



THE REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE
SOCIAL SCIENCES UNIVERSITY OF ANKARA
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

“LIBERATING WOMEN” AS PART OF HEGEMONIC DISCOURSE IN THE US
INVASION OF AFGHANISTAN

Master’s Thesis

Sevde Kapu

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Mehmet Akif Kireççi

Master of Arts in International Relations

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To Afghan women

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ABSTRACT

This study problematizes the role of masculinity in the establishment and maintenance of hegemonic discourse in the US invasion of Afghanistan. It tries to address the central question of how and why the concept of hegemonic masculinity is manifested through hegemonic discourses. My study also tries to show how these hegemonic discourses serve the cultural hegemony of the US. Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony which combines coercion and consent inspires my work. The study focuses on the period between 2001 and 2003, analyzing Presidential discourses and discourses of senators, and members of the congress. The time frame is essential for understanding how the invasion's legitimacy was established through the formation of hegemonic discourse in the context of manufacturing consent of international and domestic community. It aims to uncover how these discourses played pivotal roles in shaping the international community's perception towards the invasion. I also emphasize discursive construction of ontology of Afghan women within the Orientalist framework. In sum, this study, while focusing on the discourses of “liberation” that manifested hegemonic masculinity in the context of US invasion of Afghanistan argues that they masterfully served the maintenance of cultural hegemony of the United States.

Key Words: Afghan Women, Liberation, Hegemonic Discourse, Hegemonic Masculinity, Cultural Hegemony, the US Invasion of Afghanistan

ÖZ

Bu çalışma, ABD'nin Afganistan'ı işgalinde hegemonik söylemin kurulması ve sürdürülmesinde erkekliğin rolünü sorunsallaştırmaktadır. Bu çalışma, hegemonik erkeklik kavramının hegemonik söylemler aracılığıyla nasıl ve neden ortaya çıktığı temel sorusunu ele almaya çalışmaktadır. Çalışmam ayrıca bu hegemonik söylemlerin ABD'nin kültürel hegemonyasına nasıl hizmet ettiğini göstermeye çalışmaktadır. Gramsci'nin zorlama ve rızayı birleştiren kültürel hegemonya teorisi çalışmama ilham vermektedir. Çalışma, 2001-2003 yılları arasındaki döneme odaklanmakta ve başkanlık söylemleri ile senatörlerin ve kongre üyelerinin söylemlerini analiz etmektedir. Bu zaman dilimi, uluslararası ve yerel toplumun rızasının üretilmesi bağlamında hegemonik söylemin oluşturulması yoluyla işgalin meşruiyetinin nasıl tesis edildiğini anlamak açısından önemlidir. Bu söylemlerin uluslararası toplumun işgale yönelik algısını şekillendirmede nasıl önemli roller oynadığını ortaya çıkarmayı amaçlamaktadır. Ayrıca, Oryantalist çerçevede Afgan kadınlarının ontolojisinin söylemsel inşasına da vurgu yapmaktayım. Özetle bu çalışma, ABD'nin Afganistan'ı işgali bağlamında hegemonik erkekliğin tezahürü olan "özgürleştirme" söylemlerine odaklanırken, bu söylemlerin ABD'nin kültürel hegemonyasının sürdürülmesine ustalıkla hizmet ettiğini savunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Afgan Kadınları, Özgürleştirme, Hegemonik Söylem Hegemonik Erkeklik, Kültürel Hegemonya, ABD'nin Afganistan'ı İşgali

ACRONYMS

CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
DA	Discourse Analysis
FMF	Feminist Majority Foundation
HRW	Human Rights Watch
IMF	International Monetary Fund
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
PMC	Private Military Company
RAWA	Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan
UNOCAL	Union Oil Company of California
US	United States
UN	United Nations
WB	World Bank
WOT	War on Terror
WTO	World Trade Organization

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Every tool is a weapon if you hold it right.

Ani DiFranco

The 9/11 terrorists attacks were perceived not only as targeted at the Twin Towers, the Pentagon, the economic power, and of the United States but also aimed at its democracy, concept of freedom, way of life, masculinity, and Western civilization. In reaction to the 9/11 attacks, the United States occupied Afghanistan (and later Iraq).

There is a widely held belief that the world experienced significant change in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on September 11 against the United States. One of the main changes was the declaration of the War on Terror by the then President G. W. Bush. The discourses that produced after the 9/11 in connection with the War on Terror led to the world divide into two parts. This division was clearly visible in the well-known speech of the former President G. W. Bush as “you are either with us or against us” (2001). In order to garner global support for the division advocated by the discourse, it is essential to examine production and re-production of these discourses, as well as the underlying intentions driving them.

