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Erasmus

Legitimization of violent masculinities in self-representation of U.S army and (Islamic State) ISIS

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Abstract

Violence and masculinity is a normalized discourse of human interaction despite it being disruptive and toxic for individuals and socio-political interactions. Around the world, violent actions, either organized violence by states or non-state violence against civilians, have been fostering fear and causing damage to social and political fabrics of nations. Organized violence is largely regulated and practiced by militarized institutions of state and non-state actors. Developing on the theoretical work of RW. Connell regarding different forms of masculinities and their translation into socio-political interactions of societies, I will analyse the self-representations of masculinities and violence in the recruitment videos of the US army and Islamic State (ISIS) soldiers. My focus will be on the role of religion in defining masculinities and violence in ISIS recruiting discourses, and on the role of nationhood in defining masculinities and violence in US army recruiting discourses. I am also interested whether there are similarities in ISIS and USA military discourses, and if so what these are.

Relevance to Development Studies

As saferworld (2013) and UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) argues, peacebuilders should include efforts to promote notions of masculinity which favour non-violence and gender equality in their programming. I believe research on these lines will also help in development of peacebuilding and conflict prevention programmes that can address masculinity centered on power, violence and control in order to develop a comprehensive approach towards a changed society.

Keywords

Nationhood, Religion, Masculinities, Violence, ISIS, United States of America, U.S Army

Acknowledgment

Chapter 1 : Introduction

Statement of Research Problem:

Violence and masculinity is a normalized discourse of human interaction despite it being disruptive and toxic for individuals and socio-political interactions. Around the world, violent actions, either organized violence by states or non-state violence against civilians, have been fostering fear and causing damage to social and political fabrics of nations. Organized violence is largely regulated and practiced by militarized institutions of state and non-state actors. Connell (2002: 93) suggests that the concept of Hegemonic masculinity will help in "understanding the dynamics of violent organizations, for instance the ways armies function and produce violence and may help in understanding the difficulties of peace making and conflict resolution" (2002: 93). In this research paper, I will attempt to use Connell's theorisation of masculinities to understand the relationship between political violence and legitimization of hegemonic masculinity in institutions of violence.

Violence as an inevitable phenomenon of these normalized discourses has been a potential outcome and an ancillary trait of these interactions throughout modern history and in contemporary socio-political interactions. Representation of the self plays a crucial role in garnering and maintaining support of the in group. Violence functions on a relativity factor, which means, it always has a subject and a purpose. In context of large scale militarized violence by state or non-state actors, the purpose of violence is driven through the identity of the collective members of the society. Be it a terrorist organisation like Islamic State or a democratic nation like United States of America's army. Role of self –representation for the purpose of recruitment for violent actions by state and non-state actors plays a huge role in building the identity of 'self' and of 'other'.

I will use the case of visual self-representation of two militarized structures - ISIS and the U.S.A military - that have been engaged with each other in violent conflict in Syria. Developing on the theoretical work of RW. Connell regarding different forms of masculinities and their translation into socio-political interactions of societies, I will analyse the self-representations of masculinities and violence in the recruitment videos of the US army and Islamic State (ISIS) soldiers. My focus will be on the role of religion in defining masculinities and violence in ISIS recruiting discourses, and on the role of nationhood in defining masculinities and violence in US army recruiting discourses. I am also interested whether there are similarities in ISIS and USA military discourses, and if so what these are.

Context background:

In a post 9/11 era mainstream and right-wing western media reporting and representation of Muslim world largely adheres to it being barbaric and primitive compared to the west. Violent actions by institutions like Islamic State further amplify this particular imagery and the identity of the group. A sense of orientalism plays in the articulation of these representations. Religion – and especially Islam seen as un-democratic, and democratic state building processes of the west are the phenomena that are assumed to define different parts of the world and assign violent socio-political interactions in clashes of cultures and identities. Religion as doctrine and religious institutions often legitimize potentiality of violence for the survival of the collective identity of in group, while democratic institutions (while

widely pronounced as an anti-thesis of everything that religion professes) may also not be very different when it comes to discourses of hegemonic masculinity and violence.

This research would focus on the aspects of militarized masculinity of a democratic structure (United States of America) and a religious structure of Islamic caliphate as present in the recruiting videos. I will analyse whether the institutions that are informing the video representations - though seeming different from each other - have similar notions of hegemonic masculinities and violence. In the light of Connells' analysis of "state power, nationalism, citizenship, political violence, democracy, revolution and dictatorship being masculinist projects, informed by masculine institutions, requires hegemonic masculine processes and masculine actions" (Connell 1995 as cited in Nagel 1998). By doing an investigation of their self-representation, I want to analyse recruiting practice of both the institutions and what are the representations of violence in them.

I would analyse the cases of ISIS being a religious institution compared to United States Army as a democratic institution. Even though violence as a practice of social and political interaction has existed throughout the documented modern history, it would be effective to make a case study of self-representation of two contemporary dominant structures (i.e democratic and religious) that affects and prescribe social and political interactions. ISIS, as many would argue might not be the exact representation of Islam, yet its practices and principles of political orientation is informed by Islam. On the other hand United States of America, as a proponent of democracy, freedom, liberty and peace stands proudly with its identity of peaceful democratic structure. Many would also argue that USA might not be the correct representation of democracy, but its proponents argue that this is a peaceful democratic institution, and progressive compared to ISIS or other religious institutions. However, it still displays violent and masculine identity and hegemonic masculine discourses. The fact that these two institutions – the ISIS (as a militaristic, semi-state institution) and the US military (as an institution of a supposedly democratic state) proclaim a contrasting identity from each other – religious and democratic - yet exercise violence as a form of dominance is crucial in emergence and sustenance of violent practices and culture.

I will analyse what kind of violent practices are proposed by these two institutions (ISIS and U.S. Army) in their recruitment videos, how these practices are similar or different, in what ways religious discourses (and institutions) participate in fostering (violent forms of) military/soldiering masculinity, and in what ways democratic discourses participate in fostering violent masculinities.

The violent practices of these institutions can be located in the processes of their identity constructions and the roles they prescribe to their actors. These roles are normalized through institutionalization of practices and symbols. In the case of United States of America, such avenues of institutionalization of violent practices are seen in its self-representation, governing policies, militarization processes and its interaction with global events and competing powers. In post-World War Two and post-Cold War era United States has always portrayed itself as the greatest nation of the world with its massive military prowess, grasp of modern technology, economic growth, American freedom and American way of life.

ISIS' expansion and claim to power and dominance is acquired through violent advances and militarized engagements. Along with their military advancements ISIS's communication strategy through media, especially social media, has provided them remarkable success with their global reach. These territorial and ideological expansions of ISIS are promoted by their governing policies and religious teachings. It is also unequivocally pronounced barbaric by western actors and by the proponents of democracy. Both U.S. military and ISIS' self-representations become important in displaying their ideological and institutional influences.

"….Daesh's success cannot but include the impressive communication and propaganda apparatus which the organisation has been able to establish" (Mancuilli 2015: 8)

A brief history of ISIS and US intervention in Iraq (2003 -2017)

September 11, 2001 three attacks within the territory of United States sent shockwaves to nations all across the globe. After World Trade Centre of New York city was submerged into the grounds the U.S.A announced its 'war on terror'. The U.S military found its new enemy; 'Radical Islamic terrorism' earned a place on U.S military's top enemies list. Then President G. Bush in his address to the nation announced a "war against such acts of terror" deeming them murderous and merciless acts against freedom and democracy. Consequently U.S Troops land in Afghanistan to attack the harbours of terrorist organisations especially Al Qaeda. President Bush in his address also calls out the supporter of such activities and promised action against them. U.S officials speculated Saddam Hussein's involvement in the attack, which garnered public support for the invasion of Iraq by U.S troops in 2003 (Bassil 2012: 29). The 9/11 Commission Report released in 2006 and the Senate Report on Pre–War Intelligence on Iraq concluded that there is no evidence of cooperative efforts between Al-Qaeda and Iraqi regime, regardless of the arguments that justified the invasion of Iraq by U.S troops (Battle and Byrne 2013: no page). United States began to campaign for overthrow of Iraq's president Saddam Hussein amidst divided opinions on war between nations. The United States argued that Saddam Hussein was the worst dictator of 20th century, and that his ties with terrorist groups and his weapons programs demanded an action from the free world.

20th March 2003 was the date when US 'Operation Iraqi Freedom' (previously known as 'Operation enduring freedom' a carry-over from the war in Afghanistan) came into action that unfolded a chain of unprecedented events, which will define the geo-political situation of the area (Shah 2010: 102). Soon after U.S.A's intervention, the Ba'athist government of Saddam Hussein was deposed of power A few other crucial factors shaped Iraq's current situation and the phenomena of ISIS or Islamic State, which the world witnessed ten years after U.S invaded Iraq. Year 2003, becomes decisive in shaping power shifts within Iraq, which resulted in a snowball of violent events defining the regional geo-political situation. Along with U.S invasion of Iraq, the Middle East region was also witnessing dramatic changes in political regimes, which has stirred former totalitarian states towards a more democratic direction.

Salafi Jihadist groups in the region deemed these changes as an explosion of western influence maligning their religious and cultural value system. The battle in Iraq provided an opportunity for Salafi-jihadists Sunni groups like: Ansar al Islam, Jabhat al–Nusra and Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) to (in their words) reclaim their lost honour, avenge the humiliation and erosion of their religious and cultural values. These Salafi Jihadist groups are considered as a security threat towards the West and its ideals of democracy and freedom. They reject the western modern state and seek to establish an Islamic Caliphate based on Sharia Law.

Contemporary Islamic activism in the political arena can be traced back to 1920s with Hasan al-Bana and the founding of Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. Wiktorowiczs defines Islamic activism as "….the mobilisation of contention to support Muslim causes." (Wiktorowicz 2002: 189). The Muslim cause and the recent support from the pockets of dispersed Muslim population across the globe to the campaign of Salafi Jihadism are an outbreak of socio-political, cultural deprivation, exclusion and denigration of Muslim around the globe. It is not to say that all Muslims support the idea of Salafi-jihadism. However, a resonance can be sensed amongst the Muslims who have faced denigration from the

west or been deprived by dictatorships or oppressive regimes. This deprivation is further augmented by the western influence, history of colonialism and U.S military interventions in places like Afghanistan, Iraq or Syria. It is this sense of deprivation, humiliation and ideological loss that is visible in the self-representation of Islamic State. For United States of America, the supposed threat from the Salafi-jihadism and the self-righteousness of the USA military contributes to the modes of self-representation in their recruitment videos.

The Kurdish Islamist Militant group Ansar al Islam, which controlled a small region in Northern Iraq is a crucial actor in the emergence of ISIS. Jordanian born militant Musab al Zarqawi led it. He formed Al Qaeda in Iraq with the help of and funding by Osama Bin Laden in 2004 (Manciulli 2015: 3).

> *"That same group — the direct followers of al-Zarqawi, along with new fighters from both inside and outside Iraq and Syria — broke from al-Qaeda and renamed itself the Islamic State of Iraq in late 2006, about four months after al-Zarqawi was killed by a targeted American airstrike"* (Kemp 2016, no page).

Iraqi army's defeat by U.S invasion led to a political vacuum in Iraq, soon after which Iraq witnessed militant groups fighting for power in different regions of Iraq.

