiotic strategy suggested the relative power position of the military and encouraged viewer identification with the forces as they participated in the counterterrorism operations. Nonetheless, the military was much less reliant on this strategy than the militant group. The few subjective shots in the military's media campaign hardly even depicted combative actions. Such a choice may well indicate the military's unwillingness to disseminate images that could reveal details of its operations. Notwithstanding these cautionary perspectives, the relative absence of the POV and OTS techniques may have also inhibited the ability of the military's photographic campaign to engage viewers in the online space as it competed with the choices of Wilayat Sinai.

Wilayat Sinai and the Egyptian military finally competed over the display of the protagonist's activities. The militant group used high camera angles, intimate/personal distance, OTS shots to introduce its activities away from the battlefield, such as reading, watching videos, and cooking. This semiotic constellation positioned the viewer to look down at objects related to daily life from the militants' perspectives in the barracks. Accordingly, the images placed the viewer in a comfortable position to survey the salient parts of the object which, if acceptable might reinforce viewer identification and create closer perceived relationships with the protagonist. Engaging the viewers in these activities behind the frontlines could also function as a form of visual entertainment to some curious about the militants' lives outside of combat.

By contrast, the Egyptian military used high camera angles and intimate/personal distance to focus only on a narrow set of the protagonist's activities. The images positioned the viewer to get closer to and look down at particular soldier activities in the field, such as clearing underground storage units and confiscating illegal materials. By using this semiotic strategy, the military presented the objects associated with security threats in Sinai at a comfortable height for exploration, while still encouraging the viewer to imagine their close relationship with the soldiers. The military's media campaign, however, lacked subjective OTS shots in its displays of the protagonist's activities. Further, the military focused only on activities that were part of its law enforcement campaigns and avoided depictions of the soldiers' social life. The avoidance of OTS shots to reveal military and social activities is likely a byproduct of the level of secrecy the military typically imposes on the life of its soldiers. As a result, the military presented the activities through shots maintaining the spectatorship role of the viewers without necessarily encouraging their involvement.

6.7.2   Alignment Approaches to the Sinai Conflict

Besides directly competing over human character types and activities in their visual media campaigns, Wilayat Sinai and the Egyptian military aligned in their display of one character type: civilians. The militant group defined civilians who collaborated with the security forces or practiced Sufi Islam in Sinai as spies and/or apostates punishable under their version of shari'a law. It used intimate/personal distance, high camera angles, negative facial expressions, and direct eye contact to emphasize the humiliation of those citizens in death and in the process leading up to it. The visual semiotic constellation positioned viewers to look down at the supporting character lying or kneeling on the ground at a close distance, look him in the eye, and recognize his desperation in the run up to his execution. Wilayat Sinai encouraged viewers to

imagine having a connection with the civilian facing punishment, recognize their relative impotence in relation to the militant forces, and develop a desire to avoid similar levels of emotional distress in their own lives. Together, the semiotic constellation used in relation to photographed civilians arguably posed a death threat to the viewer and sent a stern warning to those who would violate the group's expected norms of behavior in Sinai.

The military's media campaign, by contrast, identified civilians who smuggled drugs, cigarettes, or other suspicious materials in Sinai as criminals who deserved the state's punishment. It featured the humiliation of the arrested civilians through the combined use of intimate/personal distance, high camera angles, and direct eye contact. The images typically positioned the viewers to watch nearby citizens kneeling on the ground who looked the viewer in the eye. The semiotic constellation emphasized the civilian's weak position and prompted viewer identification with the defendant in ways to deter future instances of similar illegal activities. The Egyptian military's arrest warning, however, was less poignant than the one the militants offered. Due to the group's frequent blurring the face of the arrested civilian, the shots restricted the viewer's ability to connect and interact with the individual undergoing punishment.

6.7.3   *Expansion Approaches to the Sinai Conflict*

Having directly interacted with the opposing group's media campaigns through strategies of competition and alignment, Wilayat Sinai went further to expand the application of visual semiotic constellations to imagined human subjects outside of the photographic frames. The militant group used POV shots and social/public distance to display vehicular targets on the verge of exploding in IED attacks. Through the use of overlaid red arrows, the constellation positioned the viewer to follow distant, approaching vehicles from the perspective of someone standing immediately outside of the frame. The double absence of human photo subjects in these

images—observer and vehicle driver—encouraged the viewer to simultaneously imagine his role

as a protagonist marking his target and the role of the antagonist driving the targeted vehicle.

Involving the viewer in the meaning-making process may well reinforce the image of the

militants as the dominant character type capable of destroying Egyptian soldiers on the ground in

ways that also offer steps of empowerment to viewers.

The Egyptian military further engaged in expansion strategies by using POV shots, bird

eye's view, and public distance to display its airstrikes on storage facilities and vehicular targets

in Sinai. The semiotic constellation allowed the viewer to look down at the distant targets

through the fire scope of an air force jet. The military encouraged viewer identification with an

imagined pilot operating outside of the photographic frame engaged in the targeting of the

militants' infrastructure. The strategy of deploying double absence again appeared here, as the

images encouraged viewers to assign the role of the protagonist to an unseen fighter pilot in the

cockpit and the role of a hidden militant inside the building or vehicle under attack. The scenes

conveyed the military's dominance over the Sinai airspace and invited viewers to experience the

pilots' ability to annihilate militants using airstrikes. At the same time, they portrayed the

devastating consequences awaiting those choosing to join Wilayat Sinai.

6.8   Concluding Thoughts

This chapter demonstrates how militant groups and state actors utilize visual semiotics to

facilitate the message strategies of their media campaigns during times of conflict. Focusing on

the Sinai conflict in 2016-2017, Wilayat Sinai featured human photo subjects more often than the

Egyptian military. The militant group was also more reliant on intimate/personal distance, low

camera angles, negative facial expressions, direct eye contact, and subjective shots to depict the

militants, collaborators, and citizens in Sinai. The relative high use of visual semiotics may

reflect ISIS's attempts to imitate visual techniques prominent in western entertainment media to bolster its online messages. By contrast, the Egyptian military campaign relies more heavily on positive facial expressions in its distributed photographs to perhaps humanize its image as a fighting power in Sinai by emphasizing the unity among its ranks in hospitals and the positive outcomes of its humanitarian operations.

The use of visual semiotics in the Sinai conflict exposes the different ways that such tools function in nonwestern contexts. Rather than function predictably as a means of creating perceived close relationships, intimate/personal distance in the media campaigns in the Sinai conflict served as a means of highlighting graphic warnings to viewers to avoid identification with the photo subject. Rather than working to depict others and strangers, the social/public distance served as a space to emphasize the unity of the protagonists acting as a collective. Rather than suggesting power, credibility, and/or attractiveness, the direct eye contact in the Sinai media campaigns was often a key site of human vulnerability. The new functions worked in tandem to set a negative example of the opponent and amplify his punishment, while demonstrating the power of the communicating group.

Although the assumed connotations of existing western semiotics frameworks often applied to the Sinai visual conflict, many on the ground factors arguably contributed to the emergence of new strategic applications of semiotic constellations in state and non-state actors' photographs. The strained relations between Sinai residents and the government since the security crackdown in 2004, the military's incorporation of destructive airstrikes in the peninsula in recent years, and the increased pressure on Wilayat Sinai in 2016-2017 may explain the militant group's choice to use proxemics and eye contact to emphasize brutal retaliations for its followers to celebrate and its enemies to fear. The isolation of Sinai residents from mainland

Egypt, the stereotypical image of Bedouins as traitors and drug dealers, and the deadly attacks that Wilayat Sinai has conducted against security forces, civilians, and religious minorities may have all encouraged the military to apply proxemics in ways that can exaggerate its ability to dominate the Sinai field and kill the outlaws.

The chapter also demonstrates that understanding the contested online environment benefits from an examination of the interactions between the constellations of state and non-state actors' use of visual semiotics. This exploration of Wilayat Sinai and the Egyptian military's photographic campaigns revealed that the existence of visual semiotic interactions involving competition, alignment, and expansion strategies. However, these interactive approaches varied according to character type. Through competition, the militant group and the state transformed the opponent's protagonist character into an antagonist. They limited the character types qualifying for favorable semiotic treatment to their own individual members. Through alignment, the two reinforced the rigid friend-foe-dichotomy by humiliating additional human subjects who fail to abide by the groups' respective guidelines. Through expansion, both campaigns introduced unique destructive methods that unseen protagonists can effectively deploy against hidden enemies. Together, the three strategies helped emphasize clear delineations between opposing characters in conflict. By erasing any mediated middle ground between representatives of the established state and its challenger, visual semiotic wars can exacerbate localized clashes of ideology.

Future studies of visual semiotics can reveal nuanced constellations operative in cross-cultural conflicts. Because the assumptions of visual semiotics in western studies do not necessarily apply to all contexts, this area of study requires further testing. Researchers can use content analysis to determine the comparative level of reliance on visual semiotics and the range

of human character types across different communicators. The addition of a mixed-methods approach, however, could further understandings of how audiences interpret the semiotic contestations in more depth. A qualitative inductive analysis can help generate new or alternative semiotic constellations and assess the character types that qualify for unique treatments across different local and regional settings. Studies can also examine competition, alignment, and expansion as interactive strategies and explore new ones in order to develop a broader framework of visual semiotic interactions in conflict.

7   CONCLUSION

Today's media landscape inhibits states from exercising an absolute monopoly over public communication and fully censoring opposing media content. The online environment allows non-state militant actors to create hubs for media dissemination, relocate message distribution sites during crackdowns, and maintain a direct line of contact with supporter networks. Such capabilities enable militant groups to advocate their own alternative ideologies and present content that further challenges states in the digital sphere.

This study demonstrates the value of comparatively examining the competing visual component of state and non-state actors' media campaigns. A focus on one side's media efforts in a conflict only gauges an isolated visual campaign and misses the rich interactive potentials of the online battlefield. However, examining the visual conflict between the two opposing forces exposes the inherent similarities and differences in their media campaigns, identifies competing messaging tactics to reach the audience, and detects their principal interactive strategies available for engagement with the other side.

The critical nature of the Sinai conflict at the local, regional, and international levels serves as an excellent exemplar for understanding visual contestation in the digital environment.

Besides its religious status in the three Abrahamic faiths and its geopolitical significance for world peace, Sinai is a cornerstone in the expansionist ideology of Islamist militant groups in the Arab world. Bordering Gaza and Israel, it is a sought-after place for militants claiming to fight for the liberation of the third holiest site in Islam eastward in Jerusalem. Sinai has and continues to serve as a strategic supply line and entry point for North Africa by militant groups operating in the Levant, Iraq, and/or Yemen wishing to expand the fight westward. The decades of social alienation, economic deprivation, and underdevelopment in large parts of the peninsula, coupled with the lacking security presence at the border areas and the Sinai Bedouins' strong ties of kinship across the border, further position the site as an ideal location for Egyptian and foreign militants seeking to destabilize the most populous country in the Middle East. Hence, Sinai has emerged as a key focus of ISIS, particularly after the group lost most of its occupied territory in Syria and Iraq by the end of 2017. With Wilayat Sinai as its provincial arm on the ground, ISIS militants regrouped in the peninsula, fought the Egyptian military, and posed a threat to the entire region that continues today. Complementing the military conflict on the ground, Wilayat Sinai and the Egyptian military have engaged in a war of images in recent years that show how state and non-state actors compete visually for audiences in a cluttered online environment.

This study creates an interactive model of online visual contestation by state and non-state actors based on the research process examining the media campaign experiences of Wilayat Sinai and the Egyptian military in 2016-2017. The model is a visual representation of how contemporary media battles have and are likely to continue to be fought between asymmetric forces in the online terrain. It emphasizes that visual images of non-state militant actors do not exist in a vacuum. It situates the visual contestation itself as part of the overall context. It further highlights the visual characteristics defining the state and non-state actor's opposing media

campaigns. Most importantly, the model underscores several types of visual interactions that can occur between the two media campaigns (see Figure 7.1). In so doing, it recognizes the critical role that context, content, and form play in understanding how image contestations result in multiple types of interactions.
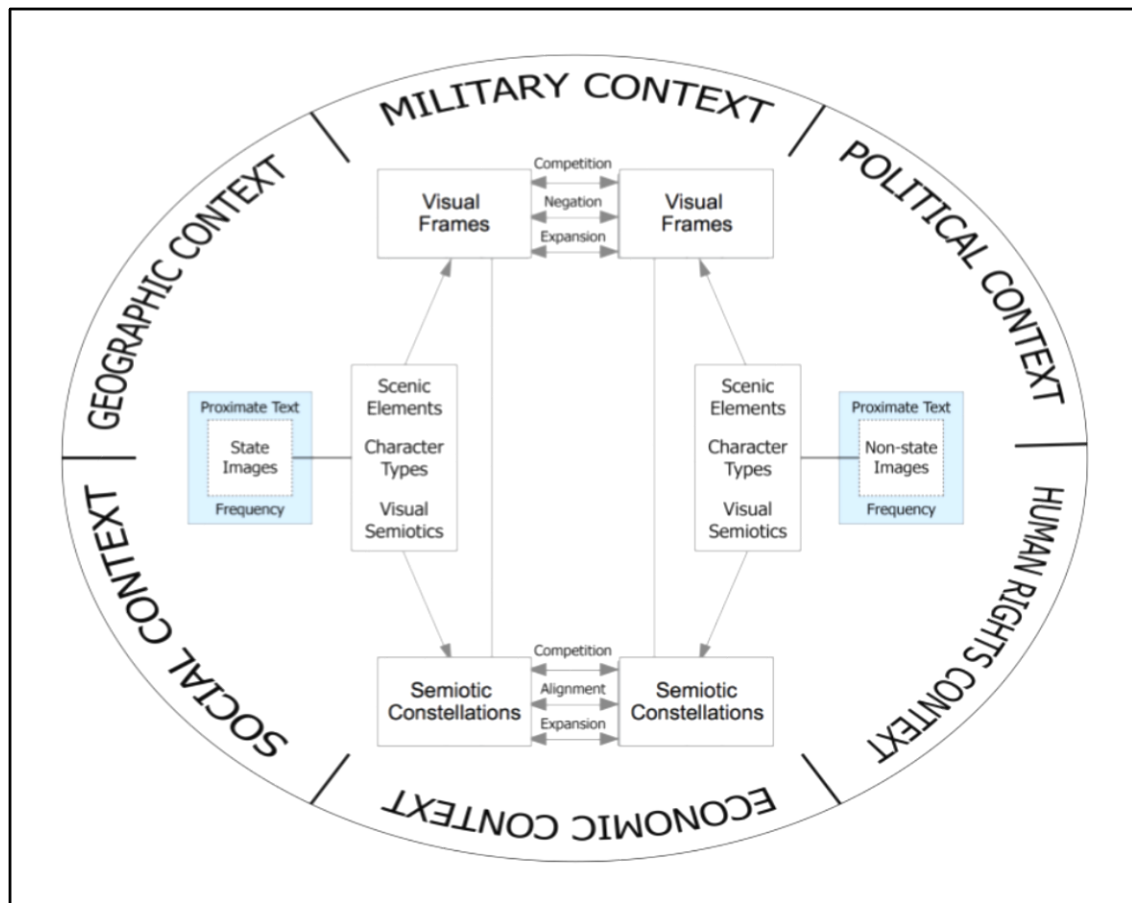
Figure 7.1 The Interactive Model of Visual Contestation by State and Non-State Actors.

7.1   Situational Context

The model's depiction of situational context provides a broader view of the conflict within which the state and non-state actors' images operate. The context interacts with the image campaigns on both sides of the conflict in two complementary ways. First, conditions on the

ground can influence viewer interpretations of the opposing visual campaigns. Lack of economic opportunities in a conflict zone, for example, can influence how the audience understands the state's portrayals of new projects or a non-state actor's displays of social services. Second, the visual media campaigns can focus viewer attention and help define portions of the reality by limiting what the viewers see in the photographic frames. The selection of particular scenes to depict and others to ignore redefines the context itself in the online environment. The model emphasizes six contextual factors that helped explain the competition between state and non-state actors: military, political, human rights, economic, social, and geographic.

7.1.1   *Military*

The military context, in particular, is key to understanding visual contestations between state and non-state actors in conflict. Five military elements related to changes in the visual media campaigns: the onset of state military operations, the completion of state military operations, the militants' attacks, the participation by local groups on either side of the battlefield, and the loss of top leaders. These factors intersected with the Sinai conflict images in various ways. The onset of local counterterrorism operations was the most impactful on the Egyptian military's photographic campaign. It corresponded with consistent shifts in output, content, and form that emphasized success on the ground. Upon the launch of the second phase of the Martyr's Right operation, for example, the military reached its highest productivity of image production in 2016, shifted to a reliance on battle aftermath images often displaying no human characters, and adopted a repeated use of long, wide angle shots of destruction. The loss of local leaders, by contrast, had the most crippling effect on the militant group's photographic campaign. The military's killing of senior militant leader Abu Duaa al-Ansari along with dozens of his aides in airstrikes devastated Wilayat Sinai's ranks and likely explains the temporary

disruption of the group's media operations and the dissemination of only one image over an

almost two-month period. The military conditions on the ground in Sinai, coupled with the

battlefield outcomes, offered crucial insights on the two side's media decisions in the visual

conflict.

