Sexual violence by ISIS

# Sexual violence by ISIS
## *The case of the Yezidis*

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# Abstract

Research concerning sexual has grown over the years, and, as a result, several theories have sought to explain sexual violence by several types of actors. However, little research has investigated how to define the sexual violence carried out by the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS). Despite the amount of media attention on the sexual violence against the Yezidis, the existing theories fail to explain all the motives for why ISIS attacked this religious minority. This study shows that there is an existing gap in the literature and therefore proposes to combine the patterns of violence model with existing theories to explain the ISIS' motives for using sexual violence. Based on documents and analysis, this study shows that strategic rape theory and socio-cultural theory are unable to explain all the motives of ISIS combatants. I instead argue that the sexual violence carried out by ISIS was a form of strategic policy rather than a practice during the war performances. Furthermore, this study shows that ideology is a key element when analysing an armed organization and when investigating why certain groups perform sexual violence.

# Introduction

During the hot summer of 2014, the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) changed its form of violence and its patterns of territory expansion. While the group had previously focused on Syria and the western parts of Iraq (ISIL), they moved toward the Kurdish Region of Iraq (KRI) in August. In a matter of days, the situation drastically changed. In the early morning of August 3, 2014, ISIS forces captured the Yezidi area and the city of Sinjar. The Yezidis who escaped fled towards the Sinjar mountain.

Unlucky were the ones who could not escape from the violence. What happened during the next days was horrific and brutal. The Islamic State killed many Yezidi men and boys; eye witnesses even mentioned that some of the people were buried alive in mass graves (Yazda 2016). In contrast to the men and boys, the Yezidi women and girls were abducted. These females became subject to sexual violence – rape and sexual slavery. Video footage showed the world how ISIS combatants bid on how many 'Yezidi slaves' they deserved and what their prices were. Several questions result from these events, such as whether the sexual violence was planned

as part of a strategy or whether the Yezidi people were simply victims of the personal desires of the ISIS combatants.

This thesis seeks a deeper understanding of that sexual violence. In terms of scientific relevance, this thesis investigates whether such sexual violence was part of a strategy or policy. Therefore, it contributes to understanding the patterns of violence by the ISIS combatants. Furthermore, in terms of ideology, it explains why ISIS chose to use sexual violence – namely, whether it was a strategy implemented from the beginning or whether it was a result of modifications over time.

Regarding social relevance, this thesis shows that wartime sexual violence is still occurring on a broad scale. Despite the United Nations (UN) Security Council Resolution (1820) on wartime sexual violence, the international community is still not acting as desired. Therefore, this thesis on the sexual violence against the Yezidis raises awareness of possible interventions to avoid wartime sexual violence. Additionally, it reveals the continued lack of protection for groups who are vulnerable to sexual violence on a large scale by armed groups. Moreover, this thesis shows that the victims are still coping with

traumatic experiences and that, therefore, ISIS combatants must be held guilty for their crimes by the legal international community framework regarding wartime sexual violence.

This research study is divided into nine chapters. Whereas the first part of the thesis introduces the reader to the subject by giving a brief summary of wartime sexual violence and by highlighting the research question and hypothesis. Thereafter, the methodology and data section present the chosen research method and describe the various kinds of data that were used to conduct the research. The first part of this thesis ends with the literature review and the theoretical framework. The literature review presents relevant studies regarding the concept of sexual violence and ISIS, and the theoretical framework is focused on the fundamental concepts that underlie the analysis. The second part of the research is the analysis and is divided into several sections. The first section highlights the history and ideology of ISIS. The second section analyses the case of the Yezidis – who they are and why the ISIS attack on Sinjar happened. Thereafter, an analysis of sexual violence by ISIS follows. By analysing ISIS actions towards the Yezidis, this thesis investigates the violent patterns of ISIS and how their use of

sexual violence should be understood. Afar considering several sexual violence theories, shows that the sexual violence by ISIS was not circumstantial or accidental- it was intentional policy. In addition, it discusses limitations and recommendations for future research. As a result, this thesis contributes to understanding the sexual violence of ISIS against the Yezidis.

## Research question and hypothesis

ISIS combatants are driven by their political ideology, influenced by the Salafist movement of Islam that believes an Islamic caliphate needs to be established. In order to realize their ideas, they do not hesitate to use brutal violence against Sunni Muslims, Shia Muslims and

Christians. Nevertheless ISIS combatants used a different treatment against the Yezidi people. While Yezidi men and boys were brutally killed, the women and girls were instead used as sexual slaves. According ISIS beliefs, the Yezidi are devil worshippers and theologically impure due to their divergent belief systems (Moradi & Anderson 2016). ISIS combatants used this idea to justify committing sexual violence against the Yezidi women and girls and selling them in slave markets. They even believed that having a Yezidi sex slave was a form of honour in terms of military masculinity and a reward for their war efforts (Sadeet 2016, p. 36).

Therefore, their use of sexual violence was likely a strategy to destroy a community. According to Boesten (2014), using sexual violence as a weapon of war morally and physically destroys a community, spreads fear and terror and

confirms military masculinity and troop loyalty. However, because every case of sexual violence may be strategic or personal, it is necessary to examine the motives behind the sexual violence by ISIS.

Therefore, the research question was formulated as follows:

*How can we explain the sexual violence by ISIS against the Yezidis?*

I hypothesize that the sexual violence against the Yezidis was part of their wartime strategy – that ISIS aimed to show that they could control a group through sexual violence and sexual slavery. However, it is not clear whether sexual violence was initially embedded in their ideology or if it developed over time due to their territorial expansion. If the sexual violence by ISIS is an outcome of practice, it would assume that the Yezidi females were unblessed in terms of luck of bypassing ISIS. Thus this would mean that the sexual violence against this minority would be seen as a side-event of territory expansion. In addition of explaining the sexual violence, the use of violence could be a form of strategically propagandize to attract more fighter for the armed organization.

Furthermore, ISIS fighters did not primarily commit sexual violence for their own desires; rather, they did so as a tool of humiliation and genocide against the Yezidis. Therefore, the sexual violence that has been carried out would not be considered as a practice.

## Methodology

This thesis answers the research question by using data from mostly qualitative secondary data main sources because I was unable to interview the ISIS combatants or Yezidi survivors. Not only in regard of the short time framework, but more importantly it would not be ethically legitimised. Building a relationship of trust with the Yezidi females in order to acquire data, would not be feasible in the time period of this research. Furthermore, in regard of ISIS combatants, it is not possible to gain access to them, because he conflict in Syria is still ongoing. Therefore, I was dependent previous studies. By employing qualitative modes of enquiry (rather than quantitative ones), I illuminate a deeper understanding of the motives of these combatants. Furthermore, qualitative research was also appropriate for this topic because it explains human behaviour – why people act the way they do (Bowen, 2009). Therefore, this thesis uses qualitative research to enable an understanding of the ideology of ISIS and its behaviour towards the Yezidi people. Despite the fact that this research only focuses on one case, it shows existing gaps in the literature and offers a recommendation regarding how to determine sexual violence by an armed organization.

With that focus, case study analysis is suitable because it focuses on small number of cases that are expected to provide insight into a causal relationship across a larger population of cases (Gerring 2007, p. 86). By assuming that sexual violence is justified by the Islamic State ideology, the theory behind the case selection of this thesis is the 'typical case'. 'The typical case exemplifies what is considered to be a typical set of values, given some general understanding of a phenomenon. By construction, the typical case is also a representative case' (Gerring 2007, p. 91). This method involves a causal model of some phenomenon of theoretical interest. It assumes that the researcher has identified a particular outcome and perhaps a specific hypothesis which she wishes to investigate.

Case study research can be divided into two groups: approaches using a single study and those using multiple studies. This research uses a single study, focusing on the case of the Yezidis. Additionally, a single case study can still be explained by several other analyses. 'A single case study with embedded units can be made if the researchers want to have the ability to study the case with data analysis within case analyses' (Gustafsson 2017, p. 9). In regard to this study,

the important embedded units are the ideology of ISIS and their motives for sexual violence against the Yezidis. The analysis of those units provides an answer to the larger context of the research question.

When performing a case study, researchers should ensure the study fulfils its purpose. As Gustafsson (2017) concluded, the writer must identify his audience and compare the study to published facts to make it reliable. Therefore, a case study that is based on multiple cases is not necessarily better than one based on a single case study. Additionally, by using embedded units within a single case study, the outcome of the research is stronger in terms of reliability and validity.

This thesis used the method of document analysis to gather data, a form of qualitative research in which documents are interpreted by the researcher to give voice and meaning to a certain topic. These documents include written data and video footage. The use of many sources (data triangulation) also strengthens the validity and reliability of the research. In this process, unnecessary data was not taken into account, and the embedded units within the case study were based on relatable data. Furthermore, with the help of a theoretical framework, the task of applying the outcomes of

analysed data according to theoretical assumption was easier. 'To be able to debate a case study, it has to defined within an analytical framework or object in the constitution of the study' (Starman 2013, p. 35). Thus, developing the theoretical framework was the foundation of this case study.

Using a case study has its advantages and disadvantages. One advantage is that the examination of the data is often conducted within the context of its use. Second, the detailed qualitative accounts often produced in case studies help explain the complexities of real life – situations that cannot be captured through experimental or survey research (Zeinal 2007, p. 4). An advantage of a single case studies, in particular, is that they contribute to the larger context of a field, enabling a deeper understanding instead of the simplistic outcome of many quantitative studies.

The most commonly cited disadvantage of performing a case study is that there is little basis for scientific generalization because of the small number of subjects, with some studies conducted with only one subject (Zeinal 2007, p. 5). Nevertheless, conducting several case studies on one topic effectively contributes different perspectives to a larger context. Indeed, the findings of this study contribute to the

knowledge and existing theories of sexual violence. Another disadvantage is the potential bias of the researcher. As Gerring (2007) mentioned, the position and perception of the researcher can result in a certain level of sensitivity regarding the results of the qualitative study. Due to the sensitive nature of research on ISIS and sexual violence, useful data must be identified through a literature review in order to achieve the desired outcome.

**Data gathering**

Contrary to the typical media approach of using ISIS' sexual violence for sensational stories, this thesis is investigates the sexual violence by ISIS largely on a scientific base. This research study was performed by the use of a qualitative research design and method. Two key reports are as follows: First, 'Escape from hell' by Amnesty International outlined the torture and sexual slavery in used by the Islamic State in Iraq. Second, 'ISIS crimes against the Yazidis' by the Human Rights Council acknowledged these crimes as a genocide. In addition to those two articles, books on the experiences of the Yezidi females under the rule of the Islamic State militants were also used. For example, the book by Hurmi (2015) was

used to acquire information regarding the sexual enslavement stories, and the book by Kizilhan (2017) was used to understand the Yezidi community and religion.

In addition to the scientific articles, books and reports, a spokesperson of the Yezidis of the KRI was contacted for reports and data that were not available via the internet. This data relates to actual numbers of Yezidis that were held in captivity by ISIS militants and how many Yezidis were killed by ISIS. Moreover, documentaries concerning the Yezidis were also taken into account for a better understanding of the case. As a result, the analysis is based on in-depth data.

To understand the motives of ISIS militants, it is necessary to analyse their ideology. This was done by analysing their self-written publication, known as 'Dabiq'. This journal justifies their actions by providing messages from the Quran and the hadiths. Moreover, actual pamphlets and video footage of ISIS were also taken into account. Statements from those pamphlets and footage concerning sexual violence are valuable because they give insight into the group and its ideology. Furthermore, the patterns of violence of ISIS can be explained by scientific articles written by Sanin and Wood (2017), which explain the behaviour of

rebel/militant groups. Thus, this thesis is built up several sources of literature that pertain to this specific case.

The concept of sexual violence is crucial for this thesis; therefore, it is necessary to understand what is meant by sexual violence and the perspectives of several existing theories regarding the topic. The scientific articles that were useful are referred in the syllabus of this thesis research course at the University of Amsterdam, along with online scientific articles.

Moreover, this study contributes to the field of sexual violence. In addition to specifying the sort of sexual violence, it shows the gaps in the existing literature regarding the case of ISIS. Therefore, this study analyses the sexual violence by ISIS from additional perspectives to give a proper answer regarding the research question of this study.

## Literature review

An objective definition of sexual violence by the United Nations is as follows: 'any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed, against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work (Krug et al. 2002, p. 149). According to the United Nations (Krug et al. 2002, p. 156) rape as a form of sexual violence has been used as a strategy in many conflicts. For example, rape has been used a deliberate strategy to subvert community bonds of a perceived enemy. As a result, the UN passed the so-called 'Resolution 1325', which is now known as the 'Women, Peace and Security' (WPS) agenda. This resolution vowed to see sexual violence as a legitimate international peace and security issue (Kirby 2015, p. 459). State interest in sexual violence has depended on its association with international peace and security and more specifically on the idea that rape is used as a weapon of war. On this account, 'perpetrators choose sexual violence as an efficient tactic of terror in the pursuit of wider aims, usually economic or political' (Kirby 2015, p. 461).

As Kirby (2015) mentioned, not every perpetrator is likely to use sexual violence, and he outlined a logic of factors that reduce the likelihood of potential aggressors committing atrocities – clear and effective mechanisms for the investigation and punishment of crimes. As he further argued, rational actors consider how their actions have been treated in the past and respond to a consistent signal that such crimes will not be tolerated by the powers. Wood (2009) continues by stating that rape as sexual violence occurs in sharply varying proportions to other forms of violence against civilians. In some cases, the sexual violence ratio is relatively higher compared to other cases. However, he also points out, 'Many armed groups, including some state militaries, leftist insurgent groups, and secessionist ethnic groups do not engage in widespread rape despite frequent interaction with civilians on otherwise intimate terms' (Wood 2009, p. 133).