9/11 attacks are perceived as a "disastrous fall" (Edwards, 2004, p. 155) for America, and it is regarded as an event that deteriorated the image of the United States worldwide. In order to rebuild the damaged image, President G. W. Bush emphasized military power by giving immediate and aggressive response to the attacks, which is acknowledged as an extension of the masculine culture in this study. In response to the 9/11 attacks, the US-led coalition launched a military operation known as *Operation Enduring Freedom* (OEF) on October 7, 2001, with the primary objective of dismantling terrorist networks in Afghanistan. Despite this primary objective, the Bush administration made significant efforts to present the invasion as a humanitarian initiative designed to "liberation" of Afghan women from

Taliban oppression. George W. Bush's concerns about Afghan women and Taliban oppression could be right. The Taliban practiced an extreme form of Islamic and Sharia law and had closed all girls' schools, restricted women from leaving the house without a male company, banned music, television, entertainment, and most sports (Rashid, 2001, p. 2). But the Taliban's oppression of Afghan women did not start with the September 11 attacks, it started in 1996 when they took over the country from the *Mujahideen*. At this point, the question must be asked, what is the reason that the G. W. Bush administration's sudden concern about the liberation of Afghan women?

In the process of invasion and afterwards, the US had used the concern for the liberation of Afghan women as a strategy to define its role and responsibilities in the world. With the 9/11 attacks, the plight of Afghan women came to the international community's attention. The Western media supported the discourse of "liberation" and tried to persuade the international community to justify the invasion by using images of veiled women in combination with images of Taliban oppression and mistreatment of women. In this point, as Kandiyoti argues that women's rights have become "implicated in the geopolitical manoeuvrings of powerful global actors" and have manifested themselves through the "principled politics solidarity" in the War on Terror (2007, p. 505). Seeking solidarity with the international community and expecting them to align with the United States have raised questions about the objectives behind the invasion of Afghanistan. This suggests that the invasion was not solely aimed at overthrowing the Taliban and liberating women, but also at creating an illusion that conceals the underlying reasons for the invasion. This study argues that this process was in fact a move aimed at eliminating the agency of Afghan women. In this context, the discourses of "liberation" in the triangle of the hegemonic masculinity, hegemonic discourse and cultural hegemony deserve to be examined in depth.

When examining the manifestations of the "liberation" discourse in the Afghanistan invasion, several factors come to light. Firstly, throughout history, Americans who believed themselves to be the "God's chosen nation" have, from Abraham Lincoln to G.W. Bush, seen themselves as a "unique" society destined to be the world's last hope for peace. In this context, America perceives itself to have a "mission" to transform the world. This mission is

epitomized as a "beacon of freedom," representing good against evil, as articulated by G.W. Bush (Judis, 2005, p. 55). The US legitimized its unique global role in the war on terror on the basis of "just war" theory (Walzer, 2006), and aimed to garner global consent.

Before and during the invasion of Afghanistan, the US was trying to manufacture consent from international community by advocating for women's rights. The U.S. government, along with First Lady Laura Bush, attributed credit to the "liberation of Afghan women" forming the crux of their public support for the invasion. On the other hand, Laura Bush in her radio speech on November 17, 2001, stated that "the fight against terrorism is also a fight for the dignity of women." In other words, the mission to "Liberate the Oppressed" was foregrounded (Cannah, 2021, p. 73), showcasing the instrumentalization of feminist concerns in the invasion. In this context, as Walzer suggests, states do not send their soldiers solely to save lives; rather, deployed soldiers are symbolic of the sovereign power's beliefs, values, and assumptions (2006, p. 102). However, military intervention "can not liberate women" but rather perpetuate gender inequality (Al-Ali & Pratt, 2009, p. 60). With these in mind, the research question of this study will be described in the next section.

1.1. Research Questions

The focus of this study is on how the discourse of 'liberation of Afghan women' serves the construction of cultural hegemony in its manifestations in the US invasion of Afghanistan. Given that cultural hegemony is based on the ability to ideologically control non-dominant groups through discourses by promoting dominant values, beliefs and views and attributing universality and naturalness to the dominant group's beliefs (Giroux, 1981, p. 94), the liberation discourse is an important site in the establishment of cultural hegemony. This study examines the US invasion of Afghanistan from a Gramscian perspective as a process in which coercion and consent complement and interact with each other in the establishment of cultural hegemony and are manifested through hegemonic discourses. The research question of the study is how and why was hegemonic masculinity manifested through hegemonic discourse and served the cultural hegemony of the US in the invasion of Afghanistan?