> *"The Sunni extremists who arrived found a friendly audience among former Iraqi soldiers and officers: The US had disbanded Saddam Hussein's overwhelmingly Sunni army, which was disbanded in 2003, creating a group of men who were unemployed, battle-trained, and scared of life in an Iraq dominated by its Shia majority"* (Beauchamp 2015, no page).

The fighting continues for coming years in Iraq. AQI (Al – Qaeda in Iraq) was not only fighting against U.S troops, it was also attacking the Iraqi Shiite population. As Salafi jihadism believes superiority of the Sunni sect and excludes the Shiite followers on the lines of blasphemy. Given the already existing tensions between the Shiite and Sunni population, AQI fighters received some support from the Sunni population in Iraq and the neighbouring countries (Manciulli 2015: 4).

In April 2013, Baghdadi asserted unilateral control of all Al-Qaeda operations in Syria and Iraq and renamed AQI to "Islamic State in Iraq and Greater Syria" – ISIS. This marked the beginning of Al-Qaeda in Iraq in its new form and brand. Since its advent, ISIS has strong view against the 'colonialist' borders and "announced they were henceforth to be the Islamic State, not confined to any particular "colonialist" country, thus signalling their global ambitions" (Wilson 2017: 1). A year after Baghdadi asserted control of all Al Qaeda and renamed it to Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, he launched an offensive on Mosul, Iraq in June 2014. Soon after that Abu Bakr Baghdadi announced the establishment of the caliphate stretching over Syria and Iraq (Glen 2016, no page).

In 2015, even though Islamic State was facing coalition forces it was also expanding its networks of affiliates in neighbouring countries as well as in the west. Its actions or attacks started emerging in the territories beyond the Caliphate. Given coalition forces constant actions against ISIS expansion Islamic State started losing control of its territory. By 2017, the ISIS caliphate reportedly has lost 95% of its territory. "The Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al Abadi declared victory over the Islamic State in Iraq on December 9, 2017. But ISIS was still inspiring and carrying out attacks all over the world, including New York City." (Glen 2017, no page).

Throughout the process of creating, maintaining, defending and now losing territory of the Islamic caliphate, the ISIS engaged in recruiting military forces – fighters for the Caliphate, throughout the world. Their use of social media in promoting their religious and ideological cause, and in recruiting new fighters has already received scholarly attention. In this research, their use of videos in recruiting the new fighters will be central.

ISIS and Social Media:

Islamic State's strongest tool for recruiting fighters from across the globe is its wide spread network of social media accounts, pages and platforms. With the use of slick videos, online propaganda messages and regular interaction through their several twitter platforms, ISIS has managed to recruit thousands of fighters from across the globe. Telegraph reported in 2014 that there are an estimated 750 Britons fighting in Syria with ISIS (Whitehead 2014). UK government alone in 2014 identified and removed 15000 items of 'jihadist propaganda' (ITV news, 2014). One of those material is a recruitment video called 'There's no life without jihad' which featured three British fighters asking people to join ISIS. I have analysed 'There's no life without jihad' for this research along with few other videos.

In present times, role of social media is crucial in understanding the reach of political mobilisation and the quick information flow. The three big social media platforms (i.e. Facebook, twitter and YouTube) has a vast reach with people from all walks of life. YouTube alone hosts 1 billion hours of videos (Youtube Statistics, 2014). Similarly, Facebook is one of the largest social media platform with over 500 million active users (Fiegerman 2014). On Twitter on an average 350,000 tweets are being sent per minute. ISIS during its campaign did not shy away from capitalising on the already existing audience that helped ISIS boost its reach across the globe amongst impressionable people. ISIS always broadcasted messages in multiple languages reflecting its transnational appeal. As demonstrated in the later section, the videos specifically asked 'young men and Muslims from various parts of the world to join their fight'. Richards (2014) claims, that ISIS literature uses motivational powerful themes, which aim to appeal to the youth, and allows ISIS to recruit and maintain its propaganda.

Bandura (2001: 267) argues that: "An extraordinary capacity for symbolization provides humans with a powerful tool for comprehending their environment and creating and regulating environmental events that touch virtually every aspect of their lives. Most external influences affect behaviour through cognitive processes rather than directly." ISIS has been proactive in exploiting the symbolisation of Muslim identity in crises to galvanize support and transform them into actions. The biggest tool for ISIS has been social media for garnering this support.

Brief history of U.S Military Recruitment

The U.S Army recruitment posters display lady justice in white gown holding the American flag with the message "Uphold our Honour". They call upon men to uphold and protecting the honour of the nation and their families. These messages are mostly directed to men – (even though women can now join all branches of the military) is evident from another poster from World War I and II of U.S Army which claim "U.S Army builds man". It builds your Character and Physique. One can identify the links between masculinity and military at the core of it. Men are asked to join military, where they will become physically strong; a characteristic that seems to be suiting only to men. Physical might entails dominance, and dominance on 'other' men brings authority and power not only individually but structurally and institutionally. These phenomena has always been on the recruitment agenda of U.S army. Portraying and romanticizing the able bodiedness and strong might of its soldiers. At the same time, enticing men to get closer to the desired masculine man. U.S soldiers are always portrayed in the recruitment calls as valorised and strong men, holding guns, rifles and handling big tanks and machines. As demonstrated in U.S Army vision 2028 the first requirement for anyone to be a U.S soldier is a highly quality, physically fit, strong men. Some of the posters of Army recruitment processes are attached below:
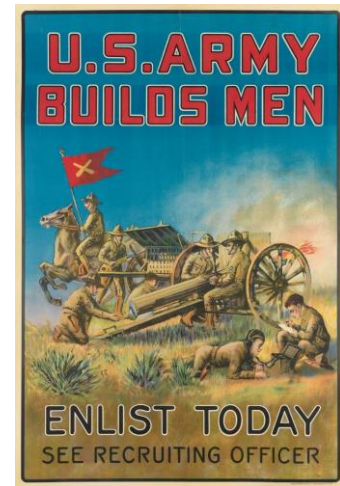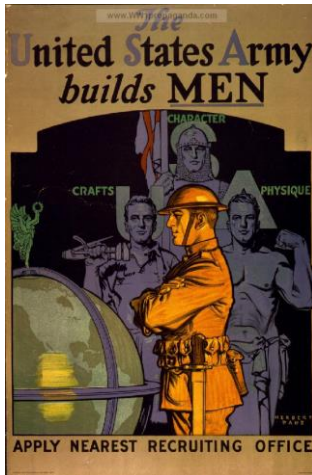
With modernization further aiding U.S military, towards late 1900s U.S Army transformed its recruitment call after Vietnam War, in the wake of anti-war movement. The U.S. Armed Forces have one of the largest standing militaries. Its military personnel come from a large pool of paid volunteers. U.S.A has used conscription in the past in various times of both war and peace, it has not been used since 1972. "The Selective Service System retains the power to conscript males, which requires that all male citizens residing in the U.S. between the ages of 18–25 register with the service" (Encyclopedia Britannica, no date).

In late 90s, U.S military started using television ads as one of the means to recruit soldiers. "Facing recruitment shortfalls, the Air Force was paying for television airtime for the first time in its history. The ads focus on personal growth and fulfilment" (Brown 2012: 3) Similarly, other branches of U.S military followed the same path, TV commercials and PSA's in movie halls became the means to reach out to its audience. Some of these television ads are used for this thesis. In the late 90s – U.S military recruitment practice moved from the posters to videos and high school enrolment drives. It became crucial for U.S military to find new ways to entice young men towards military services.

During 1991 and 2001, tuition at four-year public college rose faster than family income in 41 state (National Centre for Public Policy and Higher Education, 2002). This is where, Montgomery GI Bill offered by military provided an alternative for high school student who aspire enrolment in college for better job and life but face financial challenges in doing so. Hence, U.S military runs various high school enrolment programs in order to recruit young men in a time when serving in military is not mandatory anymore. Melissa Brown (2012) in her book 'Enlisting Masculinity: The Construction of Gender in US Military Recruiting Advertising during All Volunteer Force' sheds light on this. She argues "masculinity was widely considered to be in crisis and working class men in America losing their status, economic independence due to women's movement, loss of well-paying jobs and the loss of Vietnam war (Brown 2012: 3). She further argues "In a period when traditional masculinities have been discredited, and when women have gained importance as a source of labour for the military, a military institution faces a choice: it can move away from masculinity in its attempts to recruit, it can re-forge the link between the military and masculinity but in ways that exploit and develop new masculine forms, or it can emphasize a traditional masculinity, establishing the military as a refuge for a traditional idea of manhood that is being challenged in other parts of society"(Brown 2012: 4). Based on the currently available ads for U.S Military (some of which are used in this research) it seems that U.S military has largely followed similar links between the military and masculinity. We can definitely see some as Brown (2012) called 're-forging', the definitions of masculinity and what it means to be serving the nation. The U.S military does not only portray serving in military

as 'for brave of heart' 'for proud and honoured men' but also defines itself as more modern and advance force which provides economic benefits and teach life skills. Still these representations are not void of gender norms and masculine notions.

Research Question and Objective:

Main Research question: In what ways is violence part of production of (ideal) soldiering masculinity in the self-representations of US military and ISIS fighters, and what place is given to religion and the state in these representations?

Sub Questions:
- What are the characteristics of the 'ideal' soldier of the US military and of ISIS (in self-representations)?
- What role is given to religion and the state (as institutions) in the representations of the (ideal) soldiers?
- How does a democracy like U.S.A represent its militarized masculine power compared to ISIS as an extremist's religious institution?

Methodological strategies and methods of data collection

The videos selected for this research are taken from the communication platforms of United States Army and Islamic State's commissioned videos available online. For United State Army I chose videos from their official website (*www.usarmy.mil*). And for the Islamic State's videos it was initially a little challenging to get access to their full recruitment videos, given the nature of online activity around Islamic State and sanctions on them. However, that challenge was overcame by finding an online depository named (*www.jihadology.net*). The depository is maintained by Aaron Y. Zelin, a Richard Borrow Fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy and Sami David Fellow at the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence. Both the institutions produce videos for several purposes from information dissemination to recruitment. The videos that are used for this research are specifically recruitment videos and are comparable in terms of objective, language and rhetoric.

U.S military pays for television air time, along with that it uses social media platforms like Facebook, YouTube and Twitter to interact with its audience. This kind of outreach makes it hard to count the exact number of audience, however, unlike ISIS, U.S recruitment videos are specifically focused on American audience. ISIS on the other hand, produces it videos for a globally scattered Muslim audience. Compared to U.S Army videos, ISIS produces these videos in several languages, such as: Bahasa (Indonesia), Bosnian and Chechen (Balkans), Arabic and English. For this research I am using the videos recorded in Bahasa, Bosnian, English and Arabic. ISIS' umbrella media channel Al Hayat is responsible for the production and dissemination of the communication material and is also responsible for maintaining its communication platforms. For this research I have only used the material which is explicitly asking its desired audience to join their institutions. Hence for the purpose of this thesis, I am calling them recruitment videos.