The question – derived from the previous arguments – is why some armed groups get involved in sexual violence and others not. If we look at the results of the quantitative research by Cohen and Nordås (2014) it is arguable that sexual violence continues in the postconflict phase. The study aims to show, that when a strong apparatus is missing, it is

more likely that sexual violence by armed groups may continue. Most importantly, the results can be used to investigate important policy-relevant consequences of sexual violence. However, this article provides more quantitative than qualitative data in terms of the motives of armed groups for using sexual violence.

To understand why some armed groups get involved in sexual violence, it is important to understand the certain motives behind the carried out sexual violence. Sexual violence is being used by different actors and as a result of different perceptions and commitments. Understanding the motives behind the use of sexual violence, could result in a policy change on a global level in regard of the crimes of sexual violence.

Kirby (2015) argued that the chances of perpetrators appearing before an international tribunal for their sexual violence crimes remain small. Thus, perpetrators of sexual violence are likely not frightened by the international consequences of their behaviour. Kirby (2015, p. 465) also suggests that when the stakes are high and when the motivation of the perpetrators is political or ideological, they are unlikely to be deterred by the chance of future

prosecutions. For groups using sexual violence as a form of political violence, rape is ordered on the basis of ideological assessments, not merely the cost-benefit ratio of self-interest. Thus, perpetrators who use sexual violence from an ideological/political point of view are unlikely to respond to legal instruction because they do not recognize or obey these international laws. Another important aspect in this discussion is the lack of global policy on crimes of sexual violence. As Kirby (2015, p. 471) stressed, the prospects for producing a major shift in state action on sexual violence in conflict are not promising. As a result, there is an urgent need for a different orientation on the state level – to end sexual violence in conflict and to move from promises towards actions. If no actions are taken, perpetrators of sexual violence will likely continue to use this form of violence to reach their goals

Because not every group uses sexual violence, it is crucial to understand why ISIS choose to use sexual violence. The approval of using sexual violence is often determined by group leaders. Group leaders may decide that sexual violence would be counterproductive or against their norms (Wood 2009, p. 136). Second, the repertoire of violence exercised by

combatants may depend on their own values concerning violence against civilians. In terms of sexual desire, this particular feeling can be strong enough to override countervailing factors.

Additionally, the sexual exploitation of women and girls has also been used as sexual economy: 'IS and Boko haram, have made women's sexual and reproductive labour a matter of open trade as vital to the health of combatants and the momentum of war as the supply of weapons and food' (Sadeet 2016, p. 28). The Islamist militants' trading women as sex slaves represents the sexual economy of the caliphate at war. Although, Muslims have engaged in such wartime practices throughout history, Sadeet (2016, p. 28) mentioned that the modern example of ISIS is quite different: ISIS and Boko Haram succeeded in producing forms of wartime sexuality that are contemporary to present day sexual technologies of the body. The bodies of women were used to satisfy the needs of what she called a militarized masculinity, which refers to military actions that are highly gendered in regard to masculinity. Regarding the historical context of sexual slavery, the Islamic State erased every possibility for emancipation of their slaves: 'ISIS enactment of sex slavery

uses forced contraception and termination to ensure that enslaved women can never release themselves from slavery through pregnancy' (Sadeet 2016, p. 36.). Following the arguments of Eriksson Baaz and Stern (2013), sexual violence by ISIS can be conceptualized as a way to punish, humiliate or torture.

With regard to the Islamic State, its ideology has a large emphasis on the concept of militarized masculinity. There is a clear division between gender roles and how men and women should act according to their norms and values. As has been stated before, the ISIS male combatants do feel superior in terms of gender towards what they perceive as their enemy. ISIS combatants did not hesitate to use Yezidi women and girls as slaves for their own sexual desires and to consummate their economy by selling these females to other men. Furthermore, 'ISIS has spoken of its revival of the institution of slavery as a means of improving the moral life of its fighters and as a way to fulfil one of the signs of the hour", indicating the imminence of the end of time (Stern 2016, p. 1). According to this statement, ISIS combatants do not fear the international community and its norms and values.

Another example of militarized masculinity by the Islamic State can be seen by their use of brutal violence against their opponents. They associate horrific violence with their masculine power in order to scare of people. Militarized masculinity is important for the ideology of ISIS because it promotes the idea that they have been chosen to establish their state and to fight against their enemies and 'renegades'. ISIS combatants need to have a certain amount of assuredness that they have the ability and courage to fulfil these tasks. As a result, they convey their ideology in a way that attracts potential combatants for their armed group.

Due to the increasing attention to sexual violence in war, rape has been popularized as a weapon of war (Boesten 2014). Although rape is likely to be used by perpetrators for strategic purposes, recent research has shown that it is not always used strategically and that it is linked to existing gender ideologies. Therefore, every case of sexual violence should be carefully interpreted because generalizations of sexual violence are not always possible.

As has been stated before, in addition to attacking the Yezidis, the Islamic State also attacked other groups, such as Christians, Kurds, Shia Muslims and Sunni Muslims, who

were not 'Muslim enough' in their ideology and thus faced violence. Celso (2015, p. 262) mentioned that non-Muslim minorities have been treated more brutally and that there has been a mass expulsion of Mosul's large Christian population and a genocidal campaign waged against the Yezidi community. The year of 2014 can be seen as the crucial year in which ISIS committed acts of brutal violence against minorities**.**

With regard to the Christian population in Syria and in Iraq, this minority faced forced displacement under the threats of ISIS, which gave them the options of paying taxes, converting to Islam or leaving their area. Furthermore there have been signs of expressive violence, such as the destruction of churches and Christian burial sites (Kanso 2014).     The Kurdish population of Syria and Iraq also faced the violence of ISIS when fighting against them. The type of violence differed in the battles. For example, the Islamic State beheaded the captured 'Peshmerga' (military forces of the federal region of Iraqi Kurdistan) (A call to Hijrah 2014). Furthermore, planned bomb attacks and heavy artillery battles have been conducted against the Kurds who fight the Islamic State. In regard to the Kurds living in Syria,

many of them are displaced due to the fear of attacks by ISIS. The

Kurdish forces in Syria known as PYD (Democratic Union Party) and YPG (People's Protection Units) are maintained to fight against the Islamic State and to liberate the Kurdish areas of Syria. This has been seen, for example, in the fight over the city of Kobani. Furthermore, ISIS perceives most of the Kurds as infidels due to their rejection of the ISIS ideology and a strong commitment to Kurdish nationalism (The failed crusade 2014). Like the majority of the Kurdish population, Shia Muslims are also perceived as infidels by ISIS. This is due to the Shia beliefs, which do not share the same Islamic perceptions as the Sunni branch of Islam. As a result, ISIS has conducted expressive violence by destroying Shia mosques, symbols and burial sites (A call to Hijrah 2014). Furthermore, there is a strong sectarian conflict between Shia and Sunni Muslims due to previous tensions during the Saddam regime and the Baath regime of Syria.

Even Sunni Muslims who reject the ideology of the armed organization or are misbehaving according to ISIS are not safe. Sunni Muslims who misbehave according to the

Islamic state and its so-called 'religious police' face violence from ISIS. The punishment is based on the degree of misbehaviour, ranging from whipping the person to a horrific beheading. Such punishments are performed by ISIS in public to frighten the population (The return of the Khilafah 2014).

ISIS sees the Yezidi minority as devil worshippers because the Yezidi believe in the Peacock Angel with the unredeemed evil spirit Satan. In contrast to Christians, Yezidis do not have the option of paying taxes to the Islamic State. This is because ISIS perceives the Yezidi people as not being believers, of the 'People of the Book', in contrast to Jews and Christians. When ISIS attacked the Yezidi town, men and boys were immediately killed, and women and girls were enslaved (A call to Hijrah 2014). Before the summer of 2014, the Yezidis did not fear ISIS because they had not attacked any town near the Kurdish region of Iraq. Rather, ISIS militants were more focused on the Shia militants in Iraq. Everything changed, though, in the beginning of August when the Islamic State converged on the two towns in the Kurdish region known as Sinjar and Zumar, which were predominantly inhabited by Yezidis. The attacks forced

thousands of Yezidi civilians to flee their homes. Those who could not flee were killed or were put into sexual slavery by ISIS.

**The gap in the literature**

Following the above literature review concerning the topic of sexual violence and its use by ISIS, several questions can be stressed. For example, it is unclear what the main drivers were that caused the militants of the Islamic State to commit sexual violence against the Yezidi women and girls – whether it was for their own desires or for the purpose of their ideology and apparatus of their 'state'. Furthermore, their patterns of violence are not static and are thus unclear. The Islamic State has shown brutal and horrific violence, but have acted more violently toward some groups than others – that is, they have used selective violence. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the ideology of ISIS, its use of violence and how militants were influenced to use violence against humans. Furthermore, past studies regarding ISIS are lacking because they have not taken the ideology and role of leadership of the armed organization into consideration when explaining their selective use of sexual violence. This research analyses the ideology of ISIS by explaining their implementation and justification of sexual violence. The results of that analysis show that ISIS' patterns of sexual violence were determined by authorized policies.

## Theoretical framework

In order to explain the sexual violence that was carried out by ISIS, this research believes that the ideology of an armed organization is crucial for explaining its behaviour and violence patterns. Regarding the theoretical framework, the following concepts are applied in this research: sexual violence, ideology, militarized masculinity and patterns of violence.

When explaining wartime sexual violence, it is first necessary to understand what is meant by the concept of sexual violence. Following Krug et al. (2002, p. 149), this research refers to it as 'any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed, against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work'. In the past, rape has been used as a strategy in many conflicts. In addition, sexual violence has many purposes for the perpetrators, for example: 'Sexual violence against women during war has been perceived as an attack on women and part of an attack against "the enemy"'(Buss 2012, p. 148). While sexual violence does have a broad definition,

there are differentiations. As Krause (2015) mentioned, the variation in forms and levels of sexual violence are likely related to multiple causes and motives on the individual and group level. Analysing sexual violence requires understanding the differences between those motives. For example, rape can be distinguished into two forms: 'lust rape' as related to sexual need and 'evil rape' where there is an inclusion of brutal atrocities that are related to the frustrations experienced within a war environment (Eriksson Baaz & Stern 2013, p. 18). In regard to war performances, Krause (2015) mentioned the two distinctions by Wood (2012) of 'opportunistic sexual violence', which refers to violence carried out for private reasons and 'strategic sexual violence', which refers to a pattern of sexual violence that has been purposefully adopted by commanders in pursuit of group objectives.

Another essential concept is ideology, a set of comprehensive and coherent basic beliefs about political, economic, social and cultural affairs that is held in common by a sizable group of people within a society. Ideology is an important variable in shaping social life, including the organization and functioning of society as a whole.

Therefore, ideology predicts what the static norms and values are and how they should be practiced by their followers. 'Ideology matters in two ways. First it has instrumental value for armed groups, prioritizing competing goals, and coordinating external-actors including civilians. Ideologies differ in the kind of institutions and strategies they prescribe for meeting these challenges and in the extent to which they do so' (Sanín & Wood 2014, p. 213). The ideology of an armed group is crucial for understanding its way of violence; an ideology can shape the patterns of violence in which it engages, especially with regard to civilians. 'As an ideology may lead a group to be more selective and restrained in its targeting of civilians' (Thaler 2012, p. 548). The perception of violence within an armed group is formed by the political and military leadership of the group.

Third, the concept of militarized masculinity needs to be outlined. Following Lopes (2011, p. 2), 'Militarized masculinity is a combination of traits and attitudes that are hypermasculine, hegemonic and are associated primarily with military soldiers'. Therefore, a military characterized by militarized masculinity consists of men with a strong masculinity who exude aggression, strength and control.

Following Kronsel and Svedberg (2016), war is intricately connected to gender via a continuum of violence; the power imbalance of gender relations in most societies generates cultures of masculinity prone to violence. Furthermore, Duncanson (2017) argues that the degree of military masculinity is best seen during war performances that produce violence: 'masculinity shapes war and war shapes masculinity' (Duncanson 2017, p. 47).

Lastly, the concept of patterns of violence is a effective tool for explaining violent behaviour. A basic definition of violence is the deliberate infliction of harm on people (Kalyvas 2006). There are several forms and aims of violence, and political actors use violence to achieve multiple, overlapping and sometimes contradictory goals (Kalyvas 2006, p. 23). First, some violence has no instrumental purpose. Kalyvas (2006) argued that this type of violence is used to gain the reward of inflicting pain on one's enemies or destroying a hated symbol. Kalyvas' (2006) second form of violence, known as expressive violence (which is often combined with identity or sectarian violence) is directed against persons exclusively on the basis of who they are.

Kalyvas' (2006) final form is coercive violence, which is motivated by the control of a group. Coercive violence is primarily used to control a population; therefore, this type of violence is used as a tool rather than a final product. Violence is intended to shape the behaviour of a targeted audience by altering the expected value of particular actions. In addition, Sanín and Wood (2014) transformed the concept of violence into a model describing the patterns of violence. This model includes the use, type, and target of violence. The first dimension of the model refers to an organization's repertoire, describing all the possible forms of violence against civilians in which it regularly engages (Sanín & Wood 2014, p. 24).The second dimension focuses on the concept of targeting, described as follows: 'The subset of all possible civilian targets regularly attacked by the organization- for each form of violence in the repertoire' (Sanín & Wood 2017, p. 24).

Following these two dimensions, the third dimension implies the dimension of technique – that is, how an organization carries out a specific element of its violent repertoire against the targeted group. Finally, the dimension of frequency refers

to the number of attacks deploying that repertoire element against the specific target.

The above model is a convenient tool for analysing and describing the violence which has been carried out by an organization. Because all four dimensions are coherent, it is not likely to analyse the violence without being aware of the other dimensions (Sanin & Wood 2017).

**Scope of theory**

Having defined the central concepts, the scope of the theory remains to be addressed in order to refine the empirical data of the theories. As stated before, the type and purposes of the sexual violence vary in differing war situations. In regard to the sexual violence of ISIS perpetrators, their sexual violence during conflict cannot be confined to one specific framework rather, it includes different concepts that are subject to variations. In addition, it is necessary to address the fact that sexual violence is a dynamic occurrence rather than a static one, which implies that several concepts contribute to violence.

