KADIR HAS UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

VIOLENCE 2.0: USİNG SOCİAL MEDİA FOR RADİCAL PROPAGANDA

GRADUATE THESIS/DISSERTATION

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JUNE, 2016

MOHAMED ELLABBAN

M.A. Thesis Dissertation

2016

VIOLENCE 2.0: USİNG SOCİAL MEDİA FOR RADİCAL PROPAGANDA

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Submitted to the Graduate School of Social Sciences
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
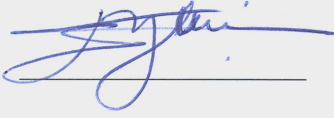in
New Media

KADIR HAS UNIVERSITY
June, 2016

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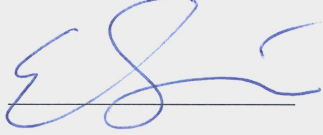VIOLENCE 2.0: USING SOCIAL MEDIA FOR RADICAL PROPAGANDA

MOHAMED ELLABBAN
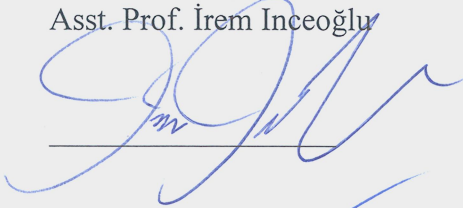
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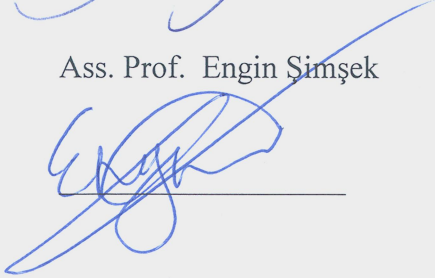
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APPROVAL DATE: 10/June/2016

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ABSTRACT

VIOLENCE 2.0: USİNG SOCİAL MEDİA FOR RADİCAL PROPAGANDA

Mohamed Ellabban

Master of Arts in New Media

Advisor: Assoc. Prof. Eylem Yanardağoğlu

June, 2016

When those who claim power attempt to oppress those who don't, violence is no longer an unlikely response. It is used as a means to resist and fight against submission to the power. To strengthen their position as the sole and rightful authority, powers usually resort to media to act as their tool of influence on people's perception. As the world change, authorities do as well. These ideological regimes start to adapt new technologies such as the internet instead or in compliment to the old traditional media. New techniques are then used but for the same old goals; influence and sometimes harassment of peoples' minds. But social media has proven that it can be different. It cannot be fully controlled, and its basic fundamental concept is that enables people to share and connect with each other, with a minimum presence of gatekeepers. This has allowed social media to be a field where any idea can flourish, even violent ones. This dissertation shows how violent groups can use social media to propagate their causes. Moreover, it contains a case study of a radical violent group that exploits digital propaganda experts to achieve its communication, operational, and strategic goals.

Keywords: Violence, Communication, Propaganda, Public Sphere, Internet, Social Media.

ÖZET

ŞİDDET 2.0: RADİKAL PROPAGANDA İÇİN SOSYAL MEDYANIN KULLANIMI

Mohamed Ellabban

Yeni Medya, Yüksek Lisans

Danışman: Doç. Dr. Eylem Yanardağoğlu

Haziran, 2016

Güç iddiasında bulunanlar, bulunmayanlar üzerinde baskı kurmaya kalktıklarında, şiddet muhtemel bir tepki haline gelir. Bu şiddet iktidara teslime karşı direnmek ve savaşmak için araç olarak kullanılır. Güçler genellikle tek ve meşru otorite olarak kendi konumlarını güçlendirmek amacıyla, insanların algıları üzerinde etki aracı olarak medyaya başvururlar. Dünya değiştikçe otoriteler de değişir. Bu ideolojik rejimler, geleneksel medyanın yerine ya da onun tamamlayıcısı olarak internet gibi yeni teknolojiler benimsemeye başlar. Yeni teknikler eski hedefler için kullanılmaktadır: insan zihnini etki altına almak ve bazen taciz etmek. Ancak sosyal medya bunun farklı olabileceğini kanıtlamıştır. Sosyal medya tamamen kontrol altına alınamaz ve denetleyicilerin varlığını en aza indirir. Sosyal medyanın en temel amacı insanların birbirleriyle iletişim kurmasını ve paylaşım yapmasını sağlamaktır. Bu da sosyal medyanın herhangi bir fikrin, şiddet içeren fikirler bile olsa, gelişebildiği bir alan haline gelmesine yol açmıştır. Bu tez, şiddet yanlısı grupların davalarını yaymak için sosyal medyayı nasıl kullandıklarını ortaya koyar. Ayrıca, bu tez kendi iletişimsel, işlevsel ve stratejik hedeflerine ulaşmak için dijital propaganda uzmanlarından yararlanan şiddet yanlısı radikal bir grubu vaka çalışması olarak ele alır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Şiddet, İletişim, Propaganda, Kamusal Alan, Internet, Yeni Medya.

Acknowledgements

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1 Introduction

—Armies of the past used to march to the rhythms of drums. Now it's the number of tweets, its density, tone, and people interactions. Armies of the recent past used traditional media to achieve goals, but now they made social media a cornerstone of their arms‖ (Barakat, 2014).

Nowadays not only traditional media talks about the violence or radical thoughts and ideas, but social media and Internet will also spread the news and violence wider than traditional the media would do. Internet as a web that allows every user to communicate with others regardless of time and space will be a reason for online propaganda.

This research discusses how violence can be propagated on the Internet and social media, using radical propaganda to refer to ISIS. This dissertation tries to answer the following: why ISIS is using social media? Which platforms are they using and why? And thirdly, it analyzes the interactions and engagement of ISIS production on social media platforms.

Violence groups need to seek attention in order to be discussed on different levels, in different spheres, and different levels of people. Therefore, the Internet is the sphere they are using away from the barriers of traditional media and also because of targeting the Internet users who are highly experienced in using digital media.

Internet gives a free sphere to produce different types of media productions, like videos, radio stations, magazines, and even online TV channels. It is diverse in the

channels; violence groups take advantage of this diversity which is represented through one medium, which is the Internet.

The research talks, in the first chapter, about the violence and why it has been used and implemented by different groups of people. It also talks about political communication and why it is important to fill the gap between power and opponents in general, in addition to the communications functions of media and the propaganda on traditional media, besides the role of the Internet and propaganda on social media.

The second chapter talks about the methodology used in this research. In this dissertation, the research question and hypothesis tried to answer a descriptive question; therefore, the qualitative strategy is more suitable for this dissertation.

The third chapter talks about ISIS as a case study and how they use the Internet and their visual production in addition to some examples of user engagement with what are they producing or what other media outlets share about them.

The forth chapter talks about the conclusions of the research and the findings of this dissertation.

1.1   Violence and Power

Power is the desire which makes people struggle in their life in order to gain it, any kind of power that makes mankind satisfy their ego. However, when some men reach this power, it will lead to resistance from other mankind who seek the same power.

Power is a tool for ruling, and mankind's instinct is to dominate and make others obey this desire. This desire can be described in many different ways like an ideology, identity, and so on. Therefore, forcing people to obey a specific desire might cause resistance from others, and according to Michel Foucault —Wherever there is power, there is resistance‖ (1978: 95).

Hanna Arendt (1970) emphasized on the problems of violence that are still ambiguous; she mentioned what Georges Sorel (1906) marked for more than a hundred years ago that —The problem of violence still remain obscure.‖ All politicians varying from Left to Right contribute to politics in order to gain power. Hanna Arendt, believed that —all politics is a struggle of power, the ultimate kind of power is politics‖ and as she described also that —Violence is nothing more than the most flagrant manifestation of power‖ (1970: 35).

Max Weber (1956) defined the state as —the rule of men over men based on the means of legitimate that is allegedly legitimate violence‖ (1956: 171). According to Weber, he equated power as a result of politics with the organization of violence, which means that the state is a tool at the hand of the ruling class and they use it for their own interests in the first place; therefore, they legitimate that tool to be a state.

On the other hand, mankind behaviors are different, as there are men whose desire is to force people to obey their dominations and their commands; there are others who are willing to offer submissions, and they are also willing to obey and to be ruled by

the strong man. This leads to a very important insight we have been living since the beginning of mankind till nowadays; the will to power and to obey people and the will to be obeyed and to be ruled are interconnected.

That is why the state forms different institutions and creating many laws in different forms by different methods in order to reinforce its legitimacy in front of the society and to force people to obey and follow these rules. Meanwhile these institutions are manifestations and materializations of this state's power.

The regime needs supporters for its rule; it needs helpers to support it in shaping these institutions and laws. It needs a high number of these supporters, and this is one of the elements to distinguish between power and violence. While power relies on the number of effective individuals who are associated with the state for their interests and are promoting for the state's ideas and opinions, violence relies on the implementations of actions against these opinions and the desires of that power. Hanna Arendt stated that (1970) —The extreme form of power is all against one, the extreme form of violence is one against all‖ (1970: 38).

Arendt (1970) described the power as —it's not just to act, but to act in concert‖ (1970: 44). She means the harmonization of different elements that lead to this power. The power does not represent only one person who is in power, but it actually defines a group of people or institutions which had been formed by this group in order to represent

them, because simply without this group of people or their formed institutions there will be no power.

Violence is the tool for a group of people who refuse to obey the state, especially if this state has been formed by fraud or forgery, according to their opinions. However, this group also seeks power, and this explains that the power of the state is a synonym for violence (Habibović, 2015).

Arendt and Weber theorized the relations between violence and power. Weber discussed the political actions as the domination of territory by different means and tools of violence where political players in this regime use all sorts of ends in view to strengthen this domination, like glory, dignity and peace. In the case of Arendt, violence itself is anti-political. This is because violence, in which obedience is secured through coercion, is the opposite of power, which is based on free consent (Frazer, E., & Hutchings, K., 2008). ISIS is claiming that they are caliphate, which consists of different institutions they have created to provide the alternative for the state as they showed in different videos that they have produced.

Therefore, violence is the radical actions against the established regime, which causes chaos and instability. It is not necessary to define the chaos in a negative definition in some cases, like what happened in the Arab Spring; it was a positive way of resistance which caused chaos. Violence might use different definitions of these chaotic actions by using ideological and religious causes which will justify practices, and based

on the ideology they have to offer alternatives for the violence, in order to gain legitimacy by their supporters and people who obey them.

1.1.1 Violence and Political Communication

Political violence is described as an act committed by the government's oppositions, and this act could be shaped and described in different forms and categories according to the differences of the public points of view. It could be described as rioting, terrorism, or civil war. (Andrew Calabrese, 2010). Using ―radical propaganda‖ refers to the propaganda conducted by violent groups such as the Islamic State (ISIS).