The videos were transcribed and then put in the membership categorisation table (see annexe) in order to identify the representations of the 'self' and 'other'. These representations are then further analysed in the line of masculinities theory postulated by R.W Connell (2002) to draw a connection between masculine representations and violence in the military

institutes of U.S.A and ISIS. "Membership Categorization Analysis (MCA) originally formulated by Sacks in the 1960s (see Sacks, 1992, and specifically lecture 6 in part I, lectures 7, 8 in part II and lectures 1, 2 in part III) and subsequently developed and extended by Jayyusi (1984), Hester and Eglin (1997), Watson (1994, 1997), Hausendorf (2000) and Leudar and Nekvapil (2000). MCA is a formal analysis of the procedures people employ to make sense of other people and their activities" (Leudar et al 2004: 244). Work of Leudar et al (2004) is utilised to analyse the videos' content, in order to identify the 'us' and 'them' categorisation. Furthermore, this categorisation is analysed through masculinities theories of R.W. Connell (2002) to identify how these categories are characterized.

Based on the membership categorisation analysis this thesis will investigate the representation of violence and of participants in the violence in ISIS and U.S recruitment videos. In order to magnify our understanding of how the speakers and presenters in the videos distinguished 'us' from 'them' in socio-political, cultural and moral terms this research has analysed 5 recruitment videos of ISIS and 11 recruitment videos of U.S army. During the period of ISIS's reign over the territory of Iraq and Syria the group came out with several communication material targeted at the world's Muslim audience as well as the general public. These videos contained different messages and were of diverse themes.

I have analysed five videos by ISIS/ISIL which are targeted at the global Muslim audience. The videos can be divided into different categories of communication strategy. Out of 5 videos, 2 videos contain songs or we can categorize them as music videos that are glorifying the Islamic State and its soldiers. The remaining 3 videos have Islamic State soldiers directly speaking into the camera asking their 'Muslim brothers' to join the fight. The titles of the videos are itself very suggestive of its content. Titles and duration of the videos are as follows:

ISIL recruitment videos[1]
1. ***Video #1***: Come my friend (3:53)
2. ***Video#2***: Path of Jihad (5:54)
3. ***Video#3:*** Honour is in Jihad: A message to the people of the Balkans (20:44)
4. ***Video #4:*** Join the Ranks (8:27),
5. ***Video #5***: There's no life without Jihad (13:26)

On the other hand, U.S Army recruitment videos presents its military might by showing its advanced military equipment and rigorous training routines. Most of the videos selected for this study have U.S soldiers directly speaking to the camera, informing the audience, how proud they feel to serve their country. In most of the videos, the soldiers are also suggesting that Army is not for faint of hearts. They need people who have never–give-up attitude and people who will not accept defeat under any circumstances.

U.S Army recruitment videos, title and duration is as follows:
1. ***Video #1:*** The U.S Army: an intensely lethal force (0:32)

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[1] ISIS videos have been constantly under the scrutiny of various governments and media authorities and get taken down from the internet regularly. As a link for the videos I am providing the url of the depository called (Jihadology.net) which has an archive of ISIS's videos still available on the internet and are open for public access with permission. For this research, I have given them codes (Video#1, Videos #2, Video #3, Video#4 and Video#5.

2. *Video#2:* U.S. Army Special Forces (4:30)
3. *Video#3:* A dangerous World (0:39)
4. *Video#4:* Oath of Enlistment (0:30)
5. *Video#5:* Army Vision (2:09)
6. *Video#6:* Warrior Ethos (0:42)
7. *Video#7:* Victory is earned (1:29)
8. *Video#8:* Soldier's Creed (1:48)
9. *Video#9:* United States Army – Symbol of Strength – More than a Uniform (2:15)
10. *Video#10:* Amphibious Assault (0:30)
11. *Video#11:* U.S Army Song (1:05)

Original Contribution of this Research

Violence, be its organized or un-organized, be it by individuals, states or non-state actors has been theorized through diverse sociological and political theories. However, with the advent of masculinities theories it becomes imperative to develop theorization of violence through masculinities especially in the arena of international politics. This thesis, is particularly trying to do that, by doing a comparative analysis of representation and interpretation of violence by two institutes (U.S Army and Islamic State). I believe masculinities studies are not only crucial for understanding the behaviour of men, but are extremely helpful in exploring the events of global magnitude with far reaching impacts on social and political fabric of our society. While there are many studies of ISIS use of social media, there is hardly any comparative research that looks at similarities and differences between ISIS and US discourses on militarized masculinities, or that compare the recruiting videos

Justification of your study

With this research, I hope to add to the existing literature on militarized masculinities, religion, self-representation, nation building. This study will contribute to our greater understanding of the issues of religion, masculinities, war culture and politics, especially, in the wake of socially disruptive events of present times where the visible reasons behind conflicts and violence in Syria, Afghanistan, Israel-Palestine and others are still being analysed. I believe that religious and western democratic doctrines and institutions are the root causes of hegemonic masculine worldviews –- and that their links to violent masculinities have still remained unexplored.

The obsession with the aggressive masculinities and religious identities is responsible for much of the violence that the world is witnessing today. As saferworld (2013) and UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) argues, peacebuilders should include efforts to promote notions of masculinity which favour non-violence and gender equality in their programming. I believe research on these lines will also help in development of peacebuilding and conflict prevention programmes that can address masculinity centered on power, violence and control in order to develop a comprehensive approach towards a changed society.

The scope and limitation of your research

Since the study is interpretive, the conclusion of this research can be challenged, as there can be more ways of interpreting the text. My ideological background can have an influence in this interpretation and can represent a challenge to address the text and maintain a certain distance. As the video material this research requires is controversial, monitored and at times a task to get access to, such issues can pose problem in data collection for my research. However, as a part of pre-seminar research I have managed to collect a considerable number of material for the research which I am hoping to substantiate further.

Ethical and Political choices and personal involvements

As a young brown man, raised in a middle class, urban Muslim environment, I do understand and am willing to reflect on my personal biases that might occur as a product of my socialization. In the midst of current media coverage and socio –political scenario of and around Islam and Muslims, I will make every possible effort to avoid stereotyping my cases through my language, representation or analysis.

Chapter 2 : Theoretical considerations

Masculinities Studies

The studies of masculinities or men's studies is a relatively new field and has garnered an interdisciplinary interest from scholars of history, sociology, political studies, gender, psychology and economics, to name a few. One of the strongest proponent of masculinities studies and the concept of masculinities is R.W. Connell, whose historical work on masculinities has been proved instrumental in understanding and application of the concept of masculinities in many academic disciplines. Connell in her work draws attention towards using masculinities theories in locating the connection between masculinities and violence. While highlighting the connection between masculinities, violence and global conflict she suggests masculinities studies can help in understanding contemporary global conflict and peace strategies. (Connell 2003: 18)

Dudink et al. in their work 'Hegemonic Masculinity and the History of Gender' claim:

> *"Nowhere is the potential for the application of a 'masculinity' perspective more promising than in the realm of politics. Whether in identifying the ideological basis of exclusionary practices, or exploring the relationship between civilian and military masculinities, or 'gendering' the body politic itself, historians have deployed masculinity in highly illuminating ways"* (Dudink et al 2004: 41).

Connell (1995, 2005) in her book *Masculinities* suggests "masculinity is not a coherent object" (2005: 67). She argues that there is no one idea of masculinity rather there are multiple notions of masculinity in a context, place and time (Connell 2005). She describes these multiple masculinities as "Hegemonic Masculinity" "Subordinate Masculinity" "Complicit Masculinity" and "Marginalised Masculinity" (Connell 2005: 76). Connell proposes, "At any given time, one form of masculinity rather than others is culturally exalted. Hegemonic masculinity can be defined as the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women" (Connell 2005: 77). To define subordinate masculinity Connell argues that "in the case of contemporary European/ American society is the dominance of heterosexual men and the subordination of homosexual men. This is much more than a cultural stigmatization of homosexuality or gay identity. Gay men are subordinated to straight men by an array of quite material practices." (Connell 2005: 78). Further she describes marginalised masculinity by giving a comparison of white supremacy and black masculinities (Connell 2005: 80). The concept of masculinities and its application in gender studies and gender power relations have been used extensively in last two decades. The interconnection of masculinities with war and conflict, as well as with religion have also been important field of study. We will use these theories to identify the notions of masculinities in ISIS and U.S Army recruitment videos and to draw a connection between religion/nationhood, masculinities and violence. Cultural, religious and national identities stand on masculine and heteronormative understanding of morality and righteousness for 'self' and 'other'

Militarism and Militarised Masculinities

Researchers and observers have noted that there are many reasons for men to resort to violence, be it non-state terrorist organisations or state institutionalized violence by army, and be it cases of domestic violence or other forms of daily life violence.

"The link between masculinities and violence is not unexplored. Many social science scholars, particularly in the last 25 years, have focused on studying and exposing the connections between masculinities and different forms of violence" (Sharma and Das 2016: 7).

There is no one factor that contributes to violent outbursts, and researchers use a range of social, geo-political, ideological/religious, and psychological reasons to trace its roots. R.W. Connell in her book *'Masculinities'* (2005) suggests that biological determinism and psychological explanations of masculinities, are not complete or are most likely wrong explanation of men being violent. She highlights that masculinity and femininity; sex roles or gender relations are seen as 'socially constructed' or 'constituted in discourse' (Connell 2005: 5).

Jeff Hearn (2003) writes: "It is an understatement to say that men, militarism, and the military are historically, profoundly, and blatantly interconnected" (Hearn 2003, 35). For men, especially in countries where enrolment in military is compulsory, serving in military becomes an important part of their life. "Military service creates a definition of normality for itself through the exclusion of women, gays, disabled persons and children and generalizes this definition to the rest of the society. The heterosexual man becomes the norm that the regime prefers and identifies with. The rest are considered as either surplus/excess or property to be protected" (Tarhan 2006, no page). Thus, this brief review of literature on masculinity will help me analyse recruitment videos where ISIS and U.S soldiers are represented, and ask how discourses of religion, democracy/nationhood and violence intersect in producing ideal masculinities of these soldiers.

Masculinities, Religion, Nationhood and Violent Conflict

In order to develop an understanding about the context of ISIS and its ideological propaganda, a study of amalgamation of religion, masculinities and war would give a deeper insight. Religion and masculinities is a combination of disciplines that questions about men and their relationship with patriarchal power in religion (something that hitherto seemed obvious). The debate on masculinities begins with trying to grasp with the nature of its presence in our society; it poses questions around the concepts of hegemonic masculinities, interrogates the constructions of masculinity in communities across the world and at various times in history. It also looks at the tense and complex relationship between hegemonic masculinities (that is, the idea of a "real man" in a given time and place) and subordinate masculinities (masculinities that, in a given time and place, fall short of the "real man" ideal).

As Marshall Mcluhan postulated that "we are heading into a profoundly religious age" (Mcluhan 1968 as cited in Fekete 1973: 117), and since religion is a strong driving force of present times, and on the other hand male domination plays a decisive role in defining social and political structures and relationships, it becomes imperative to juxtapose religion and men/manhood/masculinities in order to scrutinize the effects of their combination on the present social and political structure.

In late 20th century, the scholarship around religion has seen a dramatic shift as a result of incorporation of feminist lens in its examination. This lens brought diverse arguments and approaches, one of which is the approach of examining the construction of masculinities. While the men's studies scholars have produced impressive social scientific research exploring the construction of masculinities, little has yet appeared that explicitly explores the relationship between religion and experience of masculinities.