In regard to this research, in order to be able to define sexual violence, the purpose of the act is of great importance.

Sexual violence can be distinguished into two different forms: policy or practice (Revkin & Wood 2017). Sexual violence as a policy implies that sexual violence is authorized and ordered by the leader of an armed organization, whereas sexual violence as a practice is authorized but not ordered by the leader. Sexual violence as a policy may seek strategic gains, such as more territorial control. Rape as a practice occurs amongst fighters who are socialized by peers to a new culture of sexual perception. Furthermore, sexual violence as a practice can be tolerated by the leader of an armed organization in order to maintain his power. In summary, sexual violence as a practice is not ordered. Instead, it is tolerated as a practice within the group.

To understand why a certain armed organization commits acts of sexual violence, this research investigates the underlying motives of the ideology. With regard to the theoretical framework, ideology can reveal the internal life of armed groups as they divide and fight around ideas. The theoretical scope of this study is, to a certain degree, based on the outline of Sanin and Wood (2014), who found that an ideology can be divided into a 'weak program' or a 'strong program'. Whereas the weak program analyses the

instrumental adoption of the ideology, the strong program explores the normative commitments of particular ideologies and social preferences. Ideologies of groups differ from each other, and a group ideology can vary from highly systematic doctrine. Some groups are loosely bounded by related ideas that are vaguely advanced by leaders of others groups (Sanín & Wood 2014, p. 215). However, this research shows that an armed organization can use both, a weak program and a strong program. This is due to the theological commitment and the determinative aspect of ISIS as a group, and as it is offering a blueprint for living, strategies and institutions. Furthermore, the ideology of an armed group is crucial for understanding their way of violence: An ideology can shape the patterns of violence in which a group engages, especially with regard to civilians. According to Thaler, 'As an ideology may lead a group to be more selective and restrained in its targeting of civilians' (Thaler 2012, p. 548).

In addition, militarized masculinity has a great importance in influencing an ideology, especially with regard to violence. Rebel groups are led by violent entrepreneurs with heterogeneous ideologies who combine persuasion and coercion to recruit supporters and fighters (Marks 2017, p.

437). The importance of gender perception is crucial in shaping violence and the survival of the group in a war period. 'Power structures are deeply patriarchal, rebel leaders and decision-makers tend to be male, as do most frontline fighters' (Marks 2017, p. 438). Frequently, militarized masculinity is associated with sexual violence during war. Because militarized masculinity is sometimes based on a gendered social hierarchy, men during war can perceive themselves as superior to women. As a result, some soldiers believe they are entitled to sexual encounters with women (Lopes 2011, p. 4) as we have seen in the cases of Rwanda and Bosnia. Following the argument of Lopes (2011) some of the consequences that result from militarized masculinity are the sense of licensed sexual assaults and exploitation of women. Here again, the role of masculinity on ideology is crucial. As Hutchings (2008) argued, we should define masculinity as a concept that is flexible and malleable; masculinity can change during different modes of war performances (Hutchings 2008, p. 402).

Finally, patterns of violence can explain the phenomenon of sexual violence by analyzing and describing the violence that has been carried out by an armed

organization. As previously outlined, all the four dimensions of the model are coherent; therefore an analysis of violence according to one dimension likely results in awareness of the other dimensions (Sanin & Wood 2017). The patterns of violence model makes it easier to distinguish between different techniques and motives, such as targeting based on identity.

## The emergence of ISIS

In order to interpret the ideology and motives of ISIS, it is essential to understand the birth of this terrorist organization. Like every other terrorist organization, ISIS was not created over a short time period; instead, its establishment is related to several factors in the region. This analysis outlines the birth and development of ISIS throughout the years and specifically in 2014.

### Foundation (1999-2006)

The foundation of the Islamic State has its roots already in 1999 when the Jordanian

Salafi jihadist known as Abu Musab al-Zarqawi established a group under the name of 'Jam'at al Tawhid wal-jihad', which means 'the organisation of monotheism and jihad'. Due to the invasion of Iraq in 2003 by Western forces led by the United States, the group started attacking Western soldiers, Iraqi institutions and Shia mosques and cultural heritage sites. The tensions between Sunni Muslims and Shia Muslims were already apparent at this time. 'Zarqawi directly contributed to the Islamic State's two most prominent ideological tenets: an extreme anti-Shi'ism and a focus on restoring the caliphate' (Bunzel 2015, p. 13). In 2004, alZarqawi decided to

cooperate with Osama bin Laden, which led to changing the name of the group to al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI). In terms of ideology, there was a stronger hatred against the

Shia Muslims when compared to the American soldiers in Iraq. According to the beliefs of AQI, the feeling of hate by the Shias towards the Sunnis could not be solved with goodwill.

The Zarqawi believed the only solution was to fight against them.

## Al-Qaeda in Iraq, Mujahideen Shura Council in Iraq and Islamic State of Iraq (2006-2013)

In 2006, AQI succeeded in forming an alliance on a joint agenda with six major Sunni

Islamist groups in Iraq. One of the major changes of this alliance was the change of name to

'Mujahideen Shura Council in Iraq' (MSC). The MSC was formed to resist efforts by the American and Iraqi authorities to win over Sunni supporters of the insurgence. Hashim (2014, p. 72) argued that the MSC's efforts to recruit Sunni nationalists and secular groups were undermined by its violent tactics against civilians. Regarding the motives of the Islamic State of Iraq, it was necessary for the Sunni

population in Iraq to have their own state; therefore, the ISI came as a solution for the Sunni population. Bunzel (2015) argued that the Kurdish and Shia communities had their own semi-autonomous zones following the U.S. invasion in 2003, the ISI felt responsible to 'free' the Sunnis under the rule of a 'Maliki state'. According to Abu Umar al-Baghdadi, the Islamic state of Iraq should function as a state not only for Iraqi Sunnis but also all Sunnis of the world. ISI planned to seize power in the central and western areas of Iraq and turn them into a Sunni caliphate (Bunzel 2015). Nevertheless, most of the groups under the ISI made it clear that they were interested in liberating Iraq and not in creating an Islamic state (Hashim 2014, p. 72). By the end of 2008, ISI was apparently defeated, and Iraq was on the path to stability and security. Nevertheless, although the ISI was a failure, its idea of establishing an Islamic caliphate never disappeared amongst its proponents. And as Bunzel (2015, p. 22) stated, by the time that Abu 'Umar al-Baghdadi was killed in a joint raid by the U.S. and Iraqi forces near Tikrit on April 18, 2010, the Islamic

State in Iraq had lost any semblance of statehood.'

After a month, the Shura Council of the ISI appointed the new emir of the Islamic

State in Iraq on May 16, 2010 – Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, who is still the leader of the Islamic State at the time of this thesis. When we compare Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi to his predecessors, he was clearly more powerful in delivering messages and keeping the group together, whereas his predecessors had failed to do so. Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi survived the ISI in an underground structure, and he even coordinated large scale attacks in Iraq (Holmquist 2015, p.16). However, the organization remained weak and was not seen as an extensive threat to the state of Iraq. Nevertheless, as Holmquist (2015) stated, after the withdrawal of the American army in 2011, ISI became more public and carried out more lethal attacks. Following the study of Hashim (2014), four key factors contributed to the reemergence of ISI: 1) the organization restructuring coupled with the rebuilding of its military and administrative capacities, 2) the dysfunctional nature of the Iraqi state and its growing conflict with the Sunni population, 3) the fading away of al-Qaeda under the leadership of Ayman al-Zawahiri and 4) the outbreak of the Syrian civil war.

## Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (2013–2014)

The Syrian civil war was an important factor in the reorganization and the actual survival of the ISI. As a result of the war, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi announced the formation of Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS) on April 8, 2013 (Glenn 2017). The term refers to the Islamic State of Iraq and to Syria (or an undefined region around Syria). Another abbreviation that is commonly used is ISIL, the Islamic State and the Levant. Levant refers to an undefined region around Syria, Lebanon, Israel and Palestine (Lock 2014).

## Islamic State (2014)

The year of 2014 was the crucial year of ISIS with regard to progress and territory expansion. When seizing a city, ISIS militants first seized police and municipal buildings and core infrastructure, such as water and electricity, enabling them to completely control access to vital needs (Hashim 2014, p. 78). In January 2014, ISIS took control of the predominantly Sunni Iraqi city Fallujah – the first takeover of a larger city. On June 9, 2014, ISIS took control of two large Iraqi cities, Mosul and Tikrit. This territory expansion resulted in more than a million internally displaced persons

(IDPs) in Iraq. Moreover, ISIS succeeded in taking the cities of Al-Qaim, Rawa, Ana and Husaybah on June 21, 2014 (Martinez et al. 2014). This takeover was crucial for several reasons. The first is that these four towns are on a highway from Syria to Baghdad, connecting the border of Syria and Iraq. Second, several Sunni tribes in these towns were supporting ISIS; therefore, they did not face any attacks from them. Lastly, the town Husaybah is 100 kilometres away from Baghdad, giving ISIS an almost clear route towards the capital of Iraq (Martinez et al. 2014).

On June 29, 2014, al-Baghdadi announced the establishment of his worldwide caliphate, the Islamic State (Bunzel 2015, p. 31). As a result, the Islamic State of Iraq and al Sham was renamed as the Islamic State (IS), and the Syrian town Raqqa was declared the capital of the caliphate. ISIS had easy access to Raqqa due to the rebels of Jabat al-Nusra. Therefore, militants of the Islamic State easily took control over the city and installed sharia law. On August 3, 2014, ISIS fighters attacked the Yezidi towns of Sinjar, Zumar, Wana and nearby villages, resulting in more than 50.000 Yezidi families fleeing towards the Sinjar mountain. Females were separated from men and taken as sexual slaves, whereas

the men were killed and young boys taken into training camps. Due to the possible threat of genocide, the United States and several other nations began an aerial bombing campaign on August 7, 2014.

## The ideology of ISIS

Like every other terrorist group, understanding their ideology is essential to understanding the group. When analysing the actions of ISIS in the region, terror and fear seem to be their chosen methods . As stated in the previous chapter, the uprising of ISIS was related to several factors in Iraq. Therefore, the ideology of ISIS has likely changed over time. The ideology of ISIS has been perceived as a totalitarian, millenarian worldview that eschews political pluralism, competition, and diversity of thought (National Centre of Excellence for Islamic Studies 2016, p. 5). To develop a more in-depth knowledge of the ideology of ISIS, this chapter first outlines the main aspects of the ideology. It then shows the distinction between the strong and weak programs of the ideology of ISIS with the help of the theoretical insights of Sanin and Wood (2014).

The ideology of ISIS is not different from other totalitarian regimes or terrorist groups, which all have held visionary ideologies that implemented the use of brutal violence and total control in their quest to dominate the world. As stated by Sanín and Wood (2014), the concept of ideology is essential for understanding the functioning of armed groups

and for explaining their behaviours. A focus on the ideology and messages of ISIS provide a better understanding of ISIS with regard to sexual violence. This chapter is divided into several sections regarding the important concepts of the ideology: the influence of religion, the strong and weak programs of the ideology and shows the importance of the leadership role within the armed organization.

## Political religion

An analysis of the ideology of ISIS shows that ISIS practices the Salafist and jihadist beliefs of Islam (Cheterian 2015, p. 107). In addition, Holmquist (2015) argued that the ideology of ISIS is commonly labelled as Salafi-jihad. Thus, the first step to understanding the ideology of ISIS is to understand Salafism. Salafism is one of the many movements within

Sunni Islam. This particular movement believes that every Muslim should follow the sharia

(Islamic law) and the norms and values of the Islam during the time when the prophet Mohammed was alive. ISIS uses Salafism as the foundation of its ideology and as an approbation of its actions. In fact, ISIS has called for every Islamic believer to return to the practices of their Islamic

ancestors. This particular view demands an Islamic caliphate in which the community shares the same beliefs of Sunni Islam, and especially the Salafist view. Proponents of ISIS believe that it is their task to make this vision a reality by whatever means necessary, including the use of violence to demolish non-Islamic influences and to implement the Salafi-jihadi lifestyle. As has been argued by Westphal (2018), those proponents share the same view and commitment that the proliferation of Western norms and values is a threat to original Islamic beliefs. Thus, following the foundational idea of Salafism, this particular shares the perception of exclusiveness. Namely, 'it holds that a division has to be made between true Muslims and those who are erroneous' (Holmquist 2015, p. 19). Salafism not only implies a difference between Muslims and other religions but also between different branches of Islam. It believes that the true Islamic believers are the Sunni – in particular, those who share the Salafist view.

When analysing Dabiq, the ISIS political publication, it is clear that ISIS perceives its religion as a political religion. That is, they believe in using religion to realize their political goals – the realisation of an Islamic caliphate in the Middle

East. ISIS has a strong belief that every Muslim is obligated to follow the sharia law and to live under the Islamic State. Referring back to the first published Issue of Dabiq, it is remarkable that Abu Bakr alBaghdadi is portrayed as the only leader who has the means to create the Islamic State and to manage all the Muslims. The following has been referred in their magazine:

'Thus, the strangers are those who left their families and their lands, emigrating for the sake of Allah and for the sake of establishing His religion. In the era of *ghuthā' as-sayl* (the feeble scum), they are the most wondrous of the creation in terms of faith, and the strangest of them all.' (The Flood 2014, p. 8)

However, the use of Salafism to implement the political religion of ISIS does not satisfy the focus of this thesis regarding ISIS use of sexual violence. Therefore, to gain a more in-depth knowledge of that violence , it is necessary to analyse and understand the concept of jihadism.