Given the broad scope of ISIS's presence in 2016-2017 and its operations in the Arab

world, the regional military context also played a role in the war of images between Wilayat

Sinai and the Egyptian military. Although ISIS's regional attacks did not coincide with changes

in the visual contestation between the Egyptian military and Wilayat Sinai, the onset and

completion of regional counterterrorism operations marked clear shifts in the images in the Sinai

media campaigns. As regional forces launched attacks on ISIS in Mosul and Raqqa, for example,

Wilayat Sinai increased its use of high angle, close shots of dead enemies to emphasize the

group's potency and resistance. Upon the liberation of the ISIS's two occupied cities, however,

the provincial group in Sinai failed to maintain its steady stream of death images and reduced its

photographic output. Simultaneously, the Egyptian military boosted the number of its images,

increasingly utilized wide-angle shots of destruction to depict the opponent's losses, and

portrayed smiling leaders visiting injured soldiers in hospitals. The regional military events and

their corresponding visual shifts in Sinai suggests that the Egyptian state was in close

coordination with the global coalition and that Wilayat Sinai had close linkages to ISIS's central

media infrastructure.

7.1.2 Political

The political context in the conflict zone also serves as an important backdrop to the

visual contestation between state and non-state actors. Following the ouster of former President

Morsi in 2013, the 2016-2017 Sinai visual conflict took place in the post-Morsi period. First

Lieutenant General Sedki Sobhi, who assumed the role of Minister of Defense in 2014, became a major figure in President Sisi's administration during the period when the military became increasingly involved in Sinai. The military portrayed Sobhi as the key leader and vanguard of the state's counterterrorism efforts in its Sinai media campaign in 2016-2017. The photographic campaign also depicted other ministers, senior security officials, governors, and members of parliament in the field or visiting injured soldiers in hospitals. The images highlighted the appointment of new leaders in Sisi's administration, including Major General Mohamed Fareed who replaced Major General Mahmoud Hijazy as Army Chief of Staff and Major Mohamed Abdel Illah who succeeded Major General Ossama Askar as the military commander of the unified leadership east of the Canal in 2017. Like Sobhi, however, the governor of North Sinai Major General Abdelfattah Harhour and governor of South Sinai Major General Khaled Fouda remained in their positions and appeared in campaign photographs documenting launching events for new projects. Wilayat Sinai, by contrast, avoided the portrayal of its leaders altogether and instead presented the conflict as one between state forces and a group of organized, self-empowered militants. Thus, the state's images reflected power transitions, introducing the new administration's central characters and their roles in the Sinai conflict; the non-state actor, in contrast, presented its members as part of a nonhierarchical, grassroots movement effectively challenging the government forces.

The relationship between the state and its constituents was a key area of political contention evident in the 2016-2017 Sinai images. Former Minister of Interior Habib al-Adli cracked down on Sinai following the 2004 attacks, which further exacerbated the Bedouins' immense frustration with the Egyptian political establishment under Mubarak's rule. Community sentiments erupted in 2011, with increasing violence targeted against police forces in Sinai in the

post-revolutionary period. The new military strategy in the peninsula during the post-Morsi

period placed more constraints on North Sinai residents, ranging from curfews and forced

evictions to home demolitions. The military's 2016-2017 Sinai images challenged the notion that

such conditions resulted in a strained relationship between the state and the local Sinai residents.

Instead, the photographic campaign showed the Sinai residents rallying around leaders and

government representatives in the North, as well as Bedouin tribes publicly expressing support to

the military in the South. Wilayat Sinai, on the other hand, presented its own militants as

alternative and more favorable political actors in the North. The group's images emphasized the

local residents' fear of and respect for Wilayat Sinai through scenes of the civilians handing their

identification cards to militants at checkpoints, receiving their handout statements, and

surrounding them as they destroyed confiscated materials. Thus, in the political arena, the state

portrayed a relatively stable political climate in Sinai, while the non-state actor undermined the

stance by presenting militants as an emerging force in the community.

7.1.3   Human Rights

The human rights context contributes to how state and non-state actors' approach their

visual conflict in the online space. Human rights organizations have reported violations against

Sinai residents since 2004, including mass arrests and torture (e.g., Human Rights Watch, 2005).

Addressing the right of freedom from arbitrary arrest and the rights to life and fair trial, the

Egyptian military's 2016-2017 images pictured smuggling, drug dealing, and supporting

terrorists as grounds for arrest and referral to further interrogations. Using displays of dead

militants equipped with lethal weaponry, however, it presented fighting alongside the terrorist

group as carrying out an act of war that warranted killing in response. Wilayat Sinai applied a

different approach in its photographic campaign by stripping soldiers, state collaborators, and

Sufi Muslims of their right to life and fair trial altogether as a result of their "apostasy." The

provincial images showed brutal and humiliating executions of apostates unless they repented

and pledged allegiance to the militant group. While the state emphasized its respect for human

rights in the Sinai operations, the non-state actor discounted those rights by sanctioning its

actions as resulting from higher power, religious callings.

The Sinai visual contestation also addressed civilians' deprivation of basic human rights

in the peninsula. As chapter two of this dissertation documents, North Sinai residents have

suffered a lack of educational opportunities and healthcare facilities for decades. Human Rights

Watch's reports (2015, 2018) also pointed to the demolition of thousands of homes and the

forced eviction of families in the North as part of the military's plan to create a buffer zone since

2013. The Egyptian military specifically tackled the right to education in its online campaign by

picturing government officials as they opened new schools and educational facilities in Sinai.

However, it avoided any depictions of healthcare beyond the services injured soldiers received in

the posted photographs. Furthermore, the military's photographic campaign never directly

engaged the issue of evictions at the border areas throughout the two-year period. The depictions

of Wilayat Sinai's efforts to serve as the solution to the same issues, in contrast, were limited to

several images of militant-run clinics in the North. Otherwise, the militant group relied on

exposing the destruction of schools, farmland, and civilian property as direct outcomes of the

military's actions. It also depicted Sinai civilians evacuating their homes in late 2017, which

coincided with public reports announcing the continuation of the military's eviction policy.

Hence, in the arena of human rights, the state actor presented its efforts as needed solutions to

overcome some of the human rights issues in Sinai and avoided any contentious displays of

eviction-related scenes, while the non-state actor attempted to downplay these efforts and undermine the military's credibility by showing its alleged violations.

7.1.4 Economic

The economic context interacts with non-military photographs in the visual contestation between state and non-state actors. Economic conditions in North and South Sinai have changed over the years. Building on the infrastructure in South Sinai after the Israeli occupation, Egypt further developed the tourism industry, which in turn provided economic opportunities to the residents. But the more populous Northern region has continued to suffer from economic marginalization. The Egyptian military offered itself as a solution to the economic inequalities in Sinai by highlighting the state's new policies and projects in the North. The 2016-2017 photographic campaign showed ministerial visits marking the launch of new manufacturing and agricultural projects and emphasized the happiness of North Sinai residents as they received food aid from military personnel. Wilayat Sinai, on the other hand, failed to provide any solutions that could alleviate poverty in the North. Lacking resources, the militant group instead resorted to several depictions of destroyed farmland resulting from the state's military airstrikes. In the economic arena, the state displayed a roadmap for North Sinai's economic development, while the non-state actor portrayed the military's actions as destructive to the agricultural sector and the local economy as a whole.

The issue of illegal trade was a critical economic issue in the Sinai visual contestation between the state and the non-state actor. With widespread poverty in North Sinai, underground smuggling emerged as an alternative source of income for the residents. Not only did it become a profitable industry after the Gaza siege of 2007, but it further facilitated the Salafi militancy spillover into North Sinai until the Egyptian military announced its official plan to create a buffer

zone in 2013. The military's photographic campaign frequently highlighted its security measures to stop illegal trade and border breaches by showing the discovery and destruction of dozens of underground tunnels in 2016-2017. For Wilayat Sinai, however, the underground industry did not generally appear in the campaign photographs. The militant group's images only showed its crackdown on the smuggling of cigarettes through scenes of confiscation and burning of the packs. This move, which the group framed as a measure to stop religiously-prohibited substances, reportedly angered some of the tribal members and played a role in al-Tarabin tribe's decision to side with the military forces (Sweilam, 2017). Although the state and non-state actor both pictured their crackdown on illegal economic activity, the apparent motives shifted from national security for the former to religious norms for the latter.

7.1.5   Social

The social context also intersects with the visual contestation between state and non-state actors. The Sinai occupation period generated suspicions among many mainland Egyptians who equated the Bedouins' life under an Israeli administration for 15 years to treason (ICG, 2007; Pelham, 2012). The involvement of some Bedouins in illegal trade, drug dealing, and smuggling in the post-occupation period added to the cultural stereotypes that further isolated the group from Egypt's social fabric over the years. The Egyptian military reinforced the stereotypes in its images by frequently picturing Bedouins as criminals under arrest for collaborating with militants and for smuggling drugs or other goods across the border. Recurring shots of soldiers confiscating and burning drugs in Sinai further reinforced that image. Nonetheless, the military attempted to mitigate its mediated crackdown portrayal with other photographs stressing the integration of Sinai residents into the population. In these images, Sinai residents carried Egyptian flags and warmly interacted with military personnel on the ground. Although Wilayat

Sinai's displays of seized contraband cigarettes arguably played a similar role in affirming the image of Bedouins as smugglers, the group also depicted the subgroup as its main constituency. By providing an insider's look on the life of Bedouins, the images highlighted the group's social isolation further by showing a unique, nomadic lifestyle in deserted locations. Although the state and non-state actor's images both propagated preexisting cultural stereotypes of the Bedouins, the former promoted their social integration to reinforce a message of stability, while the latter depicted a social schism to reinforce the achievement of its goal of challenging the state.

The Sinai visual contestation between the state and the non-state actor revealed nuanced differences in social demographics. Bedouins, Egyptians from the Nile Valley, and Palestinians constitute the main groups that reside in the Sinai Peninsula. With their origins in the Arabian Peninsula and the Levant, the Sinai Bedouins enjoy strong ties with their fellow tribal members in neighboring countries and often uphold communal identity at a higher level than loyalty to the nation-state. The Egyptian military did not necessarily distinguish between the different groups making up the North Sinai population in its photographic campaign. Although some of the arrested smugglers, dead militants, and civilians were wearing Bedouin clothing, the identity of most depicted characters was not clear. On the other hand, Wilayat Sinai emphasized the different groups involved in the conflict. Eulogizing its martyrs, for example, the militant group displayed a pool of smiling Bedouin, Nile Valley Egyptian, and Palestinian fighters looking to the viewer before their participation in the militant attacks. The photo captions presented the martyr's unique origins, despite the appearance of their similar, embodied looks and identical military fatigues. The militant group further identified its local enemies, who often knelt on the ground before executions, by full name and Bedouin tribe. Demographically, the state defined the Sinai conflict in broader terms as an Egyptian war on terrorism and crime, but the non-state

actor pinpointed the different cultural identities to emphasize the diverse ethnic and transnational buildup of its ranks and to warn local Bedouins against siding with the military.

7.1.6 Geographic

The geographic context breaks up the conflict zone into meaningful locales in the visual contestation between the conflict's state and non-state actors. The Sinai Peninsula is a large desert that makes up about six percent of the size of Egypt and shares land borders with Gaza and Israel to the east. In their visual media campaigns, the Egyptian military and Wilayat Sinai defined the peninsula's topographic nature and border areas in different ways. Although both sides often depicted the desert as a site of combat, the militant group also transformed North Sinai's urban center al-Arish into a battlefield. At times, Wilayat Sinai even displayed green fields, trees, fruits, and water streams. Meanwhile, Sinai's northeastern border areas appeared in the military's images only as a site of underground tunnels that threaten national security. In militant group's images, by contrast, the border areas constituted scenes of military excavators, airstrikes aftermath, destroyed houses, and displaced civilians. Geographically, the state highlighted North Sinai's open battlefields and unsecured borders to justify its intense crackdown on militant activity and on the residents' ties with Gaza, while the non-state actor juxtaposed the beautiful sceneries with the military's destruction to garner support for wide-scale retaliation.

The Sinai conflict images also revealed the nature of the two main divisions in the peninsula. Sinai comprises the northern region, which has housed the militant insurgency in recent years, and the southern region that is imperative for Egypt's tourism industry. Although the Egyptian military and Wilayat Sinai both depicted the North as the center of the fight, they differed on the display of the southern part of the peninsula. South Sinai appeared in the

military's photographic campaign as a secure region juxtaposed with the volatile North. The images showed international leaders taking part in forums in Sharm El Sheikh and Egyptian soldiers securing the streets. The militant group, in contrast, failed to disseminate any images of South Sinai. The state pictured the southern part of Sinai to ensure viewers of its stability and security as a key tourism hub, while the non-state actor focused only on the northern region perhaps due to the intensity of battle operations in that sector, the militant group's inability to operate freely in the South, or as the key target area for militant recruitment.

7.2   Immediate Context

Two immediate visual contextual factors influence the meaning of the state and non-state actors' images in the model. The proximate text presents the communicator's narration on the scene, while the frequency helps generate areas of emphasis. The image can work in tandem with the text to deliver a common, reinforced message or direct the viewer to the key elements in the scene. For example, several images showing dozens of half-buried IEDs can complement photo captions describing the military's success in foiling roadside attacks while visually emphasizing the militants' weapon of choice. Thus, interactions between the two contextual variables and the images can alter the viewing experience and the meaning-making process in visual contestations between state and non-state actors.

7.2.1   Proximate Text

The proximate text contextualizes depicted scenes and their components. It is unique in many ways to each image and source. The "apostate" and "takfiri" labels in Wilayat Sinai and the Egyptian military's text, for example, were frequent derogatory identifiers describing the two opposing forces and their belongings in Sinai. Simultaneously, the two sides utilized text to hail their own members as heroes and martyrs. Beyond the labelling of in and outgroups, the

proximate text further described the nature and setting of the on-ground activities. The military used much more text with combat and battle aftermath images, specifying the phase of the Martyr's Right operation, the locations of the soldiers' actions, the numbers of casualties and arrests, and the types of weapons that had been confiscated or destroyed. It also described the non-military activities, such as hospital visits and school openings, by identifying the leaders in attendance, the outcome of the events, and the state's counterterrorism goals. The military spokesman's tendency to post in such details may have been an effort in transparency, given the fines that journalists had to pay in Egypt for reporting terrorism-related information contradicting the military's official statements.

On the other hand, Wilayat Sinai was more succinct in its photo captions. It used additional labels to describe the types of the attacks, ranging from suicide bombings, suicide attacks, and sniping to IED detonations. It also used captions to pinpoint the exact locations of the attacks within Sinai. But in non-military images, the militant group specified neither cities nor regions, but rather broadly presented the Sinai province as the location housing all the scenes of media distributions, feast celebrations, medical workshops, and natural landscapes. The unique locational identification strategy in those images implies the militant group's control over large swathes of land across Sinai. The group's labels and short photo captions further engaged the viewer by filling in missing pieces of information relevant to the scene. For example, the photo caption "Targeting the Egyptian apostate army with snipers," which complemented an image of a militant pointing his sniper outside a window, allows the viewer to imagine the target, outcome, and frequency of such attacks. The proximate text in each of the state and non-state actor's photographic campaigns played a critical role in emphasizing the meaning of the images and defining the Sinai conflict at large.

The format of the proximate text further influenced the images' meaning in circulation throughout the online environment. In the Sinai conflict, the proximate text that the Egyptian military used appeared in the form of Facebook posts and photo captions. The text in one Facebook post served as a standard description for several images that the Egyptian military would release together as a collective. This format constrained the clarity of the visual message as the viewer had to toggle back and forth between the image and the attached lengthy text. Circulating such images on other digital platforms without the text could further distort the images' meaning. Wilayat Sinai, by contrast, described each scene using a superimposed photo caption. In so doing, the militant group's images and text together created individual media products that could retain meaning both at the initial point of dissemination and beyond. In short, the differential text-formatting decisions limited the circulation potential of the state's photographic campaign, while allowing the non-state actor's images to operate consistently and efficiently across platforms.

7.2.2   Frequency

The frequency of images serves as a means of presence in the online environment. The Egyptian military boosted its online visual presence in 2017 through a 260 percent surge in photographic output, compared to Wilayat Sinai's images whose frequency remained relatively constant. The frequency of images on both sides, however, did fluctuate throughout the 24-month period in correspondence to events on the ground. When al-Tarabin tribe sided with the state, for example, both the military and the militant group increased their photographic outputs to imply strength on the battlefield. At other times, the militant group could not maintain its visual presence due to apparent disruptions to its media operations, signaling the precariousness of its resources in comparison with those of the state. To make up for these interruptions, the

group resorted to disseminating more images of its more limited attacks in 2017 to give the impression of sustained online presence. Despite these ebbs and flows of production output, both the state and non-state actor treated visual presence as a necessary tool to convey their strength on the ground.