This question problematizes the reasons behind the US invasion of Afghanistan. Although the motivations of the invasion were presented as the Taliban's support for al-Qaeda, it was never definitively determined whether the Taliban was an adversary of the West (Carati, 2015, p. 206). Therefore, it is essential to look for different motivations for the US invasion of Afghanistan. This is because the Bush administration focused on the production of consent of the international community in order to legitimize the invasion. This leads us to think that the "liberation" discourse is much more than the willingness to liberate Afghan women. Accordingly, the universalization of the American sense of freedom, liberation and civilization into a hegemonic discourse is an important point for the production of manufacturing consent to legitimization of the invasion. For Cannah, this situation gives the invasion an ideological meaning (2021, p. 72).

In the US invasion of Afghanistan, the production of consent through hegemonic discourses is based on the manifestations of hegemonic masculinity, which Connell and Messerschmidt define as a cultural ideal (2005, p. 842). According to this study, the manifestations of hegemonic masculinity emerged in two ways in the invasion. The first is as a process of aestheticization based on the power to control the agency of Afghan women based on the discourse of liberation, and the second is the process of evilization of the al-Qaeda and Taliban members in relation to Orientalism. The manifestation of groups subordinated by discursive constructions as the site of the ideal form of masculinity leads us to the basis of the study. In this context, this study treats the US invasion of Afghanistan as a hegemonic project. Joseph argues that hegemonic projects are involved in the production of hegemony when they are based on a structure (2000, p. 191). Taking this into account, this study acknowledged gender as a structure that consolidate the hegemonic project of the US and treats hegemonic masculinity as an element of the structure of gender.

Within this framework, to provide a comprehensive response to the main research question, this study aims to conduct a qualitative analysis of the speeches of former President G. W. Bush, as well as those of senators and representatives, including Senator Mr. Alaka, Barbara Boxer, Mrs. Carnahan, and Representatives Ms. Norton, Mr. Sawyer, Ms. De Gette, and Mr. Shays. The selection of these individuals is based on their discourses emphasis to

the oppression of women of Afghanistan. The analysis will be conducted using Foucault's approach to discourse to understand how they shaped American hegemony from a Gramscian perspective in the invasion of Afghanistan through their discourses.

Considering the points discussed above, I will elucidate how the United States reinforces the construction of its own identity by marginalizing the Afghan populace through the deployment of discursive masculinity. This study will specifically focus on the official level discourses of G.W. Bush from 2001 to 2003, including his address to the 107th Congress. More precisely, I will analyze the processes by which knowledge about Afghan men, and especially Afghan women, is produced, transformed and manipulated from a gendered perspective, while also scrutinizing how it becomes subject to hegemonic masculinity. Ultimately, the aim of this research is to investigate the role of hegemonic masculinity in facilitating the establishment of cultural hegemony by the United States.

1.2.Objective and Significance

This study seeks to delve into the intricate dynamics surrounding the United States' invasion of Afghanistan and show the profound interplay between hegemonic masculinity, cultural hegemony, and the official discourses of the Bush administration. The main goal of this research is to shed light on how the notion of hegemonic masculinity was interwoven within the overarching narrative of the invasion, specifically focusing on how it operated as a motivator for the broader pursuit of Western dominance. Moreover, this study aims to contend that the very foundation of cultural hegemony is intricately linked to the construction of discourses.

By closely examining the official discourses of the Bush administration, this research aims to underscore the ways in which hegemonic masculinity found expression at an institutional level. A pivotal objective is to illuminate the strategic usage of hegemonic narratives to establish a legitimate rationale for the invasion in Afghanistan, in parallel with the shaping of public mind in order to manufacture consent. In the subsequent chapters, an exploration of the role played by representations of Afghan women as a locus for hegemonic masculinity is undertaken. This exploration, informed by Connell and Messerschmidt's conception of hegemonic masculinity as a "cultural ideal," is contextualized within the

broader context of the US invasion. Furthermore, these representations are analyzed through the Gramscian perspective on cultural hegemony, thereby elucidating their contribution to the establishment of US cultural dominance.