The impact of post-colonial theory helped to draw the scholar's attention towards a still emerging topic of masculinity and religion. In their recent work *Men, Masculinities and Reli-*

gious Change in Post-Christian Britain, Lucy Delap and Sue Morgan state that "Not only femininity, but masculinities, too, can be sites of religious struggles and performances" (Delap and Morgan 2013: 3).

One of the most prominent work in examining the relationship between religion and masculinities is "Redeeming Men - Religion and Masculinities" (Boyd et al. 1996). Muesse characterized fundamentalism as a hypermasculine religion, pointing out the obsession of religion with aggressively masculine practices in order to maintain the status quo (1996: 91). On the other hand, Amy E. Randall (2015) in her collection of surveys *Genocide and Gender in the twentieth Century,* approaches war and genocide from a gendered lens and examines the relationship between roles defined by religion for men and women and their translation into practices during a situation of war or conflict (2015). Her gendered analysis of genocide sheds light on the traditional and religious practices that legitimize and projects the idea of male control over social and political interactions through dominance over female sexuality, either by exploiting it or by implying the notion that it needs to be protected by their male counterparts (2015).

Krondorfer (2007: 1) has argued that the social and economic global restructuring and concomitant conflicting ideas, practices and identities have unsettled heterosexual men and have led to their protest against the supposed changes in the power relations and authoritative claims, exposing one of the defining factors for men to use violence and threat power as a tool to retain their superiority in the social as well as political spectrum (2007: 1).

Investigation of this relationship and processes provides an insight on violent ideologies and discourses, intentions and motivation of perpetrators, and the significance of violence in religious agendas. Such examination will lay ground for understanding the situations and obligations through which religious masculinity not only normalise instances of violence, but by valorisation of its association with men and their masculine identity promotes the cultures of violence in political decisions.

Around the world, men are the primary perpetrators of violence, making up 95 per cent of the people who has been convicted of homicide, as well as being the majority of participants in conflicts (Saferworld 2013: i). Interrogating the reasons behind this trend, the report *Masculinities Conflict and peacebuilding* by UK Aid argues that men are not naturally violent (2013: 5). "In most cultures, violence is associated with men and boys in a way that it is not associated with women and girls" (2013: i). These socially and religiously constructed notions of masculinity can play a role in driving conflict and insecurity (2013: ii).

Michael Kimmel, a pioneer in the field of masculinities and gender studies, in his widely acclaimed book *Angry White Men: American Masculinity at the End of an Era* (2013) adds to that approach. He discusses how due to globalisation and induction of feminism, vast social, economic and political changes straight white men are experiencing a sense of loss (2013). He examines the processes of social constructions and religious legitimization of anger and violence expressed through politicised anti-immigration, anti-gay and racist sentiments (2013). Through the political mobilization of the Extreme Right represented in Neo-Nazi groups and religious fundamentalism, men are expressing their despair in slogans like 'taking our country back'. These sentiments can be experienced all over the world not only by Christian men, but Muslims, Hindus and etc.

A combined study of masculinities, religion and violence/violent conflict can help us map and understand the ways individuals and communities might react to a particular situation, their approach to an event, relationship with members who identify themselves differently, etc. Thus, we could have an understanding of the constructions of identities and threats to identities and world views that translate into domestic as well foreign policy making. Through this preliminary literature review I aim to establish the relationship that religion and masculine identities create, where a religious identity has the capability to elicit a

strong response as we have seen throughout the past century. The impact of such a development on politics and society as a whole is worth studying on a deeper level.

Lastly I want to point out that, feminist literature particularly on ISIS is seemingly low or rather not easily available. This research might contribute partially through feminist discourse by using a lens of masculinities studies. However, U.S Army and nationhood have been under the scrutiny of feminist analysis. Masculinity studies started analysing concept of nationhood in United States of America and its connection with militarism especially for last two decades. Joane Nagel (1998: 244) argues that "nationalist politics is a masculinist enterprise". She claims that "like the military, most state institutions have been historically and remain dominated by men. It is therefore no surprise that the culture and ideology of hegemonic masculinity go hand in hand with the culture and ideology of hegemonic nationalism. Masculinity and nationalism articulate well with one another, and the modern form of Western masculinity emerged at about the same time and place as modern nationalism" (Nagel 1998: 249). She argued that "in the United States, masculinity was tightly woven into two nationalist imperialist projects: manifest destiny, which justified and advocated westward expansion, and the Monroe Doctrine, which justified and extended the US sphere of influence to include the entire western hemisphere (Nagel 1998: 249). She reflects on Theodore Roosevelt's position on former Spanish colony in the Spanish-America War, and the Philippine-American War. Roosevelt said 'We of America… we, the sons of a nation yet in the pride of its lusty youth… know its future is ours if we have the manhood to grasp it, and we enter the new century girding our loins for the contest before us' (Hoganson 1996 as cited in Nagel 1998: 251).

Melissa Brown (2012) in her book 'Enlisting Masculinity: The Construction of Gender in US Military Recruiting Advertising during All Volunteer Force' points out "Military service has strong historical ties to masculinity and the transformation of boys into men" (2012: 3). Her book (2012) argues "that masculinity is still a foundation of the appeals made by the U.S military but that each branch deploys various constructions of masculinity that serve its particular personnel needs and culture, with conventional martial masculinity being only one among them" (Brown 2012: 4). Such extensive body of work on masculinities, religion, nationhood and violence will help us in unpacking the relationship between the representations of masculinities and violence in the recruitment videos of U.S Army and ISIS.

Media Studies

In order to understand representations of religion, nationhood, violence and masculinities used on recruiting videos for ISIS and US army, media studies, and studies of specifically social media, are instrumental. Piers Robinson reviews existing theories of media-state relations by Daniel Hallin and Lance Bennet, in his article *'Theorizing the influence of media on world politics'* (2001). In his work, he demonstrates the frequency and significance of media influence and suggests that media influence is likely to be frequent in the context of elite debate over policy (Robinson 2001: 541). On the other hand Wolfsfeld (1997), in his historical work, suggests that media's function is to reflect and garner support for the dominant views in society (1997: 24). He argues that"the authorities degree of control over the political environment is the key situational variable that determines whether the news media will play an independent role in political conflict" (1997: 24).

Though many commentators have cast doubts on the validity of media influence on policy, politicians continue to assert importance of media coverage in shaping policies especially in a situation of humanitarian crisis (Blair 1999). The importance of media in the con-

text of political outcomes is more complex than just manufacturing consent (Robinson 2001: 541).

Roxxane L. Euben, professor of political science in Wellesley College, while talking about U.S journalist James Foley's execution video she points out that though the verbal message of the video was hinting at the ends and means "it's in the visual rhetoric—what the hostages are made to say and do and suffer, how their bodies are positioned when alive and when dead—that the meaning and significance of ISIL's violence is fully and completely elaborated" (Euben 2015, no page). Visual representation in of the message speaks more than the verbal messages. Hence keeping in mind the above mentioned statement by Euben, this thesis will also grapple the visual representation of the actors.

My own, particular theoretical approach/perspective:

I will study the issue of representation of violence and masculinities in the context of ISIS and US soldiers and investigate how these representations utilize discourses on nationhood and religion. An amalgamation of different theoretical approaches is incorporated in order to expand on the idea of self-representation of masculinities, its informing structures and institutions. This study will be conducted in the light of:

- Concept of Masculinities by R.W Connell (2005) and her work on different forms of masculinities and their translation into socio-political interactions of societies is crucial for this study. In order to identify whether the representations of the 'self' and 'other' is projected as 'hegemonic' 'marginalise' or 'subordinate' in the recruitment videos of U.S Army and ISIS. Connell points out that to establish hegemony it's important to have 'cultural authority' and 'institutional power' (violence seldom underpins it) (Connell 2005). I would analyse which masculinities are upheld in the recruitment videos and how are they legitimized through notions of religion and nationhood.

- "It is the successful claim to authority, more than direct violence, that is the mark of hegemony (though Violence often underpins or supports authority)" (Connell 2005: 77) "So the top levels of business, the military and government provide a fairly convincing corporate display of masculinity, still very little shaken by feminist women or dissenting men" (Connell 2005: 77). Connell (2005) in her seminal work analysed hegemonic masculinity in the context of men's struggle for power and authority over women. For this research, I am borrowing her conceptualisation of hegemonic masculinity to assert authority and power in the context of men's struggle against 'other' men. In the pursuit of establishing the identity and honour of the in group (religious or nation), how do powerful men and their institutions use violence to establish authority and power. I would like to argue that in the identity struggle, discourses of nationhood and religion recall bravery and sacrifice, where men are willing to use violence in order to protect their religious or national identity. The establishment of authority and hegemony is relative; I would argue that in the global structure of masculinity, Muslims men's masculinity is rather marginalised from the perspective of U.S nationhood; however, from the perspective of Muslim men, their religious masculinity is counter hegemonic as they are recalling bravery and sacrifice to countering the hegemony of U.S nationhood. This research will attempt to find whether there is some over lapping in the notions of religious masculinity and notions of masculinity in a democratic state structure as modern nation and state are produced through democratic processes.

- In the light of Connells' analysis of "state power, nationalism, citizenship, political violence, democracy, revolution and dictatorship being masculinist projects, informed by masculine institutions, requires hegemonic masculine processes and masculine actions" (Connell 1995 as cited in Nagel 1998: 243), I want to analyse violent masculine practices of religious and democratic institutions portrayed in their self-representation.

Chapter 3 : ISIS soldiers, religion and violence

 As noted earlier, it is possible to distinguish two types of ISIS videos out of 5 selected: the first type are videos made of images that support a song calling into recruitment; the second type are videos where supposed ISIS soldiers sit in front of cameras and invite their Muslims brother to join the fight of Islam. The music videos have moving images of ISIS soldiers marching into the battlefield, waving the banners of Islamic State in the vehicles confiscated from Iraqi military and rocket launchers. The videos are also boasting about all the equipment they confiscated from Iraqi military. Videos contain many images from the battlefield, where it shows ISIS soldiers bombing Iraqi posts, firing machine guns at Iraqi soldiers while chanting *Allah hu Akbar*. They show images of killed Iraqi soldiers and their own killed soldiers who are praised and portrayed as fallen brothers or martyrs. I analyze the lyrics of the songs and how lyrics create categories of 'us' and 'them'. I am particularly interested in how violence and religion are represented in relation to us/them categories.

The second category of video is where ISIS soldiers are themselves speaking into the camera. In these videos soldiers are not in the battlefield, though they look battle ready with the armors in their hands. They are always sitting in an open space (in a park, near a waterbody or with mountains in their background). Another aspect of the second category of videos is that they are targeted at particular regions and countries. Soldiers in these videos speak local languages and discuss local realities – such as Balkans, Indonesia, Australia and Britain.

All the videos considered for this research are available with English subtitles or with English narrations, which indicates that the desired audience of the videos is not only the people who are well versed in regional languages of Indonesia or Balkans, but a wider English speaking population of the world.

 This chapter will analyse how the ISIS videos represent the 'self' and the 'other' and, following Leudar et al's discussion on categorization, whether the video representation and the messages they contain have established any moral grounds for their actions and for future violence. Leudar et al argue that: "The presentations of events provide moral accounts of past actions and prepare the ground for the future violence –presentations and actions are closely related" (Leudar et al. 2004: 244).