**Jihadism**

As previously has been stated, ISIS adheres to the ideology of Salafism. Within the analysis of Salafism, it is clear that jihadism and its accompanying violence is also of great importance. The basic meaning of jihad is to engage in the inner struggle or striving in the name of god or to work for a noble cause with determination (Knapp 2003, p. 82). However, this explanation of jihad is contested. As Knapp (2003) explained, Muslim scholars have disagreed throughout history about the concept and the meaning of jihad. In fact, the term even differs in the Quran and the Hadiths. Knapp (2003, p. 83) explained that jihad in the Quran refers to fighting in the path of god and that in the hadith (the Islamic law), it refers to armed action in a military sense. In this regard, ISIS has operated according to both definitions of jihad and has given its own radical meaning to the term. In regard to radical jihadism, the philosopher Ibn Taymiya has played a prominent role. He advocated that jihad is a warfare against the apostates and Crusaders (Knapp 2003, p. 84). Therefore, it is clear that ISIS is using violent jihad to accomplish it goals. By an analysis of Dabiq and video footage, we can see that violence is highly promoted

and justified according to belief in jihad. Within the ISIS ideology, violent jihad is also highly rewarded in terms of status and celebration. In addition, the ideology of ISIS promotes the perception that only the strongest Muslims are able to carry out jihad for god. Moreover, when reading the propaganda of ISIS, it is clear that jihadists have a special position within ISIS society; they are perceived as the strongest individuals who value the moral rectitude of their path. In addition, Fishman (2017) explained that the jihadists reform people when they become corrupt – that is, when they do not follow the Salafist perceptions of Islam.

The ideology of ISIS highlights the great importance of the afterlife of Muslims. It is regularly seen in Dabiq that violent jihadists are rewarded with a place in heaven. Thus, this form of propaganda is being used to attract more fighters by rewarding them in afterlife. Furthermore, jihad by ISIS is also perceived as a defensive practice. ISIS promoted this idea as follows: 'Jihād not only grants life on the larger scale of the Ummah, it also grants a fuller life on the scale of the individual. This life of jihād is not possible until you pack and move to the Khilāfah' (The Flood 2014, p. 31). ISIS justifies the violence of jihadism by claiming that Islam is under attack

by Western influences and by unbelievers. Therefore, they argue that jihad is the only way to fight enemies and to restore Islam by creating an Islamic caliphate.

(Holmquist 2015, p. 20).

Furthermore, by analysing Dabiq, it is clear that ISIS emphasizes that every true Muslim believer should use the violence prescribed by jihadism. According to that ideology, Islam is under attack by Western influences and by unbelievers living amongst true believers.

With phrases such as 'The sun of jihad has risen. The glad tidings of good are shining.

Triumph looms on the horizon. The signs of victory have appeared' (The Return of the Khilafah 2014, p. 7), ISIS wants to attract fighters for jihad not only from the region but also from all over the world. In addition to jihadism, it is of great value to take the concept of militarized masculinity into account, which refers to the role of a male during wartime.

**Militarized masculinity**

The ideology of ISIS regarding performing war is heavily influenced by militarized masculinity. In fact, ISIS states that every Muslim man must fight with weapons against the enemy for the sake of Islam. Following the propaganda in Dabiq, a clear division between the task of men and women exists in the Islamic caliphate. To attract jihadists, ISIS portrays men with weapons and cheering as a sign of victory. In regard to militarized masculinity, this relates to the perception of the indestructible power of jihad, as has been referred to in Dabiq: 'This religion is the one promised with victory' (A Call to Hijrah 2014, p. 3). By promoting the idea of fighting for the good of a religion and by being rewarded in the form of entrance to heaven, the fighting jihadists are acting as 'chosen men' and show no mercy towards their enemy. Furthermore, ISIS pays significant attention to the idea of being fearless. As has been outlined, 'Islamic State supporters should not fear any plans to defeat them since Allah controls the world' (The failed crusade 2014, p. 44). Therefore, the ideology of ISIS focuses on using violence that is legitimized by their interpretation of the Islam while also

building the Islamic caliphate through the importance of jihad.

However it is important to recognize that militarized masculinity is not an invention of ISIS. Since the existence of military, soldiers and war have always been associated with the linkage to manhood. Similarly, ISIS uses the perception of a strong militarized masculinity to show the strong capabilities of its soldiers. By stating that its military consists of men with a strong masculinity, ISIS exudes aggression, strength and control. As a result of that emphasis, war only attracts males to join ISIS due to the high degree of masculinity within the society. 'Masculinity in its various cultural forms is an important content of that cycle: masculinity shapes war and war shapes masculinity' (Duncanson 2017, p. 47). It is often the case that militarized masculinity is linked to the sense of licensed sexual assault and exploitation of females. According to Lopes (2011), the ISIS ideology states that soldiers are entitled to sexual encounters with women. Moreover, they have frequently mentioned their right to enslave Yezidi women as sexual slaves, considered the spoils of war. However, following the arguments of Duncanson (2017) and Hutchings (2008),

perceptions of masculinity can change during different types of war, and that is exactly what has been seen when analysing data on ISIS. While there was no reference to sexual enslavement and sexual violence in the original ISIS ideology, we can see a turning point in 2014. To further investigate the relationship between sexual slavery, jihad and militarized masculinity, it is necessary to analyse the role of leadership within the ISIS ideology, including both the strong and weak programs.

## The role of leadership within the ideology

Sexual violence carried out by ISIS fighters did not occur until a public statement of their leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, was published in Dabiq. This is supported by Wood (2009), who argues that the approval of using sexual violence is in the hands of the group leaders. Furthermore, she believes that group leaders may also decide that sexual violence would be counterproductive or against the group's values. Therefore, it is crucial to take the role of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi into account and to determine how it has influenced the ISIS ideology. From the birth of ISIS in 1999 until the summer of 2014, so mention or public statement were given regarding the justification of sexual violence. Rather, the

fourth issue of Dabiq in 2014 was the first official published document that justified the enslavement of Yezidi women. Therefore, the justification of sexual violence can be seen as an addition or side effect of the winning traits of ISIS.

As previously mentioned, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi is the only person within the organization who legitimately can take decisions regarding Islamic sharia law. And indeed, al-Baghdadi uses political religion to achieve his desired goals. He and his followers believe that he is the leader born to realize an Islamic State. His appearance is likely perceived as appealing by the followers of ISIS, and, therefore, the fighters of ISIS follow every command that is given from above. While al-Baghdadi has only made one public appearance in 2011, his leadership traits are highly illustrated in Dabiq. Like other organizational leaders, al-Baghdadi has used his leadership traits not only to attract more fighters for ISIS but also to keep the ideology of the terrorist organization intact. In addition, the leadership traits of al-Baghdadi can be traced back to the concept of militarized masculinity. According to Dabiq, the leader of ISIS is the chosen one and the only person who is capable of accomplishing the goals of the Islamic State. The ideal case for a leader is that his

combatants come to internalize the leadership's choices about violence and to implement them willingly, with no need for discipline (HooverGreen, cited in Wood 2014, p. 468). This particular thought can be seen amongst the combatants of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, who believe in him as the chosen one to reign over an Islamic caliphate.

## Strong and weak program of the ideology

Following the ideas of Sanin and Wood (2014), this research study believes that to analyse an ideology, it is first necessary to understand the differences between its strong and weak program. Whereas Sanin and Wood (2014) argue that a group chooses either a strong or a weak ideology program, this research suggests that ISIS is characterized by traits of both.

Whereas ideologies prescribe distinct institutions and strategies in regard of attaining those goals, the normative commitment to an ideology is crucial, in case of group's emergence. Thus, the strong and weak program are banded together. ISIS shows that the group is based on the strong normative commitments and the instrumental adoption. An analysis of the ISIS documents reveals that the ideology of

the group is based on systematic doctrine and not loosely related ideas advanced by the leaders (Sanin & Wood 2014, p. 215). Additionally, with the help of strong disciplinary institutions, combatants obey orders because they are punished if they do not (Wood 2014, p. 468). For example 'If the leadership chooses to promote rape of civilians, for example, combatants will rape with high frequency against the chosen target, and if the leadership chooses to prohibit rape, combatants will not rape' (Wood 2014, pp. 468-469). Table 1 below gives an overview of the strong and weak programs of the ideology of ISIS.

Table 1: The programs of the ideology

| Strong program | Weak program |
|---|---|
| **Normative commitments**<br>The most important idea of ISIS can be seen by this statement: 'This religion is the one promised with victory' ( A call to Hijrah 2014, p. 3). This statement implies the strong idea of the commitment that is needed by ISIS fighters in order to accomplish the realization of an Islamic Caliphate.<br><br>Following Sanin and Wood (2014), the strong program of ISIS is based on egalitarian ideas and identities. There is a strong sense of the jihad identity and the emphasis that every Sunni Muslim is equal when following the sharia law.<br><br>In terms of violence, the strong program of ISIS believes that violence is highly necessary for the accomplishment of an Islamic caliphate. In terms of enemies, it offers a blueprint for attacking infidels and apostates in order to purify the region. | **Instrumental adoption**<br>The weak program of the ISIS ideologies prescribes a way to live within the ISIS territory by establishing institutions and strategies regarding the normative commitments of the ideology.<br><br>ISIS ideology insists on how a fighter of ISIS should interpret the world, and it aims to structure everyday hierarchical and horizontal relations within the society of ISIS. ISIS claims that every follower of ISIS should obey the leader of the caliphate due to the belief of he is the one who is capable of realizing the goals of Islam.<br><br>In contrast with the strong program, the weak program of ISIS outlines how violence needs to be carried out. This has been done with the help of prominent figures within ISIS and its institutions. Thus, it offers a blueprint for the fighters with regard to using violence. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Regarding to sexual violence, the ideology of ISIS claims that enslavement of the spoils of war is justified by the sharia law. Thus the justification of sexual violence consists primarily out of | With regard to sexual violence, the weak program establishes institutions that are responsible for the slave trade markets and the rules of purchase. |
| egalitarian ideas and identities. As it refers back to the spoils of war during the times of the emerging of Islam. | Furthermore, this part of the ideology provides a questions and answers pamphlet to clarify the purchase and treatment of sexual enslavement Yezidi females. |

By analysing Dabiq and the actions of ISIS, there is evidence for both a strong and weak program. Whereas the strong program of ISIS emphasizes the egalitarian ideas of establishing an Islamic caliphate and attracting jihadists from all over the world, the weak program of its ideology offers the blueprint regarding how violence should be carried out, including sexual violence and its institutions. Furthermore, combining the two different programs results in ISIS enjoying a high degree of obedience amongst its followers. They both have a strong commitment to the Islamic caliphate, and they follow the rules of how to live and fight for the survival of the caliphate.

# The attack of ISIS on the Yezidis

## The Yezidis

To understand the attack of ISIS, it is crucial to understand the Yezidi people and their religion. The international world calls them the 'Yazidis', although the correct Kurdish pronunciation is *Êzidi*, meaning 'the one who created me' (Kizilhan 2017, p. 333). However, in the context of the scientific world and the international community, this research uses the term 'Yezidis' due to recognition and familiarity. The Yezidis are a Kurdish-speaking religious minority of approximately half a million people living in the Kurdish regions of Turkey, Syria, Iraq and a small part of Armenia (Spät 2017, p. 3).

Yezidis are followers of the monotheist religion Yezidism, which is the belief in one god. The Yezidis call their god 'Xweda' which means 'the one who created himself' (Kizilhan 2017, p. 333). Yezidism claims to be one of the oldest religions, even existing before the three largest religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. As stated by Kizilhan (2017), the religion of the Yezidis connects to the ancient religion of the Kurds known as Zoroastrianism. It has been claimed that Yezidism is the ancient religion of all the

Kurds, before the majority of the Kurds were forced to convert to Islam (Kizilhan 2017, p. 333). Moreover, Yezidism has been influenced by several religions, including Islam, due to the Islamization of the region.

**The Attack**

'Situated on the Iraqi-Syrian border, Sinjar is the last Iraqi city on Highway 47, the trade road between Mosul and Syria' (Knights 2017, p. 1). Sinjar is a strip of land that connects the Syrian ISIS territory with the Iraqi ISIS territory. Unfortunately, the Yezidis were living in this area, making them vulnerable to ISIS. Following the pre-2014 ISIS ideology, the Yezidis were not considered to be a threat; rather, ISIS was merely focused on the Shia population and the Iraqi army. Due to territorial expansion of ISIS and to capturing the city of Mosul, al-Baghdadi ordered the fighters to attack the Yezidi town Sinjar and the surrounding area on August 3, 2014. The Kurdish Peshmerga, who were responsible for protecting the area, retreated after realizing that they could not win against ISIS, who had modern trucks and military vehicles armed with advanced weapons.

Moreover, ISIS gained the support of the Sunni-Arabs in Sinjar, which made the area easier to conquer.

An analysis of interviews with the Yezidi people and documents of ISIS reveals that the attack on Sinjar was not decided spontaneously. Rather, the area had been studied in depth. According to one witness, 'After ISIS fighters controlled the main roads and all strategic junctions, fighters set up checkpoint and set mobile patrols to sears for fleeing Yazidi families' (Human Rights Council 2016, p. 7). Figure 1 shows the situation of the area in 2014, and the controlling groups in the area. As it has shown, the land inhabited by Yezidis, is between Syria and the route towards Mosul.
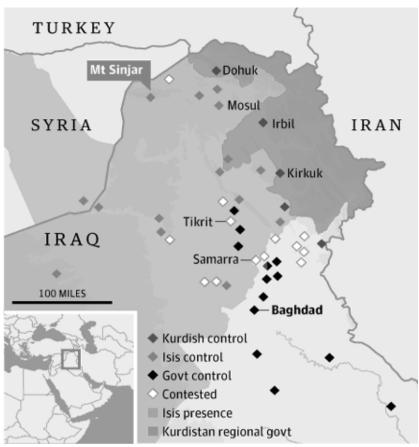
Figure 1. Map of controlling parties in 2014 (Jalabi, 2014)

According to the report of Bozani and Hurmi (2016), 1239 unarmed people were killed, and more than 6417 were captured on August 3, 2014. The captured people were divided into males and females. Whereas most of the men were killed, the females were sold in the slave markets of ISIS in Mosul, Raqqa and Tal Afar (Bozani & Hurmi 2016, p. 1). This was confirmed by the report of the Human Rights Council (2016) as well as the fact that ISIS ordered the separation of males and females with the exception of boys who had not reached puberty, who could stay with their mothers (Human Rights Council 2016, p. 7). ISIS had different ideas regarding the treatment of Yezidis in terms of gender: whereas most of the men were immediately killed, the females were held captive. 'Most of those killed were executed by gunshots to the head; others had their throats cut. Other captives, including family members, were often forced to witness the killings' (Human Rights Council 2016, p. 8). As a young girl witness mentioned, 'After we were captured. ISIS forced us to watch them beheading some of our Yazidi men. They made the men kneel in a line in the street, with their hands tied behind their backs. The ISIS fighters took knives and cut their throats' (Human Rights Council 2016, p.

