



The Construction of Masculinity in Jihad Selfie Documentary

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Abstract

This research aims to comprehend the term construction of masculinity. The construction of a 'real man' by showing masculinity can be a reason for someone to be exposed to radical ideologies under the guise of religion. Most individuals who fall into radical groups are not technologically illiterate people. They have strong reasons for joining these groups. The Jihad Selfie film can be a real example for people to think critically about how masculinity could create issues that are conveyed attractively. This study used a qualitative approach with the semiotic analysis technique of Christian Metz to reveal how the Jihad Selfie film constructs masculinity through the relationship between signs that form meaning. Metz's eight-step mapping is used to unravel the typical film structure, i.e. Autonomous Shot, Parallel Syntagma, Bracket Syntagma, Descriptive Syntagma, Alternate Syntagma, Scene, Episodic Sequence, and Ordinary Sequence. The masculinity indicator reveals 5 syntagms that represent masculinity in the form of No Sissy Stuff, Be a Big Wheel, Be a Sturdy Oak, Give 'em Hell, and New Man as Nurturer.

Keywords: construction of meaning; masculinity; documentary; film; jihad

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Introduction

The current acts of terrorism have developed and evolved in such ways that indirectly limit the public's ability to monitor, including the government. The bomb explosions in several places have been terrifying for people worldwide, especially since the evolution of current acts of terrorism has followed the trend to utilize the advance of media to carry out acts of terror. Accordingly, there is a close relationship between media and terrorism which is mutually beneficial. Media could use terrorism issues as an attractive headline. On the other hand, terrorists intend to make headlines in the media (Mubarok & Wulandari, 2018). It indirectly creates a symbiotic relationship between them. For terrorists, it eases them to gain the existence of the movement they carry.

On the other hand, the evolution of radicalism has also reached popular culture. Young people are now very close to the internet and social media. A survey conducted by the Alvira Research Center in June 2022 showed that 97.7 per cent of Generation Z in Indonesia accessed the internet, while the millennial generation had a percentage of 90.4 per cent (Mahmudan, 2022). Therefore, social media can be an effective tool for jihad and dakwah because the content always follows the needs and desires of the community. It is commonly known as the social media algorithm. For example, people who want to gain religious knowledge could simply open social media and follow several preacher figures who are active on social media. Other content that

matches the user's interests will follow afterwards. In addition, religious leaders can also easily disseminate or share their knowledge online. It is unsurprising that many people, especially teenagers, are recruited by groups spreading new ideologies because of social networks.

On July 30, 2023, several mass media and social media went viral, reporting that several female students at the Baitul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School, Magetan, East Java, were carrying rifles during the School Environment Introduction Period. According to the police, as reported on Detik.com, the long-barreled weapon was not a firearm, but an airsoft gun, which did not have a permit. The police discovered this incident after it went viral on social media.

As depicted in a documentary entitled Jihad Selfie by Noor Huda Ismail, the terrorists have evolved and followed popular culture. The fact that young people are connected to the internet makes them easy targets for today's terrorist recruiters. It is because the terrorism ideology is no longer disseminated rigidly and frighteningly but concerns and follows current trends. Teuku Akbar Maulana, who is the main character in the Jihad Selfie film, was tempted by the courageous photos of his friends, who are members of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) while holding weapons, exercising, and struggling in the name of "jihad" in the way of Allah. The youngsters are facing the issue of finding their identity and existence. It caused them to be easily caught up in this propaganda. The depiction of masculinity and modernity

in the name of religion is a plus point in the terrorist recruitment process.

The credulous of modern youngsters to fall for terrorism doctrine proves the consistency of the massive use of social media. According to a study by Pew Research Center 2010 entitled *Millennials: A Portrait of Generation Next*, millennials must own social media (Taylor & Keeter, 2010). This fact indirectly raises questions about what motives and backgrounds cause them to have social media. In other words, the owners must be active in updating the features they have on their social media.