There are different comprehensive definitions for violence. WHO defined it as ―The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation‖ (2002:5)

The political violence is used when the positive talks fail and the opposition is trying to send a message by the actions of the political violence. Andrew Calabrese (2010) mentioned in his article ―Sending a Message: Violence as Political Communication‖:

> Accepting the idea that the states are perpetrators of political violence, and that particular kinds of violence are used to _send a message', full scale warfare can easily be understood, as a means of political communication. When he decided to

launch the 1990-91 Gulf War, George H.W. Bush followed in the footsteps of Ronald Reagan in his efforts to fight off the ―Vietnam syndromeǁ. and according to William Daniel Ehrhart ‗re-establish the legitimacy of U.S. global military intervention' Ehrhart (2002, p.75). (2010: 111)

Calabrese (2010) also talked about how Bush and his administration wanted to manage the media during the Gulf War:

> In aiming to leave behind the ‗Vietnam Syndrome', Bush sought victory that would be swift and deceive. Bush administration managed the news media in the Gulf more restrictively than previous administration had controlled Vietnam War-era reporting. From strategic standpoint, the Bush method was useful, because the tighter control helped minimize public knowledge and the potential for informed dissent that could damage the broader base of favorable media coverage and American public opinion in support of the war.
>
> The Yugoslav wars on Bosnia and Kosovo, the widespread practice of raping Muslim women and girls by Serbian forces was not only violence against women, but it was against a whole culture against a whole nation during that time. Also like what happened in targeting world trade centers in the U.S during 9/11. The suicide bombings were highly symbolic, the target were not particularly people inside the buildings but the target was blowing up the military and intelligence power of U.S at that time. (2010: 111)

Disability of political communication with difficulties faced by contemporary democracies in the last decades made the Internet topic a public sphere to discussions. Dahlgren (2005) explained this by mentioning the following:

> The discussions about the poor health of democracy intensified during the 1990s, at about the same time that the Internet was rapidly leading a media revolution. It did not take long for many observers to connect the two phenomena in an optimistic way. That new information and communication technologies are affecting all spheres of life in late modern society is of course not news, but there remains ambiguity as to the extent to which they are enhancing democracy. (2005: 150)

Violence itself can be considered as medium of communication between the power and opposition. The violence could be against a whole society or ideology, not against a specific individual. A group of individuals who are sharing the same ideology or the same thoughts can conduct violence practices when the public sphere is restricted and does not give any chance for political communication (Calabrese, 2010).

Therefore, actions conducted by groups like ISIS are considered as a message containing violence, and this message is delivered by the videos they are producing like what they did by film Mouaaz Al-Kasasbah, the Jordanian pilot, or beheading Christians in Libya (CNN, 2015).

1.2   State and Role of Media

The state can use the media in order to spread the messages and ideas, whether this media is owned by state or by businessmen or elites that have interests in the regime.

Mass media plays a crucial role in connecting people in the society. It has the ability to reach wider audiences with strong and influential messages which impact upon society. Television, newspapers, and radio have been influential on people's daily lives and routines, affecting the content and times in which the audience watches and listens. As explained by Krishnasamy (2011) —The mass media has at least three important roles to play: to inform, to educate and to influence opinion. These distinctive features of

traditional media have been challenged by new media, which is changing the participation habits of the audience.

Mass media is contributing in creating the public sphere because its gathering of communicative space Dahlgren (2005) explained the functions of the public sphere as:

> Functioning public sphere is understood as a constellation of communicative spaces in society that permit the circulation of information, ideas, debates— ideally in an unfettered manner—and also the formation of political will (i.e., public opinion). These spaces, in which the mass media and now, more recently, the newer interactive media figure prominently, also serve to facilitate communicative links between citizens and the power holders of society. (2005: 148)

The Internet has shaped a sphere that allows individuals and ordinary users to express their ideas and thoughts freely and openly without restrictions in the democratic societies. In other words, it is more complicated for the states to control and manipulate the sphere that has been shaped by the Internet.

1.2.1 Functions of Media as a Way of Communication

Harold Lasswell (1948) defined the act of communication in the society and the functions of communication on people's mentality. The convenient way to describe an act of communication is to answer these questions (Who? Says what? In which channel? To whom? And with what effect?).

According to Lasswell (1948:216) the verbal communication in media has been referred to as a linear and unidirectional process, a one-way process. The focus of the verbal communication is broken down by each element of communication: 'who' refers to the communicator who formulates the message; 'what' is the content of message; 'channel' indicates the medium of transmission; 'whom' describes either an individual recipient or the audiences of mass communication; 'effect' is the outcome of the message. It is possible to establish a list of values current in any group chosen for investigation, and then we can discover the rank order in which these values are examined. We can rank members of the group according to their positions in relation to these values. In every society the values are shaped and distributed in its institutions. These institutions including the communications are involved in supporting this network as a whole.

Lasswell (1948) has explained the communications process in the society:

> The communication process in society performs three functions: (a) surveillance of the environment, disclosing threats and opportunities affecting the value position of the community and of the component parts within it; (b) correlation of the components of society in making a response to the environment; (c) transmission of the social inheritance. In general, biological equivalents can be found in human and animal associations, and within the economy of a single organism.1In society, the communication process reveals special characteristics when the ruling element is afraid of the internal as well as the external environment. In gauging the efficiency of communication in any given context, it is necessary to take into account the values at stake, and the identity of the group whose position is being examined. In democratic societies, rational choices depend on enlightenment, which in turn depends upon communication; and especially upon the equivalence of attention among leaders, experts, and rank and file. (1948: 228)

The movement of the message moves from the media to the audience. And this represents one way of communication; and this might be the effect on public opinion as long as it's only one way of communication. State uses media to conduct the propaganda principles which might be considered a neutral propaganda by establishing a list of values that they are promoting for on people; the media started its role to discover the rank order in which these values are examined. Media ranked people in the society according to their positions in relation to these values. Moreover, people, by implementing these values, have been shaped and distributed in the society. They allowed themselves to be involved in supporting these ideas of the regime. Efforts are made to black out oneself in order to counteract the security of the potential enemy and rule the elites because they are sensitized to potential threats in the internal community. At the same time the ideology of the elite is reaffirmed and counterideologies are suppressed. Mass media play an especially important role in democratic societies. They are presupposed to act as intermediary vehicles that reflect public opinion, respond to public concerns, and make the electorate cognizant of state policies, important events, and viewpoints. The fundamental principles of democracy depend upon the notion of a reasonably informed electorate (Lasswell, 1948).

1.2.2   State and Media Propaganda

In countries where the power and authority are in the hands of the state, the monopolistic control over the media is backed by the official censorship, which makes it clear that the media is powered by the dominant elites, making their loyalty to whoever owns the power and the state. The private media owned by the businessmen who are supporting the state to keep their benefits also is competing with the state media but most of them are waving in the same astronomy of the regime.

A commentator like O'hara argues that a responsibility of any form of media is to ensure fair, accurate, and impartial reporting. A set of code of ethics is essential to maintaining standards for media professionals and organizations. Everyone in the organization should uphold the standard with a sense of responsibility, equality, and accountability. Information ethics is not just a matter of written values for the broadcasters; it must be practiced in their day-to-day operation. (2002)

A lot of authors and scholars wrote different definitions of the propaganda, Richard Alan Neslon defined it as

> Propaganda is neutrally defined as a systematic form of purposeful persuasion that attempts to influence the emotions, attitudes, opinions, and actions of specified target audiences for ideological, political or commercial purposes through the controlled transmission of one-sided messages (which may or may not be factual) via mass and direct media channels. A propaganda organization employs propagandists who engage in propagandism—the applied creation and distribution of such forms of persuasion. (1996:232)

Edward S. Hermen and Chomsky (2010) in their explanation of the —Propaganda Model‖ stated that who owns the media decides upon the role it plays, through ssetting the functions in society:

> A propaganda model focuses on this inequality of wealth and power and its multilevel effects on mass-media interests and choices. It traces the routes by which money and power are able to filter out the news fit to print, marginalize dissent, and allow the government and dominant private interests to get their messages across to the public. The essential ingredients of our propaganda model, or set of news "filters," fall under the following headings: (1) the size, concentrated ownership, owner wealth, and profit orientation of the dominant mass-media firms; (2) advertising as the primary income source of the mass media; (3) the reliance of the media on information provided by government, business, and "experts" funded and approved by these primary sources and agents of power; (4) "flak" as a means of disciplining the media; and (5) "anticommunism" as a national religion and control mechanism. These elements interact with and reinforce one another. The raw material of news must pass through successive filters, leaving only the cleansed residue fit to print. They fix the premises of discourse and interpretation, and the definition of what is newsworthy in the first place, and they explain the basis and operations of what amount to propaganda campaigns. (2010: 1)

The political economy of the mass media postulates that elite media interlock with other institutional sectors in ownership, management, and social circles, effectively circumscribing their ability to remain analytically detached from other dominant institutional sectors. The model argues that the net result of this is self-censorship without any significant coercion. Media, according to this framework, do not have to be controlled nor does their behavior have to be patterned, as it is assumed that they are integral actors in class warfare, fully integrated into the institutional framework of society, and act in unison with other ideological sectors, .i.e., the academy, to establish,

enforce, reinforce, and _police' corporate hegemony. It is not a surprise, then, given the interrelations of the state and corporate capitalism and the _ideological network,' that the propaganda model has been dismissed as a _conspiracy theory' and condemned for its _overly deterministic' view of media behavior. It is generally excluded from scholarly debates on patterns of media behavior (Herman & Chomsky, 2010).

1.3   Internet as a Globalized Tool

Globalization has imposed itself after the end of the Cold War and produced a global system depending on openness to international media, the rapid renewal of technology, and increase of communication with people all over the world. These changes cause also social movements on different levels and cultures. Globalization with its tools represents the open communities of the new generations without considering any borders or limits for anything.

Internet has a technological touch which makes it favored by youth instead of traditional media tools; it allows sharing and delivery of information at the moment not even moments ago.

Krishnasamy in his article —*New Media vs Traditional Media"* (2011) defined the New Media as follows:

It is essentially a cyber-culture with modern computer technology, digital data controlled by software and the latest fast developing communication technology‖. Most technologies described as —new media‖ are digital, and often have characteristics of being networkable, dense, compressible, interactive and impartial. (2011:7)

Young people are attracted to the easy means of getting information with Internet-based terminals or hand phones which provide them with information of their choice anytime and anywhere. They need not wait for any broadcasting schedule to be connected to get information.

The Internet user can be represented as a channel. The user can produce different types of production and whatever he produces will reach very wide audience. This user might have many followers or friends and this will support him to spread whatever the production is even, whether they agree or disagree with it.

Internet becomes a communication medium; it eases access to information, enables users to surf the information, and allows them to control what they would like to be exposed to. Traditional media has only one way of communication. The Internet is more advanced and it has more than one way of communication between users (Ayyad, 2011; AmichaiHamburger 2008; Kirat 2007; Ayish 2005).

Internet has an effect on the daily life of users because of its openness and the accessibility it has without limitations unlike traditional media. According to Wai-Yu Lo and Leung (2008), Internet provides gratification opportunities allowing multiple users to communicate asynchronously and synchronously.

Internet as a communication medium can function as a mass medium like the television and the radio, streaming endless quantities and qualities of audio and video to an ordinary user or a larger audience. It allows users to converse with others within a group, or individually, using any combination of text, audio, and video channels (Amiel&Sargent, 2004). Internet is a personal channel to the mass audience to use it and its platforms.