Drawing inspiration from Gramsci's theoretical framework, this study aims to unravel how the strategic formation of hegemonic discourses fostered global consent around the US intervention, legitimizing its invasion. Consequently, it endeavors to illuminate how the emergence of hegemonic masculinity became inextricably intertwined with the fabric of US cultural hegemony. We witness within this perspective, it is rooted in the premise that coercion and consent are mutually reinforcing elements in the construction of cultural hegemony.

This research, therefore, not only adds to a deeper comprehension of the fundamental motivations behind the US invasion of Afghanistan but also offers insights into the intricate mechanisms that govern the fusion of hegemonic masculinity and cultural hegemony within the realm of international relations. By dissecting these complex connections, this study aspires to contribute to the broader discourse on the interplay between power, gender, and discourse in the context of the US invasion of Afghanistan as a hegemonic project.

1.3. Thesis Outline

This study is structured across six chapters that demonstrate how the US manufactured the consent of the world in order to legitimize the invasion of Afghanistan through the use of the 'liberation discourse.' Additionally, it illustrates how the US manifests 'hegemonic masculinity' in parallel with orientalism to serve its cultural hegemony.

Chapter 2 introduces the study's theoretical foundation, which draws upon Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony. The chapter opens with a discussion of the ontological and epistemological foundations of the study from the standpoint of critical realism. Then, Gramsci's concept of cultural hegemony is explained in more detail. It discusses how the concepts of coercion and consent play a role in the construction of cultural hegemony. It then discusses how consent was constructed as a site of cultural hegemony in the invasion of Afghanistan through the Gramscian approaches of subalternity, intellectuals, ideology, civil

society and political society. The chapter concludes with the concept of hegemonic masculinity introduced by Connell (1987, 1995) to better understand gendered images in the US invasion of Afghanistan.

Chapter 3 examines hegemony-oriented studies and masculinity-oriented studies in the literature on the US invasion of Afghanistan. In this context, this chapter will begin with a discussion of whether the US role of the world is supremacy, empire or hegemony with the example of Afghanistan. After this discussion, the focus will shift to masculinity-based studies in which the US is manifested in the invasion of Afghanistan.

Chapter 4 begins by introducing the qualitative data of the study as a basis for the concept of discourse, which is the main point of the study. The chapter then goes on to examine discourse and critical discourse analysis and introduces Foucault's approach to discourse as the research method of the study. The chapter will conclude by discussing how the US invasion of Afghanistan manufactured consent through hegemonic discourses in order to legitimize the invasion.

In Chapter 5, the focus of the study will turn to the gendered dynamics of US foreign policy and the concept of the War on Terror. In the initial section of this chapter, we will examine the role of masculinity in U.S. foreign policy from the Spanish-American War in 1898 to the War on Terror. The second part of this chapter will focus on the September 11 attacks and analyzes the War on Terror from an orientalist perspective, analyzing the ways in which women and men were involved in the war from a gendered perspective.

Chapter 6 is the main chapter of this research. In this chapter, official-level discourses, media discourses and especially the discourse of "liberation" of Afghan women in the US invasion of Afghanistan will be examined through Foucauldian perspective on discourse and how hegemonic discourses serve the cultural hegemony of the US to discuss how hegemonic masculinities are manifested. Connell (1987) argues that "emphasized femininity" and "subordinated masculinities" are subject to hegemonic masculinity globally. In this context, this chapter foregrounds two issues as areas of discursive manifestation of hegemonic masculinity. The first is aestheticization of unveiling as a site of emphasized femininity and evilization of the enemy as a part of subordination. These discursive fields constitute manufacturing consent worldwide in the legitimization of the US invasion of Afghanistan.

This is because the US reinforced the distinction between East and West by manifesting its discursive movements in the invasion of Afghanistan from an Orientalist framework.

Chapter 7 is the conclusion of the study. In this chapter it will be discussed whether the research has provided answers to the research question in light of the key findings. Accordingly, it will be concluded that in the US invasion of Afghanistan, the discursive articulations of hegemonic masculinity served the cultural hegemony of the US. In the light of the discourse of liberation, the discursive actions aimed at eliminating the ontology of Afghan women have been considered a hegemonic project and have contributed to the success of the US invasion of Afghanistan.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, conceptual and theoretical framework of the research will be introduced. This framework draws on Gramscian model of cultural hegemony. As a basis for cultural hegemony, this chapter will begin with an ontological and epistemological evaluation from a critical realist perspective. Then, the concepts of coercion and consent that underpin the Gramscian model of hegemony will be discussed (1971, p. 12). In order to understand the establishment of cultural hegemony in the US invasion of Afghanistan, Gramsci's approach to political and civil society, subaltern, intellectuals, ideology and war will be discussed and their role in the construction of consent will be analyzed. This chapter will conclude by discussing Connell's Gramsci-inspired conceptualization of "hegemonic masculinity" (1987; 1995), which is considered as a factor that feeds the cultural hegemony of the US invasion of Afghanistan. This chapter will provide a roadmap to help us approach the central question of the thesis. Before I discuss hegemony from Gramscian sense, the first part of the chapter will focus on ontological and epistemological stances to comprehend what hegemony is.