The Sinai conflict also revealed different levels of visual emphasis on certain content elements over time. The military's media campaign, for example, displayed underground tunnels in 11 percent of its images to emphasize the state's law enforcement activities at the Sinai border areas, while Wilayat Sinai visually ignored the tunnels altogether. By contrast, both the state and non-state actor heavily relied on military images, but did so in different ways. Seventy percent of Wilayat Sinai's military images showed impending IED, group, and sniping attacks to highlight its battlefield actions. The military, instead, focused on the resulting destruction, confiscation, and death in about 90 percent of its military images to emphasize dominance and success in the battlefield confrontations. The repetitive output of visual images conveyed strategic messages in the state and non-state actor's media campaigns.

7.3 Image Components

The image in the model is comprised of three main components. The scenic elements, character types, and visual semiotics all serve as message fragments that combine to attribute meaning to the photograph. For example, a scene that shows a burning military tank, a militant, and a smile would likely suggest an insurgent's happiness after taking belligerent action against the state. Changing any one of these components could alter the meaning of the message.

7.3.1 Scenic Elements

The scenic elements mediate the conflict setting in the online environment. Destruction and presumed death were recurrent elements in the Sinai images that shifted over time. The

Egyptian military and Wilayat Sinai often presented their military actions and victories through depictions of the ongoing destruction of the opponents' weapons, vehicles, and buildings. The surge in the Egyptian counterterrorism operations from 2016 to 2017, for example, translated into more than a 700 percent increase in the military's displays of ongoing destruction. Although depictions of destruction dropped in the militant group's images amid decreasing attacks during the same period, they remained a central feature in the campaign. The bulk of the state and non-state actor's images defined Sinai as a devastating warfront where the enemy forces are always losing.

Death and identity symbols also emerged as frequent scenic elements in the Sinai visual contestation. The two players typically circulated images of dead corpses highlighting the lethal consequences to the opponents in major attacks on checkpoints and military bases in Sinai. Operating outside the bounds of battle, the militant group went further by showing Egyptian solders, state collaborators, and Sufi Muslims about to die in public executions to emphasize the deadly beheading and shooting punishments that await its enemies. In the meantime, both sides demonstrated contrasting identities. The military often used the Egyptian flag as a scenic backdrop to both civilian and military gatherings in Sinai. The militant group instead employed the Qur'an, prayers, and the monotheism gesture as religious symbols present in the barracks and on the battlefields. Using scenic elements, the state evoked a sense of patriotism that can justify killing the enemies of the nation-state, while the non-state actor sanctioned its brutalities as a necessary part of a holy war.

7.3.2   Character Types

The human character types identify the key actors in the visual conflict. Despite appearing in only 56 percent of the Sinai images, the character types set the parameters of the

message in each photographic campaign. The Egyptian military and Wilayat Sinai differed in the portrayals of their own fighters. The militants, for example, emerged as the most recurrent character type in the provincial group's images, almost always appearing as the powerful, victorious players in the field. The same character type was the least prevalent in the military's campaign whose images presented them as dead corpses or helpless individuals under arrest. In the meantime, Egyptian soldiers were the most recurrent type and the only competent fighters in the military's images. They were also prevalent in the militant group's photographic campaign as weaker individuals under attack, injured, dead, or on the run. The state dismissed the militants by downplaying both their number and strength, while the non-state actor bolstered its image by juxtaposing the soldiers' large presence with their defeats.

Some character types were generally limited to only one of the photographic campaigns. Top security officials, for example, were an exclusive character type and the second most recurring type appearing in the military's images. They always appeared as caring leaders in support of their subordinates fighting on the field or recovering in the hospitals. In contrast, Sinai civilian collaborators with the state were a key character type that appeared mainly in the militant group's images. The photographic campaign did not display the acts of collaboration themselves, but rather showed their deadly consequences for civilians whether on the battlefield or in public executions. Although the military also portrayed Sinai civilian supporters in some of its images, they appeared only as secondary actors ready to receive aid or attend launching events while surrounded by military personnel. Collectively, the state media campaign's images emphasized the role of its leaders in directing its counterterrorism campaign, while the non-state actor pictured death threats to local civilians thinking of siding with the military.

7.3.3   Visual Semiotics

Visual semiotic elements associate symbolic meaning to the characters in the scene. Both the Egyptian military and Wilayat Sinai utilized viewer distance, camera angle, facial expressions, eye contact, and subjective shots in much the same way. For example, each side typically presented shots of its opponents at a distance from the viewer to encourage dissociation, while displaying its martyrs and/or injured soldiers at a close distance to prompt viewer connection and empathy. At times, the two groups also photographed their enemies from a close distance in humiliating situations to send a clear warning. Although both players displayed a group of their fighters and enemies looking directly at the viewer, the immediate context conveyed contrasting meanings. Direct eye contact underlined the high status of martyrs as the text underscored the sacrifices they had made. But the same semiotic element also emphasized the vulnerability of opponents kneeling in captivity as they awaited their lethal fate. Moreover, the two sides positioned the viewer inside combat scenes using point-of-view shots to prompt identification with their fighters. Without developing unique strategies for their own side in the conflict, the state and non-state actor strategically employed semiotic tools to present a positive image of their members and degrade their enemies.

Nonetheless, the two sides in the Sinai conflict revealed different levels of reliance on particular semiotic elements. In its depictions of human characters, the militant group was generally more dependent on many semiotic tools, including intimate/personal distance, low camera angles, subjective shots, and direct eye contact. By doing so, it constantly reinforced its differential portrayals of the two main character types: militants and soldiers. One key exception involved the use of positive facial expressions, which the military utilized about 10 times more than Wilayat Sinai. The military often pictured its own soldiers, leaders, and civilian supporters

smiling in hospital visits and food distribution drives. Instead, the militant group limited its use

of positive facial expressions to a small number of images showing martyrs before they attacked

the military. The state stressed the unity between its military and the population by regularly

displaying positive facial expressions, while the non-state actor emphasized martyrdom as the

only pathway to happiness by rarely using the semiotic tool.

7.4   Ways Images Interact in State/Non-State Media Campaigns

Interactions between the state and non-state campaigns in the visual contestation model

occur both at the levels of content and form. The image components (scenic elements, character

types, and visual semiotics) work together to generate the campaign's visual frames (i.e., image

content) and semiotic constellations (i.e., image form), which then engage with the opposing

communicators' messages in a number of identifiable ways.

7.4.1   Visual Frames

The 2016-2017 Sinai images revealed three interactive strategies between the visual

frames of state and non-state actors: competition, negation, and expansion. Wilayat Sinai and the

Egyptian military each claimed superiority through the use of competing visual frames. In their

use of the martyrdom frame, for example, the militant group presented religiosity as the sole

driving force behind its fallen fighters' sacrifices, while the military emphasized the patriotic,

nationalistic motivations of its martyrs. The two sides also utilized negation to challenge the

credibility of the other side by presenting alternate interpretations of events embodied in their

visual frames. To negate the military's claimed success from precision airstrikes against

militants, for example, the non-state actor pictured the bombings' destructive outcomes to

civilian property, mosques, and lands. To undermine the military's announced accomplishment

of opening schools and providing aid for Sinai residents, Wilayat Sinai displayed images of

destroyed schools and evacuated civilians resulting from the state's shelling and eviction policy in the North. Finally, the state and non-state actor expanded the available means of persuasion by incorporating unique frames of their own. The frame showing military visits to hospitals was a prime example that clearly emphasized the intimate relationship between the leaders and soldiers. Together, the three visual framing interactive strategies explain how opposing content in visual images interacts in the contested online environment.

7.4.2 Semiotic Constellations

The state and non-state actor's semiotic constellations serve as a second site of interaction in the visual contestation model. Three semiotic interactive strategies emerged from the two conflicting sides in the Sinai conflict: competition, alignment, and expansion. Wilayat Sinai and the Egyptian military, for example, competed over which characters qualified for a positive semiotic constellation rendering. The militant group used a combination of intimate/personal distance, positive facial expressions, and direct eye contact to symbolize the humanity of its own militants, while the military's campaign deployed a similar favorable semiotic treatment to its own soldiers. The two sides aligned over the identity of a character type that qualified for a negative semiotic treatment. They combined high camera angles, intimate/personal distance, and negative facial expressions to symbolize the humiliation of civilian law breakers under arrest. Further, the two groups expanded the use of semiotic constellations by encouraging viewers to imagine character types operating outside of the photographs' boundaries. Egyptian fighter pilots, for example, functioned as a notable protagonist in the military's visual campaign despite their absence in the photographs; instead the campaign encouraged viewers to imagine them through the use of public distance and high

angle, POV shots from the cockpit. The three semiotic interactive strategies reveal how visual

form serves as another way visual images compete in the online environment.

7.5   Implications of the Visual Contestation Model

The proposed model fills a gap in the visual communication literature. Expanding beyond

Birdsell and Groarke's (1996) visual argumentation framework that accounts for image elements,

context, and change over time, this model presents a holistic approach that maps visual conflict

into the three pillars of context, content, and form, as well as the ensuing interactions amongst

them in the online environment. It combines visual framing and semiotic methodologies with

contextual analysis and comparative applications. This new approach allows for a comprehensive

and nuanced study of visual contestation between state and non-state actors. By applying the

model, researchers can further dissect the emerging communicative phenomenon of online visual

contestation in other contexts, including competitions between non-state actors or political

campaigns in the media battlefield. Hence, the model serves as a means to assess the

implications of online digital technologies on the dynamics of contemporary visual conflicts.

The model also demonstrates that communicators in visual conflicts interact at the level

of image collections. The online environment facilitates the dissemination of digital

photographic albums, which explains the high number of images by the Egyptian military and

Wilayat Sinai in two years of the Sinai conflict (N=1905). A small sample size can help identify

select features in and the level of iconicity of individual images in conflict. However, it does not

sufficiently reveal the nature of the dialogue between the two communicators online. The visual

contestation model captures the individual image, but, most importantly, it accounts for the

patterns emerging across content and form in the overall campaigns. The resulting visual frames

and semiotic constellations are two collections through which the communicators can emphasize select messages and characters in online visual contestations.

The model's visual framing component differentiates between competing narratives. Each communicator creates unique frames highlighting different aspects of the same conflict. The inductive framing analysis identifies those frames and classifies their functions into Entman's four associations: problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation. Two overarching stories thus emerge, each with an underlying rationale and a distinct progression of events. The model further accounts for the interactions between the content elements of the stories. Investigating the interactive strategies between the two visual framing blocks over time can detect changes in how communicators present and adjust their narratives in times of conflict.

Meanwhile, the semiotic constellations component of this model has cross-cultural implications. The state and non-state actor in the Sinai conflict utilized visual semiotics in ways that do not align with the assumptions of the western visual grammar. These cultural distinctions suggest that visual semiotics are polysemic, and thus can convey different symbolic meanings across audience groups. The model allows for examining how semiotics tools work together with character types and scenic elements to generate context-specific semiotic constellations that are key to the process of message construction. This inductive method helps understand unique, cultural-based visual messages in their immediate communicative environment and challenges the assumptions that semiotic tools embody a standardized set of meanings.

The study's findings have practical implications for institutions and content creators facing the current and future threats that militant groups embody in the digital sphere. States, civil society groups, and non-governmental organizations can all utilize this approach to better

understand the mechanisms through which militant groups construct their media campaigns and to identify their unique strategies of engagement. Creators of entertainment-education projects emphasizing values of social cohesion, exposing militant groups, and warning against joining such organizations can also benefit from this approach. The model's outputs identify the main areas of emphasis in the two opposing campaigns and the conflicting presentations of character roles that are both key for building counter and alternative narratives. In sum, the visual contestation model can guide the process of transforming pro-social messages into more effective visuals relevant to the conflict.

7.6   Limitations and Future Areas of Research

This study of visual contestation is subject to some limitations. First, the datasets on state and non-state actors' military activities provide useful insights and figures, but do not accurately reflect all the conditions on the ground. By counting regional attacks that ISIS have not claimed, for example, the GTD dataset provides an exaggerated picture of the group's military activity, which can influence the examination of shifts in the media campaigns. Similarly, the level of secrecy around the state's military operations can prevent researchers from accounting for unpublicized military events, such as covert operations or assassinations of leaders. Second, Wilayat Sinai and the Egyptian military also produce and disseminate videos as part of their media efforts in the Sinai visual conflict. Hence, the study's findings are only representative of the two groups' most prominent visual medium: photographs, but not the entire visual campaigns. Third, the study demonstrates that the process of message construction in the Egyptian context involves the use of visual semiotic tools in ways that differ from the assumptions of western frameworks. Nonetheless, it does not examine how such semiotic elements may influence the perceptions of Egyptian or Arab respondents.

One area of research needed for improving understandings of visual contestation by state and non-state actors is an expanded focus on contextual variables. The study primarily examined military conditions as a lens to investigate the relationship between situational context and visual contestation. This focus on military context, however, is only a useful starting point. The political, economic, geographic, social, and human rights contexts also interact with the media campaigns in the conflict, and this study has only examined them in a cursory way. Future studies should examine these factors as additional lenses for understanding visual contestation over time. These situational contexts may then generate supplementary variables, such as the GDP, unemployment rate, or reported cases of human rights violations, to extend the applicability and usefulness of the model.

Another area of research that would help better understand contestation is an expanded focus on visual mediums. State and non-state actor's media can include videos and infographics that play a role in online visual conflicts. Researchers can further examine visual contestations by sampling the different visual media products. The components of the immediate context (text and frequency) and the image (scenic elements, character types, and visual semiotics) in the proposed interactive model of visual contestation should all apply to videos and infographics. Yet, the different visual mediums may introduce different elements or interactions that could expand the model.

An area of research that would also enhance the understandings of visual contestation is a cross-cultural examination of the role of visual semiotic tools. Researchers can compare audience responses to semiotic elements in different cultural settings, such as the U.S. vis-à-vis an Arab country, and account for their technological capabilities, including access to broadband, activity on social media, and use of smartphones. Such experimental studies can thus reveal how

similar or different semiotic strategies influence viewers' interpretations of the same image. They may even suggest a need to develop new cultural-based frameworks of visual grammar with set assumptions that do not necessarily align with those of Western studies of visual semiotics.

Furthermore, the interactions between the opposing media campaigns are an area that warrants further study. The study identified key visual framing and semiotic interactive strategies in the Sinai conflict. Competition, negation, expansion, and alignment emerged from the comparative, inductive approach to the study of visual contestation between Wilayat Sinai and the Egyptian military. However, these interactions do not necessarily make up a comprehensive list applicable in every conflict. Each visual contestation is contextual and thus may exhibit unique visual content and form in the online environment. By exploring states and non-state actors' visual frames and semiotic constellations in other settings, future studies may find additional interactive strategies or recognize situational constraints governing the ones identified here. Conflicts between Taliban and Afghanistan, the PKK and Turkey, Hamas and Israel, al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and Yemen, al-Shabaab and Somalia, and the West African ISIS province and Nigeria offer interesting opportunities for research about visual contestation. Over time, researchers can develop a broader framework that encompasses a range of potential interactions between opposing online media campaigns in times of conflict.

REFERENCES

A soldier killed in Al-Arish attack and 44 killed in Sinai since the Ouster of Morsi. (2013,
August 6). *Al-Quds Al-Arabi*. Retrieved from http://www.alquds.co.uk/?p=70829

Abdelazim, A. (2013, January 12). The Military Spokesman reafirms the patriotism of the people
of Sinai by recalling the Hasna Conference. *El-Wattan News*. Retrieved from
https://www.elwatannews.com/news/details/112124

Abdullah, S. (2015, July 25). After two years of the curfew renewal in North Sinai and the
nearing end of the stated period, the Families: Have Mercy on us, Enough Curfew. *Al-Badil*.
Retrieved from goo.gl/WxThXY%0A

Abedine, S., & Smith-Park, L. (2013, May 22). Military: 7 kidnapped soldiers freed in Egypt.
CNN. Retrieved from https://www.cnn.com/2013/05/22/world/meast/egypt-soldiers-
released/index.html

Abu Mudallala, S. M., & Al-Agha, W. H. (2011). The Tunnel Economy in Gaza: A National
Necessity or an Economic and Social Catastrophe. *Al-Azhar University Magazine in Gaza*,
13(1), 1147–1182.