In line with the Uses and Gratification theory, media users will try to find the most appropriate source to meet their need. According to the concept of Dramaturgy by Erving Goffman, individuals will compete to present the best of themselves. Erving Goffman argues that in interpersonal interactions, people want to present or show themselves as well as possible to be accepted or recognized by others. In this case, youngsters on social media will present themselves through profile photos, statuses, photos or videos to describe and represent themselves. Thus, in fact, millennials are individuals who show their existence to get recognition from others (Alboin Leonard PS, 2015).

The problems of existence in adolescents can lead to positive and negative impacts. The Jihad Selfie then explains the impact of adolescent flusters through social media, which causes them to fall for radical doctrines. The negative impact experienced by some of these youths was due to their motivation to become masculine youth figures, which are associated with dashing

men in full uniforms like soldiers carrying rifles. This condition is related to Clark's explanation in his research that several contemporary Indonesian films associate the concept of manliness with violence and physical strength, while hegemonic masculinity is represented by young, muscular, courageous, and adventurous men (Wulan, 2015). According to Noor Huda Ismail, since childhood, people have been socialized to be masculine by introducing symbols such as the use of guns, military uniforms, individual involvement in several types of games, ways of behaving, and so on. Meanwhile, radical groups have this charm to attract their targets. It also applies to women who want to show their existence through masculine symbols.

On the other hand, the Jihad Selfie film is a documentary that presents the true story of a young man named Teuku Akbar Maulana as the main character. Compared to others, the good point of this film is that Noor Huda Ismail, as the producer, could invite the original figure in the real world to play a role in the film. The release of the Jihad Selfie film attracted wider communities because it illustrates the vulnerability of youngsters as social media users to radical ideas in cyberspace. In addition, this film can explain how the charm of ISIS is spread through youth masculinity on social media because popular culture is easier for people to accept and process.

Method

In the method section, it contains the research methods carried out, which include the type of research, research stages, time

and place of research, research variables (quantitative), data gathering, informant profiles, analytical frameworks, and/or other elements that are eligible to be included in the methods section.

This study used semiotic analysis of films with a qualitative descriptive approach. The film semiotics of Christian Metz tried to seek the hidden meanings and forms related to masculinity in the Jihad Selfie film by dissecting the scene's contents. There are 8 Metz techniques, but not all are used to analyze the meaning. Instead, a series of shots can be analyzed with one or more Christian Metz techniques.

The eight Christian Metz Techniques include (Florina, 2014):

1. Autonomous Shot (establishing shot, insert). This stage is a single shot plus four types of inserts, including non-diegetic inserts, subjective inserts, displaced inserts and explanatory inserts.
2. Parallel Syntagma. It is a non-chronological syntagm consisting of several shots with contrasting images. It has an interweaving of two or more motifs with a symbolic purpose. For example, a city image with a village image, a rich image with a poor image; symbolizes a paradox.
3. Bracket Syntagma. It is part of a non-chronological syntagma that combines pictures with a matching theme. Even though it is not sequential, it tries to display fragments of events in the film.
4. Descriptive Syntagma. It is part of chronological Syntagma, which directly sequences events in one screen or setting. It descriptively describes the messages linked directly and connects the facts on the screen. Alternatively, in other words, it displays messages strung directly at the denotative level (displayed on the screen).
5. Alternate Syntagma. It is chronological events that alternately appear in two related shots. It combines different shots but has one thing in common and is presented simultaneously.
6. Scene. It chronologically and continuously displays specific or special scenes that can build the character's personality. It can be a setting of place, event, moment or action. It is successive without any breaks and eventually ends in one shot.
7. Episodic Sequence. It is shots with a discontinuous presentation or jumps but tend to be constant and still on the same thing/goal.
8. Ordinary Sequence. It is shots with irregular jumps with no common themes/goals but in the same settings. A move/break signifies the opposite and is not unexpected.



The primary research sources were obtained from the footage of the Jihad Selfie film and interviews with crews, actors and terrorism experts. Meanwhile, the secondary sources are various literature and references related to research.