The Islamic State's videos can be analysed through Connell's lens of masculinities in order to expand her concepts into religious violence and religious statehood being masculine projects. Feminist scholars like Kaplan (1982), Kennedy et al. (2005), Hearn (1987), Brown (1988) argue that the nation-state and religious projects have always rendered women invisible and have vastly excluded women not only from participation but also from the representation of these structures.

Cynthia Enloe in her book, Bananas, Beaches, and Bases points out that "nationalism has typically sprung from masculinized memory, masculinized humiliation and masculinized hope" (Enloe 1990: 45, as cited in Nagel 1998: 244). She also argues that "women are left with minor or symbolic roles in nationalist movements and conflicts, either as icons of nationhood, to be elevated and defended, to be denigrated and disgraced" (Enloe 1990: 45, as cited in Nagel 1998: 244). Her work around masculinities, nationalism and statehood is applied in this thesis to further elaborate on the findings.

The songs of praise: Representing ISIL and its project

The video titled "O soldiers of Truth" is speaking to and speaking of Islamic State soldiers, informing them that the Islamic State is established and calling them into the battles for expanding it:

> *"O soldiers of truth lets go*
> *Repeat the tune of endurance*
> *A light has illuminated in Shaam*
> *So rally all the soldiers*
> *The Islamic state has been established*
> *So wipe out all the borders*
> *Wherever our wars go*
> *Jewish Rabbis are humiliated (X2)*
> *Break the crosses and destroy the lineage of Grandsons of Monkeys*
> *The State of Tawheed will Remain in spite of the lies of the hateful people*
> *O soldiers of truth lets go*
> *Repeat the tune of endurance*
> *A light has illuminated in Shaam*
> *So rally all the soldiers*
> *The Islamic state has been established*
> *So wipe out all the borders*
> *Wherever our wars go*
> *Jewish Rabbis are humiliated (X2)"*

Video #1 (O soldiers of Truth)

This is asking the soldiers to go forward and wipe out all the borders. Islamic State openly denounces all the nation state and colonial projects. The video suggests an opposing stand of Islamic State against colonial, western democratic, and modern nation states promoted by secular actors. There is no space for democratic or western institutions in Islamic State as it calls them 'lineage of America, Jews and Christians to eradicate Islam, establishing that their fight is religious. Hence, it also does not recognize the Sykes-Picot border between Iraq and Syria and asks its soldiers to eradicate all the signs of colonial history. Instead of nation-state, ISIL promotes the idea of a global Islamic, religious-state.

The song represents the 'self' by portraying or rather claiming oneself to be of truth or on the side of truth, which immediately characterized the mentioned 'other' as liar or false. The self-portrayal of being truthful or on the right side of the war very much derives from the religious text and from the notion that their fight is for the god, characterizing the 'self" with a divine purpose. Such characterization establishes a moral ground for the category identification.

The video portrays the 'other' primarily as a religious other - the Jewish Rabbis and Christians, who need to be humiliated by the actions of Islamic state soldiers, who are called 'hateful people' and 'grandsons of monkeys'. The video mentions a place where the ISIS soldiers are operating, which is 'Sham' - Arabic for most of current Syrian territory and its neighbouring regions. In English, it is known as the 'Levant'. It is pointing out the geographical location of the Islamic state and revealing the geo-political context of their state-project. Geographical location of this claimed Islamic Caliphate is religiously critical for Muslims, as it plays a huge role in Islamic political heritage, for the Muslim population that feels connected by ideas of Islamic unity and its heritage. Prophecies of Prophet Moham-

mad towards 'Sham' or the 'Levant' become a promise for Muslims to make this region religiously sacred and politically crucial. Another group called 'Hizb ut- Tahrir' which claims to be a global Islamic political party seeking to establish Khilafah/Caliphate through intellectual liberation of Muslims, describes the importance of 'Sham' by quoting a hadith of Prophet Mohammad:

> *"Blessings to al-Shâm, blessings to al-shâm, blessings to al-Shâm!" (yâ tûbâ li al-Shâm). They asked why and he replied: "Because the wings of the angels of the Merciful are lowered over it"* (Hizb ut- Tahrir 2016: no page).

Prophecies by Prophet Muhammad play a crucial role in ISIS propaganda, as they invoke Muslim pride for Islam's historical conquests. Islamic State has the same desire as other Islamist groups, to establish a socio-political order that replicates Islam's pristine era.

The region that the video portrays on still images shows desert and rocky terrain where Islamic state soldiers are riding in the back of trucks, carrying machine guns and rocket propelled grenades. To valorise the Islamic State and its soldiers the video portrays Islamic State's might and arsenal, with rockets and missiles lined up, entourage of trucks mounted with machineguns, soldiers in black uniforms, with most of their faces covered with a black cloth marching in the desert hoisting black Islamic State flags with Quranic text on it 'La ilaha illalha' (there is only one god – Allah).

Such categorization of the 'self' – as morally right, religiously demarcated and militarily powerful - makes it easy to divide the 'self' and 'other', where self is defending the honour of Islam and has a divine purpose, the 'other' is hateful liars and humiliated by soldiers of Islamic State. Using Leudar and Marsland's (2004) lens such demarcation of identities and the presentation of events provide a ground not only for justification of violence portrayed in the video, but also dehumanizes the 'other', and thus justifies preparations of future violence. Islamic State soldiers are portrayed as brave men, who can endure the hardships of battlefield, who not only can defeat their enemies but can also defeat them in a humiliating manner.

The second song titled "Let's go for Jihad" has moving imagery of ISIS soldiers fighting in the war zone with bombs falling in the background. The lyrics asks Muslim men to join the fight of ISIS for the sake of children and sisters of Muslim men. The video further has fractions of ISIS soldiers shooting at what seems like enemy soldiers. It also shows scenes of gun fighting, cars exploding in what seems like a city or town. Islamic State soldiers fighting around buildings firing at enemy soldiers and chanting *Allah - hu- Akbar* (Allah is great).

The song categorizes the actors as *'brothers'* who are also addressed as *'you'* and *'we'*. 'We' is identifying with the Islamic Soldiers, who are fighting with Islamic state's ranks, and *'you'* is for Muslim men who have not joined the fight. The song is asking them to join the fight for Islamic State. The 'brothers' is an overarching category to identify with Muslim men, which consists of two different sub categories. Sub category one of mentioned identity *'brothers'* is speaking of the Muslim men who have either already joined the ranks of Islamic State or are migrating to Iraq and Syria to join Islamic State's ranks. Sub category two is addressing Muslim men who have not joined the ranks of Islamic State yet.

Both songs maintain a tone of authoritative obligation and of collective responsibility of the group (Muslim men) in its call for action and migration to Syria, suggesting that it is a divine duty especially of Muslim brothers to fight for the security, honour, dignity and authority of the collective Muslim identity. This call for action finds its justification in the religious obligation of Islam.

The lyrics also represent the 'self' by using the adjective 'we' which is followed by actions that are characterized as we 'fight', 'slaughter till the day of judgment' 'setting forth'

and 'we went out and gave everything'. Further enquiry of the lyrics reveals the moral grounds for the fight and violence, which justify the events in the line of religion, or for a divine purpose. ISIS represents itself as violent in this song, though justifies is violence in the name of religion and the honour of Muslim men. its See for example:

> *"And we will not stop*
> *Until the word of Allah is the highest*
> *The black flags rise up*
> *There is only one god and we testify this with our blood, with our death until we fall in battle*
> *With harshness we fight in front of the gates of paradise"*

<div align="right">Excerpt from Video #2 (Let's go for Jihad)</div>

As mentioned above 'us' is divided into two categories. The second category of actors are asked to join the fight by using rhetoric around 'your' failure to fulfil 'your' religious obligation. A humiliating tone is used which is playing on uselessness of the second category of 'Muslim men' who are not taking part in these campaigns, as the text ask the brothers to join the fight for their Muslims brothers and sisters who are crying, shouting and dying. They are being shamed for sitting in comfort and blinded by the world while 'your' brothers are giving their blood to the cause. For example, 'brothers who are already there':

> *"They are coming from everywhere, the soldiers of honour, unstoppable on battlefield*
> *Let's go for the defense of the messenger (SAW)*
> *They have recognized their obligations*
> *They are destroying the enemies*
> *No more disease in the heart*
> *Because they love to die*
> *And the satisfaction of our lord is the goal*
> *Therefore, we went out*
> *We gave everything*
> *And call you to the land of honour"*

<div align="right">Excerpt from Video #2 (Let's go for Jihad)</div>

Brothers who have not joined the fight:

> *"But the people don't want to understand*
> *Blinded by this world"*

<div align="right">Excerpt from Video #2 (Let's go for Jihad)</div>

As demonstrated in the above mentioned excerpt, the only time the text hints at the otherisation of any identity is when it is either addressing the enemies or to the Muslims who don't want to take actions on the lines of Islamic State. They are addressed as people rather than 'brothers' which depersonalizes or rather suggests disowning of the people who are not taking part in their actions. Even though religion is a unifying factor for Muslim men, they are still defined differently. The fighters of Islamic state are described as brave, responsible, worthy of honour and obligated to religion, the 'brothers' who have not joined the fight are described as blinded by the modern world who likes to stay in comfort.

Songs of masculinities

Both the songs specifically address Muslim men, while completely excluding women. The sense of men's ownership on decision making about religious struggles, actions or obligations is expressed throughout the video. They are completely occupied by a discussion with and for Muslim men. The video creates a sense that Muslim identity, honour and dignity are fundamental matters for men to discuss and take actions around. Women are only portrayed as a subject of Muslim men's responsibility who are to be saved and protected from the enemy. The power and agency of decision making and to take action, not only as combatants but also as leaders, is portrayed to be in the hands of men who are deciding the fate of not only religious identity but are also deciding the obligations of Muslims.

'Self-imagery' is enshrouded by masculine principles which comes from a gendered perspective and is based on heteronormative gendered roles of men. They are portrayed as defenders of their sisters, mothers and children. The soldiers in the songs are portrayed as 'men' who are strong and compared to 'lions'. Fearless men who are willing to die for the dignity, honour, respect and leadership of the religion. They are portrayed as men who can defend their women and children, men who will not sit around while their women are being exploited and are brave enough, powerful enough to fight for their dignity and honour. Such representation also highlights another patriarchal masculinist understanding of honour, where the woman in man's life defines his honour and dignity: men who will kill and destroy anyone who does not agree or follow their religion, men who are ready to use violence against their opponents, and are even willing to die for it. While the men who are taking actions are seen as brave, honourable and respected, the men who are not taking actions are mocked and humiliated for being coward and not being able to defend and avenge the exploitation of their women and children.

This willingness is not coming out of vacuum; it has a religious purpose and a divine duty behind it. Does this mean that informing principles of such violent masculinities are rooted in the religion and in divine rule? As revealed by the analysis, the justification of Islamic State's campaign lies in the religious obligations of Muslims men who are compelled to fight for their religious honour and for their God. There is a divine goal at the other side of this violence.