Adolphs, R. (2002). Recognizing Emotion From Facial Expressions: Psychological and
Neurological Mechanisms. *Behavioral and Cognitive Neuroscience Reviews*, *1*(1), 21–62.
http://doi.org/10.1177/1534582302001001002

Al-Badil Announces the Number of Terrorist Attacks in Sinai between January 2011 and January
2014. (2014, January 30). *Al-Badil*. Retrieved from https://elbadil.net/2014/01/-البديل-تعلن
حصيلة-العمليات-الإرهاب/

Al-Badry, Y., Abu Diraa, A., & Mubarak, A. (2012, August 7). Al-Masry Al-Youm Publishes
Details of "The Rafah Massacre": Masked Men Attacked the Checkpoint With 4 Vehicles

and The Breakfast Cannon Was the Launching Sign. *Al-Masry Al-Youm*. Retrieved from

http://today.almasryalyoum.com/article2.aspx?ArticleID=349153

Al-Beheiry, A. K. (2017). *Terrorist Operations: Paths and Characteristics since January 2011*.

Cairo. Retrieved from http://acpss.ahram.org.eg/News/5669.aspx

Al-Furqan Media. (2007). Announcement of Ministry Formation for the Islamic State of Iraq.

Retrieved March 23, 2016, from https://archive.org/details/The_Islamic_State_of-Iraq

Al-Furqan Media. (2009). Second Ministry Formation for the Islamic State of Iraq. Retrieved

March 23, 2016, from https://archive.org/details/Al-Tashkeelah-2-Le-Dwla-Iraq- Islamic

Al-Furqan Media. (2014). Even if the Disbelievers Despise Such. Retrieved December 18, 2017,

from https://archive.org/details/wlw_krh_alkafron_alfurqan

Al-Furqan Media. (2016a). And those who lived in faith would live upon evidence. Retrieved

February 8, 2017, from https://ia800409.us.archive.org/9/items/KalemtSHabaan/kalemt

SHa%60baan.mp3

Al-Furqan Media. (2016b). Audio Speech by the Emir of the Faithful Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi

entitled "So wait, we too are waiting with you." Retrieved December 18, 2017, from

https://ia800201.us.archive.org/17/items/29122015mediaIS/K1.mp3

Al-Furqan Media. (2016c). Sarh al-Khilafa (The Structure of the Caliphate). Retrieved December

15, 2016, from https://ia600603.us.archive.org/4/items/ee997b74_mohmal_720/720.mp4

Al-Hamed, R. (2016). *The Effective Sides in the Raqqa Battle: Contradicting Goals and

Potential Clashes*. Retrieved from http://alaalam.org/ar/politics-ar/item/443--الأطراف-الفاعلة-في-

معركة-الرقة-تناقض-الأهداف-واحتمالات-التصادم

Al-Himma Library. (2016). Oh You Media Operative, You Are A Mujahid. Retrieved January

16, 2017, from https://ia601902.us.archive.org/22/items/mojahed_ilamee_is/ أيها أنت مجاهد

الإعلامي.pdf

Al-Kadi, Z., & Shaalan, M. (2017, February 10). The Chief of Military Intelligence unveils the secrets of the war on terrorism. *Youm 7*. Retrieved from https://www.youm7.com/story/2017/2/10/مدير-المخابرات-الحربية-يكشف-أسرار-الحرب-على-الإرهاب-اللواء-محمد/3096322

Al-Kataib Media. (2017). Gaidi Mtaani 9. Retrieved February 12, 2018, from https://azelin.files.wordpress.com/2017/09/gaidi-mtaani-issue-9.pdf

Al-Malahim Media. (2011). Sada al-Malahim 16. Retrieved February 27, 2016, from https://ia700402.us.archive.org/28/items/Malahem_16/16h.pdf

Al-Malahim Media. (2017, August). Inspire 17. Retrieved March 9, 2018, from https://azelin.files.wordpress.com/2017/08/inspire-magazine-17.pdf

Al-Muqrin, A. H. (2008, July). A Message to Yemeni Youth. *Sada Al-Malahim*.

Al-Naba'. (2016, December 22). Wali of Sinai Shaykh Abu Hajar al-Hashemi: The Apostates' Plots Extends the War on Them by God's Willing. *Al-Naba' 60*.

Al-Qaeda "behind Egypt bombings." (2004, October 8). *BBC*. Retrieved from http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/3725662.stm

Al-Qudsy, S. H. S. I., & Rahman, A. A. (2011). Effective Governance in the Era of Caliphate Umar Ibn Al-Khattab. *European Journal of Social Sciences*, *18*(4), 612–624.

Al-Rawi, A., & Gunter, B. (2013). News in Iraq. In B. Gunter & R. Dickinson (Eds.), *News Media in the Arab World: A Study of 10 Arab and Muslim Countries* (pp. 41–65). Bloomsbury Publishing USA.

Al-Sorani, G. (2008, December 14). Rafah Tunnels and their Economic, Social, and Political Impact. *Al-Hiwar Al-Mutamidin*. Retrieved from http://www.m.ahewar.org/s.asp?aid=156356&r=0

Al-Tabarani, H. (2011, July 31). 11 Egyptians referred to Ismailia Military Prosecutor over Al-

Arish Incidents. *Ahram*. Arish. Retrieved from http://gate.ahram.org.eg/News/100400.aspx

Al-Tahtawy, R. (2012, August 26). Study: Reviving "the Frozen" Sinai Development Project

Needs 300 Billion Egyptian Pounds. *Al-Masry Al-Youm*. Retrieved from

http://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/159467

Al-Tarabin Tribe Leads an Initiative to Unite Sinai Tribes to Face the Takfiris. (2017, April 29).

Youm7.

Al-Tawhid Wal-Jihad in Egypt Claims Responsibility for Sharm El Sheikh Attacks. (2005).

Retrieved November 21, 2016, from http://www.albayan.ae/one-world/2005-07-27-1.91578

Al-Wafd News. (2014). Shady al-Menai during his beseige of the peacekeeping forces in Sinai.

Retrieved October 11, 2016, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F6Tl20NeceE

Ali, N., & Fakhry, N. (2014, November 26). The 30 June Investigation Committee's Final

Report: Rabaa Sit-in was armed.. First casualty from the police.. The Brotherhood

transported corpses from Al-Marg, Al-Salam, and Al-Nahda to Rabaa.. 8 Police Deaths..

860 deaths in Rabaa, Al-Nahda, and Al-Manas. *Youm 7*. Retrieved from

https://www.youm7.com/story/2014/11/26/-التقرير-النهائى-للجنة-تقصى-حقائق-30يونيو-اعتصام-رابعة-كان

1967154/مسلحا

Ali, S. (2017, February 22). Peshmerga will not participate in western Mosul operation: Ministry.

Kurdistan 24. Retrieved from goo.gl/3eKRnT%0A

Alkhshali, H., & Younes, A. (2013, August 19). Egypt: 25 soldiers killed in Sinai Peninsula

ambush. *CNN*. Retrieved from http://www.cnn.com/2013/08/19/world/meast/egypt-sinai-

ambush

Allendorfer, W., & Herring, S. (2015). ISIS vs. the U.S. government: A war of online video

propaganda. *First Monday*, *20*(12), 1–16. Retrieved from

http://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/6336/5165

Amad, P. (2012). From God's-eye to camera-eye: Aerial photography's post-humanist and neo-humanist visions of the world. *History of Photography*, *36*(1), 66–86. http://doi.org/10.1080/03087298.2012.632567

Amalfitano, J. G., & Kalt, N. C. (1977). Effects of eye contact on the evaluation of job applicants. *Journal of Employment Counseling*, *14*(1), 46–48.

Ammar, A. M. (2014). *Egypt's Eastern Gateway: The Sinai Peninsula as an Avenue for Transportation and Human Migration* (2nd ed.). Beirut: Arab Center for Research & Policy Studies.

Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis. (2012). And if you return, we return. Retrieved September 16, 2016, from https://archive.org/details/Ansar_Maqds

Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis. (2014a). Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis pledges allegiance to the Emir of the Faithful Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi and joins the Islamic State. Retrieved December 18, 2017, from https://archive.org/details/ansar.bait.al.maqdes.baayat.khalifa.al.bagdadi.original.quality.mp3

Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis. (2014b, September 16). All Statements for the Lions of Egypt Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis. *Justpaste*, pp. 1–59. Retrieved from https://justpaste.it/h4km

Aqtash, N. A., Seif, A., & Seif, A. (2004). Media Coverage of Palestinian Children and the Intifada. *International Communication Gazette*, *66*(5), 383–409. http://doi.org/10.1177/0016549204045919

Ashour, K. (2016). *Egypt's North Sinai Post 2011 Revolution: The Nexus Between Ungovernability Dimensions and Terrorism*. American University in Cairo. Retrieved from http://dar.aucegypt.edu/bitstream/handle/10526/4751/MGA Project- Final Version - Karim

Ashour - May 22-2016.pdf?sequence=1

Ashour, O. (2016). *ISIS and Wilayat Sinai: Complex Networks of Insurgency under Authoritarian Rule*. Berlin. Retrieved from https://dgap.org/en/article/getFullPDF/28365

Assailants kill five Egypt soldiers in Sinai: army. (2017, January 23). *News24*. Cairo. Retrieved from https://www.news24.com/Africa/News/assailants-kill-five-egypt-soldiers-in-sinai-army-20170123

Awad, M. (2016). IS in the Sinai. In K. Bauer (Ed.), *Beyond Syria and Iraq: Examining Islamic State Provinces* (pp. 12–17). The Washington Institute For Near East Policy. Retrieved from http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/uploads/Documents/pubs/PolicyFocus149_Bauer.pdf

Aziz, S. F. (2016). Rethinking Counterterrorism in the Age of ISIS : Lessons from Sinai Rethinking Counterterrorism in the Age of ISIS : Lessons from Sinai. *Nebraska Law Review*, *95*(2), 308–363. Retrieved from goo.gl/5pKF3H%0A

Azoulay, A. (2008). *The Civil Contract*. New York: Zone Books.

Bar-Eli, A. (2012, April 22). Egypt Cancels Natural Gas Deal With Israel. *Haaretz*. Retrieved from https://www.haaretz.com/1.5216151

Barnett, D. (2014, January 17). Sinai gas pipeline attacked for first time in 2014. *Long War Journal*. Retrieved from http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2014/01/sinai_gas_pipeline_attacked_fo.php

Baron-Cohen, S., Wheelwright, S., & Jolliffe, and T. (1997). Is There a "Language of the Eyes"? Evidence from Normal Adults, and Adults with Autism or Asperger Syndrome. *Visual Cognition*, *4*(3), 311–331. http://doi.org/10.1080/713756761

Barr, A., & Herfroy-Mischler, A. (2017). ISIL's Execution Videos: Audience Segmentation and

Terrorist Communication in the Digital Age. *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, (September), 1–22. http://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2017.1361282

Barthes, R. (1977). The Rethoric of the Image. In R. Barthes (Ed.), *Image-Music-Text*. London: Fontana.

Barthes, R. (1978). *Image-music-text*. Macmillan.

Basu, M. (2017, January 12). In Iraq, thousands of terrorism's victims go unnamed. *CNN*. Retrieved from https://www.cnn.com/2017/01/12/world/iraq-terrorism-faceless-victims/index.html

Batanouny, K. H. (1985). Botanical Exploration of Sinai. *Qatar University Science Journal*, *5*, 187–211.

Batziou, A. (2011). Framing 'Otherness' in press photographs: The case of immigrants in Greece and Spain. *Journal of Media Practice*, *12*(1), 41–60. http://doi.org/10.1386/jmpr.12.1.41

Baudouin, J. Y., Gilibert, D., Sansone, S., & Tiberghien, G. (2000). When the smile is a cue to familiarity. *Memory*, *8*(5), 285–292. http://doi.org/10.1080/09658210050117717

Behr, I. von, Reding, A., Edwards, C., & Gribbon, L. (2013). *Radicalisation in the digital era: The use of the Internet in 15 cases of terrorism and extremism*. Santa Monica, CA. Retrieved from http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR400/RR453/RAND_RR45 3.pdf

Bell, P. (2008). Content Analysis of Visual Images. In T. van Leeuwen & C. Jewitt (Eds.), *Handbook of Visual Analysis* (7th ed.). London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Bergen, P. (2017). Will Iraq survive victory over ISIS in Mosul? *CNN*. Retrieved from https://www.cnn.com/2017/03/20/opinions/will-iraq-survive-mosul-victory-

bergen/index.html

Birdsell, D. S., & Groarke, L. (1996). Toward a theory of visual argument. *Argumentation and Advocacy*, *33*, 1–10.

Borah, P. (2009). Comparing Visual Framing in Newspapers: Hurricane Katrina Versus Tsunami. *Newspaper Research Journal*, *30*(1), 50–57.

Boyd, J., Boyd, S., & Kerr, T. (2015). Visual and narrative representations of mental health and addiction by law enforcement. *International Journal of Drug Policy*, *26*(7), 636–644. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.drugpo.2015.04.007

Bradley, J. R. (2008). *Inside Egypt: The land of the Pharaohs on the brink of a revolution*. New York: MacMillan.

Branigan, E. (1984). *Point of view in the cinema: A theory of narration and subjectivity in classical film*. Walter de Gruyter.

Brantner, C., Lobinger, K., & Wetzstein, I. (2011). Effects of visual framing on emotional responses and evaluations of news stories about the Gaza conflict 2009. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, *88*(3), 523–540.

Brooke, G. J. (2008). Moving Mountains: From Sinai to Jerusalem. In The Significance of Sinai (pp. 73-90). Brill. Chicago. In G. J. Brooke, H. Najman, & L. T. Stuckenbruck (Eds.), *The Significance of Sinai: Traditions About Sinai and Divine Revelation in Judaism and Christianity* (pp. 73–90). Chicago, IL: Brill Academic Publishers.

Brooker, W. (2009). Camera-Eye , CG-Ey Videogames and th. *Society for Cinema & Media Studies*, *48*(3), 122–128.

Brooks, C. I., Church, M. A., & Fraser, L. (1986). Effects of duration of eye contact on judgments of personality characteristics. *Journal of Social Psychology*, *126*(1), 71–78.

http://doi.org/10.1080/00224545.1986.9713572

Brown, B. (2012). *Cinematography Theory and Practice: Imagemaking for Cinematographers and Directors* (2nd ed.). Focal Press. http://doi.org/10.15713/ins.mmj.3

Bruce, M. D. (2014). Framing Arab Spring Conflict: A Visual Analysis of Coverage on Five Transnational Arab News Channels. *Journal of Middle East Media*, *10*(1), 1–27.

Bruce, M. D. (2015). An Analysis of Visual Structure on Five Transnational Arab News Channels. In J. V. Pavlik (Ed.), *Digital Technology and the Future of Broadcasting: Global Perspectives* (pp. 76–93). Routledge.

Brunner, E. A., & Deluca, K. M. (2016). The argumentative force of image networks: Greenpeace's panmedlated global detox campaign. *Argumentation and Advocacy*, *52*(Spring), 281–299.

Buck, R., & Ginsburg, B. (1997). Communicative genes and the evolution of empathy. In W. Ickes (Ed.), *Empathic accuracy* (pp. 17–43). New York: Guilford Press.

Calderwood, I. (2016, August 4). Egypt kills leader of ISIS terror cell behind the shooting down of Russian passenger jet which killed 224 people. *Daily Mail*. Retrieved from http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3724081/ISIS-leader-killed-Egyptian-military-Sinai.html

Call, J., Voorhees, G. A., & Whitlock, K. (2012). *Guns, Grenades, and Grunts: First-person Shooter Games* (2nd ed.). Bloomsbury Publishing USA.

Camp David Accords. (1978). Retrieved December 19, 2017, from http://www.acpr.org.il/publications/books/42-Zero-camp-david-accords.pdf

CAPMAS. (1996). *1996 Egypt Census*. Retrieved from http://www.capmas.gov.eg/Pages/ShowPDF.aspx?page_id=http://www.censusinfo.capmas.

gov.eg/

CAPMAS. (2017). *Egypt's Annual Census*. Retrieved from

http://www.capmas.gov.eg/Pages/StaticPages.aspx?page_id=5034

Carroll, J. M., & Russell, J. A. (1996). Do facial expressions signal specific emotions? Judging

emotion from the face in context. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *70*(2),

205–218. http://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.70.2.205

Carter, J. A., Maher, S., & Neumann, P. R. (2014). *#Greenbirds: Measuring Importance and

Influence in Syrian Foreign Fighter Networks*. London.

Castells, M. (2007). Communication, Power and Counter-power in the Network Society.

International Journal of Communication, *1*(1), 238–266.

http://doi.org/10.1177/0094306111425016k

Chavez, N., & Levenson, E. (2017, November 2). Terror suspect wanted to attack people on

Brooklyn Bridge, documents say. *CNN*. Retrieved from

http://www.cnn.com/2017/11/02/us/new-york-terror-attack/index.html

Chouliaraki, L. (2013). The humanity of war: iconic photojournalism of the battlefield, 1914–

2012. *Visual Communication*, *12*(3), 315–340. http://doi.org/10.1177/1470357213484422

Chouliaraki, L., & Kissas, A. (2018). The communication of horrorism: a typology of ISIS

online death videos. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, *35*(1), 24–39.

http://doi.org/10.1080/15295036.2017.1393096

Cian, L., Krishna, A., & Elder, R. S. (2014). This Logo Moves Me: Dynamic Imagery from

Static Images. *Journal of Marketing Research*, *51*(2), 184–197.

http://doi.org/10.1509/jmr.13.0023

Claiborne, W. (1982, April 25). Sinai Reverts to Egyptian Control Today. *The Washington Post*.