8). Figure 2, shows the ratio of people who were killed or captured on the area of Sinjar in August 2014.
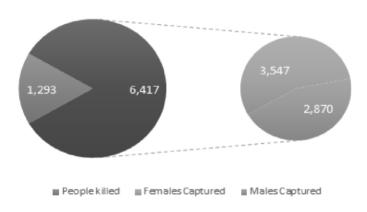


Figure 2. The attack of ISIS on the area of Sinjar

# The justification of sexual violence by ISIS

The Yezidis are the largest minority group that have endured sexual violence by ISIS perpetrators. According to the report of Unami (2016), the number of people taken into slavery was estimated to be around the 3500. Although wartime sexual violence is not a rare occurrence, ISIS attracted the attention of the international community with pictures and video footage showing their slave markets in Mosul and Raqqa. Nevertheless, having slave markets and selling females as sexual slaves was not an occurrence during the initial phases of the Islamic caliphate and its ideology. Instead, it only occurred after ISIS fighters had controlled and seized more territory. In 2014, ISIS published its fourth edition of Dabiq, which had its first reference to the sexual enslavement of Yezidi females and the massacre of the Yezidi male population. While the strong program of the ISIS ideology explained why this religious minority should be eliminated, the weak program offered the blueprint for how the violence should be carried out. According to the beliefs of ISIS and sharia law, the Yezidis were to be treated as apostates and the Yezidi women to be enslaved as the so-called spoils of war. Dabiq reported, 'After capture, the Yazidi women and

children were then divided according to the Sharī'ah amongst the fighters of the Islamic State' (A Call to Hijrah 2014, p. 15).

## The blueprint for sexual violence

ISIS engages in particular sub-patterns of violence based on the social identity of targeted persons. An analysis of the ideology of ISIS shows that the weak program of the organisation offered a blueprint regarding the sexual enslavement of Yezidi females. Whereas the strong program of ISIS showed that sexual enslavement of Yezidis was justified, the weak program showed how to capture the women and set up the slave markets. The captured females were brought into large buildings where they once again were dived into different groups. 'The ISIS fighters separated married females from unmarried females, girls aged eight years and under were allowed to remain with their mothers' (Human Rights Council 2016, p. 12). ISIS openly stated that the captured Yezidi females were being treated as slaves or *sabaya*. However, unlike the sexual violence of previous wars (such as in Bosnia and Rwanda), mass rape of Yezidi women and girls did not occur. Rather, these females were

brought into slave markets to complement the economy of the Islamic caliphate and the sexual desires of the combatants. According to the stories of Yezidi females, ISIS fighters collected and put them in large empty buildings, such as schools in the village Kojo and administration buildings in Sinjar. After collecting all the women and girls, most of the girls were put into large buses and were brought to Mosul, tel-Afar and Raqqa. After arriving in the city, the girls were again brought into large empty buildings with mattresses (Callimachi 2015). To regulate and encourage the purchase of a slave, ISIS published a document with a pricelist for Yezidi and Christian slaves (Webb & Rahman 2014). In regard to the slave market, men needed to register at what ISIS called the 'battalion administrative'. If they did not register, their attendance would be not allowed. Furthermore, those who won the bids in the auction had to pay the price with a stamped envelope at the time of the purchase (Appendix B). This organization shows that the institutions of sexual violence are highly bureaucratized within ISIS territory. Table 4 below shows the prices of the females categorized by age.

Table 4: Pricelist for Yezidi and Christian slaves (Webb & Rahman 2014)

| Age | Price |
| --- | --- |
| 40-50 year | $43 |
| 20-30 year | $86 |
| 10-20 year | $130 |
| 1-9  year | $172 |

However, it is important to know that these prices were set by the battalion administrative after a decline of purchases; some Yezidi girls were sold for a much higher price. For example, Women in the World (2016) showed that an eleven-year-old Yezidi girl was sold for $9000. Moreover, according to video footage of a slave distribution day amongst ISIS fighters, the price of girl differed if she had blue eyes (BBC News 2014). This has also been confirmed by several Yezidi survivors, who said, 'They touched our bodies and wanted the girls with blue eyes. The prettiest girls were reserved for the men from the Gulf states or as a gift for the highly ranked IS fighters' (Hurmi 2015, pp. 99-105). According to the report of the HRC (2016), ISIS made 80% percent of the women and girls available to its fighters for individual purchase. An individual purchase was conducted

at the slave markets or at the holding centres of ISIS. The remaining 20% of the females were distributed in groups to military bases throughout Iraq and Syria. 'In the last year, ISIS fighters have started to hold online slave auctions, using the encrypted Telegraph application to circulate photos of captured Yazidi women and girls, with details of their age, marital status, current location and price' (Human Rights Council 2016, p. 12).

As support for the claim that these women were used for the economic profit of the caliphate, the documents of ISIS show that it was forbidden to sell Yezidi females to nonISIS members. This shows a strict authority derived from the ideology and designed to keep the slaves within the Islamic State. Furthermore, video footage shows that ISIS tried to attract more (foreign) men to join ISIS because they would be rewarded with a slave due to their right as a jihadist for the caliphate. In addition to the justification of sexual slavery in their magazine Dabiq, ISIS published a document with several questions and answers regarding taking captives and slaves (Appendix A). ISIS once again mentioned that it was permissible to have non-Muslim slaves and that they should be treated as personal property. This included

permission to engage in sexual intercourse, beat the women and trade them as slaves. As Kirby (2015, p. 809) describes, this is an example of the 'merging of private desires and public events'. While the intentions and motivations of individual ISIS members might simply have been economic or sexual, the function of the slavery was still to manifest territorial control and to create a sense of terror. However, there is not sufficient data showing that ISIS made a large economic profit when selling the Yezidi women.

Another important point regarding wartime sexual violence is pregnancy. ISIS mentioned that if a female captive was impregnated by her owner, he could not sell her. As a result, ISIS has used contraceptive medicines, such as Depo-Provera, to deprive the captives of their rights as a mother during their sexual enslavement. Women in the World (2016) stated that the Islamic State ensured that the females were not pregnant to avoid breaking the Islamic law, which demands that a man must ensure that a slave is not pregnant before having any sexual intercourse with her. Furthermore, the document shows that the female captives were being sold as the property of an ISIS fighter: 'It is permissible to buy, sell, or give as a gift female captives and slaves, for they are

merely property' (Memri 2014). Selling Yezidi slaves meant money for ISIS, due to the economic benefits for the caliphate. 'One of the girls told me she asked the men holding her why they did not kill them if they hated them so much, and she got the reply that they meant money for them' (Neurink, 2015).

With regard to imposing measures to prevent births, ISIS performed abortions on Yezidi captives who were pregnant. Yezidi females who were pregnant were separated and later brought into the hospital. Bushra recalled 'One of my friends was pregnant. Her child was about three months in the womb. They took her into another room. There were two doctors and they did the abortion' (Shubert & Naik 2015). Other forms of preventing the birth of Yezidi children were in the form of abortion pills, birth control and beating the females in the stomach in the effort to kill the unborn child (Prestigiacoma 2016). The interviews with Yezidi women reveal that birth control pills were the standard procedure for preventing pregnancy of the Yezidi women and girls. A 16-year-old girl recalled, 'Every day, I had to swallow one in front of him. He gave me one box per month. When I ran out, he replaced it. When I was sold from one man to another, the

box of pills came with me' (Prestigiacoma 2016). By forcing the captured females to have abortions, take birth control pills and receive injections, the ISIS men maximized their acts of rape.

In terms of the physical destruction of the Yezidi community, ISIS militants were eager tell the captive Yezidi females that their husbands, fathers and brothers were killed and that their future as a slave was fixed. Fighters of ISIS claimed that they controlled the Kurdish cities Duhok and Erbil in order to create fear amongst the captives (Hurmi 2015, p. 131). Gule, a Yezidi captive, said, 'They told us that they had conquered the Kurdish cities, we thought that it was true because we did not had any access to any media channels' (Hurmi 2015, p. 140). By telling the women that ISIS controlled the Kurdish territory, ISIS fighters inflicted psychological harm on the group by making them think they could not be saved by the Kurdish Peshmerga. In addition, ISIS fighters were eager to tell that these females would not be accepted anymore due to the damage to the honour in regard of the Yezidi community. This would imply, that ISIS used this way of acting to predict escaping. Fortunately, the Yezidi leader Baba sheikh said that every Yezidi female

survivor would be accepted back into the community if they managed to escape (Graham-Harrison 2017).

## Framing the sexual violence of ISIS in light of existing theories

As previously stated, the patterns of sexual violence that were conducted by ISIS were part of their policy. The smaller units within the organization regulated the sexual violence and, as a result, contributed to the specific gender hierarchy within ISIS territory. Following the arguments by Henry (2016) by conducting sexual violence, the perpetrators used violence based on gender perceptions of the victim. Thus, the acts of sexual violence are connected to the important concept of militarized masculinity within ISIS ideology. By enslaving the Yezidi females, ISIS claims that these women are not worthy at all, which in turn, implies as a form of humiliation of women in the community.

In this regard, Wood and Gottschall (2008) suggested that sexual violence in conflict takes a variety of forms. An improved and more comprehensive understanding of the principal motivations for sexual violence is crucial to a given context and for implementing effective strategies for prevention and response. 'Sexual violence in conflict is

motivated and perpetuated by a complex mix of individual and collective, premediated and circumstantial reasons' (Wood & Gottschal 2008, p. 1).

With regard to framing the sexual violence of ISIS, both gender inequality theory and  strategic rape theory are of great importance. These two theories help to develop a linkage between the sexual violence of ISIS and the existing theories strategic rape theory and sociocultural theory. Moreover, by analysing the theories, this chapter shows that there is still a gap in the existing literature. As has previously been outlined, ISIS used sexual enslavement for strategic and non-strategic purposes. The armed organization controlled and managed the sexual slavery with institutions following the guidance of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. The analysis of ISIS documents shows that rape is strongly forbidden against female Sunni Muslims. In addition, ISIS believed that they were not committing rape in their sexual violence against the Yezidi females.

**Strategic Rape Theory**

Strategic rape theory is the most influential and common theory for understanding sexual violence during conflicts. The theory predicts that rape is used to achieve certain political, economic and social goals. Diken and Laustsen (2005) emphasized that organized rape has been an integral aspect of warfare: 'The prime aim of war rape is to inflict trauma and thus to destroy family ties and group solidarity within the enemy camp' (Diken & Lauststen 2005, p. 111). In addition, war rape can be an aspect of ethnic cleansing and has often has been referred as genocidal rape (Gottschall 2004, p. 131). Therefore, this theory suggest that rape aims to destroy the opponents culture. In light of this, strategic rape theory is able to explain the sexual violence by ISIS to a certain degree.

When an organization institutionalizes sexual slavery or forced marriage, the organization has purposefully adopted that form of sexual violence in pursuit of organizational objectives, and it is therefore a strategy due to the believe to achieve the aimed goals (Wood 2014, p. 472). An armed organization commits strategic rape due to the perception of realizing greater goals for the organization. For example, the

Dabiq publication of 2014 mentioned that the Yezidi people and its religion in the KRI had been studied over time. Thus, this means that the attack on Sinjar was not spontaneous. According to the ideology of ISIS, the area of the Islamic caliphate needs to be purified by removing apostates. Whereas the Yezidi men were killed, the women were seen as spoils of war. Following the historic circumstances of sexual violence during conflict, Henry (2016) stated that rape can be seen as a form of militarized hegemonic masculinity within the armed organization. However, with regard to ISIS, different groups received different treatment, which was justified by their ideology. The connection between the sexual violence patterns of ISIS as a policy and strategic rape theory suggests that the sexual violence was a tactic ordered by the leader and carried out by the soldiers with regard to larger strategic objectives. Therefore, following Wood (2014), the sexual violence by ISIS was not a side action; instead, sexual violence was strongly institutionalized by the ideology of ISIS and by smaller units within the organization.

In light of strategic rape theory, it is clear that ISIS engaged in sexual enslavement for strategic and non-strategic purposes. Following the thought of Leaning and Gingerich

cited in in Wood and Gottschal (2008), the military objectives of ISIS are designed to tear communities apart by encouraging aggression and by allowing rape as a reward or spoil of war to improve the morale within the organization.

When referring back to the theoretical framework where the work of Eriksson Baaz and Stern (2013) is explained, the sexual violence towards the Yezidis can be interpreted as evil rape instead of lust rape. Whereas the ISIS combatants believed that the spoils of war were their reward and right, the Yezidi females reported that they felt mentally and physically destroyed.

Additionally, the way ISIS conducted its attack on the city Sinjar – executing the men and enslaving the women – can be understood as the destruction of masculinity within the Yezidi community. By enslaving the women and girls, they were presuming that the Yezidi males are not capable of protecting their females. With regard to the policy method of sexual violence, the argument by Wood (2014) states that when sexual violence is perpetrated in a manner that leads to internal displacements, it is a clear example of collective violence. Therefore, the sexual violence by ISIS can be categorized as a form of collective violence because victims

were targeted for residing in an area of strategic importance for the armed group. Namely, one of the strategic purposes of conquering Sinjar was to create a free trade route between Mosul and the ISIS territory in Syria.