2.1. Ontological and Epistemological Basis of the Research

It is essential to examine the ontological and epistemological outlooks of the research in order to create a solid foundation for conceptual and methodological framework. In this context, the ontological outlook of this research is rooted by critical realism and is in line with the epistemological perspective of the research. To elucidate the ontological and epistemological perspective, it is required to start with philosophical standpoint. Ontology is focused on the nature of social reality and questions whether there is a real and objective world outside the human mind in which social phenomena have an independent existence (Corbetta, 2003, p. 12). In other words, ontology is concerned with “what exists, what it looks like, what units make it up and how these units interact with each other” (Blaikie, 1993, p. 6). In this regard, the nature of social entities constitutes a distinction between objectivism and constructionism. In objectivist stance, social entities are seen as objective entities with reality outside of social actors, on the other hand constructionism regards social entities as

social constructions shaped by the actions and perceptions of social actors. Put it differently, the question of whether social phenomena depend on an external reality outside our influence or are constructions of the social world shaped by our influence constitutes the ontological distinction in knowing social reality (Bryman, 2012, p. 32-33).

Ontological realists believe that the world exists independently of our consciousness. That is, objective social reality is outside human existence and this reality can be known with a true essence (Corbetta, 2003, pp. 16-17). Whereas the critical realists argue that reality independent of human beings can be imperfectly known (p. 20). Put it differently, there is a reality that is independent of human beings, but in order to understand the social world, it is needed to identify the structures that produce this reality which means events and discourses. In this regard, Roy Bhaskar (1989) proposes a "transformational understanding of social activity" to explain the relationship of structure-agency. According to this model, the existence of social structures is essential for human activity and is supported by society with "means, media, rules" and materials. Through this process, society reproduces and transforms the structures of the social world. The plurality of structures generates social phenomena. Therefore, in order to fully understand reality independent of human actions, structures play an important role as a bridge (pp. 3-4).

Applying Bhaskar's transformational aspect of social activity to hegemony, Joseph discusses structural reproduction of hegemony from objective-structural context. According to him, the concept of hegemony is properly related to "how different social groups achieve dominance through constructing consent" and also includes political projects. But hegemony is not limited to this approach. Contrary to Bhaskar, Joseph Jonathan considers it inter-subjective to explain the social world through human activity and in order to avoid this, he aims to achieve objectivity by focusing on the structural and agential aspects of hegemony from a critical realist perspective (2000, p. 179).

Joseph began his conceptualization of hegemony by first distinguishing between the structural (deep) and agential (surface) aspects of hegemony. For him, they are two facets of a "continual process." Structural hegemony deals with "the deep, underlying conditions within society and the unity of the social formation" and agency-based surface hegemony

deals with “actual hegemonic projects that arise out of this situation it represents a manifestation of the underlying conditions, albeit, with its own character and dynamics” (Joseph, 2002, p. 131).

While structural hegemony fulfills the operation of promoting the re-production of social structures and structural units, this operational necessity enables various hegemonic projects to emerge and interact with this basic requirement (2002, p. 131). For a wider perspective in order to understand relationality of structural and surface hegemony, Joseph proposes more sweeping definitions about them. The agential aspect of hegemony involves "the struggle for dominance, the application of strategy, the exercise of power, the striving for consent, the articulation of interests, the construction of blocs and the battle of ideas". Conversely, the structural aspect of hegemony concerns the role of structures in social production and it "refers to the relations between these (social) structures, practices, generative mechanism and institutions, and between political, economic and cultural domains" (2000, p. 191). However, Joseph argues that the structural and agential aspects of hegemony are not completely separated. For him, the distinction, rather, is based on the difference between structural hegemony, which focuses on the reproduction of the unity of society's structures, and on the other hand agentially-based hegemony, which centers on “specific hegemonic projects” (2000, p. 191). That is to say, there exists a relationality between them.