Result and Analysis

Masculinity is a social construction for men. Therefore, the writer takes several masculinity indicators that describe masculinity in the Jihad Selfie film. Among them are 115 No Sissy Stuff, in which men must avoid feminine behavior or characters associated with women. Be a Big Wheel, in which masculinity is measured by wealth, fame, success, power and the recognition of others. Be a Sturdy Oak is that man needs strength, rationality and independence (stay cool). Give em Hell, in which a man must be brave and be able to take risks even though

he is afraid. New man as nurturer, a man with gentleness as a father, is involved in the domestic area. New man as narcissist, in which man shows masculinity with a flamboyant and perlente lifestyle, such as indulging himself with commercial property products, cars, clothes, and so on, to make him look successful. Macho, hooliganism and violence are men who usually live with drinking, sex, having fun and living freely. Metrosexual is a man who glorifies fashion, cares about a regular lifestyle, likes details, and is a perfectionist.

Table 1. Analysis of Masculinity using Christian Metz's Film Semiotic

Scene	Sign (Semiotic Film)	Masculinity Indicator
Al Baghdadi Speech 	<i>Autonomous Shot</i> (non-diegetic insert): Al Baghdadi's video footage in the film is an insert with absolutely no relation to space and time and shows something outside of the action film. This video is documentation owned by ISIS media which is spread on social media and then quoted in the film.	Masculinity <i>Be a Big Wheel</i> : The speech footage of ISIS leader Abu Bakar Al Baghdadi, which is spread through social media, shows and introduces his figure to the world. It is an indicator of masculinity that is measured by fame and power as the leader of the ISIS group.
Male Students (santri) Sports (Running and Football) 	<i>Autonomous Shot</i> (displaced diegetic): Inserted shot to explain the depiction of the Al Islam Islamic boarding school where Wildan studied, which is actually space and time outside. Apart from studying,	Masculinity <i>No Sissy Stuff</i> : Described through the students' sports activities, such as running and football, to hone physical strength. Even though women also do this sport,



**Interview with Akbar and
ISIS Training Video**



**A story about Wildan
Mukholad**



Pondok Al Islam students also have extracurricular football activities to strengthen the bonding between students.

Autonomous Shot (displaced diegetic): ISIS video footage and a photo of Yazid carrying a rifle serve as insert shots that explain the story of the main actors, but they are not connected in the same space and time.

football is still associated with the main sport for men.

The Masculinity of Be a Sturdy Oak: The phenomenon of using firearms has so far supported the image of someone strong and independent, such as police officers, who have the right to use guns because they have to maintain national security. Before becoming a police officer, someone will also be educated physically and psychologically to have the courage to be at the forefront of securing the country.

Autonomous Shot (explanatory insert): Video footage of the suicide bombing in the middle of an explanation by Wildan's friend (Nizam) and several shots of Wildan's pictures. It is as if the shot is inserted to explain the event to the audience.

Give 'em Hell: The suicide bombing carried out by Wildan illustrates that, as a man, he wants to show that he is brave and willing to take risks in this action, which is to die in his suicide bombing.

Photo of Muis, an Indonesian who joined ISIS



Bracket syntagm: The bracket syntagm is illustrated through a picture Muis sent to his family and a voice note informing that he and his family had arrived in Syria. The shot provides a reality that actually has no relation to space and time in the film.

The Masculinity of Be a Sturdy Oak: It is depicted through pictures of Muis and her child posing and carrying rifles, symbolizing strength.

Photo of Photo of Aman Abdurrahman and Abu Bakar Bashir



Bracket syntagm: It is described through screenshots of Aman Abdurrahman and Abu Bakar Baashir being in prison and Abu Bakar's voice recording explaining his support for Al Baghdadi. The picture provides a real example with a similar theme but has no relation to space and time.

The Masculinity of Be a Sturdy Oak: It can be seen from the photo of Abu Bakar that even though he is behind bars, he still shows his strength. His tone of voice is full of confidence, saying that he acknowledges the existence of a caliphate. He kept showing strength and stayed cool even though he was in prison.