(O'Hara, 2002) has mentioned:

> It is often assumed that the Internet is a boon for democracy. It brings colossal quantities of information within reach of virtually anyone in the developed world, and a large number of people in the developing world (Varian, 2001). It is hard for governments to police. It allows effective and targeted publishing by many more individuals. Not only is it difficult to keep someone with a grievance quiet, but he can now send his complaints to an infinity wider audience. (2002: 287)

Internet is making an impact on democracy, and the current destabilization in the political communication system will be seen as a cause for better understanding for the Internet and its role as a new paradigm for political communication (Dahlgren, 2005).

There was discussion about the characteristics of public sphere. Mark Poster argued against the public sphere described by Jürgen Habermas in his book The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere in 1962. —Habermas defined the public sphere as a domain of uncoerced conversation oriented toward a pragmatic accord‖ (Poster, 1997).

Mark Poster (1997) has emphasized the public sphere and characteristics of the Internet as cyber-democracy. He talked about the Internet decentralizing all

communication systems, like the telephone network. Anyone can use the Internet and initiate any process or call or send a message or an email.

The Internet database has cheaper access than its alternative, also sending an email instead of regular post mail; it is also cheaper and this is how it has an effect on the profit.

Poster has argued about the Internet as a public sphere and discussed the word public itself because, before, it was face-to-face meeting, but now the public with the Internet has other characteristics. Poster said

> This difficulty is amplified considerably once newer electronically mediated communications are taken into account, in particular the Internet. Now the question of "talk," of meeting face-to-face, of "public" discourse is confused and complicated by the electronic form of exchange of symbols. If "public" discourse exists as pixels on screens generated at remote locations by individuals one has never and probably will never meet, as it is in the case of the Internet with its "virtual communities," "electronic cafés," bulletin boards, e-mail, computer conferencing and even video conferencing, then how is it to be distinguished from "private" letters, print face and so forth. The age of the public sphere as face-to-face talk is clearly over (1997)

Internet is decentralized, unlike traditional media, and it became a sphere itself with different characteristics and different aspects. It is an open space for whoever has access to it to express different ideas and thoughts according to Poster (1997). Internet has extended the existence of identities and institutions. It also gave individuals a new sphere to reshape their identities and access to different information as well as cultures, and this allowed them to create new identities (Poster, 1997).

Therefore the sphere shaped by the Internet will cause different manifestations like spreading awareness, information, hate speech, and propaganda, but with different techniques and wider audiences.

1.3.1   State and Social Media

Social media has proven recently its power and ability to make changes by providing platforms for different users to communicate and express their ideas and thoughts, and even this communication can move from the virtual world to reality. What happened in the Middle East, specifically in Egypt in 2011, is a living proof of this power and how it transferred thoughts and ideas from the virtual life to the real life. At times of oppression and lack of freedom of speech, social networks appeared as the only way to freely communicate and discuss their personal, local, and national issues. People have used social media networks like Facebook and Twitter to demonstrate their opinions, call for marches, and promote new ideas that eventually led to the step-down of the old corrupt regimes, which can be considered as critical voices promoted by youth but not welcomed by the ordinary people. New media can alter its form as often as it is updated and changed by a user or users. It is created to be continually changing, evolving, and adapting to the needs of those consuming it.

Herman and Chomsky analyzed and emphasized the effect of media on communities and how the authority and power can control this effect by different forms (Herman & Chomsky, 2010; Lasswell, 1948). This is justified by the type of media which is considered a one-way communication and flow of information from the state and how it can impose surveillance over the spread of content. But for social media, which is a completely different form of medium and content, it allows more than one

way of communication between the users and audience over the Internet, making propaganda different.

At times of political communication disability through the traditional mediums and channels, Internet appears as an effective political communication tool. Dehlgren (2005) talked about this:

> In particular, the current destabilization of political communication systems must be seen as a context for understanding the Internet: It enters into, as well as contributes to, this destabilization. At the same time, the notion of destabilization can also embody a positive sense, pointing to dispersions of older patterns that may have outlived their utility and possibilities for reconfiguration. We can note, for example, the obvious positive consequences that the Internet extends and pluralizes the public sphere in a number of ways. It is this kind of tension that I would accentuate, rather than any cheery optimism, dour pessimism, or cavalier dismissal. (2005: 147)

The state which lasts longer with power usually becomes like a sintered entity; it does not give high attention to other aspects that appear because of many changes taking place in the society, particularly in the main tool it controls, which is the media.

For instance, in 2009, a press conference was held in Egypt, in which the speaker was Gamal Mubarak. At that time, he was the Assistant Secretary-General and the Secretary of Policies in the former National Democratic Party in Egypt. During the conference, a question was directed to him about devolution of power and the possibility of preparing several meetings with political groups which were only known on social networks, like Kefaya and 6th of April Movement. He evaded the question ironically,

saying —You answer him‖ addressing the attendees (The question that embarrassed Gamal Mubarak, 2009).

This example shows a very important issue, which is that the regime in Egypt during that time before 2011 did not notice the power that started to rise through the Internet and social networks. The state did not notice the new public sphere which has been shaped on the Internet though it is a virtual public sphere, and this public sphere led to the revolution that took place after that, in 2011, in Egypt. Also, what happened in 28th of January, 2011, during the Egyptian Revolution was the only way the state in Egypt back then had by cutting off the Internet from all over Egypt because it could not prevent users from communicating and taking actions against the regime in Egypt back then (Richtel, 2011).

ISIS, which is one of the violent radical groups, believed that the violence is the tool because they refused to obey the state, especially if this state has been formed by fraud or forgery, according to their opinions, though this group is seeking the power as well and this gives explanation about power of the state as the synonym for violence.

After the massive events in the Middle East and the crucial role that social media played in the Arab Spring and the relapse of Arab youth's dreams, some groups took advantage of the defeat of these youth and tried to direct peaceful resistance to violence.

Violence groups are taking advantage of the Internet. Rogan (2007) has mentioned in his paper *Al-Qaeda's online media strategies: From Abu Reuter to Irhabi 007:*

> Another assessment which supports the idea that terrorists benefit from using their own media outlets, such as the Internet, rises from findings that traditional media coverage does not lead to public approval either of the terrorists or their causes. The attention that so-called sensationalist media coverage lends to terrorism is rarely positive and often does not portray terrorists and their causes in the way that the terrorists perhaps would wish for. This indicates that news prepared and presented by the terrorists themselves potentially could be more advantageous to their cause. (2007:14)

Because of many obstacles and barriers related to issuing permissions to have a TV channel on satellites, violence groups would use the Internet to reach wider audience and also because generating the content is not the only thing these violence groups are seeking, but also the interaction between audience, and this can be found on the Internet.

1.3.2 Propaganda and Social Media

The Internet is unlike traditional media in terms of interaction and expressing thoughts and ideas. It is a sphere where users are not only consuming the media itself but are also interpreting in shaping the content which is leading to shape the sphere as well as long as there is a space for interactive communication. The net makes interaction as

one to many and many to one, which lead to a larger scale of spreading ideas, causing an influence on net users in their daily life.

Public sphere that is shaped by the Internet as a communicative space which is relevant to democracy has many features and elements like freedom of expression and eliminating space and time by communicating from anywhere at any time regardless of the boundaries as long as the service of the Internet is provided.

One of the features of the Internet as a communicative space is creating what is called cyber-geography as Dahlgren (2005) described or the development of the communication tools of the Internet which are easier and more open for discussion. Social media could also be described as geo-social media because the communicative space will allow different users who share the same culture, language, political perspective, and so on to communicate in the common space they have in an interactive way, which almost eliminates national borders. This concept of easing the communication between users regardless of the time and space boundaries in addition to the freedom of expressing any kinds of ideas and thoughts is the basic premise of democratic theories of the Internet.

The political communication is being destabilized. A huge number of media outlets and networks vary between TV channels, newspapers, and radio stations. The audience feels disengaging from these outlets, which means that the political communication also is losing its efficiency. The Internet represented a new sphere away

from these outlets, in terms of control over the content, and the audience can reach different points of view and different stories compared to the ones that are being broadcasted in the traditional media. There is a growing cynicism among Internet users on the media, increasing the sociocultural heterogeneity among the audience and also increasing the feeling of the indifference of boundaries and borders especially if there is a common ideology or identity. Those reasons caused destabilization of the political communication and opened a new path to the Internet to be considered as a new sphere and also to be used as a tool of political communication.

Dahlgren (2005) was talking about —the use of the Net for political purposes is clearly minor compared with other purposes to which it is put‖ which has been oppositely proven by using the Net in the Arab spring and the vital role that the Internet has played and social media from allowing people to communicate, discuss, and organize events in real life based on political purposes. Meanwhile, it is being used now more by violence groups like ISIS in order to spread their messages.

Internet can be controlled and censored by either corporations which own the social media platforms, or by users themselves who report any kind of abusive content on these platforms. If the state wants to control the generated content on social media the only ways it has are by either shutting down the Internet, or by blocking this platform, or by suspending the user who generates this content. Corporations that own the social media platforms like Facebook or Twitter in this case can control the violence on their

platforms by suspending or blocking users who generate content that is against their policies.

Weimann (2004) talked about the publicity and propaganda for terrorism groups and violence groups. They have direct control over the messages they are spreading over the Internet to reach wider audience unlike traditional media.

2 Methodology:

Web2.0 is the network lead to more engagement and generating content from internet users, thus as a result; social media has been produced as a result of this network. It aims at reinforce communicating and connecting people. Social media is harnessed by the generated content on its platforms and social data to serve wider technological forms like online media and online marketing. In turn, social media and related aspects for the way of communicating might result different types of effects like online propaganda, online hate speech. (Livingston, 2014)

The new usage of social media in spreading information and leading people toward specific targets and objectives might reach to create special armies for professional users in order to conduct this mission like what happened in the last war on Gaza by Israel and also British army creates team of Facebook warriors. This would be a new era of information battles between the social media users which also might be called as cyber-warfare which can be defined as:

National entities and governmental and non-governmental organizations also use the Internet for communication and information purposes. These institutional players are therefore vulnerable to cyber-attacks aimed at objectives as numerous and varied as the motives and interests of the attackers themselves: disruption, disinformation, detection of vulnerable points, exaggeration or propaganda, for example." (Directorate General External Policies of the Union, 2011:28)

Due to many changes in the political situations and the increase the areas of expressing on the internet the role of social media has been changed and it didn't become limited only to its primary cause; but it could be considered as a new public sphere to spread more information on wider scale to cross borders and knocked the doors of political scenes in the whole world and especially in the Middle East.