In addition to sexual violence, ISIS intentionally demoralized the population, tore communities apart and polluted blood lines. ISIS knew that killing the Yezidi men would endanger the future of this religious community because Yezidis believe that a Yezidi can only be born from two Yezidi parents. Furthermore, Hurmi (2015) presented evidence that ISIS fighters conducted abortions on Yezidi females to prevent new Yezidi from being born. With regard to the rite of initiation, of strategic rape theory, which aims to mark the acceptance within a group,  ISIS knew that honour is an important symbol in Yezidi culture. Thus, by raping and enslaving Yezidi females, they knew that the Yezidi females would not only be physically abused but also mentally terrorized by taking their honour and by creating feelings of shame and worthlessness. More broadly, the Yezidi males would also be affected by feeling powerless to save their women and girls. Thus, by carrying out sexually violent acts, ISIS exploited the gender values of female purity and

masculine protection. In addition, ISIS used rape as weapon to impose control over the community and produce: they showed that they were capable of capturing Yezidi females and using them as spoils of war.

Therefore, in light of strategic rape theory, it is clear that ISIS used sexual violence to destroy the Yezidi community's coherence and stability. In addition to those strategic opportunities, ISIS saw the bodies of the conquered as sexual property (Ahram 2015, p. 67). The militants organized slave markets in the cities and used Telegram to sell the Yezidi females. Therefore, using Yezidi females was strategic; it complemented the economy of the caliphate and possibly recruited more fighters who may have perceived that they deserved spoils of war. However, the data is not sufficient to prove that more men joined ISIS in order to acquire a sexual slave.

The ISIS policy of strategically raping Yezidis can also be seen as a means to reinforcing bonds among the ISIS fighters and believers. According to Ahram (2015, p. 59) 'Sexual violence reinforces bonds among Sunni Muslims, turning the motley crew of true believers, opportunists, thugs and outright sociopaths into networks that form the upper

levels of the embryonic Islamic State'. According Revkin and Wood (2017), individuals who join Salafi-jihadist groups, including ISIS, are often motivated by a desire for community and a collective identity. As the ideology of these groups is claiming that every true Muslim worshipper is lost in the Western world; thus, the believer is required to follow the path of jihad, which eventually leads to a collective jihadist identity.

**Remarks**

Although, the strategic rape theory explains why ISIS engaged in sexual violence to some extent, it does not acknowledge gendered roles within society and, in particular, the concept of masculinity among the ISIS militants. Furthermore strategic rape theory does not adequately describe the patterns of violence of the group or the ideology of ISIS, but this research study hypothesizes that the ideology of ISIS played a key role in the authorization and the performance of sexual violence against the Yezidis. Strategic rape theory, though, is only capable of explaining why the Yezidis were a potential target – namely, by showing that rape played a strategic role. Moreover, Revkin and Wood

(2017) argued that armed organizations develop organizational policies that authorize certain forms of sexual violence by defining the classes of persons who can legitimately be targeted and by regulating the conditions under which the different forms can occur. However, strategic rape theory is unable to explain the behaviour of individuals in the armed organization.

In conclusion, then, strategic rape theory shows that the sexual violence of ISIS was strategic because it was done in pursuit of group objectives rather than opportunistic rape out of anger or for private reasons. However, the role of private reasons can be contested due to the belief that ISIS wants to control/regulate the sexual lives of its fighters.

## Socio-cultural theory

The second theory which can explain the sexual violence by ISIS is socio-cultural theory, which focuses on the social and cultural aspects within an armed organization and its setting. Gottschal (2004) argued that a nation's or armed group's history and culture can be examined to find triggers for sexual violence. According to Henry (2016, p. 49), we should take the following factors into account:

adverse childhood experiences, attachment and personality disorders, social learning and delinquency, gender inequitable masculinities, substance abuse and firearms. In addition it is necessary to be aware that these individual factors are formed by environmental gender attitudes. The theory understands socio-cultural perceptions of gender as the decisive factor in sexual violence. Jewkes (2012) stated that rape perpetration is motivated by a perception of structured power relations between male and female and an understanding of femininity and masculinity. In line with this view, sociocultural theory argues that sexual violence is culturally constituted and endorsed.

According to Jewkes (2012), environmental influences may be the key factor causing the sexual violence against the Yezidi community. As stated above, the sexual violence and killings by ISIS are not the first time attempt of ethnic cleansing against the Yezidis. Rather, throughout history, the Yezidis have endured several attacks on their community due to their religion and culture. Due to being perceived devil worshippers, the status of Yezidis is not positive in the Islamic region of the Middle East. Therefore, the sexual violence against Yezidi females may have been justified

according to the socio-cultural perceptions of the region. As one supporter of ISIS told Amnesty International, 'It is right and proper that these people should convert to Islam and that the unmarried women should be married to Muslim men according to Islam. It is not true that they are oppressed, this is just propaganda' (Amnesty International 2014, p. 9). Another perception is the belief that taking a woman as a spoil of war and having sexual intercourse with her gives the jihadist a stronger bond with God. Ahram (2015) argued that ISIS emerged from a socio-political environment deeply imbedded with violence; therefore, sexual violence in the region of Syria and Iraq is not something new.

As has been outlined by ISIS in their pamphlet (Appendix B), questions and answers (Appendix A) and in Dabiq, there is a strong emphasis on gender differences, thus revealing the strong influence of hegemonic masculinity on the group and on its actions. In light of socio-cultural context theory, this emphasis on gender differences shows that ISIS is grounded in masculine perceptions and desires. This perception can be seen in the expressions of ISIS ideology and in Dabiq, which justifies their actions because they are the ones chosen to establish an Islamic caliphate. Ahram

(2015, p. 60) asserted that the masculinity of the state is embodied in despotic and arbitrary power over a population through coercive regulation of sexual relations. However, many non-state actors have shown their ability to use sexual violence. As Hutchings (2008) mentioned, the social practice of war requires the production and reproduction of masculine men. Due to the perception that each fighter deserved one or more Yezidi females, the perception of being masculine and having more power only grew among the ISIS fighters. The perception of militarized masculinity was seen in how these men treated the Yezidi females as war spoils; they degraded them and denied their humanity in horrific ways.

ISIS gives much attention to showing that its fighters are the chosen ones to fight for the real Islam and to establish the Islamic State. Therefore, we can see a form of hegemonic masculinity in which the fighter is a risk taker, not afraid to die for the establishment of the Islamic State and the fulfilment of the Salafist view of Islam and her norms and ideas. In addition, 'ISIS deploys sexual violence as a part of its effort to construct alternative institutions of protection and public services' (Ahram 2015, p. 59). According to Ahram (2015), ISIS used sexual violence to construct a distinctive

form of a hyper-masculine Islamic State, in which sexual violence upgrades the status of male Sunni Muslims and degrades the status of Yezidi females as sex slaves and Yezidi males as not being able to protect the females.

With regard to the aim of this research study, it is important to take the key institutions and norms of ISIS into consideration. By an analysis of the ideology of ISIS and its formation, we can see that the institutions of ISIS were influential and contributed to the gender hierarchy and to perceptions of sexual violence: 'IS doctrine makes clear that women are subordinate to men, but does not grant them limited rights, both in the household and in the larger society to which they belong' (Revkin & Wood 2017, p. 22). With regard to the Yezidi females, 'IS claims that the enslavement of certain classes of people is authorized by its interpretation of sharia. Slavery is among the institutions present during the first caliphate, which the group is seeking to emulate' (Revkin & Wood 2017, p. 19). Another important aspect with regard to the sexual violence was the obedience within ISIS. The socialization process within the territory shows that the followers of ISIS were obedient to its leader and that they followed his commands. The institutions were brought into

the state to control and shape their norms and values. Video footage of slave distribution published by ISIS confirms this way of thinking. The video shows fighters from all ages who are eager to buy or claim a Yezidi girl due to the belief that they deserve one, motivated by their ideology, which is strongly masculinized by war (Conflict Studies 2014).

According to socio-cultural theory, targeting victims based on their identity has been a part of the history of the beliefs of the Salafist movement within the Islam. As stated before, the Salafist movement justifies killing apostates and taking their women as spoils of war. Due to perception that the ideology of ISIS is strongly influenced by Salafism, sexual violence may not only be consistent with but, in fact, determined by the ideology of the organization. Indeed, the followers of ISIS were preserving the culture of sexual violence not only by using existing institutions, such as official slave markets, but also by influencing each other. As Revkin and Wood (2017, p. 10) argued, combatants who observed their peers engaging in prohibited behaviour may have felt social pressure to join in the practice. In addition, such practices are typically driven both by individual

opportunism and by social dynamics, such as by a desire for a community and for a collective identity.

For example, individual opportunism can be seen in the opportunity to have sexual intercourse outside of marriage. ISIS combatants believed that having sexual intercourse with a slave was justified by their ideology. In this regard, it is important to know that ISIS prohibits rape and sexual intercourse outside of marriage, with the exception of the spoils of war. Moreover, ISIS never uses the term rape to describe its sexual violence and in fact has repeatedly denied that its slave trade constitutes a system of institutionalized rape (Revkin & Wood 2017, p. 20). According to the beliefs of ISIS, sexual slavery is a religiously legitimate institution, in contrast with the forbidden crimes of fornication and rape. Moreover, Hurmi (2015, p. 108) argued that being in possession of a sexual slave enables men to sexually express themselves. These men live in conservative Muslim societies where prostitution is forbidden or any other sexual intercourse before marriage.

In terms of the influences that shape the ideas of the proponents of ISIS, the structure of the organization is important. As Sanin & Wood (2017) explained, the ideology

of a group is related to how the smaller units are structured within an organization. Such units are of great importance in shaping the social and cultural perceptions of the group. As has been explained before, the role of gender perceptions are determined by organizations, and, in the case of ISIS, the defining of those roles is an up-bottom process. The leader of the organization influences his followers by creating institutions that facilitate the sharing of a collective identity amongst the followers of ISIS. Therefore, military masculinity, which is of great importance with regard to the justification sexual violence, is socially constructed. As stated before, ISIS believes that only the strongest jihadists are capable of fighting for an Islamic caliphate. When the jihadists conquer a territory where they find a population of apostates, it is believed that these women are reserved to be the spoils of war. This perception of spoils of war – and how they should be treated – is implemented by the ideology. Following the arguments of Leaning and Gingerich (2004) in the discussion paper of Wood and Gottschal (2008), who believe that rape can be used as a boost for the morale, ISIS believes that the sexual enslavement of the Yezidis is one of the important morals of jihadism and therefore an important

part of the religious war of Islam. Another important aspect regarding the sexual violence of ISIS is the notion of damaging the honour of the Yezidis. ISIS believed that using Yezidi females as sexual slaves would damage their honour not only in terms of femininity but also with regard to their community, potentially preventing them from being accepted if they escaped. Fortunately, the Yezidi leader Baba Sheikh said that every Yezidi female survivor would be accepted in the community (Graham-Harrison 2017).

**Remarks**

Like every other theory, the socio-cultural theory lacks in providing an complete answer regarding all of the aspects of wartime sexual violence. Whereas it highlights the socially constructed beliefs of ISIS, it lacks in providing an understanding with regard to the strategic motives of enslaving these women. As Krause (2015) mentioned, there is a differentiation between opportunistic and strategic sexual violence. Following the perceptions of socio-cultural theory, it is not clear whether the sexual violence of ISIS was motived by lust rape or evil rape out of hate towards the Yezidis. In addition the theory also fails to explain the

justification of having institutions such as slave markets, which were intended to fulfil the economic prospects of ISIS. Instead, the theory views a society's perceptions of gender to be the key factor in explaining sexual violence, with an unclear distinction between the motives behind the sexual violence and the different forms of sexual violence.

Furthermore, as Revkin and Wood (2017) differentiate between sexual violence as a practice or a policy, socio-cultural theory is unable to explain why sexual violence by ISIS was been carried out as a policy with strategic purposes. Because strategic rape theory is unable to do so, socio-cultural theory can take aspect of honour into consideration, which is an important aspect of the culture of the region.

Both theories show that there is still a gap in understanding the sexual violence of ISIS, especially in terms of the ideology of the armed organization. Therefore the violence patterns by Sanin and Wood (2017) are crucial to understanding the behaviour of ISIS. The following chapter shows the various forms of sexual violence in which ISIS has engaged against the Yezidi females.

**The violence patterns of ISIS**

Violence is a key element in understanding the ideology and motives of ISIS fighters. In terms of violence based on identity, ISIS makes a clear distinction between the Muslims and unbelievers. Therefore, they strongly advocate for violence against disbelievers within their ideology and their perception of the Islam. Additionally, the encouragement to use violence against their enemies has been a major part of the ISIS strong program of the ideology. The violence patterns of Sanin and Wood (2017) become apparent after considering the perceptions of the weak program of the ideology and the data provided by the interviews with the Yezidis. In addition, Sanin and Wood (2017) argued that violence does not occur in an organizational vacuum; instead it requires skills and routines and is implemented by specific sets of combatants embedded in particular organizational structures (Sanin & Wood 2017, p. 26). The violence that was carried out by ISIS militants against the Yezidi community can be classified as targeting based on identity. For example, Revkin and Wood (2017, p. 4) stated, 'ISIS engages in particular sub-patterns of violence based on the social identity of targeted persons'. The armed organization

believes that its violence falls within its strict interpretation of Islamic view. According to ISIS, enslaving Yezidi women and girls is their right due to seeing them as spoils of war.

However, the sexual violence that was carried out by ISIS cannot be attached to one single pattern or motivation. Indeed, as described above, sexual violence was not a reality in the beginning of ISIS, but rather it became a policy due to the changing conflict dynamics in the region. Regarding previous sexual violence conflicts, the El Salvador civil war shows the same differences in patterns of violence due to the changing conflicts and institutions (Wood 2014, p. 469). As a result of the different combination of factors and the changing patterns with regard to violence, the armed organization of ISIS reveals a varied pattern in terms of sexual violence.