Retrieved from goo.gl/1PGxAq%0A

Cohen, J. (2001). Defining identification: A theoretical look at the identification of audiences with media characters. *Mass Communication & Society*, *4*(3), 245–264.

Cohen, J. (2009). Mediated Relationships and Media Effects: Parasocial Interaction and Identification. In R. L. Nabi & M. B. Oliver (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Media Processes and Effects2* (pp. 223–236). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Cookman, C. H. (2009). *American photojournalism: Motivations and meanings. Northwestern University Press*. Evantson, Illinois: Northeastern University Press.

CTC. (2018). *A Short Summary for the Media Mujahid on the Subject of Filming*. West Point, NY. Retrieved from https://ctc.usma.edu/pulling-back-the-curtain-an-inside-look-at-the-islamic-states-media-organization/

Cummins, R. G., Keene, J. R., & Nutting, B. (2012). The Impact of Subjective Camera in Sports on Arousal and Enjoyment. *Mass Communication and Society*, *15*, 37–41. http://doi.org/10.1080/15205436.2011.558805

Damanhoury, K. El. (2017). Understanding ISIS's Provincial Propaganda : A Visual Framing Analysis of Wilayat Sinai ' s Imagery in 2016. *Journal of Middle East Media*, *13*, 1–31.

Damanhoury, K. El, & Winkler, C. (2018). Picturing Law and Order: A Visual Framing Analysis of ISIS's Dabiq Magazine. *Arab Media & Society*, *Winter/Spr*(25), 1–25.

Damanhoury, K. El, Winkler, C. K., Kaczkowski, W., & Dicker, A. (2018). Examining the Military-Media Nexus in ISIS's Provincial Photography Campaign. *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict*, 1–20. http://doi.org/10.1080/17467586.2018.1432869

Damon, A., Balkiz, G., & Smith-Spark, L. (2017). Raqqa: US-backed forces declare "total liberation" of ISIS stronghold. *CNN*. Retrieved from

https://www.cnn.com/2017/10/20/middleeast/raqqa-syria-isis-total-liberation/index.html

Dauber, C. E. (2009). *YouTube War: Fighting in a world of cameras in every cell phone and photoshop on every computer*. Carlisle, Pennsylvania: Strategic Studies Institute.

Dearden, L. (2016, August 4). Abu Duaa al-Ansari: Leader of Isis' Sinai province killed in air strikes, Egyptian military says. *Independent*. Retrieved from https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/isis-leader-killed-air-strikes-bombed-egypt-military-sinai-province-wilayat-abu-duaa-doaa-al-ansari-a7172851.html

Debord, G. (2002). *The Society of the Spectacle*. (K. Knabb, Ed.).

Deif, E. (2018, February 9). 6 Military Operations Against Terrorism in 7 Years. *Masrawy*. Retrieved from http://www.masrawy.com/news/news_egypt/details/2018/2/9/1259852/6-عمليات-عسكرية-للقوات-المسلحة-ضد-الإرهاب-في-7-سنوات

Deluca, K. M. (2006). The Speed of Immanent Images: The Dangers of Reading Photogrphy. In D. S. Hope (Ed.), *Visual communication: Perception, rhetoric, and technology* (pp. 79–91).

Denisova, A., & Cairns, P. (2015). First Person vs. Third Person Perspective in Digital Games. *Proceedings of the 33rd Annual ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*, 145–148. http://doi.org/10.1145/2702123.2702256

Dentice, G. (2018). *The Geopolitics of Violent Extremism: The Case of Sinai*. Barcelona. Retrieved from http://www.iemed.org/publicacions-en/historic-de-publicacions/papersiemed-euromesco/36.-the-geopolitics-of-violent-extremism-the-case-of-sinai/image_view_fullscreen

DePaulo, D. M. (1992). Nonverbal behavior and self-presentation. *Psychological Bulletin*, *111*(2), 203.

Dragon, J. D. (2015). *Western Foreign Fighters in Syria: An Empirical Analysis of Recruitment and Mobilization Mechanisms*. Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA.

Egypt's Coptic Christians flee Sinai after deadly attacks. (2017, February 25). *BBC*. Retrieved

    from https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-39085285

Egypt's Information Portal. (2018). Geographic Location. Retrieved March 11, 2018, from

    http://www.eip.gov.eg/AboutEgypt/GeoInfo.aspx

Egypt scraps Israel gas supply deal. (2012, April 23). *BBC*. Retrieved from

    http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-17808954

Ekman, P. (1972). Universals and cultural differences in facial expressonality and social

    psychology. In J. K. Cole (Ed.), *Nebraska Symposium on Motivation* (pp. 25–59). Newbury

    Park, CA.

El-Kouny, N. (2013, April 25). Egypt's Sinai Peninsula: From liberation to neglect. *Ahram

    Online*. Retrieved from

    http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/70048/Egypt/Politics-/Egypts-Sinai-

    Peninsula-From-liberation-toneglect.aspx

Eleiba, A. (2011, August 26). In Sinai everything is possible: Egyptian army's Operation Eagle

    is open-ended. *Ahram Online*. Retrieved from http://english.ahram.org.eg/News/19747.aspx

Eleiba, A. (2013, May 2). Sinai: Atrophied development. *Ahram Online*. Retrieved from

    http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContentP/1/70604/Egypt/Sinai-Atrophied-

    development.aspx

Eleiba, A. (2017, October 18). Showdown in Sinai. *AhramOnline*. Retrieved from

    http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/279017/Egypt/Politics-/Showdown-in-

    Sinai.aspx

Entman, R. M. (1991). Framing U.S. Coverage of International News: Contrasts in Narratives of

    the KAL and Iran Air Incidents. *Journal of Communication*, *41*(4), 6–27.

http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1991.tb02328.x

Entman, R. M. (1993). Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm. *Journal of Communication*, *43*(4), 51–58. http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1993.tb01304.x

Ewing, L., Rhodes, G., & Pellicano, E. (2010). Have you got the look? gaze direction affects judgements of facial attractiveness. *Visual Cognition*, *18*(3), 321–330. http://doi.org/10.1080/13506280902965599

Fabe, M. (2014). *Closely watched films: an introduction to the art of narrative film technique*. University of California Press.

Fahmy, S. (2004). Picturing Afghan Women: A Content Analysis of AP Wire Photographs During the Taliban Regime and after the Fall of the Taliban Regime. *International Communication Gazette*, *66*(2), 91–112. http://doi.org/10.1177/0016549204041472

Fahmy, S. (2004). Picturing Afghan Women: A Content Analysis of AP Wire Photographs During the Taliban Regime and after the Fall of the Taliban Regime. *International Communication Gazette*, *66*(2), 91–112. http://doi.org/10.1177/0016549204041472

Fahmy, S. (2005). U.S. Photojournalists' and photo-editors' attitudes and perceptions: Visual coverage of 9/11 and the Afghan War. *Visual Communication Quarterly*, *12*(3/4), 146–163. http://doi.org/10.1207/s15551407vcq1201

Fahmy, S. (2007). "They Took It Down": Exploring Determinants of Visual Reporting in the Toppling of the Saddam Statue in National and International Newspapers. *Mass Communication & Society*, *10*(2), 143–170. http://doi.org/10.1080/15205430701265638

Fahmy, S. (2010). Contrasting visual frames of our times: A framing analysis of English- and Arabic-language press coverage of war and terrorism. *International Communication Gazette*, *72*(8), 695–717. http://doi.org/10.1177/1748048510380801

Fahmy, S., & Kim, D. (2008). Picturing the Iraq War: Constructing the Image of War in the British and US Press. *International Communication Gazette*, *70*(6), 443–462. http://doi.org/10.1177/1748048508096142

Fahmy, S., & Neumann, R. (2012). Shooting War Or Peace Photographs? An Examination of Newswires' Coverage of the Conflict in Gaza (2008-2009). *American Behavioral Scientist*, *56*(2), NP1-NP26. http://doi.org/10.1177/0002764211419355

Finnegan, C. A. (2015). *Making Photography Matter: A Viewer's History from the Civil War to the Great Depression*. University of Illinois Press.

Forgas, J. P., & East, R. (2008). How real is that smile? Mood effects on accepting or rejecting the veracity of emotional facial expressions. *Journal of Nonverbal Behavior*, *32*(3), 157–170.

Frampton, M., Fisher, A., & Prucha, N. (2017). *The New Netwar: Countering Extremism Online*. Retrieved from https://policyexchange.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/The-New-Netwar-2.pdf

Freedberg, D. (1989). *The Power of the Image: Studies in the History and Theory of Response*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Fridlung, A. J., Ekman, P., & Oster, H. (1987). Facial Expressions of Emotion: Review of the Literature, 1970-1983. In A. W. Siegman & S. Fieldstein (Eds.), *Nonverbal Behavior and Communication Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.* (pp. 143–224). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Friis, S. M. (2015). ' Beyond anything we have ever seen ': beheading videos and the visibility of violence in the war against ISIS. *International Affairs*, *91*(4), 725–746. http://doi.org/doi:10.1111/1468-2346.12341

Fursan Al-Balagh. (2012). Formation of the Mujahideen Shura Council in the Environs of

Jerusalem. Retrieved March 30, 2018, from https://archive.org/details/forsan_fr_majs-chora2

Gamson, W. A., & Modigliani, A. (1987). The changing culture of affirmative action. In R. G. Braungart & M. M. Braungart (Eds.), *Research in political sociology (Vol. 3)* (pp. 137–177). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

Gerhardsson, A., Högman, L., & Fischer, H. (2015). Viewing distance matter to perceived intensity of facial expressions. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *6*(July), 1–8. http://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2015.00944

Gibson, R., & Zillmann, D. (2000). Reading between the photographs: The influence of incidental pictorial information on issue perception. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, *77*(2), 355–366.

Gill, P., & Corner, E. (2015). Lone-actor terrorist use of the Internet and behavioural correlates. In L. Jarvis, S. Macdonald, & T. M. Chen (Eds.), *Terrorism Online: Politics, Law, Technology and Unconventional Violence* (pp. 35–53). London, UK: Routledge.

Gill, P., Corner, E., Conway, M., Thornton, A., Bloom, M., & Horgan, J. (2017). Terrorist Use of the Internet by the Numbers: Quantifying Behaviors, Patterns, and Processes. *Criminology & Public Policy*, *16*(1), 99–117. http://doi.org/10.1111/1745-9133.12249

Gill, P., Horgan, J., & Deckert, P. (2013). Bombing alone: Tracing the motivations and antecedent behaviors of lone-actor terrorists. *Journal of Forensic Sciences*, *59*(2), 425– 435. http://doi.org/10.1111/1556-4029.12312

Giovanni, J. Di. (2015, February 16). Simple Ideas to Counter Terrorism In France. *Newsweek*. Retrieved from http://www.newsweek.com/simple-ideas-counter-terrorism-france-307096

Glassner, M. I. (1974). The Bedouin of Southern Sinai under Israeli Administration. *Geographic*

Review, *64*(1), 31–60.

Gold, Z. (2013). *Sinai Security: Opportunities for Unlikely Cooperation Among Egypt, Israel and Hamas*. Washington, D.C. Retrieved from https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/22-sinai-hamas-egypt-israel-gold.pdf

Goldstein, C. S. (2009). *Caputring the German Eye: American Visual Propaganda in Occupied Germany*. London, UK: The University of Chicago Press.

Gomaa, M. (2018). *Main Directions for Terroristic Activity in Egypt in 2017*. Retrieved from http://acpss.ahram.org.eg/News/16514.aspx

Gorenberg, G. (2006). *The accidental empire: Israel and the birth of the settlements 1967-1977*. MacMillan.

Grbich, C. (2007). Grounded Theory. In *Qualitative Data Analysis: An introduction* (pp. 70–83). Sage Publications.

Green, L. (2015). *Advertising War: Pictorial Publicity, 1914-1918*. Manchester Metropolitan University. Retrieved from https://e-space.mmu.ac.uk/600404/1/Leanne Green PhD with corrections September 2015.pdf

Green, M. C., & Dill, K. E. (2013). Engaging with stories and characters: Learning, persuasion, and transportation into narrative worlds. In K. Dill (Ed.), *Oxford handbook of media psychology* (pp. 449–461). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Greenberg, J. (2012, June 18). Gunmen from Egypt's Sinai Peninsula attack Israeli workers, killing one. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from goo.gl/fj7HN9%0A

Greenwood, K., & Jenkins, J. (2013). Visual Framing of the Syrian Conflict in News and Public Affairs Magazines. *Journalism Studies*, *16*(2), 207–227. http://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2013.865969

Greenwood, N. (1997). *The Sinai: a physical geography*. University of Texas Press.

Greer, J. D., Hardin, M., & Homan, C. (2009). "Naturally" less exciting? Visual production of men's and women's track and field coverage during the 2004 Olympics. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, *53*(2), 173–189. http://doi.org/10.1080/08838150902907595

Griffin, M. (2004). Picturing America's "War on Terrorism" in Afghanistan and Iraq: Photographic motifs as news frames. *Journalism*, *5*(4), 381–402. http://doi.org/10.1177/1464884904044201

Griffin, M., & Lee, J. (1995). Picturing the Gulf War: Constructing an Image of War in Time, Newsweek, and U.S. News and World Report. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, *72*(4), 813–825.

Griffin, M., & Lee, J. (2002). Picturing the "new war": Newsmagazine images of conflict revisited. In *International Communication Association*. Seoul, South Korea.

GTD. (2017). ISIL Terrorism Incidents in 2016. Retrieved December 20, 2017, from goo.gl/9DDRGU%0A

GTD. (2018a). Data Collection Methodology. Retrieved May 26, 2018, from goo.gl/5iuVVb%0A

GTD. (2018b). ISIL Terrorism Incidents in 2017. Retrieved August 1, 2018, from https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/Results.aspx?expanded=no&casualties_type=b&casualties_max=&start_year=2017&start_month=1&start_day=1&end_year=2017&end_month=12&end_day=31&dtp2=all&success=yes&country=95%2C200&perpetrator=40151&ob=GTDID&od=desc&page=1

GWUPOE. (2017). *Telegram Tracker by the Program on Extremism*. Washington, D.C.

Retrieved from https://extremism.gwu.edu/isis-online-infographics

Hafez, M., & Mullins, C. (2015). The radicalization puzzle: a theoretical synthesis of empirical approaches to homegrown extremism. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, *38*, 958–975. http://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2015.1051375

Hagopian, P. (2006). Vietnam War Photography as a Locus of Memory. In A. Kuhn & K. E. McAllister (Eds.), *Locating Memory: Photographic Acts* (pp. 201–222). New York and Oxford: Berghabn Books.

Hall, E. T. (1966). *The Hidden Dimension*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.

Hall, S. (1997). *Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices*. London: Routledge.

Halverson, J., Corman, S., & Goodall, H. L. (2011). *Master narratives of Islamist extremism*. Springer.

Han, L. (2009). An Imagined Global Chinese Community: Television and Diaspora in Phoenix TV Documentary Chinatown. In *International Communication Association*.

Hardin, M., Walsdorf, S. L., Walsdorf, K., & Hardin, B. (2002). The framing of sexual difference in SI for Kids editorial photos. *Mass Communication and Society*, *5*(3), 341–359.

Hassan, M. (2015, November 10). Sharm el-Sheikh is a crucial part of Egypt's economy – but it will bounce back from the Sinai crash. *The Conversation*. Retrieved from http://theconversation.com/sharm-el-sheikh-is-a-crucial-part-of-egypts-economy-but-it-will-bounce-back-from-the-sinai-crash-50429

Hemsley, G. D., & Doob, A. N. (1978). The Effect of Looking Behavior on Perceptions of a Communicator's Credibility. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, *8*(2), 136–142.

Hess, U., Beaupré, M., & Cheung, N. (2002). Who to whom and why – cultural differences and

similarities in the function of smiles Who to whom and why – cultural differences and similarities in the function. In A. Millicent (Ed.), *An empirical reflection on the Smile* (pp. 187–210). Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press.

Hess, U., Blairy, S., & Kleck, R. E. (2000). The influence of expression intensity, gender, and ethnicity on judgments of dominance and affiliation. *Journal of Nonverbal Behavior*, *24*(4), 265–283. http://doi.org/10.1023/A:1006623213355

Heyman, S. (2015, July 29). Photos, Photos Everywhere. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from https://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/23/arts/international/photos-photos-everywhere.html

Higazy, M. (2017, September 11). 18 Killed and 6 Injured from the Police in Wilayat Sinai's Attack against a Security Convoy West of Al-Arish. *Mada Masr*. Retrieved from https://www.madamasr.com/ar/2017/09/11/news/u/18-استهداف-إثر-الشرطة-من-مصابين-6-و-قتيلًا/

Higazy, M. (2017a, December 20). Update: Sinai Province claims responsibility for Arish airport attack. *Mada Masr*. Retrieved from https://www.madamasr.com/en/2017/12/20/news/u/at-least-1-officer-5-militants-killed-in-clashes-outside-arish-airport-following-attack/

Higazy, M. (2017b, December 28). Military commander of Bir al-Abd, 4 others killed in Sinai. *Mada Masr*. Retrieved from https://madamasr.com/en/2017/12/28/news/u/military-commander-of-bir-al-abd-4-others-killed-in-sinai/

Himdan, G. (1993). *Sinai: In The Strategy, Politics, and Geography*. Cairo: Madbouly Library.