"The growth of the Internet, however, has transformed propaganda beyond anything those tasked with its production and spread in earlier generations could have imagined. The Internet is a wilderness of information that is, unlike previous methods of disseminating propaganda, near impossible to regulate or officiate. What's more, with the extent that we engage with this medium, and use it to share, spread and promote information, we have all become propagandists!. (Kaye, 2014)

This research has used mixed qualitative and quantitative research method in order to observe the approaches that ISIS is using to communicate with internet users and to observe the interactions with the generated content they are producing. Qualitative approach in order to analyze the content that ISIS is producing and the messages included in addition to the used techniques in their production. Quantitative approach to analyze the interactions on hashtags; which can be counted and representing numbers of engagement to the topic of the hashtag. Hashtag on social media web sites

and applications can be defined as a "word or phrase preceded by a hash and used to identify messages relating to a specific topic; (also) the hash symbol itself, when used in this way". (Myslewski, 2014)

The mixed research method has been used because the quantitative method which represents the numbers of interactions and qualitative method to represent the observation of using the social media platforms in propaganda by ISIS. This dissertation shows how violence groups can use internet and social media to conduct propaganda, in addition to the case study of ISIS as violence group which consists of digital expert users can conduct propaganda as Harman (2015) in his article America is losing the digital war against the Islamic State in Washington Post has mentioned "Online, we move too slowly and know too little to combat this generation of Web-native jihadists"

This dissertation argues that social media as online platforms are effective tools that can be used to conduct propaganda. Even if this content is used in this propaganda consist of violence and brutal images and videos. Analyzing data and documents is the used method in this dissertation. Mainly, there are other methods in the qualitative research like ethnography and interviews but they can't be used in the case of ISIS.

In this dissertation the research question the mixed research of qualitative and quantitative methods strategy has been used. In this context, ISIS as the most current and causing uproar will be analyzed as case study for a violence group that uses social media

in order to propagate and spread their ideas through social media taking the advantage of the events in the region to attract more members and spread for its ideas and thoughts. (Bryman, 2012)

In order to talk about the main argument of this dissertation, different questions will be generated. Analyzing ISIS usage of social media will be focusing on the below:

Why ISIS is using social media?

Also, another question about which platforms they are using and why?

And thirdly, analyze the interactions and engagement of ISIS production. Explain the patterns of images and messages ISIS is producing and spread them over social media platforms.

Conveyed but not strictly textual visual analysis but it focuses on quantitative analysis of using digital tools such as Topsy which is analyzing data tool has been used in order to measure the interactions and engagement with hashtags that have been produced by ISIS on Twitter. The data has been measured on date of releasing these hashtags. The tool measured the engagement from different tweeps with different sentiments in a specific period which is one week for each analyzed hashtag in this research. The hashtags have been chosen randomly based on the produced videos by ISIS itself and other videos productions about ISIS the number of interactions they have created to promote for their videos.

3   What is ISIS?

The group is known as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) or the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). ISIS is a radical group that espouses brutal violence practices, controls different territories in Iraq and Syria, and operates in different areas of the Middle East. The group's Arabic name is DAESH which is an acronym of AdDawlah Al-Islamiyah fi Al-Iraq wa-sh-Sham. In June 2014, the group renamed itself as the Islamic State (IS), but this name has been criticized by different international organizations and institutions like the UN and various governments (Ishaan, 2014; BBC News, 2014; Schwartz, 2014; Withnall, 2014; ROGGIO, 2014; The Week, 2014).

The prevailing ISIS is not a newly established violence group. They have been originated as —Jama'at Al-Tawhid wal-Jihad‖ in 1999 which was previously named as —TanzimQaidat Al-Jihad fi Bilad Al-Rafidayn,‖ known as Al-Qaeda in Iraq. After the American invasion of Iraq in 2003, the group pledged allegiance to Al-Qaeda in 2004. In 2006, the group joined other Sunni Jihadist groups to form and establish the Mujahideen Shura Council which afterwards proclaimed and announced the formation of an Islamic State of Iraq (ISI) (Homles, 2014; Sly, 2013; Sly, 2014; Encyclopædia Britannica, 2015).

The group —ISIS‖ grew significantly under the leadership of Abu-Bakr AlBaghdadi, following the consequences of Al-Asad regime's practices against the Syrian revolution, which took place in Syria in 2011; the group established a wide

presence in the Sunnis majority areas in Syria like Arraqqah and Idlib. According to the expansion of the group in Syria, its name was changed to the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria when the group's leader Al-Baghdadi announced its merging with the Syrian Jihadist group (Jabhat Al-Nussra) in April 2013. ISIS was strongly linked to Al-Qaeda which was represented by —Jabhat Al-Nusra‖ until Al-Qaeda cut all ties with ISIS, citing its failure to consult and confer with them. Moreover Al-Qaeda criticized ISIS as they are of notorious intransigence. In June 2014, ISIS proclaimed that they are the worldwide Caliphate under the name of —Islamic State‖; they announced Abu-Bakr Al-Baghdadi as their Caliph and invited all religious groups, political authorities, and armies of all Muslims around the globe to pledge allegiance to the Caliph to support and cooperate in the expansion of the Caliphate authority in different areas and territories (Withnall, 2014; ROGGIO, 2014; The Week, 2014; Homles, 2014; Sly, 2013; Sly, 2014; Encyclopædia Britannica, 2015).

3.1   ISIS and Internet

ISIS realizes that the hegemonic control of the media is not different from controlling the streets of a country with typical surveillance mechanisms or similar practices. ISIS is aware that there is no way through traditional media to spread and communicate with its supporters and followers (Al-Erhaby, 2014), and one of the lessons learned during the last years was the great effect of social media which allows people to communicate and to spread ideas. The Internet does not only facilitate the

communication between ISIS members in different places, but it also allows the spread of information on a wider range at a time that does not allow any other media channel to enter the lands they are controlling. Therefore ISIS supporters and members will be the only source of sharing information and it will only be their point of view.

ISIS is radical in the ideology but they are adapting with the modern techniques, particularly in using social media. ISIS realizes that people are living in the time of the visual influence of manifestos. That is why ISIS did not think about establishing traditional media channels, and instead they focused on social media in order to deliver their messages to a wide range of people. ISIS media strategy shows various sides of the militants, besides the ordinary skills of jihadists (Rose, 2014).

ISIS uses social media because it is cheap and has accessibility; social media facilitate quick, broad sharing and dissemination of messages and allow for unfiltered communication with the audience. Unlike before, social media allowed ISIS to release messages directly to the intended audience without intermediates of traditional media (Oremus, 2011).

Contrary to tranquil online forums that other jihadist groups used in most of their communications before, social media is considered an open sphere, which means ISIS took advantage of these new social media platforms to benefit from the immediate communication and the spreading of information, in addition to posts, images, and videos spread on a wider scale.

ISIS has proved its fluency in the most active social media platforms like Twitter, You Tube, Instagram, and Internet memes. ISIS developed its techniques and sophisticated strategies of using social media and also in producing the content. Now, they have members of different languages in order to reach more audience especially from the west. Moreover, the interactions in different languages were more aggressive for the west (Stern & Berger, 2015).

One of the main characteristics of social media is that it is an open space and cannot be controlled like traditional media. The content will be shared, and even if users who are sharing the content will be blocked, new accounts will be created, and it will be only a matter of time to get popular again, especially if the group is professional and fluent in social media like ISIS.

Due to the shortage of the traditional media coverage for ISIS operations because of security reasons, media agencies are thirsty to know what are they doing, and they talk about what ISIS is sharing on social media platforms. This helps ISIS to reinforce the messages they want to spread either on online platforms or on traditional media (Colhoun, 2014).

As (Winter 2015) emphasized the propaganda strategy of ISIS:

> There is no one size-fits-all messaging strategy for any political movement, jihadist or otherwise. Different forms of propaganda, while they may cross over, affect different audiences in very different ways. When it comes to our understanding of Islamic State propaganda, the analysis is skewed by the assumption that brutality is the extent of it. However, as indicated above,

contrary to the common consensus, much of the content focuses on something far more potent: the portrayal of _normal life' in the _caliphate', the regular depiction of things like markets, service provision and agriculture. 74 While its brutality is undeniable, understanding the group's propaganda strategy based on the assumption that it does not go beyond violence is mistaken. As has been demonstrated above, the _caliphate' brand is much more than that. (2015: 32)

The messaging machine that ISIS is using is sophisticated and it is winning the social media war, according to New York Times (2015: 1) and —An internal State Department assessment paints a dismal picture of the efforts by the Obama administration and its foreign allies to combat the Islamic State's message machine, portraying a fractured coalition that cannot get its own message straight.‖

3.2   ISIS and Social Media Platforms

Brian Jenkins (2011), Senior Advisor for the Rand Corporation, commented on Al-Qaeda's dominant presence on the web as follows:

> Al-Qaeda is the first to fully exploit the internet. This reflects al Qaeda's unique characteristics. It regards itself as a global movement and therefore depends on a global communications network to reach its perceived constituents. It sees its mission as not simply creating terror among its foes but awakening the Muslim community. Its leaders view communications as 90 percent of the struggle. Despite the risks imposed by intense manhunts, its leaders communicate regularly with video and audio messages, which are posted on its websites and disseminated on the Internet. The number of websites devoted to the al Qaedainspired movement has grown from a handful to reportedly thousands, although many of these are ephemeral‖. (2011: 1)

Al-Qaeda was using online forums mainly to communicate with its members; forums were mainly not as famous as other social online platforms, like Facebook and Twitter, and they were not easily reachable unless people wanted to get the videos and audio messages they produced.

ISIS proved its fluency in social media platforms especially with Twitter because their target is not only to communicate with their members, but they also want to reach larger audience and the best platform that will give them this access is Twitter.

Facebook is mainly limited somehow to people who are looking to reconnect with their old friends, family members, or closed circles, even after Facebook launched the —Follow‖ feature which a user allows on his account; it was a bit late, because the main characteristic of Twitter is the —Follow.‖ This feature mainly allows users to follow the interactions of the targeted user in order to receive everything the user shares on the follower's timeline. Accessing public topics on twitter is easier by using the option of the —Hashtag‖ or by putting the symbol —#‖ before the topic to reach and read all opinions and news about it. This is not easily reachable on Facebook (Thornton, 2009).

According to Arab Social Media Report (2014), —The total number of active Twitter users in the Arab world reached 5,797,500 users as of March 2014."

The country with the highest number of active Twitter users in the Arab region is Saudi Arabia, with 2.4 million users, accounting for over 40% of all active Twitter users

in the Arab region. Saudi Arabia, alone, produces 40% of all tweets in the Arab world, while Egypt produces 17% and Kuwait produces 10%.

According to (Internet World Stats, 2014) the total number of the Internet users in the Middle East is 113,609,510 users by end of December, 2014, including Iran. Saudi Arabia comes first in the Arab world with a number of users reaching 18,300,000 users in December 2014.