Your religion needs you: call for Muslim brothers

Unlike the last 2 videos, these videos feature Islamic State soldiers, who are talking directly to the camera, asking their Muslim brothers to join them. The video message titled 'There is no life without Jihad' features 5 Islamic State soldiers with a Islamic State flag talking directly at the camera, giving reasons to the audience for joining their fight. Most of the men in this set of video message and the other set of videos are using masculine shame of not being able to be a good Muslim, not being able to defend their wives, sisters and children as reasons to join ISIS' fight. Unlike the previous videos that use songs about Islamic state and the bravery of its soldiers, in this video Islamic State's soldiers are sharing their experiences and personal stories to connect with its audience who they call 'Muslim brothers'.

Three soldiers in the video titled 'There is no life without Jihad' claiming to be from Britain and two are claiming to be from Australia. The video is recorded in English, which suggests that it is meant for English speaking audience in this case British and Australian Muslims. The second video titled 'Honour is in Jihad' features eight soldiers. The soldiers claim to be from the Balkans and are speaking in the regional language. The video provides subtitles in English as well. In the third video titled 'Join the Ranks' soldiers claim to be

from Indonesia. Physical features of the soldiers can be identified as Indonesian, same goes for the language that the soldiers are speaking in. The video is targeted at the Indonesian Muslim population, as the speaker is making his speech in Bahasa and asking his Muslim brothers from Indonesia to join their fight.

The videos are occupied with 'self', as all the other videos of ISIS, the self is more of an umbrella term for collective Muslim identity. Where the 'self' is further divided into two categories 'we' who have already migrated and are seen as the true Muslims who care for the religion and Muslims, 'you' who is questioned, for not taking actions or for not migrating to Syria to join ISIS. 'We' or 'self' is portrayed as valorised and compassionate towards the Muslims of the world. 'We' is working to raise the honour of Muslim 'ummah'. In contrary to 'We' the 'Taghut' or 'non believer' is portrayed as corrupt, oppressor, and unjust, who humiliates Muslims. For example:

> *"We are your brothers from Indonesia who have come to the Islamic State. We send our Salam to you all. We ask Allah the Exalted to bless you with His acceptance, and we ask him to raise your honour and grant you victory"*

> Excerpt from video#4, Abu Muhammad al Indonesi

ISIS videos categorize the 'other' as 'Jews' and 'America', who are Islam's and Islamic state's enemies. Who 'mocks the rule of Islamic god', 'humiliates Muslims', 'violates Muslim sisters' and 'kill Muslims children', while on the contrary Islamic state is the one who is saving Muslims from being killed and reclaiming their honour and dignity. 'We' is making sacrifices and are at the peak of their religion (Islam) because they are making sacrifices and fighting for the religious honour. The argument presented in the text is seeking a single collective identity of Muslims all across the globe, and asking them to respond for the humiliation faced by Muslims wherever in the world. See for example:

> *"A message from a Muslim brother's heart to another brother's heart. Palestine, a long time it's been gone, it's been pounded, the Jews have taken it. Our sisters in Fellujah day after day, they are giving birth to deformed babies. Look at the disgraced this ummah is going through."*

> Excerpt from video #3 (Soldier #3 –Abu Yahya ash Shami)

By drawing on collective Muslim identity, the video messages also establish a moral, ethical and religious justification to their actions, which is characterized under the category of god, Allah, Quran and Prophet Mohammad. The 'others' are clearly characterized in the videos as: *'trying to destroy Khilafah (Islamic State), 'use every means to prevent Muslims from uniting together', 'they fought Islam using communism', 'forcefully attempted to eradicate Islam from the lives of Muslims,' 'The crusaders', who set to eradicate all traces of Islam', 'who killed thousands of Muslim men and youth'* and *'killed children'.*

The justification of these representations is rooted in the religious text as the soldiers keep referring to Quran, Allah and Prophet. The religious framework is prominent in the call for joining the war for Islam and Muslims. The message asks its audience to sacrifice, as it is their duty to make sacrifices for their god and their religion in order to attain honour for themselves and for the Muslims around the world. The soldiers one by one ask the same thing in the video and ground the justification of Islamic State's campaign in religious obligation to please their god.

An assertion of the speaker of being right and on the right side of the fight can be traced throughout all the videos taken for this research. A justification that has been provided for migration to Syria and Iraq in Islamic State's recruitment videos is that whatever

actions are being taken by Islamic State are right as they are for God, while any inactions are just efforts of derailing Muslims from their religious path. See for example:

"When you want to know who is upon the haq and my brothers and sisters you need to look to the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad sallallahu salam he said the land of sham is the best of lands from Allah. He has made this the best of his land and he chooses the best of people to come here. So you see where the muhajirin are and this is the biggest evidence that they are upon the haq and by Allah. I don't know anybody else that has as many muhajirin as we do."

<div align="center">Excerpt from Video #3 (Abu Muthanna al Yemeni from Britain)</div>

Or

"And alhamdulillah the flags of tawheed are once again being raised and the honor that the deen is coming back and the deen is established. So wake up."

<div align="center">Excerpt from Video #3 (Abu Yahya ash Shami from Australia)</div>

The moral ground also establishes the ground for 'self' valorisation, as 'we' is portrayed as brave religious men who are participating in battles and winning them, brave soldiers who are willing to fight in different regions. Arguments are also presented to portray the sorry and humiliated state of Muslims, which compelled these soldiers to join ISIS. The argument also mentions Muslim women; however they rather have passive to no presence in all their videos. The portrayal or mention of women is mostly as victims of rape and torture by the kuffar (non-believer). See for example:

"The Crusaders were now set to eradicate all traces of Islam from the Balkan Peninsula. Thousands and thousands of Muslims men and youth were killed or tortured in concentration camps. Our children were killed and our sisters were systematically raped and slaughtered. The ummah was shocked yet again. Shocked because they failed to read Allah's warning."

<div align="center">Excerpt from video #5 (Honour is in Jihad)</div>

Even though the videos categorize Muslims who are being humiliated, tortured and raped, it uses this rhetoric to justify ISIS's actions (establishing an Islamic State) and valorise themselves for taking revenge for what allegedly has been done to Muslims in Balkans and in other parts of the world. See for example:

"the Ummah of Islam is the Ummah of the brave, the Ummah of Islam is the Ummah of the lions. The Ummah of Islam should be united so that the word of Allah is the highest and the word of the taghut and the enemies of Allah is the lowest. Today, the Muslims live in dignity with their families and their brothers, because they are fighting to raise the word of Allah."

<div align="center">Excerpt from video #5 (Honour is in Jihad)</div>

Manhood of brothers and Islamic state

The three videos highlight how the message is generated from a gendered perspective and plays on the heteronormative gendered roles of men and women, where Muslim men are asked to join the ranks and play an active role in establishment of the collective religious identity, while women are only being mentioned with limited agency or decision-making power. Muslim women's religious identity is largely defined by them being a subject of Muslim men's protection. Speakers even use example from the times of Prophet Mohammad to inflict guilt on the audience. See for example:

"Have you forgotten that the companions of Allah's Messenger (PBUH) emigrated for jihad to Sham? Before that they were ordered to emigrate from Makkah to Madinah? They obeyed without hesitation and did not look for excuses."

<div align="right">Excerpt from video#4, Abu Mohammad al Indonesi</div>

And

"They went to Madinah seeking Allah's pleasure. They were not half hearted my brothers.

There were also sahabiyyat (Female Companions) who emigrated without their families' permission There was a pregnant shabiyyah who travelled in the hot sun and extreme heat out of love for Allah and obedience to Him."

<div align="right">Excerpt from video#4, Abu Mohammad al Indonesi</div>

Above-mentioned statements demonstrate the use of shame, guilt and humiliation of Muslim men's masculinities, to compel to join forces with ISIS. The mention of pregnant women and women joining fights for Islam while 'you' are staying home in your comfort suggests a mockery on the manhood of Muslims who are incapable to defend their religion. Usage of such arguments draws upon the concepts of normative masculinity where men's masculine identity is defined by their virility, courage, bravery and will power

Even though the video messages are mostly occupied with the 'self' (i.e. Muslims), yet the self is divided in 'us' who is brave and powerful to join the fight and 'them' or 'you' who is sitting in comfort while their brothers are dying on the front line. See for example:

"…don't you want to show Allah that you have given anything for him? Ask yourself what prevents you and what keeps you behind"

<div align="right">Excerpt from Video #3 (Abu Dujana al Hindi from Britain)</div>

Or

"Ask yourself is this what I have selected, is this what I have chosen instead of Jannah (Paradise), while you know your brothers are there on the front lines facing bullets, bombs and everything that the enemies of Allah has. While you are sitting there in comfort, while you are sleeping, while you are going shopping,"

<div align="right">Excerpt from Video #3 (Abu Dujana al Hindi from Britain)</div>

Or

"know that on the day of judgment when Allah resurrects you naked and you have your sins on your neck, Allah is gonna show you the sisters that got violated, the child that got beheaded for being a Muslim and they will be brought in front of you. The brothers who gave their lives their bodies will be shown to you and Allah will ask you and you won't be able to respond on that day your tongue will be tied"

<div align="right">Excerpt from Video #3 (Abu Dujana al Hindi from Britain)</div>

The fear of losing one's masculine identity is used for mobilization of men to join Islamic State's fight, where the claims made by soldiers defines the role of a good or true Muslim man to defend, protect, fight and use violence in order to attain the highest religious status.

The informing principles of messages is enshrouded with gendered perspective of religious and socio-political discourse, where Muslims men who have migrated are seen as the masculinized heroes who are defending and shielding the sanctity of Muslim Ummah with their own blood. They are portrayed as heroes 'who are bringing the Muslim ummah out of

the darkness and into the light', enlightened men, who are brave to fight with not just one but multiple enemies for the dignity and honour of Muslim Ummah.

The message also creates an image of an oppressor, 'who is out to kill', 'rape and torture Muslim women', 'children and men who are not able to defend themselves'. By drawing on that argument, the speaker is also putting down other men who have not migrated to join the fight. This sub category of men within 'Muslim men' category is identified with children and women who are supposedly not being able to defend themselves. Such interactions of inferiority and superiority is laden with heteronormative perspectives of gender identity and roles. This perspective puts the Muslim men who have joined the fight in a position of authority and honour with in Muslims who are portrayed as defenders and saviours of the religious identity, dignity and honour.

Conclusion: Masculinized memory, masculinized humiliation and masculinized hope of Islamic state[2]

Analysis of this chapter can be concluded in the lines of Connell's theories of masculinities (2002, 2003 and 2005) and Enloe's (2014) argument of masculinized memory, masculinized humiliation and masculinized hope finds their ground in the self-representation of Islamic State. Self-representation of Islamic State in videos can be seen from the lens of 'manly virtues' described by Mosse (1996, as cited in Nagel 1998: 245) as "'normative masculinity' which includes willpower, honour, courage, discipline, competitiveness, strength, stoicism, persistence and dignity". Recruiting videos of Islamic state through the textual and visual representations not only portray Islamic State soldiers as men who are at the peaks of masculine expression but also demand of them to continue with these expressions as if these are the only blueprints available to continue their campaign for the collective honour and dignity of Muslims.