Hjarvard, S. (2000). Proximity: the name of the ratings game. *Nordicom Review*, (21), 63–81.

Holbrook, D. (2017). The Spread of its Message: Studying the Prominence of al-Qaida Materials in UK Terrorism Investigations. *Perspec*, *11*(6), 89–100.

Holiday, S., Lewis, M. J., & Labaugh, J. L. (2015). Are you Talking to Me? The Socio--Political Visual Rhetoric of the Syrian Presidency's Instagram Account. *Southwestern Mass*

Communication Journal, *30*(2), 1–28.

Howard, P. N., & Hussain, M. M. (2011). The Role of Digital Media. *Journal of Democracy*, *22*(3), 35–48. http://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2011.0041

Huang, W., Olson, J. S., & Olson, G. M. (2002). Camera angle affects dominance in video-mediated communication. *Short Talk: Communication Media*, 716–717. http://doi.org/10.1145/506558.506562

Huang, Y., & Fahmy, S. (2011). Same Events, Two Stories: Comparing the Photographic Coverage of the 2008 Anti-China/Olympics Demonstrations in Chinese and US Newspapers. *International Communication Gazette*, *73*(8), 732–752. http://doi.org/10.1177/1748048511420091

Huang, Y., & Fahmy, S. (2013). Picturing a Journey of Protest or a Journey of Harmony? Comparing the Visual Framing of the 2008 Olympic Torch Relay in the US Versus the Chinese Press. *Media, War & Conflict*, *6*(3), 191–206. http://doi.org/10.1177/1750635213495601

Human Rights Watch. (2005). *Egypt: Mass Arrests and Torture in Sinai* (Vol. 17). Retrieved from https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/egypt0205.pdf

Human Rights Watch. (2006). *Egypt: Events of 2005*. Retrieved from https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2006/country-chapters/egypt

Human Rights Watch. (2015). *Egypt: Thousands Evicted in Sinai Demolitions: In Insurgent Fight, Border Families Left to Fend for Themselves*. Retrieved from https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/09/22/egypt-thousands-evicted-sinai-demolitions

Human Rights Watch. (2018). *Egypt: Army Intensifies Sinai Home Demolitions*. Retrieved from https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/05/22/egypt-army-intensifies-sinai-home-demolitions

Hussein, F. (1996). *Our Unknown People in Sinai*. Cairo: Family Library.

Hussein, F. (2010). *The Holy Sinai Peninsula*.

ICG. (2007). *Egypt's Sinai Question*. Retrieved from https://d2071andvip0wj.cloudfront.net/61-egypt-s-sinai-question.pdf

Ingram, H. (2016). *A Brief History of Propaganda During Conflict: Lessons for Counter-Terrorism Strategic Communications*. *International Centre for Counter-Terrorism*. The Hague. http://doi.org/10.19165/2016.1.06

Intel Center. (2005). *Evolution of Jihadi video*. Retrieved from https://intelcenter.com/EJV-PUB-v1-0.pdf

Iraqi PM Media Office. (2017a). H.E. Supreme Commander of the armed forces Dr.Haider Al-Abadi: from here from Old Mosul we announced the Iraqi Great Victory. Retrieved February 14, 2018, from http://www.pmo.iq/pme/press2017en/10-7-20171en.htm

Iraqi PM Media Office. (2017b). Victory Speech. Retrieved December 17, 2017, from https://www.facebook.com/IraqPMMediaOffice/posts/805121279672569

Islamic State militants return to Syria's ancient Palmyra ruins. (2016, December 11). *EFE*. Retrieved from https://www.efe.com/efe/english/portada/islamic-state-militants-return-to-syria-s-ancient-palmyra-ruins/50000260-3121663

Islamic Union for the Afghan Mujahideen. (1985, December). Al-Bunyan Al-Marsus Issue 4. Retrieved from https://archive.org/details/AlBunyanAlMarsus_Magazine_85-90

Israeli drone strike kills suspected Islamic militants in Egypt. (2013, August 9). *The Guardian*. Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/aug/09/israeli-drone-strike-suspected-militants-egypt

Jaguaribe, B., & Lissovsky, M. (2009). The Visible and the Invisibles: Photography and Social

Imaginaries in Brazil. *Public Culture*, *21*(1), 175–209.

Jansz, J., & Tanis, M. (2007). Appeal of Playing Online First Person Shooter Games. *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, *10*(1), 133–136. http://doi.org/10.1089/cpb.2006.9981

Jewitt, C., & Oyama, R. (2008). Visual Meaning: a Social Semiotic Approach. In T. van Leeuwen & C. Jewitt (Eds.), *Handbook of Visual Analysis* (7th ed., Vol. 1, pp. 134–156). London: Sage Publications Ltd. http://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107415324.004

Jolly, M. (2003). Composite Propaganda Photographs during the First World War. *History of Photography*, *27*(2), 154–165. http://doi.org/10.1080/03087298.2003.10443266

Jones, L. G. (2012). *The Power of Oratory in the Medieval Muslim World*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press.

Joscelyn, T. (2015, November 25). Graphic promotes the Islamic State's prolific media machine. *Long War Journal*. Retrieved from https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2015/11/graphic-promotes-islamic-states-prolific-media-machine.php

JTIC. (2018). Jane's Terrorism and Insurgency Centre: Expertise and Methodology. Retrieved May 26, 2018, from goo.gl/GYd27v%0A

Kamel, M. (2015, August 17). The Full Transcript of the Anti-Terrorism Law. *Al-Masry Al-Youm*. Retrieved from http://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/793978

Kampf, Z. (2006). Blood on their hands: The story of a photograph in the Israeli national discourse*. *Semiotica*, *162*(1), 263–285.

Kang, I., & Heo, K. (2006). Framing the enemy: a proxemics analysis of US news magazine cover photographs. In *International Communication Association* (pp. 1–18). Dresden, Germany.

Katz, R. (2014, September 16). The State Department's Twitter War With ISIS Is Embarrassing. *Time*. Retrieved from http://time.com/3387065/isis-twitter-war-state-department/

Kazecki, J., & Lieblang, J. (2009). Regression versus Progression: Fundamental Differences in German and American Posters of the First World War. In J. Pearl (Ed.), *Picture This: World War I Posters and Visual Culture* (pp. 111–144). University of Nebraska Press.

Keltner, D., & Bonannno, G. A. (1997). A study of laughter and dissociation: distinct correlates of laughter and smiling during bereavement. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *73*(4), 687.

Kemp, S. (2017). *Digital in 2017: Global Overview*. Retrieved from https://wearesocial.com/special-reports/digital-in-2017-global-overview

Kidnappings lead to heightened tensions between militants and North Sinai tribes. (2017, April 24). *Mada Masr*. Retrieved from https://www.madamasr.com/en/2017/04/24/news/u/kidnappings-lead-to-heightened-tensions-between-militants-and-north-sinai-tribes/?platform=hootsuite

King, C., & Lester, P. M. (2005). Photographic coverage during the Persian Gulf and Iraqi wars in three US newspapers. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, *82*(3), 623–637.

Knobloch, S., Hastall, M., Zillmann, D., & Callison, C. (2003). Imagery Effects on the Selective Reading of Internet Newsmagazines. *Communication Research*, *30*(February), 3–29. http://doi.org/10.1177/0093650202239023

Knutson, B. (1996). Facial expressions of emotion influence interpersonal trait inferences. *Journal of Nonverbal Behavior*, *20*, 165–182.

Koga-Browes, S. (2013). Social distance portrayed: Television news in Japan and the UK. *Visual Communication*, *12*(1), 71–96. http://doi.org/10.1177/1470357212462323

Kraft, R. N. (1986). The influence of camera angle on comprehension and retention of pictorial events. *Memory & Cognition*, *15*(4), 291–307. http://doi.org/10.3758/BF03197032

Kraidy, M. (2017). The projectilic image: Islamic State's digital visual warfare and global networked affect. *Media, Culture & Society*. http://doi.org/0163443717725575

Kress, G., & van Leeuwen, T. (1996). *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design* (Second Edi). London: Rouletdge.

Kugel, J. L. (2008). Some unanticipated consequences of the Sinai revelation: A religion of laws. In The Significance of Sinai (pp. 1-14). Brill. Chicago. In G. J. Brooke, H. Najman, & L. T. Stuckenbruck (Eds.), *The Significance of Sinai: Traditions About Sinai and Divine Revelation in Judaism and Christianity* (pp. 1–14). Brill Academic Publishers.

Lampinen, J. M., Neuschatz, J. S., & Cling, A. D. (2012). *The psychology of eyewitness identification*. Psychology Press.

Larsen, R. J., & Shackelford, T. K. (1996). Gaze avoidance: Personality and social judgments of people who avoid direct face-to-face contact. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *21*(6), 907–917. http://doi.org/10.1016/S0191-8869(96)00148-1

Lesaca, J. (2015, September 24). On social media, ISIS uses modern cultural images to spread anti-modern values. *Brookings Institution TechTank Blog*, pp. 1–5. Retrieved from http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/techtank/posts/2015/09/24-isis-social-media-engagement

Levenson, R. W., Ekman, P., & Friesen, W. (1990). Voluntary facial action generates emotion-specific autonomic nervous system activity. *Psychophysiology*, *27*, 363–384.

Lief, L. (1982, April 22). Egypt Puts Stamp on Sinai. *The Christian Science Monitor*. Retrieved from https://www.csmonitor.com/1982/0422/042255.html

Lombard, M., & Ditton, T. (1997). At the heart of it all: The concept of presence. *Journal of*

Computer Mediated Communication, *3*(2).

Lombard, M., Reich, R., Grabe, M., Bracken, C., & Ditton, T. (2000). Presence and television: The Role of Screen Size. *Human Communication Research*, *26*(1), 75–98. http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2958.2000.tb00750.x

Mahmoud, K. (2005, July 27). Group related to Zarqawi claims responsibility of Sharm El Sheikh bombings. *Al-Sharq Al-Awsat*. Cairo. Retrieved from http://archive.aawsat.com/details.asp?article=314450&issueno=9738#.WDpTJdUrLIV

Mandell, L. M., & Shaw, D. L. (1973). Judging people in the news-unconsciously: Effect of camera angle and bodily activity. *Journal of Broadcasting*, *17*, 353–362.

Marroushi, N. (2013, October 7). Dark Clouds Over the Sinai: The military's brutal North Sinai campaign is targeting civilians and militants alike. *Slate*. North Sinai. Retrieved from http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/foreigners/2013/10/abdel_fattah_al_sisi_s _sinai_campaign_egypt_s_military_is_targeting_civilians.html

Martin, J. M. (2011). *The information battlefield: Al-Qaeda's use of advanced media technologies for framed messaging*. University of Nevada. Retrieved from goo.gl/2hHCX5%0A

Martyrdom of 3 including a Military Officer and the Injury of 19 in an attack by masked militants raising Black Flags on Al-Arish Security Facility. (2011, July 29). *Al-Badil*. Retrieved from https://elbadil.com/2011/07/29/26158/

McCain, T. a., Chilberg, J., & Wakshlag, J. (1977). The effect of camera angle on source credibility and attraction. *Journal of Broadcasting*, *21*(1), 35–46. http://doi.org/10.1080/08838157709363815

McCants, W. (2015). *The ISIS Apocalypse: The History, Strategy, and Doomsday Vision of the*

Islamic State. Macmillan.

McCauley, T. (2015). The war of ideas on the Internet: An asymmetric conflict in which the strong become weak. *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict*, *8*(1), 79–90.

McClancy, K. (2013). The iconography of violence: Television, Vietnam, and the soldier hero. *Film & History: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, *43(2)*(2), 50–66.

McGregor, A. (2016). *Why are Egypt's Counter-Terrorism Efforts Failing in the Sinai Peninsula. Terrorism Monitor: In-depth analysis of the War on Terror* (Vol. XIV). Retrieved from https://jamestown.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/TM_Dec_15_2016.pdf

Mcluhan, M. (1969). The Playboy Interview: Marshall McLuhan. *Playboy*, (March 1969), 1–23. http://doi.org/10.1017/S0008423900025002

Melki, J., & El-Masri, A. (2016). The Paris Attacks: Terror and Recruitment. *The Carter Center*, 28–33. Retrieved from https://www.cartercenter.org/resources/pdfs/peace/conflict_resolution/countering-isis/counteringdaeshpropaganda-feb2016.pdf#page=30

Melki, J., & Jabado, M. (2016). Mediated Public Diplomacy of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria : The Synergistic Use of Terrorism , Social Media and Branding. *Media and Communication*, *4*(2), 92–103. http://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v4i2.432

Messaris, P., & Abraham, L. (2001). The Role of Images in Framing News Stories. In S. D. Reese, O. H. Gandy, & A. E. Grant (Eds.), *Framing public life: Perspectives on media and our understanding of the social world* (pp. 215–226). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Meyers-Levy, J., & Peracchio, L. A. (1992). Getting an Angle in Advertising: The Effect of Camera Angle on Product Evaluations. *Journal of Marketing Research*, *29*(4), 454.

http://doi.org/10.2307/3172711

Mi, J. (2005). The Visual Imagined Communities: Media State, Virtual Citizenship and Television in *Heshang* (*River Elegy*). *Quarterly Review of Film and Video*, 22(4), 327–340. http://doi.org/10.1080/10509200590475805

Mikhail, G. (2017, May 15). Sinai tribes take up arms against IS. *Al-Monitor*. Retrieved from https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/05/egypt-sinai-tribes-weapons-fight-islamic-state.html

Military News Conference to Announce the Results of the Sinai Operation. (2012). Retrieved May 8, 2018, from goo.gl/PThLvF%0A

Miller, E. (2014, January 20). Israel allowing Egypt army to operate in north Sinai. *Times of Israel*. Retrieved from https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-allowing-egypt-army-presence-in-north-sinai/

Milton, D. (2016). *Communication Breakdown: Unraveling the Islamic State's Media Efforts*. *Combatting Terrorism Center at West Point*. Retrieved from https://www.ctc.usma.edu/v2/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/ISMedia_Online.pdf

Milton, D. (2018). *Pulling Back the Curtain: An Inside Look at the Islamic State's Media Organization*. Retrieved from https://ctc.usma.edu/app/uploads/2018/08/Pulling-Back-the-Curtain.pdf

Mitchell, T. (1994). The Pictorial Turn. In *Picture Theory: essays on verbal and visual representation* (pp. 11–33). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Mohamed, D. (2016, November 9). The Story of "Al-Azazma" Egyptian Tribe and Its Members Who Are Deprived of the Citizenship. *Raseef 22*. Retrieved from https://raseef22.com/life/2016/11/08/؟أيهما-أخطر،-داعش-أم-الاحتباس-الحراري/

Mokhtar, H. (2016, August 12). The Ministry Cabinet approves the modification of the curfew duration in some areas of Sinai. *Youm 7*. Retrieved from goo.gl/Z4tKt1%0A

Morrow, A., & Al-Omrani, K. M. (2007, June 18). Egypt: Bedouin Take On the Govt. *Inter Press Service*. Cairo. Retrieved from http://www.ipsnews.net/2007/06/egypt-bedouin-take-on-the-govt/

Mubashir, A., & Tawfik, I. (1978). *Sinai: The Location and History*. Dar al-Maaref.

Mujahideen Services Burreau. (1988, March). Al-Jihad Issue 40. Retrieved from https://archive.org/details/AlJihad040/page/n0

Neal, T. M. S., & Brodsky, S. L. (2008). Expert witness credibility as a function of eye contact behavior and gender. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, *35*(12), 1515–1526. http://doi.org/10.1177/0093854808325405

Neuendorf, K. A. (2002). *The content analysis guidebook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Neumann, R., & Fahmy, S. (2012). Analyzing the Spell of War : A War / Peace Framing Analysis of the 2009 Visual Coverage of the Sri Lankan Civil War in Western Newswires. *Mass Comunication and Society*, *15*(2), 169–200. http://doi.org/10.1080/15205436.2011.583192

Newhagen, J. E., & Reeves, B. (1992). The evening's bad news: Effects of compelling negative television news images on memory. *Journal of Communication*, *42*(2), 25–41.