The high increase of Internet users in the Arab countries and the increase of social media platforms users cause high interactions between users. It also allows the spread of different ideas and thoughts, giving more people the chance to interact and engage with different discussions and debates on the Inter

Middle East Internet Users, Population and Facebook Statistics						
MIDDLE EAST	Population (2015 Est.)	Users, in Dec/2000	Internet Usage 31-Dec-2014	% Population (Penetration)	Internet % users	Facebook 31-Dec-2012
Bahrain	1,346,613	40,000	1,297,500	96.4 %	1.2 %	413,200
Iran	81,824,270	250,000	46,800,000	57.2 %	41.2 %	n/a
Iraq	33,309,836	12,500	2,997,884	9.0 %	2.6 %	2,555,140
Israel	7,935,149	1,270,000	5,928,772	74.7 %	5.2 %	3,792,820
Jordan	6,623,279	127,300	5,700,000	86.1 %	5.0 %	2,558,140
Kuwait	3,996,899	150,000	3,022,010	75.6 %	2.7 %	890,780
Lebanon	4,151,234	300,000	3,336,517	80.4 %	2.9 %	1,587,060
Oman	3,286,936	90,000	2,584,316	78.6 %	2.3 %	584,900
Palestine (West Bk.)	2,785,366	35,000	1,687,739	60.6 %	1.5 %	966,960
Qatar	2,194,817	30,000	2,016,400	91.9 %	1.8 %	671,720
Saudi Arabia	27,752,316	200,000	18,300,000	65.9 %	16.1 %	5,852,520
Syria	22,878,524	30,000	5,920,553	25.9 %	5.2 %	n/a
United Arab Emirates	9,445,624	735,000	8,807,226	93.2 %	7.8 %	3,442,940
Yemen	26,737,317	15,000	5,210,593	19.5 %	4.6 %	495,440
Gaza Strip	1,869,055	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
TOTAL Middle East	236,137,235	3,284,800	113,609,510	48.1 %	100.0 %	23,811,620

Figure 1 Middle East Internet users

Twitter also does not have a real name policy; it has a laissez-faire approach to monitoring content, together with an aggressive posture in challenging censorship requests and demands for customer information. It can be used anonymously, and it can be used by any cellphone with a text-messaging function (Twitter Help Center).

ISIS is using Twitter heavily and they are contributing by generating content. (Schmitt, 2015) in his article at New York Times, Schmitt mentioned that:

> With the Islamic State and its supporters producing as many as 90,000 tweets and other social media responses every day, American officials acknowledge they have a tough job ahead to blunt the group's digital momentum in the same way a United States-led air campaign has slowed ISIS' advances on the battlefield in Iraq and, to a lesser extent, in Syria.(2015: 4)

Despite the heavy interaction from ISIS supporters on Twitter, Twitter has suspended dozens of their accounts in order to eliminate their interactions, but what happened was that in no time they created new accounts and went popular again.

(Friedman , 2014) Freidman mentioned the ability of recreating accounts by ISIS in his article at Daily News:

> Charles Lister, a visiting fellow at the Brookings Doha Center (2015), 12 official ISIS —provincial-level accounts, upon which they published all news — military, political, social, religious — for that specific area,‖ were disabled by Twitter on Aug. 11, 2014 after operating for months. The next day, ISIS members re-created and advertised the accounts — only to have Twitter disable them, too, Lister said. The accounts were relaunched yet again — and suspended a third time, Lister said. By Saturday morning, just one one inactive account remained. (2014: 4).

ISIS created a hashtag called #دعم_حسابات_الأنصار_بعد_الحذف which means supporting Ansar accounts after deletion. Ansar means supporters of ISIS on Twitter; the word —Ansar‖ itself has a religious meaning because it refers to people who supported Prophet Mohamed and welcomed his emigration from Mecca to Madina at the early ages of Islam in The Arabian Peninsula.

The hashtag was created after former Twitter CEO Dick Costolo revealed that he and colleagues received death threats from ISIS after disabling accounts that they were using to communicate (Grossman, 2014).

Hashtags showed the support to promote for ISIS new accounts and to spread them among tweeps. In a week when this hashtag was established from October 6, 2014, to October 12, 2014, the interactions on the hashtag reached nearly 10,000 tweets and the majority of tweets were expressing positive interaction to the hashtag. They were also showing support to each other and encouraging each other to follow the new accounts after the old ones had been suspended. Some of ISIS supporters, tweeps, said that as long as the tweep has more than 700 followers, it is enough for him to try to support the rest because it is not a competition to get more followers, as they said.

Figure 2 Interactions insights on the hashtag

The hashtag represented the new accounts after being disabled and suspended by Twitter. ISIS supporters were mentioning the new and the re-created accounts in order to gain followers and promote for those accounts.

Another example was when the hashtag #لانهم_كفار_داعش was created, which means —ISIS are infidels because‖ by tweeps criticizing and insulting ISIS supporters and members because of the brutal practices and violence by ISIS members. The hashtag had several tweeps from different countries but mainly tweeps from Lebanon. It was very interesting that after creating the hashtag of tweeps who are against ISIS at the beginning, the supporters of ISIS literally occupied the hashtag and started to talk and justify why they are supporting ISIS and that what it is doing is the right thing.

ISIS supporters criticized who created this hashtag and described them as Rafidis and Shiaa because they are afraid of ISIS and its soldiers. Tweeps were making fun of

the hashtag creator and they were talking about ISIS as infidels of the global rules, UN, and all laws by human beings who discriminated against Sunnis under their names. Tweeps also talked about ISIS fighting against the regimes who killed the innocent people and they are taking revenge. Tweeps also talked about this hashtag that was created because of ISIS when they were achieving victory and control over large parts of Syria and Iraq and they were expanding with the support of a lot of people.

Figure 3 Interactions insights on the hashtag

ISIS is very professional in using buzzwords which reflect the early ages of Islam, ages when Muslims were struggling to spread the religion of Islam in order to attract more followers and supporters; they are using those words to propagate for the ideology and creed which will meet the sentiment of many tweeps especially the Jihadists and Wahhabis. The new approach they are using is through presenting these

buzzwords in new digital forms that match the Internet and social media users. According to Ibish, 2015, in his article at New York Times, he mentioned that:

> Millenarian buzzwords suffuse Islamic State rhetoric, which promises Muslim redemption from a history of humiliation. With soft focus, slow fades, color saturation, superimpositions and carefully layered soundtracks, the group's most effective videos are haunting. Its fighters seem to hover, spectral and numinous, as if holy or angelic. They offer to transport the audience into an imaginary prophetic space in which —end times‖ approach: The return of the caliphate will burn —the crusader army in Dabiq‖ (a Syrian town which, in some traditions, is a Muslim equivalent of Armageddon)‖. (2015: para 11)

ISIS is using twitter as the main platform to propagate for their videos. They know that video links will be removed either by the platform they are uploading the videos on like You Tube or because Twitter will suspend the account that shares the links.

It was difficult to trace the engagement ratio of the video produced by ISIS arms, but this research will show different examples about the engagement with the hashtags created and spread by ISIS supporters over twitter. The hashtags were representing the names of the produced videos by ISIS and its media arms.

Topsy, a free online tool, was used in the following insights for the number of interactions on the hashtags that were created by ISIS supporters. Topsy was acquired by Apple Inc (Gupta 2013). Topsy allows searching, analyzing, and insights from conversations and trends on social media platforms including Twitter.

3.3 ISIS Visual Production:

When violence becomes a natural daily life routine among a group of people, the members of this group might be affected according to what they are witnessing and living every day. ISIS is implementing the same concept but in different frames and different context than what states do against their opponents or civilians like what Assad did in Syria. ISIS is acting naturally according to the circumstances they are part of and the only difference is that they are exposing their violence in high-quality imagery production on the Internet (Masi, 2015).

The image is the main purpose not the violence itself, especially because image is one of the modernity features and it reflects the society, and if not, it is a tool to reshape the perceptions of this society. At this point, reality will become a series of images and the actual truth will be buried under the proliferation of these images like what happened during the Gulf war (Coulter, 2010).

Winter (2015) has mentioned violence in using the image in the following:

> Every time an execution is being conducted, ISIS directly documented and publicized, it serves as a reminder of the group's self-proclaimed supremacy and its ability to exact revenge on behalf of Sunni Muslims against the CrusaderShi'ite-Zionist conspiracy allegedly mounted against them. (2015: 22)

The roots of violence that ISIS is conducting were a result of the violence of the American invasion of Iraq in 2003. Chomsky said in an interview (Jacobin, 2015):

Finally, the US just decided to attack the country in 2003. The attack is compared by many Iraqis to the Mongol invasion of a thousand years earlier. It's very destructive. Hundreds of thousands of people killed, millions of refugees, millions of other displaced persons, destruction of the archeological richness and wealth of the country back to Sumeria, One of the effects of the invasion was immediately to institute sectarian divisions," Chomsky said. The natural dynamics of a conflict like that is that the most extreme elements begin to take over. They had roots. Their roots are in the major US ally, Saudi Arabia. That's been the major US ally in the region as long as the US has been seriously involved there, in fact, since the foundation of the Saudi regime. It's kind of a family dictatorship. The reason is it has huge amount of oil. (2015: para 9)

According to each society, violence has to find reasonable resources from its point of view to justify to itself first the practices and brutal actions, and then to people who are obeying the violence practices. Violence with ISIS will be through citing different verses and Hadiths and putting them in the context they are using.

ISIS was keen on using the Internet and social media platforms to disseminate images. ISIS has learned, from modernity, that if it will use the images professionally, it will deliver the messages it wants, and this explains the professional images and videos they are producing through many media agencies they own or from media agencies which are supporting them because they are on one side against the common enemy (Avant, 2014).

The images and videos have been broadcasted and shared widely before, showing brutality and ugliness of destructions of infrastructures, historical buildings, and of killing people without differentiating between the innocents, children, women, or elderlies. This did not make people

sympathize with them because the images were not professionally produced and traditional media dealt with the situation as a matter of daily routine.

The point here is not the actions of that regime against humanity, religions, and all international conventions but the reactions of people toward these images compared to the sympathy they expressed and showed, for example, for the Jordanian military pilot Moaz al-Kasasbeh. This sympathy was not because it was less violent, but because all media channels focused and spotted on this incident and because of the new way of killing him, by burning. People were used to ISIS beheading techniques and the previous videos and images.

ISIS succeeded in attracting the international attention with their visual production; the high quality of cinematic videos and images is one of the key factors of the wide spread of the visual production of ISIS.

Steve Rose (2014) stated in his article in the Guardian:

> In 1941, Hollywood director Frank Capra was commissioned to make a series of propaganda films for the US war effort. He knew he had his work cut out: he had seen Leni Riefenstahl's Triumph Of The Will – a staggering, state-of-the-art display of both film-making expertise and Nazi military might. —It scared the hell out of me, Capra later said. —It fired no gun, dropped no bombs, but as a psychological weapon aimed at destroying the will to resist, it was just as lethal. How could the Americans possibly compete? Capra's solution was to turn the enemies' weapons against them. His resulting seven-film documentary series, Why We Fight, repurposed footage from Triumph Of The Will and other propaganda films to show —our boys‖ what they were up against. He even copied Riefenstahl's editing rhythms and rousing use of music. —Let their own

films kill them,‖ Capra said. ―Let the enemy prove to our soldiers the enormity of his cause – and the justness of ours. (2014: 1)

Using the new methods of the new media tools like Twitter, You Tube, or even Internet memes by ISIS (check #catsofjihad) shows how much they mastered these new democratic tools that have been established by the west democratic societies. ISIS is presenting media production in several languages to reach different audience from different countries in order to deliver their messages to a wider audience (Rose, 2014).