Many scholars argue that there is no universal standard of masculinity as can be seen from Gilmore's (1980) research on cross cultural conception of masculinity, *'Manhood in the Making'.* There is still a consensus among scholars, that at any time, in any place, there is an identifiable 'normative' or 'hegemonic' masculinity that defines the standards for male demeanour, thinking and action (Connell 2005). This can be witnessed in the self-representation of Islamic State. All the above-discussed categorization of 'self' and 'other' when analysed through the theories of masculinities to elaborate the gendered perspective gives deeper understanding of what Connell calls masculinist projects.

ISIS held institutional power in the territories of Islamic State through violence, while they find justification of cultural authority in their religious claims. However, there is a clearly a hierarchy between the soldiers of Islamic state and the Muslim men who have not joined their campaign. By drawing upon religious responsibilities and military actions, they are portrayed as better Muslim men than the ones who are not fighting for Islam.

A path of righteousness and religious truthfulness that defines the existence and identity of Muslim men is seemed to be resting on their actions and sacrifices for the honour of religious identity, where the establishment of religious identity in return provides honour,

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[2] Masculinized memory, masculinized humiliation and masculinized hope is the statement I borrowed from Cynthia Enloe's work *'Banana Beaches and Bases'* 2014, to elaborate if further in the context of ISIS and Religious masculinity.

respect and authority to Muslim men in this world and hereafter. This intertwined transaction between establishment of religious identity and authority of Muslim men reflects the informing principles of Muslim men's socio-political interaction where violence, authority, honour and religious status are key features of this interaction.

Based on Connell's analyses of hegemony as a claim to cultural authority and institutional power, ISIS's justification of Islamic State's campaign and its soldiers can be defined by the Connell's interpretation of masculinities. ISIS through its discourse is countering the hegemony of U.S nationhood and its military, therefore based on the analysis it can be concluded that ISIS representations are masculine and violent. It can also be argued that, their discourse is attempting to replace or denounce the democratic notions of masculinity. In the next chapter, we will analyse if there is any overlap between the notions of masculinities between the institutional discourses of ISIS and U.S Military.

Chapter 4 : U.S Military, Masculinity, Nationhood and Violence

"We dominate the skies, we dominate the sea, we dominate the land and space"

('Trump's speech in Yokota Air Base Japan', 2017)

While Donald Trump was claiming United States domination in the sky, sea and land by praising the U.S. Army as the cornerstone of U.S democracy and freedom, his words were resonating with the masculine architecture of nationhood and violent institutions obsessed with power, conquest and domination. By highlighting the above-mentioned statement this section will analyse U.S Army recruitment videos through juxtaposing nationhood, violence and masculinities. This is necessary to pursue a deeper understanding of relationship between violent masculinities and ideals of nationhood in United States of America.

For identification of the 'us' and 'them' categorisation in the U.S. recruitment videos, this chapter will use 11 U.S Army recruitment videos in order to understand how nationhood and violence is represented in these categories. Does nationhood legitimize violent institutions? If so, then how do ideals of masculinity play a role in creation of these identities? As compared to the ISIS videos, the desired audience of the U.S Army recruitment videos is located in the geographical boundary of U.S.A, where the desired actors are mostly able-bodied men and women. Even though U.S Army recruitment looks more inclusive of women and gender neutral in its approach, Moira Gattens' (Gattens 1983: 156, as cited in Cregan 2006: 133) claim stands strong, that gender neutral representations and practices are not neutral "but 'masculinization' or 'normalization' where men are seen as the norm and standard of women". The eraser or suppression of normative female identity is achieved through uniform and drill.

The recruitment videos for the sake of this research are divided in two categories. Category 1 is talking about U.S army as a lethal, modernized and most powerful force in the world, where category 2 elaborates how important the U.S Army soldiers are for the security and defence of its nation's freedom.

Both kinds of videos have images of U.S soldiers marching in the battlefield with battle gears and equipment. In the videos the U.S Army arsenal and military prowess are portrayed as respected and the bedrock of U.S achievements as a Nation. Later in the chapter, we will learn that in comparison with ISIS recruitment videos, U.S Army videos do not have a clear enemy. In fact, unlike ISIS videos the U.S Army's is focused on the 'self' and call for action is rather inclined towards it being the best of the best force in the world, which the recruits should feel proud to join. Another interesting aspect about U.S Army recruitment videos is that the battlefield for the soldiers is always outside United States, mostly in the dessert of Afghanistan or Iraq. Same as the previous chapter this chapter also uses masculinities theories by R.W. Connell (2002, 2003 and 2005) and Cynthia Enloe's (2014) analysis of nationhood and masculinist projects to understand the self-representation of U.S. Army and the relationship of masculinities, violence and nationhood.

Invincible Self and Invisible Other

U.S Army recruitment videos very rarely mention an enemy from whom the land of United States has to be protected. In the 11 videos the 'other' has been mentioned only 4 times and has been referred to as: 'Oppressive regimes', 'Hostile government' or 'Occupying force', 'adversary' and 'enemy', where the 'self' is represented as rather invincible and the most powerful around the world. The videos use a language of self-valorisation and pride. **The U.S Army Song** reveals this invisibility of the enemy and invincibility of the US Army dynamics quite clearly

> *March along, sing a song with the Army of the free*
> *Count the brave, count the true,*
> *Who have fought to victory, We are the army and proud of our name*
> *We are the Army and proudly proclaim*
> *First to fight for the right*
> *And to build the Nation's might*
> *And the Army goes rolling along*
> *Proud of all we have done,*
> *Fighting till the battle's won, and the army goes rolling along.*
> *Then its Hi! Hi! Hey!*
> *The Army's on its way.*
> *Count off the cadence loud and strong*
> *For wherever we go,*
> *You will always know*
> *That the army goes rolling along.*

Video #11 (U.S Army Song)

Unlike ISIS songs, the U.S Army song is completely occupied with 'self', where 'self' is portrayed as free, brave and true, the U.S Army is proud of all that it has done, the 'battles it has won for the nation and its might'. One similarity between the representation of both the institutions is that both call themselves as 'true' and 'brave'. The army is proudly proclaiming its existence, claiming to fight for the right. However a question that lingers on is the authority of deciding the 'right' that is to be fought for. It is necessary to question, under what circumstances and by what measures the U.S Army decides right from wrong. Who are the adversaries? Why are they categorised as enemies and what is the perceived threat from these enemies? The call for joining the best force in the world does not portray a clear sketch of the threat from which United States of America is to be defended. Rather, the call for action only suggests that their world is becoming dangerous as a reason for U.S army to augment their capacity as a lethal force that can win and disrupt. See for example:

> *"Our world is becoming increasingly dangerous as traditional governments are failing and oppressive regimes take their place spreading chaos and turmoil. Today's warfighter must continue to adapt to unfamiliar environments and technological advancements used by our adversaries in ungoverned areas."*

Excerpt from video# 2 (U.S. Army Special Forces)

The call for action against this invisible enemy is laden with self-valorisation on the lines of rightfulness, modernization, democracy, freedom and the American way of life. The U.S Army is represented as a modern, fast, violent, intensely lethal and a superior force. This self-representation is grounded in the principles of hegemonic masculinity, which strives for

control of power and dominance by establishing superiority. Most of the times this superiority is attained through violence, suppression and materialistic advantages. See for example:

> *"Close Combat on sensor –rich battlefields of the future will be faster, more violent, and intensely lethal unlike anything any of us have witnessed (Gen. Mark A. Milley, Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army). Modernizing for greater lethality. Change our approach. Utilize technology. Maintain war fighter superiority"*

<div align="center">Recruitment video #1 (The U.S Army: an intensely lethal force)</div>

The maintenance of 'war fighter superiority' is reflected in the representation of the U.S. Army soldiers, who are seen as able-bodied, strong men. Men 'who possess unique skills' and 'qualifications', 'who don't strive for the minimum', 'men who are individually selected' and 'especially trained through the Army's most rigorous program'. These men receive speciality training on weapons, engineering and are ready to 'coerce', 'disrupt', 'deploy', 'fight and 'win' their nation's wars. Compared to ISIL, U.S Army ranks do have more women in it, yet their deployment and tasks are limited compared to men and are more passive. Even in the recruitment videos, the number of times men have occupied the screen space is radically high. The women on the other hand, have very limited screen space and when they do, they are only limited to symbolic representation or shown doing traditionally considered feminine tasks (such as mothers sitting in a park with children, or working in the army as doctors and nurses). Until 2018, women made up to 16 percent of active U.S Army (Reynolds and Shendruk 2018, no page)

Patriotism of these soldiers is judged on their will to defend the idea of nation that is United States of America. It is stressed in the videos that U.S.A faces threats and challenges, the world is becoming increasingly dangerous and American way of life, American freedom and American family is to be defended. See for example:

> *"Our world is becoming increasingly dangerous. Today's soldier must continue to adapt to unfamiliar environments and technological advancements used by our adversaries. America's army is the best trained and equipped fighting force in history capable of conquering of any fall on any terrain. Do you possess the strength to answer the calling of a soldier?"*

<div align="center">Video#3 (A dangerous World)</div>

Or

> *"The threats and challenges our nation faces demand that America's Army prepares to be ready for future warfare."*

<div align="center">Excerpt from Video #5 (Army Vision)</div>

Or

> *"I stand ready to deploy, engage and destroy the enemies of the United States of America in close combat. I am a guardian of freedom and the American way of life"*

<div align="center">Excerpt from Video #8 (Soldier's Creed)</div>

In the context of Iraq war, United States' actions are projected as the guardian of freedom and liberty. Iraq war is not just projected as defending U.S.A and the American way of life but is also claimed to be U.S.A's action to fight a bigger enemy which is not only attacking U.S.A but is also an oppressor, human rights violator and mass murderer of innocent people of poor country. Based on the selection of words to describe United States Army and it actions (i.e. the best trained and best equipped fighting force in the history), self-representation in the recruitment videos establishes an upper hand of U.S. Army in any bat-

tlefield. US Army is a strong, powerful and hegemonic structure using its hegemonic institutions to defend the poor and weak people of Iraq who are subjected of oppression and violence. Ironically, the eradication of violence and oppression is seemed to be only achieved through advanced means and machinery of violence. Interestingly, United States as a nation of free, civilized, modern people, as saviour of poor and weak can only maintain its identity through lethality and violence. See for example:

> *"Modernizing for greater lethality, change our approach, utilize technology, Maintain war-fighter superiority"*

> Video #1 The U.S Army and intensely lethal force

This notion of nationhood is enshrouded with "masculinized hope and masculinized memory" (Enloe 2014: 106), which wants to defend the poor women from the oppression of their partners and violence of radicals. In this effort, the participation of women in nationalist project remains underrepresented, passive and symbolic. This includes not only American women who are joining the U.S Army and perpetuating the cycle of masculine ideas of nationhood, but also Muslim women who are working with or supporting the U.S invasion of Iraq. How are their voices represented in the democratic nations' counter terrorism actions and the war on radical Islam? "Nationalist movements rarely have taken women's experiences as the starting point for an understanding of how a people becomes colonized or how it throws off the shackles of that material and psychological domination" (Enloe 2014: 106). Same is true for the ideals of nationhood for the United States of America. Which is visible in the principles of United States Armed forces and patriotism of U.S soldiers.