Nichols, M. (2013, July 23). U.N. says Egypt crackdown closes 80 percent of Gaza tunnels. *Reuters*. Retrieved from https://www.reuters.com/article/us-palestinians-egypt-tunnels-un/u-n-says-egypt-crackdown-closes-80-percent-of-gaza-tunnels-idUSBRE96M10J20130723?irpc=932

Nitsche, M. (2008). *Video game spaces: image, play, and structure in 3D worlds*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press. http://doi.org/10.15713/ins.mmj.3

Noble, A. (2010). Recognizing Historical Injustice through Photography: Mexico 1968. *Theory, Culture & Society*, *27*(7–8), 184–213. http://doi.org/10.1177/0263276410383714

O'Neil, A. (2015, March 30). The 13th Juror: The radicalization of Dzhokhar Tsarnaev. *CNN*. Boston, MA. Retrieved from http://www.cnn.com/2015/03/27/us/tsarnaev-13th-juror-jahar-radicalization/index.html

Official Page of Armed Forces Spokesman. (2016a). Egyptian Military Spokesman Statement on Al-Ansari. Retrieved April 27, 2018, from https://www.facebook.com/EgyArmySpox/posts/872570456207271

Official Page of Armed Forces Spokesman. (2016b). Egyptian Military Statement on 2nd Phase of Martyr's Right Operation. Retrieved May 29, 2018, from https://www.facebook.com/EgyArmySpox/photos/a.219625808168409/763700090427642/?type=3

Official Page of Armed Forces Spokesman. (2016c). Egyptian Military Statement on 3rd Phase of Martyr's Right. Retrieved May 28, 2018, from https://www.facebook.com/EgyArmySpox/posts/836040606526923

Official Page of Armed Forces Spokesman. (2016d). Egyptian Military Statement on Al-Sabil Checkpoint Attack. Retrieved May 23, 2018, from https://www.facebook.com/EgyArmySpox/posts/942786839185632

Official Page of Armed Forces Spokesman. (2016e). Egyptian Military Statement on Checkpoint Attack South of Beer Al-Abd. Retrieved May 23, 2018, from https://www.facebook.com/EgyArmySpox/posts/914914448639538

Official Page of Armed Forces Spokesman. (2016f). Egyptian Military Statement on the killing

of 16 terrorists in North Sinai. Retrieved August 28, 2018, from

https://www.facebook.com/EgyArmySpox/posts/838588312938819

Official Page of Armed Forces Spokesman. (2016g). Egyptian Military Statement on the

Ministers of Defense and Interior's Visit to Sinai. Retrieved August 28, 2018, from

https://m.facebook.com/EgyArmySpox/posts/779002165564101

Official Page of Armed Forces Spokesman. (2017a). Egyptian Military Spokesman Statement on

Checkpoint Attack Near Rafah. Retrieved April 29, 2018, from

https://www.facebook.com/EgyArmySpox/posts/1097965677001080

Official Page of Armed Forces Spokesman. (2017b). Egyptian Military Statement on a Second

Army Operation in North Sinai. Retrieved August 28, 2018, from

https://www.facebook.com/EgyArmySpox/posts/1048526451945003

Official Page of Armed Forces Spokesman. (2017c). Egyptian Military Statement on Abu Anas

Al-Ansari's Death. Retrieved May 26, 2018, from

https://m.facebook.com/EgyArmySpox/posts/1030156730448642

Official Page of Armed Forces Spokesman. (2017d). Egyptian Military Statement on Al-Arish

Checkpoint Attack.

Official Page of Armed Forces Spokesman. (2017e). Egyptian Military Statement on March 18

Airstrikes.

Official Page of Armed Forces Spokesman. (2017f). Egyptian Military Statement on Sheikh

Zuwayid Checkpoint Attack. Retrieved May 23, 2018, from

https://www.facebook.com/EgyArmySpox/videos/1158932220904425/

Official Page of Armed Forces Spokesman. (2017g). Egyptian Military Statement on the

Martyrdom of Ahmed Abdelhamid Al-Dardiry. Retrieved August 28, 2018, from

https://www.youm7.com/story/2017/3/22/المتحدث-العسكرى-ينشر-قصة-استشهاد-العقيد-أركان-حرب-أحمد-عبد/

3156120/عبد

Official Page of Armed Forces Spokesman. (2017h). Egyptian Military Statement on Third

Army's Checkpoints in Sinai. Retrieved August 18, 2018, from

https://www.facebook.com/EgyArmySpox/posts/1175445129253134

Official Page of Armed Forces Spokesman. (2017i). Egyptian Military Statement on Third

Army's Operations in Central Sinai. Retrieved August 18, 2018, from

https://www.facebook.com/EgyArmySpox/posts/1023359544461694

Official Page of Armed Forces Spokesman. (2017j). Egyptian Military Statement on Third

Army's Sinai Operations. Retrieved August 18, 2018, from

https://www.facebook.com/EgyArmySpox/posts/1138430516287929

Official Page of Ministry of Interior. (2016). Egyptian Ministry of Interior Statement on Al-Safa

Checkpoint Attack. Retrieved May 23, 2018, from

https://www.facebook.com/MoiEgy/posts/1052407651469564

Official Source: The Assassination of Sheikh Khalaf Al-Menei's Son at the hands of Ansar Bayt

Al-Maqdis. (2013, October 29). *Masrawy*. North Sinai. Retrieved from

https://goo.gl/KC7Jqb

Ohl, J. J. (2015). Nothing to see or fear: Light war and the boring visual rhetoric of U.S. drone

imagery. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, *101*(4), 612–632.

http://doi.org/10.1080/00335630.2015.1128115

Öhman, A., & Dimberg, U. (1978). Facial expressions as conditioned stimuli for electrodermal

responses: A case of "preparedness"? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*,

36(11), 1251–1258. http://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.36.11.1251

Okail, N. (2016, May 13). ISIS's Unprecedented Campaign Promoting Sinai. *Huffington Post*. Retrieved from https://www.huffingtonpost.com/nancy-okail/isis-unprecedented-campain-promoting-sinai_b_9928934.html

Ortiz, M. J., & Moya, Jo. a. (2015). The action cam phenomenon: a new trend in audiovisual production. *Communication & Society*, *28*(3), 51–64. http://doi.org/10.15581/003.28.3.51-64

Osman, M. (2017, September 11). 28+ Powerful Facebook Stats Your Brand Can't Ignore in 2017. *SproutSocial*. Retrieved from https://sproutsocial.com/insights/facebook-stats-for-marketers/

Palanica, A., & Itier, R. J. (2012). Attention Capture by Direct Gaze is Robust to Context and Task Demands. *Journal of Nonverbal Behavior*, *36*(2), 123–134. http://doi.org/10.1007/s10919-011-0128-z

Parry, K. (2010). A Visual Framing Analsis of British Press Photography Druing the 2006 Israel-Lebanon Conflict. *Media, War & Conflict*, *3*(1), 67–85.

Parry, K. (2011). Images of liberation? Visual framing, humanitarianism and British press photography during the 2003 Iraq invasion. *Media, Culture & Society*, *33*(8), 1185–1201. http://doi.org/10.1177/0163443711418274

Patridge, L. (2005). *A visual and textual framing analysis of terrorism: The case of Beslan, Russia*. Iowa: Iowa State University.

PeaceTech Lab. (2018). Terrorist Attacks. Retrieved May 26, 2018, from https://www.peacetechlab.org/terrorist-incidents-map/

Pelham, N. (2012). *Sinai: The Buffer Erodes*. London. Retrieved from https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/public/Research/Middle

East/pr0912pelham.pdf

Pentagon. (2017a, July 27). Coalition Announces Death of ISIS Leaders. *CENTCOM News Releases*. Retrieved from https://www.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/1259978/coalition-announces-death-of-isis-leaders/

Pentagon. (2017b, November 14). Coalition removes ISIS leaders from battlefield. *Operation Inherent Resolve News Releases*. Retrieved from http://www.inherentresolve.mil/News/News-Releases/News-Article-View/Article/1371550/coalition-removes-isis-leaders-from-battlefield/

Perlmutter, D. D. (2016). "Look, Look; See the Glorious Fighters!": The Visual Persuasion of ISIS and the Fanboys of Terror. In The Carter Center (Ed.), *Countering Daesh Propaganda: Action-Oriented Research for Practical Policy Outcomes* (pp. 9–14). Atlanta, GA. Retrieved from https://www.cartercenter.org/resources/pdfs/peace/conflict_resolution/countering-isis/counteringdaeshpropaganda-feb2016.pdf#page=11

Pew Research Center. (2017, January 12). Social Media Fact Sheet. Retrieved from http://www.pewinternet.org/fact-sheet/social-media/

Pfau, M., Haigh, M. M., Shannon, T., Tones, T., Mercurio, D., Williams, R., … Melendez, J. (2008). The influence of television news depictions of the images of war on viewers. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, *52*(2), 303–322. http://doi.org/10.1080/08838150801992128

Powers, S., & Armstrong, M. (2014). Conceptualizing Radicalization in a Market for Loyalties. In C. Winkler & C. Dauber (Eds.), *Visual propaganda and extremism in the online environment* (pp. 165–192). Carlisle Barracks, PA: United States Army War College Press.

Powers, S., & O'Loughlin, B. (2015). The Syrian data glut: Rethinking the role of information in conflict. *Media, War & Conflict*, *8*(2), 172–180. http://doi.org/10.1177/1750635215584286

Proverbio, A. M., Riva, F., & Zani, A. (2009). Observation of static pictures of dynamic actions enhances the activity of movement-related brain areas. *PLoS ONE*, *4*(5). http://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0005389

Rabin, N. M. (2012). Picturing the mix: Visual and linguistic representations in kip fulbeck's part asian•100% hapa. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, *29*(5), 387–403. http://doi.org/10.1080/15295036.2012.691610

Ramadan, B. (2014, August 10). The 6 Most Notable Bombings in Al-Adli's Era. *Al-Masry Al-Youm*. Retrieved from https://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/498953

Roberts, A. (1990). Prolonged Military Occupation: The Israeli-Occupied Territories Since 1967. *The American Journal of International Law*, *84*(1), 44–103.

Roberts, H. (2014, October 8). Photography. *International Encyclopedia of the First World War*.

Rodriguez, L., & Dimitrova, D. V. (2011). The levels of visual framing. *Journal of Visual Literacy*, *30*(1), 48–65.

Rose, G. (2001). *Visual methodologies: An introduction to the interpretation of visual methods*. London: Sage Publications. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.lisr.2008.09.001

Russian MoD. (2017). Statement of the Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces – First Deputy Defence Minister General of the Army Valery Gerasimov. Retrieved December 17, 2017, from https://www.facebook.com/mod.mil.rus/posts/2016575361918543

Sabry, M. (2013, July 5). Egypt's North Sinai Under Curfew Following Deadly Clashes. *Al-Monitor*. Cairo. Retrieved from http://www.al-

monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/07/egyptian-sinai-witnesses-deadly-violence-curfew-imposed.html

Sabry, M. (2015). *Sinai: Egypt's Linchpin, Gaza's Lifeline, Israel's Nightmare*. Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press.

Sabry, M. (2016). Local Popular Support for the Islamic State. In K. Bauer (Ed.), *Beyond Syria and Iraq: Examining Islamic State Provinces* (pp. 66–70). The Washington Institute For Near East Policy. Retrieved from

http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/uploads/Documents/pubs/PolicyFocus149_Bauer.pdf

Said, O. (2017, December 1). The tales of Palestinian fighters in Sinai. *Mada Masr*. Retrieved from https://www.madamasr.com/en/2017/12/01/feature/politics/the-tales-of-palestinian-fighters-in-sinai/

Said, O., & Naguib, A. (2018, April 1). Counterterrorism in Sisi's 1st term: Progress despite clinging to tradition. *Mada Masr*, pp. 1–13. Retrieved from

https://www.madamasr.com/en/2018/04/01/feature/politics/counterterrorism-in-sisis-1st-term-progress-despite-clinging-to-tradition/

Sakr, T. (2017, January 9). Update: 9 dead after 2 deadly attacks shake North Sinai city of Al-Arish. *Daily News Egypt*. Retrieved from

https://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2017/01/09/609315/

Salah, K., & Talaat, S. (2011, June 14). General Mansour Al-Essawi in the Boldest Interview to Al-Youm Al-Sabea: It's Impossible that Al-Adli Would Order the Opening of Jails Because It's Foolish and if he did No One Would Have Done It. *Youm 7*. Retrieved from

https://www.youm7.com/story/2011/6/14/-من-«حوار-أجرأ-لـ«اليوم-السابع»-من-العيسوى-فى-اللواء-منصور-المستحيل/435024

Saleem, M., & Anderson, C. a. (2012). Arabs as Terrorists: Effects of Stereotypes Within

Violent Contexts on Attitudes, Perceptions, and Affect. *Psychology of Violence*, *3*(1), 84–99. http://doi.org/10.1037/a0030038

Salem, A. (2011, March 10). Mother of the Martyr Mohamed Atef: Mohamed was the only one to remember me on Mother's Day. *Youm 7*. Retrieved from https://www.youm7.com/story/2011/3/10/-أم-الشهيد-محمد-عاطف-محمد-الوحيد-الذى-كان-يتذكرنى-فى/366854

Salem, A., Reid, E., & Chen, H. (2008). Multimedia Content Coding and Analysis: Unraveling the Content of *Jihadi* Extremist Groups' Videos. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, *31*(7), 605–626. http://doi.org/10.1080/10576100802144072

Sammartino, J., & Palmer, S. E. (2012). Aesthetic issues in spatial composition: Effects of vertical position and perspective on framing single objects. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Perception and Performance*, *38*(4), 865–879. http://doi.org/10.1037/a0027736

Sanchez, R., McLaughlin, E. C., & Blau, M. (2016, October 17). ISIS in the crosshairs: Battle for Mosul begins. *BBC*. Retrieved from https://www.cnn.com/2016/10/16/middleeast/mosul-isis-operation-begins-iraq/index.html

Saudi's Bin Salman talks about megacity project in South Sinai. (2018, March 6). *AhramOnline*. Retrieved from http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/292235/Egypt/Politics-/Saudis-Bin-Salman-talks-about-megacity-project-in-.aspx

Schmidt, K. L., & Cohn, J. F. (2001). Human Facial Expressions as Adaptations:Evolutionary Questions in Facial Expression Research. *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*, (33), 3–24. http://doi.org/10.1021/nl061786n.Core-Shell

Senju, A., Hasegawa, T., & Tojo, Y. (2005). Does perceived direct gaze boost detection in adults and children with and without autism? The stare-in-the-crowd effect revisited. *Visual*

Cognition, *12*, 1474–1496.

Seo, H. (2014). Visual Propaganda in the Age of Social Media: An Empirical Analysis of Twitter Images During the 2012 Israeli–Hamas Conflict. *Visual Communication Quarterly*, *21*(June), 150–161. http://doi.org/10.1080/15551393.2014.955501

Seo, H., & Ebrahim, H. (2016). Visual propaganda on Facebook: A comparative analysis of Syrian conflicts. *Media, War, & Conflict*, *August*, 1–25. http://doi.org/10.1177/1750635216661648

Shams El-Din, M. (2017, April 29). Province of Sinai claims responsibility for attack targeting Tarabin tribesmen. *Mada Masr*. Retrieved from https://www.madamasr.com/en/2017/04/29/feature/politics/province-of-sinai-claims-responsibility-for-attack-targeting-tarabin-tribesmen/

Sharon, A., & Chanoff, D. (2002). *Warrior: an autobiography*. Simon and Schuster.

Shilad, J. (2017, April 11). Egypt's state of emergency may act to further silence press. *Committee to Protect Journalists*. Retrieved from https://cpj.org/blog/2017/04/egypts-state-of-emergency-may-act-to-further-silen.php

Shin, J.-H., Fahmy, S., & Lewis, R. A. (2012). Katrina Study Shows Human Interest Photos Predonninant. *Newspaper Research Journal*, *33*(1), 38–54.

Shipler, D. K. (1982, April 4). Sinai Israelis Leaving Trail of Modernity for Bedouins. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from https://www.nytimes.com/1982/04/04/world/sinai-israelis-leaving-trail-of-modernity-for-bedouins.html

Shirky, C. (2011, February 12). The Political Power of Social Media: Technology, the Public Sphere, and Political Change. *Foreign Affairs*, pp. 1–12. Retrieved from https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2010-12-20/political-power-social-media

Shuqair, N. (1991). *The Old and New History of Sinai and its Geography*. Beirut: Dar al-Jeel.

Silva, M. F. S., Rodriguez, E. R., Banares, A. B., & Talavera, M. del M. L. (2017). The Distant Other: The depiction of immigration in four Spanish daily newspapers. *Journalism Practice*, *11*(5), 592–605. http://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2016.1155968

SIS. (2017). Martyr's Right Operation Continues in North Sinai. Retrieved April 17, 2018, from http://www.sis.gov.eg/Story/116100?lang=en-us

Slackman, M. (2006, April 25). 30 Are Killed in Sinai as Bombs Rock Egyptian Resort City. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2006/04/25/world/middleeast/25egypt.html

Sontag, S. (2003). *Regarding the Pain of Others*. New York: Picador.