ISIS combined brutality with social media; they produced a video showing different images from the Grand Theft Auto (GTA 5) game, which has been edited in order to make game users use it as a battlefield for an ISIS member. Such type of videos which combined the violence practices of ISIS with a well-known game to teenagers and children to attack military tanks or kill police officers includes a very important message encouraging them to join ISIS (Tassi, 2014).

3.3.1 ISIS and Videos

ISIS as a violence group is very professional in using the Internet; they use photography and imagery in a very advanced way, not only in the message that the image indicates, but also in the high-quality images which are produced by highly professional cameras and very modern editing techniques which are similar to the ones being produced in the western media outlets.

The images are being used and spread widely over social media platforms that ISIS is using, especially Twitter. Ordinary users were not familiar with such high-quality images produced and spread by a violence group on social networks before. The images represented different ways of the imagery content that ISIS wanted to show to the public audience on social media.

ISIS video production is different from any other violence group. Videos are made by media centers that support ISIS like AlHayat and AlFurqaan. There was no chance for any traditional media outlet to enter the territories that are under ISIS control; therefore what ISIS is producing from videos are the only way to show how this group is dealing with its opponents or how civilians are living their daily life in those territories, except one video so far that was been produced by —VICE‖ (Dairieh, 2015).

This gives some insights about what the audience knows about ISIS, and people who are living under their control are known only to ISIS itself, which makes interested audience wait for ISIS video in order to watch and analyze it only through their production. This also means that we know what only ISIS wants to show us because of the difficulties the traditional media is facing to enter ISIS territories.

ISIS plays on the catchy symbols; for instance, Al Hayat center, which is different from Al Hayat Newspaper, designed its logo to be like a tear drop, which is closer to Al-Jazeera logo, especially for non-Arabs who do not read Arabic. Also with

each video produced by ISIS media arms, the logo of the Islamic State should be always on the top left corner of the video.

Jeffrey Fleishman (2015) in his article in Los Angeles Times mentioned that:

> Other recent execution videos released by Islamic State are slickly produced narratives of multiple camera angles, eerie tension and polished editing that suggest the filmmakers are versed in Hollywood aesthetics. Brutal and perverse, the clips, some infused with music and subtitles, carry a primeval message stylized for a world wired to social media and hypnotized by an endless pulse of competing images. (2015: 2).

The tones that are used in the videos give indicators about the early ages of Islam. They also use selective buzzwords and special sound effects which reflect Jihad.

ISIS is producing videos in several languages like English, French, and German; even if the speakers are Arabs, the subtitles will appear in different languages in order to deliver the messages from the videos to a wider audience, from different regions and with different languages.

Nonetheless, there is another point here besides the video production of ISIS itself, and it is the videos that have been made by foreign media or ISIS videos that have been broadcasted by foreign channels which somehow helped in disseminating ISIS daily life. An example for this is VICE video, which was unlike other videos; it did not

show brutality which ISIS is known for. The video views on You Tube exceeded 8 million views (the Islamic state (full length), 2014).

3.3.2 Engagement with ISIS Videos

As ISIS propagates for itself as a state, they are sharing different videos, images, and messages of people who are living in the territories and areas that are under the control of ISIS. They are showing different pictures and images of developing their areas and how people who are living in these areas are feeling safe and have a normal daily life. Different videos have been produced by ISIS show how the civilians are living under the authority of ISIS. Those videos show different aspects of daily life like trading, health care, police, municipalities, and real state. Most of these videos have been removed from social media platforms but some websites are archiving them. On the other hand, there are some videos that have been filmed by other journalists and reached higher views as will be explained below. Twitter was suspending many accounts of ISIS supporters which make it hard to trace the data that has been generated by the tweeps. In a published article on New York Times, Gladstone (2015) wrote that:

> Twitter representative confirmed what some were saying and put a number on it. The social media network's violations department suspended approximately 10,000 accounts on April 2 —for tweeting violent threats,‖ the representative said. It was impossible to independently verify the assertion because Twitter's data is not public. But it would be the biggest single mass purge by Twitter of accounts linked to the Islamic State, also known as ISIS, ISIL and Daesh, which some experts believe has as many as 90,000 affiliated accounts. The suspensions came against a backdrop of rising criticism that Twitter has allowed the Islamic

State to exploit the social network to spread propaganda, glorify violence and seek recruits.

Therefore, it was hard to find the generated data, though the below data has been gathered once the hashtags have been created. The data below shows the numbers of engagement with hashtags that have been created by ISIS supporters for one week after creating each hashtag, in addition to random samples of tweets tweeted to contribute to each hashtag.

Engagement of Internet users could be through different forms, either interacting and engaging with the content, or re-sharing the content, or by even watching and reading the content. That is why the number of views on You Tube videos for example counts and it supports others to watch the video as long as it has a high number of views.

Peterson (2008) has defined engagement as ―Estimate of the degree and depth of visitor interaction on the site against a clearly defined set of goals‖ (2008:5). Also according to Davenport (2013), he defined engagement as ―Engagement is the demonstration of attention via psychomotor activity that serves to focus an individual's attention. Attention is behavior that demonstrates that specific neutral activity taking place‖ (2013:73).

This gave an indicator also that the growth in the number of interactions and engagements on ISIS is organic and not fake (Berger&Morgan, 2015). The large number of interaction might show an increase in the number of supporters of ISIS on the ground,

too. According to Berger&Morgan (2015) —The growth in ISIS's online support base also broadly correlates with its growth on the ground in Iraq and Syria, and the course of its rift with and ultimate separation from al-Qa'ida. Some al-Qa'ida-supporting Twitter users may have created new accounts after this split to demonstrate their allegiance to ISIS (2015:17).

The high number of interaction with production on ISIS was through You Tube channels like VICE and Channle 25. Most of the You Tube-posted content by ISIS supporters have been removed, but the videos mentioned below still exist because they are on You Tube by official legal channels. This also is a reason for the high number of views on these videos.

3.3.2.1 Although Disbelievers Dislike it

The original hashtag in Arabic is ولو_كره_الكافزون#. A hashtag has been created after a new video was produced by the media producers of ISIS, showing that it is expanding in different countries and showing operations for slaughtering soldiers. In the video there was a message from Abu Bakr Al-Baghdady talking about expansion of ISIS and they accepted who pledged allegiance to ISIS in these countries (Although Disbelievers Dislike It, 2015).

Figure 4 Shots from Although Disbelievers Dislike It video

ISIS members and supporters created a hashtag with the same name of the video in order to propagate for it. The hashtag gathered more than 78,915 tweets from different tweeps in one week starting from 11 November, 2014, to 17 November, 2014.

Figure 5 Interactions insights on the hashtag

Figure 6 Samples of Internet users' interactions on the hashtag

3.3.2.2 Soulet Al-Ansar

Another video was produced by ISIS under the name of Soulet Al-Ansar. The original hashtag in Arabic is #صولة_الأنصار (Sinai State Soulet Al-Ansar, 2014).

During the same week from 11 November, 2014, to 17 November, 2014, new hashtags were created after ISIS produced a new video about its operation in Sinai. These operations were conducted by Ansar Bait Al-Maqdis and they announced that they pledge allegiance to ISIS. The video shows operations against the Egyptian Army in Sinai and the killing of soldiers. ISIS and Ansar Bait Al-Maqdis considered this video

a response to the Egyptian Army that declared war against terrorism in Sinai and after

evacuation of people in some areas in Sinai in order to fight the terrorists there.

Figure 7 Shots from Soulet al-Ansar video

ISIS launched the hashtag when it released this video. The first one was about the

video itself. The hashtag which is #صولة_الأوصار gathered 22,759 tweets in one week

from 11 November, 2014, to 17 November, 2014.
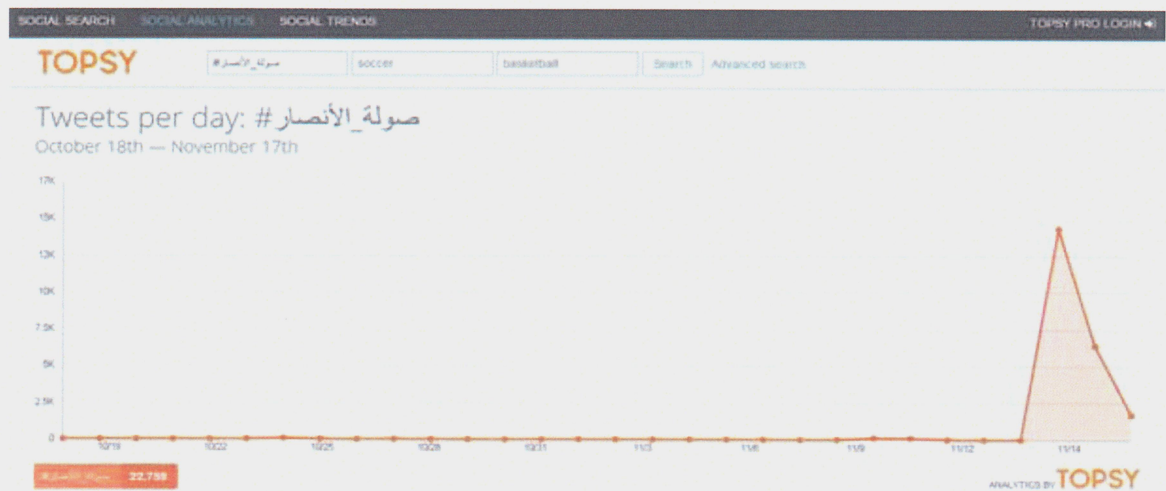
Figure 8 Interactions insights on the hashtag

Figure 9 Samples of Internet users' interactions on the hashtag

3.3.2.3 They Are Killing and They Will Be Killed

The original hashtag in Arabic is #فيقتلون_ويقتلون. This hashtag was created after a new audio was released and produced by AlFurqan media production agency which is one of the media arms of ISIS. The released audio is a statement by Al-Adnany, ISIS spokesman (They are Killing and They Will be Killed, 2015).

In his statement, Al-Adnany said that ISIS is expanding and is getting much stronger. He mentioned that the international coalition lost 70% of its forces in their battle with the Islamic State. They attributed this victory to Allah's blessings on them, saying that they were alone and fighting many countries. He also added that the Caliphate accepted the allegiance of Boko Haram in Nigeria and he asked from all

Muslims in Africa to join them to be under the flag of the Islamic State. Al-Adnany also asked foreigners and non-Muslims to either convert to Islam or pay tributes; otherwise they will be beheaded. He also talked about the reasons of the expansion and victories of ISIS, saying that they achieved this when they refused the voting polls and declared allegiance to Al-Baghdady.

The hashtag had over 26,744 tweets in one week in the period from 9 March, 2015, to 15 March, 2015.

Figure 10 Interactions insights on the hashtag

Figure 11 Samples of Internet users interactions on the hashtag

3.3.2.4 Until There Came to Them Clear Evidence

The original hashtag in Arabic is حتى_تأتيهم_البينة#. A new hashtag has been created after the one the main media arm of ISIS, Al-Fruqan, posted, which was a promo for a new video. According to supporters of ISIS, the video will be released very soon. The name of the video is ―Until There Came to Them Clear Evidence‖ (Until There Came to Them Clear Evidence, 2015).