Using the patterns of violence model to understand the ideology of ISIS results in an overly narrow focus on conflict-related sexual violence. As Wood (2014) described, it is essential to take contextual concepts into account knowing whether rape occurs in the context of genocide or torture, for example, is essential to analysing why it occurs. 'Conflict-related sexual violence is undoubtedly a complex

phenomenon" (Wood 2014, p. 463) The patterns of violence model by Sanin and Wood (2017) shows that violence by an armed organization is comprised of a repertoire of different forms of violence, in which the targeting and frequency of each form of violence changes. The organization's sexual violence repertoire is thus a part of its overall repertoire (Wood 2014 p. 461). Table 5 shows the description for each unit in the violence patterns model.

Table 5: Violence patterns of ISIS in regard of Yezidis

| Repertoire | Targeting | Technique | Frequency |
|---|---|---|---|
| Executions Sexual slavery (Sexual) torture Forced abortion | Violence based on collective identity Specific forms of violence based on gender | execution: gunshots or beheadings, human shields Physical violence: child soldiers, forced conversion Sexual violence: sexual slavery, birth control, drugs in regard of becoming unconscious | Estimated numbers: captured people: 3547 females and 2870 males  Freed people: 1.084 females, 793 girls, 808 boys and 334 males |

**Repertoire**

'Repertoire' refer to the various forms of violence in which the organization regularly engages. Many of the forms of violence by ISIS are categorized by gender. There are four forms of violence which have been carried out by ISIS: execution of men and boys who are in puberty, sexual- and gender-based violence in the sphere of enslavement of the women and girls, abusing the young children who are held captive with their mothers and mental violence in training young boys in ISIS camps to become child soldiers and convert to Islam. The forms of violence that have been conducted are executions, (sexual)-torture, sexual slavery, and forced abortion.

**Targeting**

'Targeting' refers to the individuals who were selected for violence out of the Yezidi people. ISIS believed that these people were apostates due to their religion and classified them as devil worshippers. The Yezidis as a whole were perceived as apostates with no difference between female or male members of the community. According to ISIS, elimination of the community was needed to purify the area. However, specific forms of violence are based on gender.

**Technique**

The techniques that were carried out against the Yezidi men and boys are outlined as follows:

**Execution of people (mostly men and boys 12 years old and above):**

Witnesses who were forced to see the killings have described two forms of executions: beheading the males by cutting their throats and execution by gunshots to the head (HRC, 2016, p. 8). Furthermore, there have been statements that ISIS used Yezidi men and boys as human shields when they were under attack.

**Physical violence:**

ISIS used forced conversion into the Islam as a technique of physical violence in order to erase the Yezidi identity. However, the forced conversion was not a guarantee of safeness nor of equal treatment with other Muslims. Furthermore, the techniques used for physical violence included the prohibition of speaking the Kurdish language, praying and any other reference towards their identity and religion. With regard to the young children, ISIS placed them in their training camps so that they would embrace the ISIS

ideology and become a child soldier. All of the techniques of ISIS had the purpose of erasing the Yezidi community.

The techniques that were carried out with regard to sexual violence can be categorized into different forms, which are outlined here below:

**(non) Sexual slavery:**

Sexual violence against the Yezidi females was carried out according to a concrete plan and technique by ISIS. Females were categorized by age and appearance. The younger and unmarried females were sold as sexual slaves for ISIS fighters while the elderly were sold as slaves for household tasks. Females who were virgins had a higher price than the others, and attractive females were reserved for higher ranking ISIS members. The females were sold in the slave markets in Mosul, Raqqa and Tel-Afar – and between the fighters themselves.

**Forced abortion:**

There are several statements made by Yezidi survivors that ISIS forced abortion on pregnant women to prevent new Yezidi from being born (Hurmi 2015). Yezidi females who were pregnant were separated and later brought into the

hospital. 'One of my friends was pregnant....There were two doctors and they did the abortion' (Shubert & Naik 2015).

**Birth control:**

Birth control pills were also used to prevent that the Yezidi women and girls from becoming pregnant. A 16-year-old girl recalled, 'Every day, I had to swallow one in front of him. He gave me one box per month. When I ran out, he replaced it. When I was sold from one man to another, the box of pills came with me' (Prestigiacoma 2016).

**Sexual torture:**

Sexual torture was being carried out in two different forms: physical and mental. A twelve-year-old girl said the following: 'He told me that according the Islam, he was allowed to rape us. By raping me, he felt that he was becoming closer to god' (Hurmi 2015, p. 113). This particular view was also mentioned by other survivors. Another girl said that the man who raped her believed that raping a Yezidi female was part of the prayer between him and god (Hurmi 2015, p. 115). Besides sexual torture, the Yezidi females were humiliated by inhuman practices. A female named Jinan mentioned the following: 'If we refused sexual intercourse, they would beat us, tie us up and torture us with electricity

(Hurmi 2015, p. 115). Yezidi survivors also stated that they were drugged during sexual intercourse. Barfo, a Yezidi girl, stated, 'I told him please do not rape me, I fought against him but he was very strong. He lifted me up to bed and injected me with morphine before raping me' (Hurmi 2015, p. 128).

**Frequency**

As has been mentioned by Wood (2014) the concepts of repertoire and targeting are more noticeable than frequency. From the report of Bozani and Hurmi (2016), the estimated number of captured females by ISIS was 3.547. In 2016, the number of freed Yezidis with the help of the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) was estimated to be 1.084 women and 793 girls. In regard of the males, 2.870 were captured, whereas 808 boys and 334 males were freed with help of the KRG.

The concept of technique shows that ISIS engaged in a variation of particular forms of sexual violence. Following the arguments of Sanin and Wood (2017), which suggest that organizations often specialize in particular repertoires, it is clear that ISIS specialized in different forms of sexual

violence. As Sanin and Wood (2017) suggested, each dimension of the model is necessary and sufficient to advance an analysis of how the sexual violence of ISIS can be defined: 'The approach also helps prevent the neglect of certain forms of violence or types of victims, therefore the researcher is impelled to explore whether rape was part of its pattern' (Sanin & Wood 2017, p. 29). Thus, the patterns of violence shows more precisely the different forms of sexual violence and against whom they were carried out. In so doing, the model assesses the confirmation of theoretical claims more accurately.

As Kirby (2015) argued, the results of sexual violence can be analysed as consequences rather than instrumental causes. Thus, the sexual violence of ISIS can be analysed as a functional option within the armed organization. As the documents of ISIS have shown, the purpose of sexual violence against the Yezidis was perpetrated for economical profits, and to fulfil the demands of the fighters for spoils of war. Referring back to the theoretical approach of Eriksson Baaz and Stern (2013), sexual violence of ISIS was commanded from the top down. This means that the sexual violence was a result of strategic policy that was commanded

from above and that resulted in implementation by ISIS institutions and its followers. Defining sexual violence as a strategic policy implies that it is not the result of a tool of practice. Furthermore, there were no clear signs that Abu Bakr alBaghdadi lacked control in terms of collective identity and controlling the people inside the territory of the Islamic State. As Revkin and Wood (2017) argued, sexual violence has not always been commanded by the commander in historical cases. Rather, sexual violence sometimes has occurred and been accepted by the leader so as not to lose the control and power of his position. Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi enjoys a high degree of a collective identity and following its political ideology. Following the work of Sanin and Wood (2014), the leader of ISIS likely has control over the sexual violence of his subordinates, due to the institutions that indoctrinate recruits so strongly that they internalize the commander's preferred pattern of violence.

Referring back to the motives of using wartime sexual violence, the case of the Yezidis shows that sexual violence was not used to extract information or intelligence. It is interesting to note that ISIS is against any sexual violence in terms of raping Muslims. When referring to the Yezidis,

though, sexual violence is not a violation or a rape according to their beliefs. Thus, they are selective in their interpretation of sexual violence and only justify their theological perceptions. With regard to the gender perceptions, the type of violence against the Yezidis was based on targeting on gender. The sexual violence can be perceived as control over a certain community, which in this case was the Yezidis. Gaining more control over a territory can be seen as an important motivational factor for carrying out sexual violence, with regard to being rewarded. Unlike other sexual violence during war, the Yezidi females were held captive and were later transferred to slave markets in several cities. The sexual violence by ISIS can therefore be perceived as not only gaining control over the area of Sinjar but perhaps more importantly also as controlling the community by destroying Yezidi culture, norms and values. Following the thought of Leiby (2009), it suggests that ISIS saw the enslavement of Yezidi females as a way of affecting the whole Yezidi community, not only by violence but also in terms of physical damage by showing that the men could not save their women.

**Sexual violence as a policy**

By the analysis of Dabiq and the Questions and Answers pamphlet (Appendix A), it was possible to define the sexual violence of ISIS to a certain degree. When analysing sexual violence, we can make a distinction between two explanations: rape as a practice and rape as a policy during conflict. The first explanation is supported by the assumption that rape often occurs amongst the fighters of an armed organization without an explicit command by the leader of the group. The second explanation argues that rape as a form of sexual violence is embedded in the policy of the armed organization, not only with knowledge by the leader but also by giving a command to use sexual violence (Sanin & Wood 2017). It is important to know that sexual violence as a result of practice may be the product of social interactions rather than commanded from above (Wood 2014, p. 471). Institutionalized forms of sexual violence, on the other hand, are clearly adopted for organizational purposes and are therefore strategic (Wood 2014, p. 471). Wood (2014) argued that in some settings, rape is an institutionalized form of compensation or reward, rewarding combatants for exemplary service with civilians to victimize.

Being aware of these two distinct forms of defining sexual violence, it is arguable that the sexual violence of ISIS was carried out as a policy and not as a practice. 'Forced marriage and sexual slavery are clearly strategic: they are strongly institutionalized within the group, which has issued rules for their implementation' (Wood 2014, p. 473). The interviews with the Yezidi females and the documentation by ISIS shows that sexual violence occurred not only as a result of policies regarding territorial control but also as a tool for managing the sexual lives of the combatants of ISIS. By understanding the ideology of ISIS and its leadership traits, we know that there was already a gender hierarchy within ISIS, especially regarding highly militarized masculinity. The enslavement of Yezidi females within ISIS territory was strongly restricted in terms of purchase and enslavement. As has been outlined by Hurmi (2015), ISIS made institutions to regulate the trading of Yezidi females, which indicates that the sexual enslavement was used not only as a method of humiliating this religious minority but also of gaining economic profits. The written publication of the ISIS slave market (Appendix B), shows that any interested fighter of the

caliphate should register at the battalion administrative and that whoever wins the bid must pay the price of the slave.

Furthermore, another strategic purpose of sexual enslavement is seen by the different treatment of the women amongst the fighters. According to documentations of ISIS, a fighter who is from the Western countries, Turkey or the Gulf States, is allowed to have more than three Yezidi females as sexual slaves (Memri 2014). This way of acting can be seen as a strategic move to attract more foreign fighters by seducing them with more sexual slaves. Figure 2 gives an overview of how the leadership traits of al-Baghdadi have influenced the sexual slavery institutions and the followers and fighters of the caliphate. Starting from here, it is believed that the leader of ISIS used his political religious ideology to shape the perception regarding the spoils of war. Slave markets and holding centres are responsible for carrying out the policy of the commander concerning sexual violence. As stated in the previous chapter, the leader of ISIS has a strong constituency that believes he is the assigned leader to accomplish the realization of an Islamic caliphate. As a result, it is relatively easy for the leader of ISIS to seduce his followers with his perceptions and strategic ideas regarding

the goals of the caliphate. We can see that Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi ensures that he has a strong form of obedience, group cohesion and sexual violence as a social norm amongst the different levels of the organization. Therefore, we can assume that there is a coherence amongst the leader, the institutions and his followers, who share the same view regarding the sexual enslavement of the Yezidi females. Furthermore, disobedience amongst ISIS members is highly punished by its institutions. Finally, followers of ISIS are influenced by their peers as a result of strong coherence and shared collective identity.
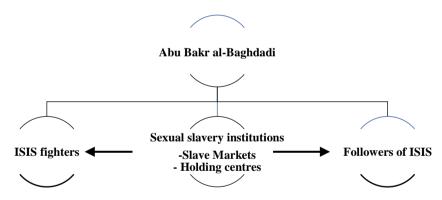


Figure 2. Top-down influence within ISIS with regard to sexual violence

To refer back to the purpose of controlling the sexual lives of combatants, we can assume that ISIS male followers had several motives for doing so. Sexual violence could be carried out not only due to compliance and obedience to ISIS but also according to personal preferences. As has been argued by Hurmi (2015), the followers of ISIS are believers of the Salafist movement within Islam, which forbids sexual intercourse before and outside marriage. However, a male is allowed to have a sexual slave, whom they refer to as a spoil of war. They believe they are not committing a sin because they are having sexual intercourse with a non-Sunni Muslim. From the interviews with Yezidi females, the sexual violence not only consisted out of rape but also sexual torture that fulfilled the private desires of ISIS fighters. By using the spoils of war as a strategic policy, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi not only managed to fulfil his strategic motives for his established Islamic caliphate but also influenced and maintained control over his followers in terms of sexual preferences with the help of the institutions and the published pamphlet of questions and answers concerning the spoils of war.

ISIS has visible traits of both the strong and weak programs of an ideology. An ideology is crucial due to the

perception of organized ideas and the internal life of an armed organization. As outlined before, the use of sexual slaves is already embedded in the strong program of the ISIS ideology, whereas the weak program implements techniques regarding the spoils of war. The patterns of violence by Sanin and Wood (2017) show that the different units (repertoire, targeting, technique and frequency) are crucial in terms of being able to analyse and define the types of violence committed by ISIS.

However as Sanin and Wood (2017) mentioned, one of the important concerns regarding the model is the availability of data. In the case of ISIS, there is a lack of data regarding the perceptions of ISIS fighters regarding the normative commitments of the techniques that have been carried out. However, the analysis of the violence of ISIS helps to identify the characteristics of violence patterns against the Yezidi people. More importantly, 'Attention to the targets of violence is essential to the determination of whether or not the perpetrators intended to destroy a particular group' (Sanin & Wood 2017, p. 36).