Footage of the Sarinah Bombing Incident



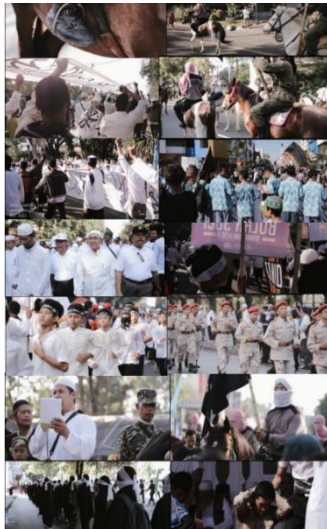
The bracket syntagm is illustrated through the video footage of the Sarinah bomb, which is shown without any relationship between space and time.

Give 'em Hell: The video of the Sarinah bomb tragedy and the actions of the police who handled it. It shows one of the indicators that men must be brave and able to take risks. It can be seen from the people involved in the tragedy that they were all male and courageous. Moreover, the risk was quite large.

Jihad Parade in Solo

Descriptive syntagm: Shots of jihad parade activities are shown sequentially and in one setting. It describes

Be a Big Wheel: Masculinity can be measured by its fame. In the film, the groups participating in the jihad



Noor Huda with His Wife and Children



Akbar's Journey Back to Aceh



relationships and facts directly on the screen.

parade display their attributes to be seen, known and even acknowledged by society.

Scene: Depicted from the scene of Noor Huda with his wife and children, which is shown in a coherent, chronological and linear manner in one setting.

New Man as Nurturer: Noor Huda Ismail is warm with his family (wife and children), which impacts the harmonious household.

The sequence of episodes: Tend to be constant or steady and talk about the same things or goals. The scene above tells of Akbar's journey to return to Aceh to meet his parents and not join ISIS. The shot was taken from Akbar's journey until he arrived home.

New Man as Nurturer: Depicted Akbar's father smiling happily as his son comes home while being hugged by his mother tightly.

Masculinity

Masculine terminology is the same as feminine discussion. According to Fakihi, sex is determined biologically and is adhered to a particular sex: male or female. While the concept of gender is a trait inherent in both men and women that is socially and culturally constructed (Anshori, 2014).

The social construction of men is never separated from the word masculine or better known as "macho". Masculinity can also be defined as a way of being a man as accepted by society. Masculinity is formed by a fantasy of what and how a man should be in his life (Buchbinder, 2002a). Masculinity indeed regulates how men should behave, dress, and look according to their qualities as men (abdurrohman azzuhdi, 2019a). Masculinity is a concept of social roles, behaviour and certain meanings attached to men at certain times and constructed by different cultures (Demartoto, 2007a).

Masculinity is a concept that arises because of the social construction of men. This concept identifies men as hard, active, aggressive, logical, ambitious, and strong. This construction causes a burden on the son when he is born. It becomes the norm, obligation and expectation of the family. This condition applies continuously in every generation (Syulhajji, 2017). Social life requires men to be masculine because men are considered failures if this tradition is not carried out. Men who look weak and emotional will be insecure because masculinity is called manhood or manliness (Demartoto, 2007b).

Masculinity has been constructed because of different interpretations of

society that are also different in each period. Over time, different cultures, periods and histories will construct different concepts of gender. However, in this millennial era, many youths identify ideal men as masculine men. Concepts passed down from previous generations indirectly become an obligation that must be carried out. For instance, men are not allowed to cry. They must be strong, tough, brave, and muscular. Men are also considered more manly when they smoke, fight, etc. Hence, men will do this in order to maintain self-esteem.

According to Beynon (Buchbinder, 2002b), masculinity is not part of male genetics that they are born with, but it is formed and acculturated by social behaviour that they learn and imitate. There are several examples of culturally shaped masculinity, such as men in Arabia generally having moustaches and beards to differentiate themselves from women. Then, in Dayak culture, men show their masculine side by showing a series of tattoos. Although women also have tattoos like men in the Dayak tribe, the meaning is different. Tattoos are given to men for their services in war or because they have travelled far to another village thousands of kilometres away. While tattoos on women are usually given on religious grounds and only placed on the left arm (Ui, 2012).