I Am an American Soldier

In comparison with Islamic State's soldiers, U.S. Army soldiers are not persuaded to join the Army to reclaim their lost honour or avenge the humiliation of their women and their dignity. Their recruitment is rather projected as a challenge to their masculinity. The recruitment videos always maintain competitive masculine messages for the desired recruits. See for Example:

> *"I am a U.S Army soldier*
> *I am a Warrior and a member of a team*
> *I serve the people of the United States and live the Army values*
> *I will always place the mission first*
> *I will never accept defeat*
> *I will never quit*
> *I will never leave a fallen comrade*
> *I am disciplined physically and mentally tough, trained and proficient in my warrior tasks and drills*
> *I always maintain my arms, my equipment and myself*
> *I am an expert and I am a professional"*

> Video#8 (Soldier's Creed)

Or

> *"The need is great for those who can rise to the challenge. We are looking for volunteers who possess courage, integrity, perseverance and the desire to answer the calling of the soldier elite. 'The Oppresso Liber' - Free the oppressed (United State Army Special Forces) Embrace the challenge."*

> Excerpt from Video #2 (U.S. Army Special Forces)

Or

"The U.S Army has defended the American people for more than 240 years. Our soldiers, true patriots and American heroes have proven themselves in combats on battlefields across the world. Today, the Army's mission remains constant: To deploy, fight and win our nation's wars. This mission is vital to our nations and to the American people. To protect our way of life, our Army prepares for battle. Training to defeat any enemy anywhere and at any time."

Excerpt from Video # 5 (Army Vision)

In the above mentioned messages violence gets legitimized in the name of nationhood and gets valorised through masculine achievements. The soldiers are seen as true patriots and American heroes because of whom the American way of life has sustained and prospered. Violence in the name of nationhood makes these men American heroes. Men for whom *'mission comes first'* and *'mission failure is not an option'* where in this dangerous world the 'other' (i.e. oppressive regimes) are spreading chaos and turmoil, United States of America and its Soldiers are the beacon of freedom and peace. They are the 'liberators of the oppressed' where freeing the oppressed is also projected as a challenge. As if there is a competition going on between men; one wants to rule and control the people on the line of religious fundamentalism, while the other wants to lead by liberal values. Interestingly, both only know the use of force to gather people in a collective and make them follow these ideals. This authority becomes the desired form of masculine ideals which results in these ideals becoming hegemonic.

Such traits get further augmented when the soldiers are taught never to accept defeat and to never back down. United States of America takes pride in use of violence and destruction for the supposed liberation of the oppressed. It takes pride in its 'technological advancements', 'modernisation', the skills to 'coerce and disrupt', in its 'courage', 'perseverance' and 'capability of conquering any fall on any terrain'. This project seems to be only achieved through 'unmatched lethality'. The soldiers are portrayed as figures of hegemonic masculine saviour, who makes the force that ensures victory and will go to any extent to modernize and upgrade its machinery of violence to be effective. These men in return of their services and sacrifices receive masculine benefits that make the project of nationhood and militarism even more desirable. As can be seen in the following recruitment call:

"This is the uniform of the U.S. Army soldier
It can make you stronger
It can make you wiser
More substantial
More respected"

Excerpt from video #9 (Symbol of Strength- More than a Uniform)

Respect can be earned through victory for the nation and victory can only be achieved through brute force, lethality and strength. Violence for nation's identity is respected. In a heterosexual patriarchal structure, men's respect and honour is attached with masculine ideals. Embeddedness of violence in realisation of hegemonic masculinity and the benefits for its practitioners is deeply intertwined. They do not only attain superiority as warrior but also gain social and political authority while already reaping benefits from patriarchal capital or should we say – this authority is a result of patriarchal capital.

Conclusion: The clash of religious men and the liberators

Hegemonic masculinity in the context of United States Army, which is defined by social, cultural and political discourses, compared with the ideals of masculinity in the context of a

religious state and its army (IS) are not very different. In the apparatus of international politics of identity and global structure of masculinity, Muslim men fall into what R.W. Connell described as marginalised masculinity. (Connell 2005: 80). However, the religious context of Muslim men and their role in the establishment of an Islamic State carries context-specific ideals of masculinity, which is trying to counter this hegemony. This counter is respected, honoured and consequently desired. If one is to draw a parallel between the ideals of hegemonic masculinity of both U.S Army and Islamic State, the difference between the two is very thin.

Religion for Islamic State becomes the source for legitimization as the victory in the line of religion provides religious dividend to the soldiers in this life and hereafter. As the song titled – "Let's go for Jihad" points out. Authority, dignity and honour for Islamic State soldiers is rooted in the protection of Muslim women and children. Women carrying any other identity, such as: Yazidi, Western or liberal are not deemed worthy enough of their protection or respect. At the same time, a masculine need to reclaim the lost honour and avenge the humiliation by the non-believer is further augmenting these beliefs.

United States' Army is rather projected as the liberator of oppressed. Brave, righteous men out on the battlefield defending the exploited. Such characterisation of 'self' seems to be emerging from self-righteousness of United States of America. This self-righteousness is visible in speeches of national leaders of United States, praising the courage and actions of its soldiers.

Nation building project of U.S.A is resting on the categorisation of 'us' who is to be defended from the 'outsider' or 'invader'. Furthermore, it is also projected as the defender of freedom, civilization, modernisation and liberty. The dangerous 'other' is creating chaos and turmoil in the world, which seemingly can only be curbed through violent means. United States of America takes pride in its contribution to the idea of free and civilized nationhood and their way of life, where the interaction with the 'other' is largely conducted in the language of violence. It is this clash between 'us' and 'them' augmented with the rhetoric of cultural and moral superiority and civilisation that defines the violent means. As demonstrated in the previous chapters, Donald Trump's words align with the self-representation of the U.S Army, giving it a stamp of authority. See for example:

"I solemnly swear that I will support and defend the constitution of the United States against all enemies foreign and domestic."

U.S Army recruitment video #4 (Oath of Enlistment)

Or

"Today, the Army's mission remains constant: To deploy, fight and win our nation's wars. This mission is vital to our nations and to the American people. To protect our way of life, our Army prepares for battle."

Excerpt from U.S Army video #5 (Army Vision)

Acceptance and further augmentation of the strength and prowess of military institution is legitimizing the violent masculine discourses. As demonstrated in the self-representation of U.S Army and Islamic State, self-praise and constant effort in attaining superiority further sanctify such discourses, where violence through masculine principles of strength, superiority, victory, power, bravery, destruction and courage becomes the tool of domination and authority. U.S.A provides legitimacy to its military and gives monopoly over brute violence in the name of nationhood, freedom and liberty, normalising violence as a tool to meet the political ends.

U.S Army' representations does find grounds in Connell's (2005) analyses of hegemony through 'cultural authority' and 'institutional power' where discourses of nationhood seek

'bravery in violence' for the protection of national identity. However, the analysis also reveal that U.S. Army is not limiting its representation to just traditional masculine ideals, it is creating a hybrid hegemonic masculinity. Which is not limiting itself to traditional notions of masculinity, violence, cultural authority and institutional power. U.S soldiers are not only portrayed as brave, powerful and violent but are also modern professionals who are techologically advanced and economically better. It also allows women to be a part of the military institution and break the traditional notion of violence being an exclusive tool of men to assert power, though it limits their participation. This argument finds its grounding Brown's (2012) claims that military has the ability to 're-forge' traditional notions of masculinity with modern notions of masculinity as long as it maintains men's authority over culture and institutions.

Chapter 5 Conclusion

Masculinities theories on militarised violence as a means of dominance for the projects of religion and nationhood offer twofold arguments. Firstly, we have to understand and acknowledge that the decision-making actors and active participants of violent institutions are dominantly men, be it army generals, majors, soldiers, the founding fathers of the idea of nation or religion. The weighing scale of political power, political and religious authority, patriarchal dividend and social capital has a clear inclination towards one gender.

Secondly, these violent discourses are outcomes of what Enloe (2014: 106) called "masculinized memory, masculinized hope, and masculinized humiliation". Socially and culturally ingrained understanding of masculinities runs through the veins of violent institutions, where hegemony of able-bodied men is further planted by rigorous training on masculine ideals, while simultaneously excluding women from decision-making or by reducing their participation to symbolism. These social relations of gender are both realised and symbolised in the soldier's performance. It serves as a symbolic proof of men's superiority and right to rule.

As demonstrated in the previous chapters, the soldierly performance for abled body men are projected as realisation of gender relations and their gender identity. These gender identities are laden with power structures resulting in dominance and control over political and religious authorities. The analysis of U.S Army and Islamic State in previous chapters highlights these patterns of masculine domination emerging from masculinized hope and masculinized memory.

On the one hand the U.S Army characterizes its soldiers as ideal men who are well trained and equipped with modern means of lethality and destruction, soldiers who are 'willing to rise to the challenge', 'who are not willing to accept defeat', who are 'courageous, strong, ready to defeat, disrupt and destroy their enemies' for their nation. On the other hand, Islamic State characterizes its soldiers as 'brave', respected men who 'will not stop' until their religious goals are realized, men who are 'willing to die', who are willing to 'destroy their enemies' 'men who are ready to face bullets and bombs' for their religion. The characterisation of the soldiers by both the U.S Army and the Islamic State have similar masculine understanding of the 'ideal' soldier. However, for the two institutions motivation for violent actions are rooted in different discourses. Islamic State locates its legitimization of violence in religious text and religious values, while the U.S Army finds its motivation in the ideals of modern liberal nationhood.

At one hand, U.S Army defines itself as the supreme fighting force and maintains absolute dominance over all forms of military warfare and discourses of nationhood. Its holds hegemony over the discourses of masculinity and military violence. ISIS on the other hand, tries to counter this hegemony by rejecting U.S model of masculinity and perceives it as its arch nemesis. U.S Army's pursuit of authority relies on modernisation, where U.S militarized masculinity is modern and hybrid. U.S soldiers are projected as professionals who are skilled, technologically advanced and economically better compared to ISIS soldiers. Yet given these materialistic and ideological difference between the two institutions, the research does find some overlap between the notions of masculinities of the two institutions. The need to win, to be brave, to be better, to avenge humiliation and to not be humiliated, to hold authority and power seems to be existing in the representation of both the institutions. Nagel (1998) points out "once a war is widely defined as a matter of 'duty', 'honour', 'patriotism', a defence of 'freedom' and 'the American way of life', etc., then resistance for many men (and women) becomes a matter of cowardice and dishonour" (1998: 259). Cow-

ard and dishonoured men do not get social status or political capital. Therefore, U.S Army and ISIS must fight.

Soldiers in the recruiting videos are not portrayed just physical entities with a sole function to deliver the material outcomes of wars, but are also used to send ideological messages to their enemies. The soldiers and their actions are not only channels to communicate messages to the enemies but are also receptor of messages that play a role in creating their male identity. The categories of 'us' and 'them' are divided into humiliation/humiliated and brave conqueror/war fighters, where narratives consist of masculinized demand which emerges from a masculinized perspective of the world, authority, power, religion, nationhood, respect, honour and dignity.

Through this research I tried to understand the relationship between violence, masculinities, religion and nationhood. However, it leaves me with further questions about individual's struggle for the identity of the self and how that definition of the self translate into the interactions with the socio-political institutions. It would be interesting to further this study by looking into the notions of masculinity of Muslim men in U.S Army and American Muslims who migrated to Syria and Iraq to join ISIS.

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