# Conclusion

The aim of this research was to answer the following question: How can we define the sexual violence by ISIS against the Yezidis? Taking the theoretical insights into consideration when explaining the behaviour of this armed organization, this research concludes that the sexual violence was the result of a strategic policy tool rather than an accidental practice during conflict. The violence carried out by ISIS is rationalized by Salafist influenced ideology, which encourages performing a jihad for the creation of an Islamic caliphate consisting purely out of Sunni Muslims.

The spoils of war concept within the Salafist doctrine was used to justify the enslavement of Yezidi females, whom ISIS considers to be apostates. In addition, ISIS believed it was their right to enslave these women and girls for sexual purposes, while also believing that they were not raping them. The questions and answers pamphlet (Appendix A) shows why Yezidis should be enslaved and traded amongst the ISIS fighters. Thus, this gives a strong sense of obeying the commanders institutions amongst the ISIS followers.. With regard to violence, the attack on the Yezidi females was purely based on the perception of collective identity. This

research has shown the religious motive for using sexual violence. ISIS used its interpretation of Islam to justify the attack on the Yezidis. Seeing them as apostates and not as followers of the book of the three religions, ISIS believed that they were the chosen ones to eliminate this religious minority. By killing the males and enslaving the females, the fighters believed that they were performing the religious jihad and had the right to enslave the Yezidis as spoils of war.

Furthermore, besides their religious justifications, the strong role of ISIS' leadership is crucial in understanding the motives of the sexual violence. Following the leadership traits of the leader of ISIS, it is clear that Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi enjoys a high degree of commitment amongst his followers. There is a strong sense of group cohesion, obedience and violence as a social norm. All these traits are justified by the theological perspective of ISIS ideology. Due to his ability, the institutions within ISIS enforce the commander's principles and carry out discipline.

As has been outlined by Revkin and Wood (2017), it is crucial to take the ideology of an armed organization into consideration when explaining a certain behaviour. The outcome of this research shows that the current theories

regarding sexual violence fail to give a desired outcome in the case of the Yezidis. Whereas strategic rape theory explains the motives behind the use of sexual violence as a strategic policy, it fails to address the gender perspectives and the influence of ideology. Socio-cultural theory predicts that the use of sexual violence can be driven by the embedded perceptions of sexual violence with regard to gender roles. However, this theory fails to give an answer about the motives behind sexual violence as a strategic policy of ISIS. The leader of ISIS implemented an ideology amongst his followers that is influenced by gender norms with regard to militarized masculinity. Therefore, the violence that was carried out was based on identity and gender. The concept of patterns of violence shows that the techniques of targeting differed for each group. This shows that the violence was dynamic rather than static.

When giving a suitable answer to the research question, it is logical to conclude that the sexual violence by ISIS was been used as a strategic policy rather than as a practice amongst the combatants during war. Thus, this implies that the sexual violence was carried out for organizational practices rather than for the opportunistic private reasons of

combatants. To support this statement, the documents of ISIS state that rape and sexual intercourse before and outside marriage are prohibited. They even mentioned that the sexual enslavement of the Yezidis should not be seen as a form of rape due the belief of spoils of war. In order to analyse sexual violence during conflict, this research shows that smaller units in an armed organization are important in shaping the behaviour of the fighters. As the outcome of this research shows, the gender norms are created by the leadership traits, whereas the key institutions maintain these norms by shaping the sexual behaviour of followers . However, with regard to the economic profits of sexual enslavement, there is not enough sufficient data to show that ISIS profited from selling the Yezidi women.

As stated before, the patterns of violence during a war are dynamic. When analysing ISIS documents, this particular view is especially clear in the evolving violence due to more territorial expansion and power. Whereas some armed organizations struggle with the compliance and obedience, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi enjoys a high degree of obedience amongst his followers. As a result, he used the concept of

spoils of war as an organizational policy in order to manage and control his proponents.

## Discussion

The outcome of this research shows that there are still gaps in the sexual violence framework. Whereas some scholars maintain the sufficiency of existing theories, such as strategic rape theory and socio-cultural theory, to explain wartime sexual violence, this research shows that the existing theories are not capable of fully explaining the sexual violence of ISIS. Like Revkin and Wood (2017), this research shows that the patterns of violence need to be used in order to explain the wartime sexual violence.

As stated before, patterns of violence are dynamic. Therefore, the previously applied theories with regard to explaining sexual violence cannot explain every aspect of the violence against the Yezidis. Furthermore, an analysis of ideology is needed to explain the sexual violence of an armed organization. The challenge for future sexual violence work is to identify and explain why a leader chooses to use sexual violence as an organizational policy or a practice. The case of ISIS gives an understanding of its ideology to some degree; however, this might not always be the case with regard to

explaining other cases of sexual violence by armed organizations. In regard of improvements in the sphere of explaining sexual violence, is to take the concept of ideology again in consideration when explaining the violence of an armed organization. In regard of improvements in the sphere of explaining sexual violence. Lastly, the need of qualitative data is crucial in explaining the motives behind the sexual violence during war, in regard of defining this specific form of violence.

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# Appendices

## Appendix A Pamphlet on Female Slaves Questions and answers

**"Question 1: What is a*l-sabi*?**

"Al-Sabi is a woman from among *ahl al-harb* [the people of war] who has been captured by Muslims.

**"Question 2: What makes a*l-sabi* permissible?**

"What makes *al-sabi* permissible [i.e., what makes it permissible to take such a woman captive] is [her] unbelief. Unbelieving [women] who were captured and brought into the abode of Islam are permissible to us, after the imam distributes them [among us]." **"Question 3: Can all unbelieving women be taken captive?**

"There is no dispute among the scholars that it is permissible to capture unbelieving women [who are characterized by] original unbelief [*kufr asli*], such as the *kitabiyat* [women from among the People of the Book, i.e. Jews and Christians] and polytheists. However, [the scholars] are disputed over [the issue of] capturing apostate women. The consensus leans towards forbidding it, though some people of knowledge think it permissible. We [ISIS] lean towards accepting the consensus…"

**"Question 4: Is it permissible to have intercourse with a female captive?**

"It is permissible to have sexual intercourse with the female captive. Allah the almighty said: '[Successful are the believers] who guard their chastity, except from their wives or (the captives and slaves) that their right hands possess, for then they are free from blame [Koran 23:5-6]'..."

**"Question 5: Is it permissible to have intercourse with a female captive immediately after taking possession [of her]?**

"If she is a virgin, he [her master] can have intercourse with her immediately after taking

possession of her. However, is she isn't, her uterus must be purified [first]…"
**"Question 6: Is it permissible to sell a female captive?**

"It is permissible to buy, sell, or give as a gift female captives and slaves, for they are merely property, which can be disposed of [as long as that doesn't cause [the Muslim ummah] any harm or damage."

**"Question 7: Is it permissible to separate a mother from her children through [the act of] buying and selling?**

"It is not permissible to separate a mother from her prepubescent children through buying, selling or giving away [a captive or slave]. [But] it is permissible to separate them if the children are grown and mature."

**"Question 8: If two or more [men] buy a female captive together, does she then become [sexually] permissible to each of them?**

"It is forbidden to have intercourse with a female captive if [the master] does not own her exclusively. One who owns [a captive] in partnership [with others] may not have sexual intercourse with her until the other [owners] sell or give him [their share]."

**"Question 9: If the female captive was impregnated by her owner, can he then sell her?**

"He can't sell her if she becomes the mother of a child..."

**"Question 10: If a man dies, what is the law regarding the female captive he owned?**

"Female captives are distributed as part of his estate, just as all [other parts] of his estate [are distributed]. However, they may only provide services, not intercourse, if a father or [one of the] sons has already had intercourse with them, or if several [people] inherit them in partnership."

**"Question 11: May a man have intercourse with the female slave of his wife?**

"A man may not have intercourse with the female slave of his wife, because [the slave] is owned by someone else."

**"Question 12: May a man kiss the female slave of another, with the owner's permission?** "A man may not kiss the female slave of another, for kissing [involves] pleasure, and pleasure is prohibited unless [the man] owns [the slave] exclusively."

**"Question 13: Is it permissible to have intercourse with a female slave who has not reached puberty?**

"It is permissible to have intercourse with the female slave who hasn't reached puberty if she is fit for intercourse; however if she is not fit for intercourse, then it is enough to enjoy her without intercourse."

**"Question 14: What private parts of the female slave's body must be concealed during prayer?**

"Her private body parts [that must be concealed] during prayer are the same as those [that must be concealed] outside [prayer], and they [include] everything besides the head, neck, hands and feet."

**"Question 15: May a female slave meet foreign men without wearing a hijab?**

"A female slave is allowed to expose her head, neck, hands, and feet in front of foreign men if *fitna* [enticement] can be avoided. However, if fitna is present, or of there is fear that it will occur, then it [i.e. exposing these body parts becomes] forbidden."

**"Question 16: Can two sisters be taken together while taking slaves?**

"It is permissible to have two sisters, a female slave and her aunt [her father's sister], or a female slave and her aunt [from her mother's side]. But they cannot be together during intercourse, [and] whoever has intercourse with one of them cannot have intercourse with the other, due to the general [consensus] over the prohibition of this." **"Question 17: What is a*l-'azl*?**

"*Al-'azl* is refraining from ejaculating on a woman's pudendum [i.e. coitus interruptus]."

**"Question 18: May a man use the a*l-'azl* [technique] with his female slave?**

"A man is allowed [to use] *al-'azl* during intercourse with his female slave with or without her consent."

**"Question 19: Is it permissible to beat a female slave?**

"It is permissible to beat the female slave as a [form of] *darb ta'deeb* [disciplinary beating], [but] it is forbidden to [use] *darb al-takseer* [literally, breaking beating], [*darb*] *altashaffi* [beating for the purpose of achieving gratification], or [*darb*] al-*ta'dheeb* [torture beating]. Further, it is forbidden to hit the face."

**Question 20: What is the ruling regarding a female slave who runs away from her master?**

"A male or female slave's running away [from their master] is among the gravest of sins…"

**"Question 21: What is the earthly punishment of a female slave who runs away from her master?**

"She [i.e. the female slave who runs away from her master] has no punishment according to the shari'a of Allah; however, she is [to be] reprimanded [in such a way that] deters others like her from escaping."

**"Question 22: Is it permissible to marry a Muslim [slave] or a *kitabiyya* [i.e. Jewish or Christian] female slave?**

"It is impermissible for a free [man] to marry Muslim or *kitabiyat* female slaves, except for those [men] who feared to [commit] a sin, that is, the sin of fornication…"

**"Question 24: If a man marries a female slave who is owned by someone else, who is allowed to have intercourse with her?**

"A master is prohibited from having intercourse with his female slave who is married to someone else; instead, the master receives her service, [while] the husband [gets to] enjoy her [sexually]."

**"Question 25: Are the *huddoud* [Koranic punishments] applied to female slaves?**

"If a female slave committed what necessitated the enforcement of a *hadd* [on her], a *hadd* [is then] enforced on her – however, the *hadd* is reduced by half within the *hudud* that accepts reduction by half…"

**"Question 27: What is the reward for freeing a slave girl?**

"Allah the exalted said [in the Koran]: 'And what can make you know what is [breaking through] the difficult pass [hell]? It is the freeing of a slave.' And [the prophet Muhammad] said: 'Whoever frees a believer Allah frees every organ of his body from hellfire.'"

# Appendix B Public Statement ISIS Slave Market

In the name of Allah

Islamic State
Wilayat Homs

Document Number: 1
Date: 16/June/2015

## Public Statement

For the brothers who are willing to buy Sabaya (Slaves), Please register at the at the battalion administrative.

As for brothers on duty, Your Amir (Leader) will be informed 10 days after issuing this statement regarding the specific date for the Souq Al Nikhasa (Slave Market), so please coordinate your leave with your Amir.

And those who don't register will not be allowed to attend the Slave Market.

Those who win the bids in the Auction must pay the price with a stamped envelope at the time of purchase.

Allah is the Arbiter of Success . . .

A copy for records to:

Troop and battalions that belong to military administrative.

Troop and battalions of the General administrative-Jihadists affairs- (Marriage Office).

# Delwin Merani

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## Personalia

Born 11 juli 1994, Almere

Nationality: Dutch

Marital status: Unmarried

Driving license B

## work experience

FEB 2019- Present          **VECHTSTEDE COLLEGE**

**TEACHER SOCIAL STUDIES**

- Designing and teaching lessons/tests
- Offering tutor lessons

SEP 2018 – PRESENT          **HUDSON'S BAY ALMERE**

SALES ADVISOR

- Offering advice to customers
- Dressing room activities
- Helping customers and giving assistance if needed
- Keeping the store representative
- Cash-desk activities

SEP 2012 – JUL 2013      **STUDENT IN ALMERE**

AMBASSADOR

- Promotional work for the city Almere as a 'Studentcity'
- The face of students in Almere and for potential students
- Promoting studies in Almere
- Contact person for questions in relation to study facilities in Almere
- Keeping the website up to date

**Education**

FEB 2019 – Present      UNIVERSITEIT VAN AMSTERDAM
Leraarbevoegdheid Maatschappijwetenschappen, Master degree (teaching degree social studies)

SEP 2017 – JULI 2018     UNIVERSITEIT VAN AMSTERDAM
Political Science (International relations), Master degree

SEP 2013 – JULI 2017     VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT AMSTERDAM
Political Science, Bachelor of Science degree

qualifications

**Extracurricular activities:** Homework and tutoring assistance,  UNHCR refugeehelp

(Refugeecamp Domiz

Northern-Iraq 2013).

**Computer skills :** excellent knowledge of Word, Photoshop and Imovie.

**Certificate of fast and blind typing and word processing (PICA).**

**Languages:** excellent knowledge of the English, Dutch and Kurdish language in speaking and writing . Basis knowledge of German.