Masculinity has many varieties. Some describe it as courage, strength, virility and rationality. In contrast, it is also depicted as tenderness, intimacy, motherhood, and sharing attitude.

Abdurrahman Azzuhdi conveyed that male virility is not depicted through gallantry, strong muscles, mental

intelligence, and other traits often attached to people's mindsets. Male is just gender, not various attributes attached (abdurrohman azzuhdi, 2019b). Masculinity is no longer limited to men only. Even women are capable of having masculine traits. Every human being tries to identify himself in various ways: physically, perceptually or psychologically, based on idealism, beliefs, and social interactions as a human being. In addition, the environment, experience and parenting styles also influence self-concept formation.

The concept of masculinity in its development has changed and is divided into four periods, i.e., masculine before the 1980s, masculine in the 1980s, masculine in the 1990s, and masculine in the 2000s. Based on those four groups, the following masculine characteristics were drawn (Demartoto, 2007b) :

1. No Sissy Stuff. Men must avoid feminine behaviour or characters that associate with women.
2. Be a Big Wheel. Masculinity is measured by wealth, fame, success, power and the recognition of others.
3. Be a Sturdy Oak. Men need strength, rationality and independence. They must stay cool no matter the conditions and not show their emotions and weaknesses.
4. Give em Hell. Men must be brave and be able to take risks even if they are afraid.
5. New Man as Nurturer. Men have gentleness as a father, involved in the domestic area

6. New Man as Narcissist. Men show masculinity with a flamboyant and perlente lifestyle, such as indulging themselves with commercial property products, cars, clothes, etc., to look successful.
7. Macho, hooliganism and violence. Men usually live with drinking, sex, having fun and living freely.
8. Metrosexual. Men who glorify fashion, care about an organized lifestyle, love details, and tend to be perfectionists.

The construction of the meaning of masculinity indicators has multiple points of view. The media awareness network divides masculinity into five characteristics. First, good behaviour and sportsmanship. Second, caveman mentality. Third, new fighters. Fourth, muscles and ideal men. Fifth, the masculinity of the hero. In addition, the privileges of old masculinity have been yielded (Buchbinder, 2002b).

The role of men is no longer just as a father, husband, worker, and so on. Nowadays, many men are happy to exchange positions doing domestic work with their partners. Thus, the concept of traditional masculinity tends to pay little attention to the dialogue space of men and their feelings. Men are depicted with muscular bodies, able to withstand tenderness, emotions and signs of fragility. Meanwhile, "new men" are described as more considerate, sensitive, expressive and willing to do domestic work. It has been proven in Abdurrohman Azzuhri's research that amid masculine hegemony, there is a masculine alternative in different constructions. Although

masculinity cannot be separated from the male element, the Javanese have other depictions in which men are also gentle, candid, romantic, willing to care for, holding hands, and accompanying the child to sleep (Abdurrohman Azzuhdi, 2019b).

Based on several masculinity theories by several figures above, researchers, in this case, tend to use the basic theory of masculinity by Demartoto. He stated eight indicators of masculine traits, including No Sissy Stuff, Be a Big Wheel, Be a Sturdy Oak, Give 'em Hell, New Man as Nurturer, New Man as Narcissist, Macho Hooliganism and violence, and Metrosexual. Those eight indicators of masculinity illustrate the concept of manhood according to its development from before the 1980s to the 2000s. Thus, Demartoto's theory has encapsulated the concept of maleness from time to time so that researchers consider that his masculinity indicators are more comprehensively described.

Conclusion

The conclusion does not summarize the article from introduction to analysis. The conclusion contains the important points or the researcher's findings regarding the research he is conducting. The conclusion answers the urgency of the research presented in the introduction.

Based on analysis through eight grand syntagmatic of Christian Metz, the construction of masculinity meaning in the Jihad Selfie film contains five masculinity indicators. This film constructs the meaning of youth masculinity, creating a new picture

of how masculinity could influence the desire to follow radicalism.

This research only focuses on examining one documentary film so that the representation of the meaning of masculinity construction is still limited to one subject. Therefore, further research is considered to use more than one documentary film subject with a film series or others to enrich references on masculinity.

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