Figure 12 Shots from the video Until There Came to Them Clear Evidence

This hashtag is measuring the interaction on a promo of a video that has not been released during that time. In this hashtag, ISIS used the teasing method in order to get attention to the video when they release it. The hashtag had the interaction of around 39,090 tweets in the period from 13 April, 2015, to 19 April, 2015.
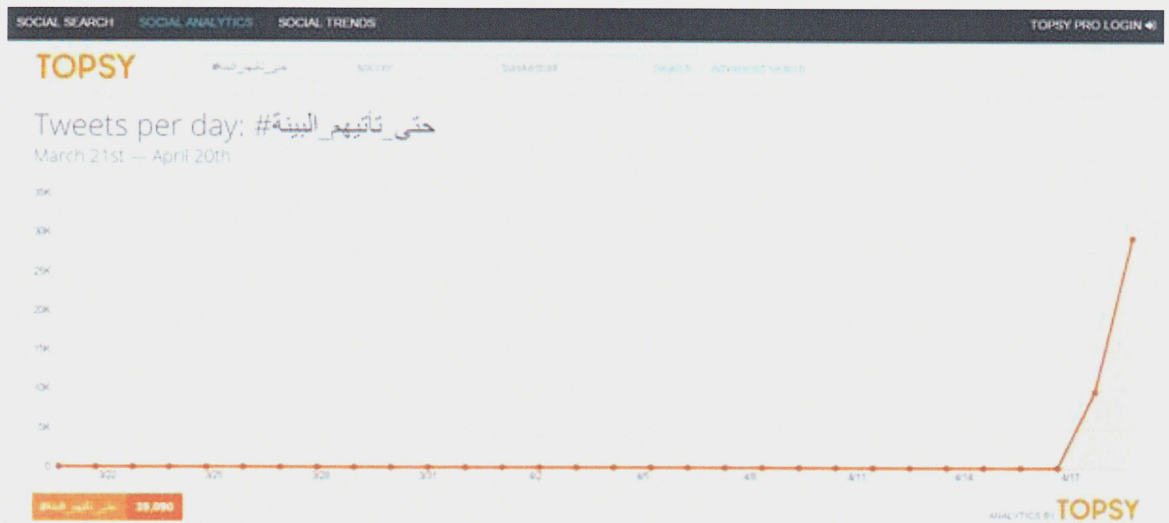
Figure 13 Interactions insights on the hashtag

Figure 14 Samples of Internet users' interactions on the hashtag

3.3.2.5 The Return of Golden Dinar

The original hashtag in Arabic is ‫عودة_الدينار_الذهبي‬#. A new hashtag was created after ISIS released a new video showing their own currency. The video, which showed the history of world economy, showed the smelting of gold, silver, and copper coins. ISIS claimed that their new currency will never lose its value compared to the paper money and it will defeat the international economy system (The Return of Golden Dinar, 2015).
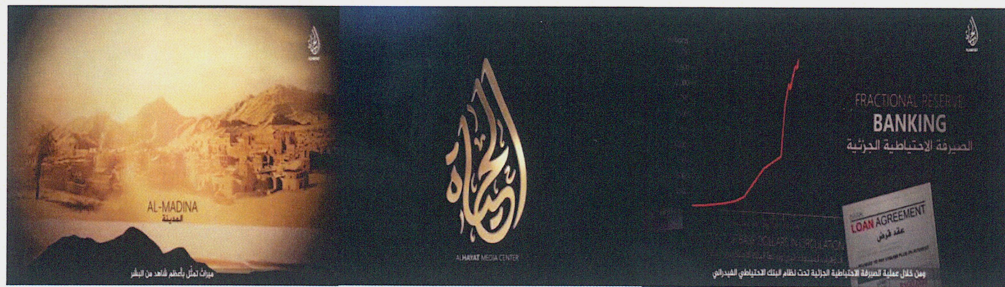
Figure 15 Shots from the video The Return of Golden Dinar

The hashtag shows the engagement with the video in the period from 24 August, 2015, to 30 August, 2015, with over 54,767 tweets.

Figure 16 Interactions insights on the hashtag

Figure 17 Samples of Internet users interactions on the hashtag

3.3.2.6   From Inside Mosul

The original name of the video is من داخل الموصل. The video is on You Tube now and available on the account of the —Canale 25 News,‖ an Italian Channel (ISIS New Propaganda Video - John Cantlie Report From Mosul Iraq, 2015).

A video was filmed by ISIS and was represented by the British hostage correspondent John Cantlie in 2014. The video showed the daily life inside Mosul which is the second largest city in Iraq. The video was trying to shed light on the daily life of people and denies the allegations like that which claimed that electricity works for only two hours in four days and the

streets are full of blood, as Cantlie stated in the video. The video was released in high-quality production and using different camera frames like medium close-up shots and long shots.

The video starts with Cantlie speaking about the Mosul which is the second largest city in Iraq and is under the control of ISIS. He talked about the demography and geography of Mosul and how it changed after the American invasion. This shows the strong control of ISIS back in January 2015 over Mosul.

Cantile talked about the foreign media and how it shows the life in the controlled territories by ISIS as depressed and beaten by ISIS soldiers; this is the main cause for producing the video: to show how civilians are normally living their life, unlike the foreign media talks, and also to show the daily business life of people in Mosul in the proclaimed caliphate.

The video shows many images and scenes of the trade life of people in Mosul. ISIS used Cantile to show the false proclaims of the foreign media like the Guardian and some of the Arab media like the Saudi TV Channel Al-Arabia, as he said.

Another scene of the video shows the healthcare system of Mosul. It shows how little children are being treated and how health centers are equipped with doctors and nurses. The scenes show a clean hospital, and Cantile talks about the hospital, that it has electricity and the needed medicines, according to a doctor he talked to, and Islamic State provides all needed supplies for the hospital and patients.

Cantile was making jokes for a plane, which might refer to the air force of the international coalition and how useless it is because it failed to achieve its target to defeat ISIS. A scene shows a big screen of Cantile reporting from Kobani, and he starts to talk about the large territories that ISIS is controlling from Kobani to Mosul.

Figure 18 Shots from the video From inside Mosul

Police is important to protect lives and business in a city with two million people. This is what Cantile mentioned in the video while he was talking next to a police car to show that Mosul, under the control of ISIS, is a city like any other city in the world. He also talked about the police before ISIS control over Mosul, which was very weak and coward, to show that ISIS police is protective and courageous.

The video has more than 353,011 views on the You Tube channel of the Italian channel till 30 October, 2015 (ISIS New Propaganda Video – John Cantlie Report from Mosul Iraq, 2015).

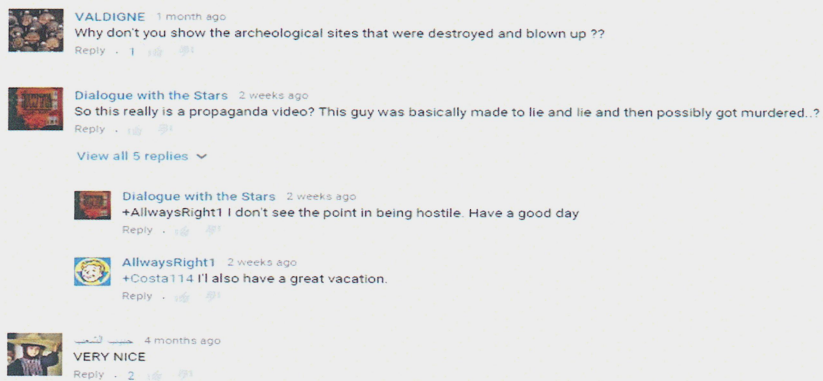Figure 19 Video views number from Canale25 News on You Tube

Figure 20 Samples of Internet users Interactions on the video From Inside Mosul

3.3.2.7 The Islamic State (VICE Video)

VICE News produced a world exclusive when filmmaker Medyan Dairieh spent three weeks alone close to the Islamic State in June, 2014, gaining unprecedented access into the heart of the self-proclaimed caliphate (VICE News, 2015).

The video was shot in Al-Raqqah, considered by ISIS as the capital of the proclaimed caliphate. The video starts with an ISIS soldier who says that sharia will be implemented only by force and weapons (The Islamic State (Full Length), 2014).

The video shows several messages by the soldiers who appeared in it, telling Americans that the caliphate was established, and challenging them to bring their soldiers instead of drones. They challenged Americans to defeat them.

The video shows also Imams in mosques giving speeches on supporting AlBaghdady, the leader of ISIS. An Imam is asking people to support him with money, weapons, and jihad in order to raise the flag of Islam and apply the Islamic sharia. Even in the mosques children are pledging allegiance to Al-Baghdady, and this shows the influence of people on children in young ages.

A member of ISIS said that family is the least important thing, as there are more important things; he meant Jihad and the establishment of the caliphate.

After Turkey had built a dam over Euphrates River, decreasing water supply to the capital of the proclaimed caliphate, members of ISIS threaten the state.

Hisbah is an authority responsible for implementing the Islamic sharia among people and making sure that there is no fraud or cheating with buyers and trade shops. Hisbah has its own cars, and its members are known to the public. Another scene was showing the daily life interaction between ISIS members and a man who has a shop and was putting some pictures outside the market for his products. ISIS member talked to him in a friendly way and asked him nicely to remove the pic because it represents infidels and infidels are the opponents of the Islamic caliphate, as he said.

Another scene also shows the same ISIS member asking a man walking with his wife in the street to make his wife wear proper Niqqab and to tell her not to hold her gown up because people would see what is behind it. This man accepted what the ISIS member told him and he said he will do it.

This video showed different scenes for children. A member of ISIS was asking a child if he wanted to go back to Belgium; the kid refused to go back to Belgium and preferred to stay in the Islamic caliphate to defend Muslims, and because he did not want to live with the infidels of Europe.

Another child, who is nine years old, was asked what he wanted to do; he answered that he wanted to join the training camp to learn how to use the Russian weapons to fight against Russia and the U.S.

A member of ISIS attributed their strategy with children to the fact that they are the generation of caliphate, as he described. He talked about children under the age of 15

who join Sharia camp to learn about creed and religion, and children above the age of 16 who join military camps to be prepared to join the military operations conducted by ISIS. He mentioned the example of Osama Ben Zaid, the companion of the prophet who was leading an army and he liberated Rome in the earlier ages of Islam.

A child says he likes to live with ISIS because they are fighting infidels and apostates.
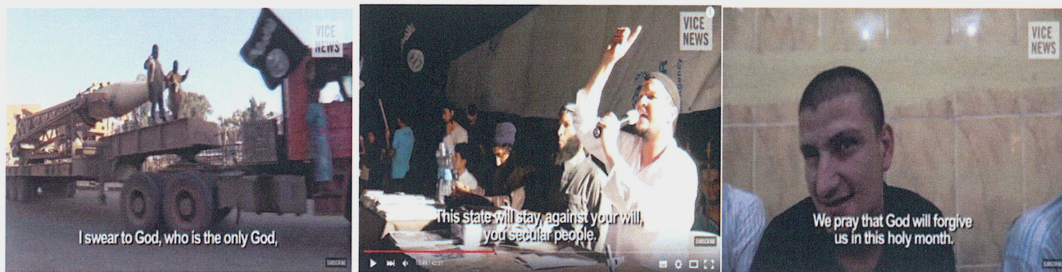
Figure 21 Shots from the video The Islamic State (VICE Video)

Another member was talking during the celebration of establishing the Islamic caliphate in Al-Raqqah has mentioned that he traveled to Europe when he was 25 years old, but he wanted to live in the Islamic lands and he left the luxurious life, beautiful women, and his children to join the Islamic state. He also said that children are looking at them proudly, unlike the older ages, when they were terrified to look at them.