Sreberny-Mohammadi, A., & Mohammadi, A. (1997). Small Media and Revolutionary Change: A New Model. In A. Seberny-Mohammadi, D. Winseck, J. McKenna, & O. Boyd-barrett (Eds.), *Media in Global Context Reader* (pp. 220–235).

Stamps, A. E. (2011). Distance Mitigates Threat. *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, *113*(3), 751–763. http://doi.org/10.2466/24.20.27.PMS.114.3.709-716

START. (2018). Global Terrorism Database - Attacks in Israel 2011-2016. Retrieved April 13, 2018, from goo.gl/2QSvN5%0A

Statistic Brain. (2017, July). Instagram Company Statistics. Retrieved from https://www.statisticbrain.com/instagram-company-statistics/

Stewart, F. H. (1991). Notes on the Arrival of the Bedouin Tribes in Sinai. *Journal of Economic and Social History of the Orient*, *34*(1/2), 97–110.

Stratcom Centre of Excellence. (2016). *Daesh Information Campaign and Its Influence*. Riga, Latvia. Retrieved from

http://www.difesa.it/SMD_/CASD/IM/IASD/65sessioneordinaria/Documents/DaeshInform

ationCampaignanditsInfluence.pdf

Suez Canal Authority. (2018). *Navigation Reports*. Retrieved from

https://www.suezcanal.gov.eg/English/Downloads/Pages/default.aspx?folder=Navigation

Reports/Annual Reports

Sullivan, D. G., & Masters, R. D. (1991). Facial displays and political leadership: some

experimental findings. In G. Schubert & R. Masters (Eds.), *Primate politics* (pp. 188–206).

Carbondale: South Illinois University Press.

Sweilam, A. (2017, April 17). Clashes erupt between tribes and IS militants in Sinai. *Associated

Press*. Retrieved from https://apnews.com/5d648a9abf0a45aab6f3915701aed9f3/clashes-

erupt-between-tribes-and-militants-sinai

Tan, S., O'Halloran, K. L., Wignell, P., Chai, K., & Lange, R. (2018). A multimodal mixed

methods approach for examining recontextualisation patterns of violent extremist images in

online media. *Discourse, Context and Media*, *21*, 18–35.

http://doi.org/10.1016/j.dcm.2017.11.004

Tang, D., & Schmeichel, B. (2015). Look me in the eye: Manipulated eye gaze affects

dominance mindsets. *Journal of Nonverbal Behavior*, *39*(2), 181–194.

Tankard, J. W. (1970). Effects of eye position on person perception. *Perceptual and Motor

Skills*, *31*(3), 883–893.

Tankard, J. W. (2001). The empirical approach to the study of media framing. Framing public

life: Perspectives on media and our understanding of the social world. In W. J. Severin & J.

W. Tankard (Eds.), *Communication theories: Origins, methods, and uses in the mass media*

(pp. 95–106). Pearson College Division.

Tantawy, M. A. (2015, September 20). The Results of 13 days from the Military Operation "The

Martyr's Right" in Sinai. The killing of 521 terrorists, arresting 602 suspects, detonating

462 IEDs, destroying 98 vehicles and 29 explosives storage, and burning 575 location for

the Takfiri elemen. *Youm 7*.

Tewksbury, D., & Scheufele, D. A. (2009). News Framing Theory and Research. In J. Bryant &

M. B. Oliver (Eds.), *Media Effects: Advances in Theory and Research* (Third Edit, pp. 17–

33). New York: Routledge.

The Carter Center. (2017). *Countering Daesh Recruitment Propaganda Workshop 3: Muslimc

Civic Engagement: Countering Islamophobia and Immunizing Communities*. Atlanta.

Retrieved from

https://www.cartercenter.org/resources/pdfs/peace/conflict_resolution/countering-

isis/countering-daesh-workshop-3.pdf

The Journalists and Reporters in North Sinai condemns the arrest of "Al-Shorouk" Journalists.

(2013, September 23). *Masress*. Retrieved from http://www.masress.com/fjp/86293

The Library of Congress. (2018). World War I in Pictures: An Overview of Prints &

Photographs Division Collections. Retrieved February 12, 2018, from

https://www.loc.gov/rr/print/coll/wwicoll.html

The Participating Sides in the Mosul Offensive. (2016, October 18). *Al-Jazeera*. Retrieved from

http://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/military/2016/10/18/الأطراف-المشاركة-في-معركة-الموصل

Tiemens, R. K. (1970). Some relationships of camera angle to communicator credibility. *Journal

of Broadcasting*, *14*(4), 483–490. http://doi.org/10.1080/08838157009363614

TIMEP. (2016a). *Egypt Security Watch Quarterly Report: July-September 2016*. Retrieved from

https://timep.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/ESW-Quarterly-Report_July-

Sep2016_Q3.pdf

TIMEP. (2016b). *QUARTERLY REPORT : JANUARY - MARCH 2016*. Retrieved from

https://timep.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/ESW-QR-2016-Q1-WEB.pdf

TIMEP. (2017a). *Egypt Security Watch: Quarterly Report: January-March 2017*. Retrieved from

https://timep.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/ESW-Report-2017-Q1-Web.pdf

TIMEP. (2017b). *Egypt Security Watch: Quarterly Report October-December 2016*. Retrieved

from https://timep.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/ESW-Report_Q42016_web.pdf

TORP. (2018). About the List of Attacks. Retrieved May 26, 2018, from

https://www.thereligionofpeace.com/pages/site/the-list.aspx

Trachtenberg, A. (1985). Albums of war: on reading Civil War photographs. *Representations*, *9*,

1–32.

Transcript of Counterterrorism Law (2015). Egypt. Retrieved from

http://www.ahram.org.eg/News/121635/25/423204/الإرهاب-مكافحة-قانون-نص-/الأولى.aspx

U.S. Department of Defense. (2017). *Department of Defense Press Briefing by General Dunford

in the Pentagon Briefing Room*. Retrieved from

https://www.defense.gov/News/Transcripts/Transcript-View/Article/1351411/department-

of-defense-press-briefing-by-general-dunford-in-the-pentagon-briefin/

U.S. Department of Justice. (2017). U.S. v. Akayed Ullah Federal Criminal Complaint. Retrieved

from https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdny/press-release/file/1017396/download

Vail III, K. E., & Arndt, J., Motyl, M. Pyszczynski, T. (2012). The aftermath of destruction:

Images of destroyed buildings increase support for war, dogmatism, and death thought

accessibility. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *48*(5), 1069–1081.

Vitale, H. M., & Keagle, J. M. (2014). A time to tweet, as well as a time to kill: ISIS's projection

of power in Iraq and Syria. *Defense Horizons*, *October*(77), 1–12.

von Grunau, M., & Anston, C. (1995). The detection of gaze direction: A stare-in-the-crowd effect. *Perception*, *24*, 1297–1313.

Vuilleumier, P. (2000). Faces call for attention: evidence from patients with visual extinction. *Neuropsychologia*, *38*, 693–700.

Wagenaar, W. A., & Van Der Schrier, J. H. (1996). Familiar face recognition as a function of distance and illumination: A practical tool for use in the courtroom. *Psychology, Crime and Law*, *2*(4), 321–332. http://doi.org/10.1080/10683160410001715123

Wainer, D., Ferziger, J., & Feteha, A. (2016, July 10). Old Mideast Foes Unite Over Gas Deals and Fighting Militants. *Bloomberg*. Retrieved from http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-07-10/old-middle-east-foes-unite-over-gas-deals-and-fighting-militants

Walsh, D., & Youssef, N. (2017, November 24). Militants Kill 305 at Sufi Mosque in Egypt's Deadliest Terrorist Attack. *The New York Times*. Cairo.

Wanta, W. (1988). The effects of dominant photographs: An agenda-setting experiment. *Journalism Quarterly*, *65*(1), 107–111.

Weisburd, a. A. (2009). Comparison of Visual Motifs in *Jihadi* and *Cholo* Videos on YouTube. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, *32*(12), 1066–1074. http://doi.org/10.1080/10576100903319789

Weiss, M., & Hassan, H. (2015). *ISIS: Inside the Army of Terror*. Simon & Schuster.

Weizman, E. (2007). *Hollow Land: Israel's Architecture of Occupation*. London: Verso Books. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2008.10.001

Welch, D. (2014). 'Opening Pandora's Box'': Propaganda, Power and Persuasion.' In

Propaganda, Power and Persuasion: From World War I to Wikileaks (David Welc, pp. 14–25). London: I.B. Tauris.

Wells, K. (2007). Narratives of liberation and narratives of innocent suffering: The rhetorical uses of images of Iraqi children in the British press. *Visual Communication*, *6*(1), 55–71. http://doi.org/10.1177/1470357207071465

Wignell, P., Tan, S., & O'Halloran, K. L. (2017). Under the shade of AK47s: a multimodal approach to violent extremist recruitment strategies for foreign fighters. *Critical Studies on Terrorism*, *00*(00), 1–24. http://doi.org/10.1080/17539153.2017.1319319

Wignell, P., Tan, S., O'Halloran, K. L., & Lange, R. (2017). A Mixed Methods Empirical Examination of Changes in Emphasis and Style in the Extremist Magazines Dabiq and Rumiyah. *Perspectives on Terrorism*, *11*(2), 19. Retrieved from http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/592/1169

Wilayat Sinai. (2018). *The Religion of Abraham*. Retrieved from https://archive.org/details/mohammedjarrar_mail_20180404_1108

Wilson Center. (2017, November 28). ISIS After the Caliphate. Retrieved from https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/isis-after-the-caliphate-0

Winkler, C. (2015). Challenging Communities: A perspective about, from, and by argumentation. In C. H. Palczewski (Ed.), *Disturbing Argument*. New York: Routledge.

Winkler, C., Damanhoury, K. El, Dicker, A., & Lemieux, A. (2016). The Medium is Terrorism: Transformation of the About to Die Trope in Dabiq. *Journal of Terrorism & Political Violence*. Retrieved from http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2016.1211526

Winkler, C., Damanhoury, K. El, Dicker, A., & Lemieux, A. F. (2018). Images of death and dying in ISIS media: A comparison of English and Arabic print publications. *Media, War &*

Conflict. http://doi.org/10.1177/1750635217746200

Winter, C. (2017, November 9). Is Islamic State losing control of its "virtual caliphate"? *BBC*.

    Retrieved from http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-41845285

Winter, C. (2018). Apocalypse, later: a longitudinal study of the Islamic State brand. *Critical*

    Studies in Media Communication, *35*(1), 103–121.

    http://doi.org/10.1080/15295036.2017.1393094

Withnall, A. (2016, November 6). Raqqa offensive begins: US-backed rebel forces launch bid to

    capture Isis's Syrian stronghold. *Independent2*. Retrieved from

    http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/isis-raqqa-us-backed-rebel-forces-

    launch-bid-to-capture-syrian-stronghold-a7400701.html

Women Without Borders. (2016). Mothers Schools: Sensitizing Mothers to Recognize Signs of

    Radicalisation. Retrieved April 2, 2017, from http://www.women-without-

    borders.org/projects/underway/42/

Yaari, E. (2012). *Sinai : A New Front*. Washington, D.C. Retrieved from

    http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/sinai-a-new-front

Zelin, A. Y. (2015). Picture Or It Didn't Happen : A Snapshot of the Islamic State's Official

    Media Output. *Perspectives on Terrorism*, *9*(4), 85–97.

Zelizer, B. (1998). *Remembering to forget: Holocaust memory through the camera's eye*.

    Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Zelizer, B. (2004). When War Is Reduced to a Photograph. In B. Zelizer (Ed.), *Reporting War:*

    Journalism in Wartime (pp. 115–35). London and New York: Routledge.

Zephoria. (2017, October 18). The Top 20 Valuable Facebook Statistics – Updated October

    2017. Retrieved from https://zephoria.com/top-15-valuable-facebook-statistics/

Zettl, H. (2003). *Television production handbook* (8th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Zettl, H. (2013). *Sight, sound, motion: Applied media aesthetics*. Cengage Learning.

Zillmann, D., Knobloch, S., & Yu, H. S. (2001). Effects of photographs on the selective reading of news reports. *Media Psychology*, *3*(4), 301–324.

APPENDIX

As you code the images, you may consider the headlines, photo taglines and images.

Please record an answer for each of the bolded categories.

<u>**Human Features**</u>

Humans: Which of the following best describes the number of humans in photograph? (count

human parts such as legs if that human is dead or about to act in the photograph)

1. One human exists in the image

2. A small group of humans exist in the image (~2-10)

3. A large group of humans exist in the image (>10)

4. No humans exist in the image

Age: What age category best describes the human subject(s) in the image? (Choose category

that best describes the subject(s) in the photo?

1. Infants (up until 3 years old)

2. Children

3. Adults

4. Mixed

5. Not applicable—no human subjects are in the image.

Gender: Which gender category best describes the human subject(s) in the photo?

1. Male

2. Female

3. Mixed. The image includes both males and females.

4. Not applicable—no human subjects are in the image.

Body Position: Which of the following best describes the body position of the human(s) displayed in the photograph)?

1. On knees (not praying)

2. Sitting (if can't discern when riding in vehicles, default to sitting).

3. Standing

4. Laying down

5. Praying (on knees or bent over)

6. Mixed. The humans display a mixture of #1-5.

7. Not Applicable.

Visual Semiotics

Viewer Distance. How far is the viewer away from the subject(s) of the photograph?

1. Intimate Space (facial close-up)

2. Personal Space (1.5 -~4 ft)

3. Social/Public Space (> 4 ft)

4. Mixed. Some subjects are at one distance; others are at other distances.

Camera Angle: When taking the picture, the camera is: (Note: when coding, move image at your eye level and code accordingly)

1. Low looking up

2. High looking down

3. At the eye level

4. Mixed (use only in cases where more than one photograph are embedded in the image and are shot from different camera angles)

Eye Contact: How would you best describe the eye contact of the human subject(s) in the photograph?

   1. Looking directly at the viewer

   2. Looking away/Mixed

   3. Eyes closed or mangled

   4. Not applicable—no humans appear in the photograph.

Facial Expressions: How would you best describe the facial expressions of the human subject(s) in the photograph?

   1. Positive (e.g. happy, joyful)

   2. Negative (e.g. Concerned/Angry/Troubled/Afraid)

   3. Unclear (Include images that have both positive and negative facial expressions here. Also include all images shot from a public distance here.)

   4. Not Applicable—no human subjects are in the image.

Subjective Shots:

   1. Embodied Point of View (i.e., embodied POV shots that neither reveal the photographer parts nor any props the photographer carries – e.g., sniper shot)

   2. Referentially Embodied Point of View (i.e., embodied POV shots that reveal the photographer's hand/arm and/or a prop that he carries – e.g., shot from right behind a rifle in battle)

   3. Over the Shoulder (i.e., shots from right behind the subject's shoulder revealing what he sees in front of him)

   4. Not applicable

<u>Scenic Visual Elements</u>

Death: Is there presence of the following:

1. Dead human being (Note: can be in casket, in body bags, or exposed)

2. Not applicable—no signs of death appear in the photograph.

Destruction: What features of destruction are present in the image?

1. Presence of fire, explosions, or other acts of destruction in process (must be in the context of destruction. Cooking fire, for example, does not fall under this category)

2. Destroyed buildings/ bridges/vehicle/ religious iconography

3. Not applicable—the image contains no features of destruction

About to Die:

1. Possible

2. Certain

3. Presumed Death

4. Not Applicable

State-building: Which of the following state-building actions are present in the photograph?

1. Social Services/State infrastructure workers (education, health, parks, playgrounds, plumbers, electricians, and foot distribution, etc.)

2. Law Enforcement/Punishment (Hudud; tobacco; alcohol; stealing; homosexuality, adultery; executions)

3. Economic Activity

4. City/Natural Landscape

5. Media Distribution (pamphlets, leaflets, newsletters, and videos)

6. Mixed—more than one of the actions in #1-5 are in the image

7. Not applicable—none of the state-building actions mentioned above are present in the

image.

Infrastructure: Which of the following infrastructure elements are present in the photograph?

1. Buildings (Outside of Buildings only).

2. Bridges

3. Vehicles (Trucks, Planes, Ships, Trains, Tank)

4. Military weaponry/equipment (AK47s, rockets, RPGs, etc).

5. Mixed—more than one of the infrastructure elements in #1-5 are present.

6. Not applicable—none of the infrastructure elements in the list above are present.

Religious Symbols: What symbols of religious practice are present in the photograph?

1. One finger pointing to heaven

2. Reading Qu'ran, Qu'ranic text, or Qu'rans (don't include text on IS flag)

3. Individuals engaged in prayer

4. Religious Iconography/Shrines

5. Mixed—more than one of the religious practices described in #1-4.

6. Not applicable—none of the religious practices described above are present.

Flag: Which of the flags below are contained in the image?

1. The image contains at least one ISIS Flag.

2. The image contains a U.S. flag.

3. The image contains an Egyptian flag.

4. Other

5. The image contains multiple flags from various entities.

6. Not applicable—the image contains no flag.