The video has over 8,399,579 views on VICE You Tube channel until 30 October, 2015 (The Islamic State (Full Length), 2014).

The Islamic State (Full Length)
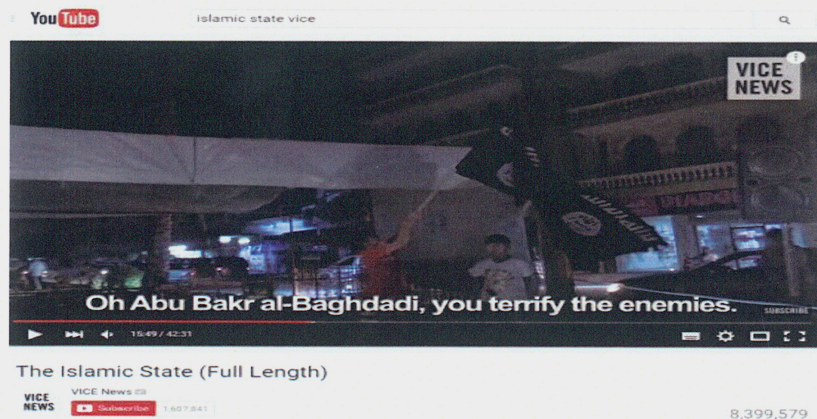
Figure 22 Video views number from VICE Channel on You Tube
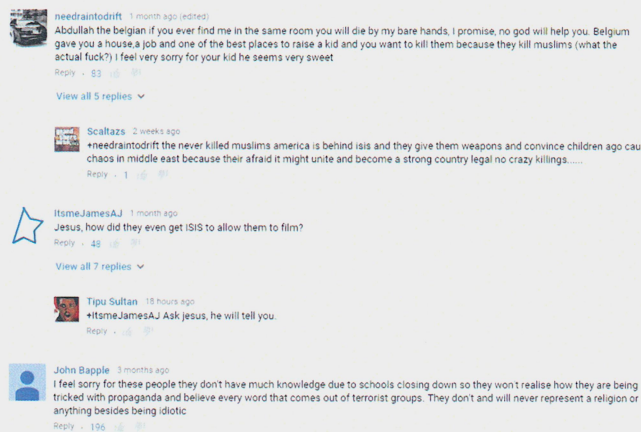
Figure 23 Samples of Internet users Interactions on the Islamic State (VICE Video)

3.3.2.8   An Interview with a German Fighter in ISIS

Another video was released and filmed by the German journalist Jürgen Todenhöfer. Todenhöfer was the first western journalist who was given permission by ISIS themselves to access their controlled territories. The video is an interview with

another German member who joined ISIS and was explaining why he joined ISIS and what the aims of ISIS are. The interview comes in around 13 minutes.

Figure 24 Shots from the video Interview with a German Fighter in ISIS

The video was posted by Jürgen Todenhöfer's official Faceook page and has more than 5,324,862 views, over 50K shares, 40K likes, and 22K comments as well as interactions from users   (MEIN INTERVIEW MIT EINEM DEUTSCHEN IS-KÄMPFER, 2015).

Figure 25 Video views number from Jürgen Todenhöfer Fan Page

Alba Al Capon Montana wen er meint das christen und sonstige nicht gläubige kopfgeld zahlen sollen dan will ich seinen kopf auf meinem teller sehen er macht meine religion kaputt weil er jetzt erst angefangen hat zu lesen ich bin mit dem kuran geboren und meine das alle rel... See More
See Translation
Like · Reply · 👍 39 · January 14 at 11:53pm

↳ 5 Replies

Ugur Ülkü Ich zittre an denn Händen meine Augen sind voller tränen vor Wut und Zorn das ist nicht die Religion die ich in meinem Herzen trage das ist nicht der glaube der durch meine Adern fließt das ist weder annähernd noch ein Teil vom Islam was darin beschrie... See More
See Translation
Like · Reply · 👍 52 · January 15 at 2:01am

Mesut Korkut Herr Jürgen Todenhöfer bitte gehen sie nicht mehr so ein Risiko ein. Ich habe fürchterliche Sorgen darüber, dass diese Welt einen Ehrenmann wie Sie verlieren kann. Gehen Sie in die Politik. Nur wenn an der Wurzel gepackt wird, kann man Früchte ernten, nicht an der Krone eines Baumes.

Die Welt verdient Sie nicht, Sie aber die ganze Welt!!
See Translation
Like · Reply · 👍 13 · January 14 at 10:02pm
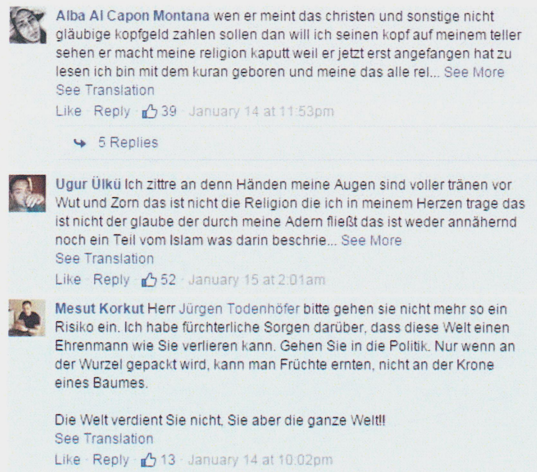
Figure 26 Samples of Internet users' interactions on the video of interview with a German Fighter in ISIS

4 Conclusion:

The state is using traditional media as one of the main tools of political communication. Other political opponents also who are supported by businessmen can operate and launch traditional media outlets, which is leading to the reinforcement of hegemony in the public sphere shaped by the media which is ruled by the state and the political parties in democratic societies.

The media channels have been spreading widely using the satellites. This spreading can be noticed as a horizontal and vertical expansion. These channels became the main source of traditional media outlets with different varieties in the content, including social, cultural, entertainment and political programs.

The wide-range usage of TV channels was due to their affordable cost and because of the diversity in the content, crossing boarders and boundaries, though the content was being observed by the state that owns the satellite.

In other states, like North Korea, the regime is trying to manipulate the public sphere in order to spread its own messages and ideas and to create many obstacles as well as difficulties on other political opponents in using the media. For instance, obstacles were imposed upon them to prevent them from issuing legal permissions in order to operate their media channels. The public sphere, in this case, is manipulated by only one ideology and only one voice; political communication in this case becomes very weak because of the control over the public sphere (Norris&Inglehart, 2010). The

content is diverse, but it cannot neglect the dominance of the owners of the TV channels who have strong ties with the regimes. Diversity in the content will not lead to diversity in the mindsets of the audience; it will lead to more attachments to those TV channels because of the diversity in the provided content.

The state can manipulate the public sphere in order to stabilize its power and its interest by determining the awareness movement and information in the public sphere via the surveillance and censorship over the media and news sources. It also takes control through determining the ability of citizens to gather and publicly express their opinion, confiscating public spaces and the rights to expression.

Internet in such countries becomes the only way of political communication, not only for the political opponents or movements, but also for ordinary users and civic Internet users. This shapes a new public sphere for those users. Internet and social media platforms have many characteristics that allow them to be public spheres. For example, all users are counterparts and every user can be a channel by expressing their content, views, and ideas.

Internet itself becomes a medium where users connect and communicate freely and openly; they can deal with the restrictions and obstacles caused by the companies that operate those platforms. Restrictions like suspending an account could be solved by creating another account and it can reach its popularity again easily as long as there are followers who are keen to follow the owner of this account.

In this public sphere, manipulation by the state is weak compared to the traditional media because the state cannot prevent the content from being created and spread on social media platforms. And this is one of the democratic aspects of social media and the Internet as a public sphere.

Unlike traditional media, capital is not the biggest obstacle in the Internet as a public sphere, but capital on social media is the number of followers and friends of the Internet user. Social media has produced different kinds of elites who can influence large numbers of groups, whether social, cultural or political groups.

The continuous suppression by the states to allow for other opinions and ideas to be broadcasted on traditional media will lead oppositions to use Internet and social media more in order to spread their ideas and ideologies. Meanwhile, under the suppression and lack of sphere for freedom of expression, violence will appear as a means for refusing the policies and practices of the suppressive state, and violence itself becomes a communication tool to send messages that include refusal for the power of the state.

From this dissertation findings can be clarified as follows:

Violence groups might use the democratic public sphere which has been shaped by the Internet and social media to send their messages to the state and also to gain more followers and sympathy from people who are living under the suppression of the state. The violence groups may not attract high numbers of followers in real life to join them

in their practices against the state, but at least they will gain sympathy and high numbers of audience on Internet and social media platforms.

Meanwhile, violence groups need to be digital experts in order to reach a wider scale of users on the Internet and social media platforms to attract them virtually and on real life. They use the same techniques of traditional media by creating different channels on the Internet; channels like visual production, textual production, and sound production. Violence groups present many media outlets in order to attract all kind of audience to send the messages they want to deliver but in different shapes and forms.

The high-quality production, different channels of production, digital nativity of the producers of this content, and the high numbers of followers of the violence groups create propaganda on the Internet and social media platforms. This propaganda might cause radical changes in the audience's point of view toward the violence groups.

The public sphere which is shaped by the Internet and social media platforms can be manipulated by the high interaction and the high number of users who influence this sphere. Propaganda on the Internet and social media is more effective on the Internet public sphere because one of the Internet public sphere characteristics is that it is globalized and because it is sharable and accessible by any user who has access to that public sphere. It is also reachable among many Internet users regardless of the boundaries and borders between different countries especially if they are sharing in the same language and traditions.

Violence groups' counterparts on the Internet are creating propaganda by producing content that delivers the messages, and they are cooperating to build it. Counterparts are implementing similar techniques to that which the state is using on traditional media by presenting various forms of content but in different forms.

However, the propaganda here is shaped with different methods from traditional media. It depends more on the high number of counterparts who are producing a high volume of content. Violence group members do not deal with each other as rivals who are competing to gain more followers or to be celebrities on social media platforms, but they are cooperating as counterparts to reinforce the propaganda they are implementing.

The propaganda that is being used by the violence groups is considered

Propaganda against the states and the powers ruling those states. Its aim is also to spread the groups' ideologies and ideas. Propaganda prevails, for example, over a social media platform on the Internet by heavy interactions on an issue, even if this issue is against the violence group. The heavy interaction is not automated or generated content, but it is through real users who are using the Internet as sphere to propagate for the violence group's ideology.

The Internet and social media platforms which allow freedom of expression are results of democracy, though these results could be used in another way that might threaten democracy itself.

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