Joseph's relational approach between deep(structural) and manifest(surface) hegemony is in line with Roy Bhaskar's statements on power. According to Bhaskar, there are two types of power. While “power1” refers to the transformative capacity of the agency, “power2” refers to the transformative, dominating, controlling, exploitative and subjugated aspect of the structure (1993, p. 60). Joseph applied these power relations to hegemony and presented two perspectives as “hegemony1 and hegemony2.” Accordingly, while power1 refers to the "to be able" aspect of hegemony1 as structural relations, power2 refers to "the ability to exercise power over," that is, manifestation of hegemony2 (2000, p. 194). Based on this distinction and relationship, the success of social groups in achieving hegemony in a society depends on how hegemonic forces operate vis-à-vis dominant social structures

(Joseph, 2001, p. 266). Deeper social structures therefore provide passive and unconscious structural conditions for manifest hegemonic projects (Joseph, 2002: 131). Therefore, social structures unconsciously serve conscious hegemonic projects (Başkan, 2021, p. 195).

This study considers the US invasion of Afghanistan as a conscious surface 'hegemonic project'. For Joseph, "hegemonic projects are expressed through a dominance of coercion over consent, reflecting a deeper disjuncture between state, politics and economy" (2000, p. 137). The construction of hegemony through consent will be elaborated in the next section, Gramscian Model of Hegemony. In the US invasion of Afghanistan as a conscious hegemonic project, 'gender' as a social structure will be recognized as a reality independent of human perception and interpretation. Only by considering gender as a distinct entity can we truly comprehend the processes of generating, acquiring, transforming, and manipulating knowledge about gender, along with its societal impact on shaping social phenomena. Recognizing gender as a social structure will be discussed in the section of Conceptualizing Hegemonic Masculinity.

As for the epistemological dimension of the study, it is essential to note that epistemology is focused on the question of what acceptable knowledge is or should be (Bryman, 2012, p. 27). In this regard, if knowledge about the social world exists independently of human action, the desire to attain it is legitimate (Corbetta, 2003, p. 12). Bleiker defined epistemology as "consist of ideas about what can count as knowledge," what kinds of things can be known and what criteria must be met for it to be called knowledge (2000, p. 8). In other words, the question of epistemology is what is valid knowledge, and whether it should be examined according to the same procedures and rules as the natural sciences in central matters. In this regard, the natural sciences are identified with the positivist epistemological perspective. But because of the limits of positivism and its unclear position between philosophy and science, critical realism emerges as a philosophical standpoint in order to comprehend true reality (Bryman, 2012, p. 27).

In contrast, the epistemological stance taken as the opposite of positivism is interpretivism (Bryman, 2012, p. 27). For interpretivist stance, there is a fundamental epistemological distinction between social and natural sciences. Accordingly, social reality

cannot only be observed, but must also be interpreted. In other words, knowledge is obtained through "comprehension" (Corbetta, 2003, p. 28). In this context, Bhaskar argues that transforming society depends on knowledge of structures. However, the world cannot change rationally until it is sufficiently interpreted (2011, p. 5). But, style of interpretations poses a dilemma. Rescher argues that some interpretations solve problems and others create difficulties (2003, p. 184).

To address the dilemma of the interpretation, critical realists focus on the role of language. Critical realism is a theoretical perspective that assumes that there is an ultimate reality, but that reality is shaped by the way it is experienced and interpreted, by political interests, culture and language (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 329). In critical realist epistemology, "language is understood as constructing our social realities". But the nature of the physical world both enables and limits the social reality constructed by language. This is why critical realism actually challenges social constructionism's reification of discourse. In other words, material practices are not reducible to discourse and are not meaningless unless they are discursively interpreted. At this point, the meaning given to material practices is a relational ontology that is both independent of and in relation to discursive relations (Sims-Schouten, Riley & Willig, 2007, p. 102).

According to Roy Bhaskar, social practices rely on concepts, but unlike the hermeneutic tradition in the social sciences, they are not confined solely to their conceptual aspects and consistently possess a material dimension. In this epistemological situation, the role of human agency in the construction of the social world and the relationship between people's actions can be impacted by personal and social mechanisms independent of our thoughts (1989, p. 4). In this context, while all texts are analyzed by their ideological function, critical realism argues that in order to comprehend the social world from a broader angle, the relationship between (deep) material and social structures is not causal and linear, but rather produced in dynamic and dialectical interaction with each other (Sims-Schouten, Riley & Willig, 2007, p. 105).

As for the epistemological presumptions of critical realism, this research will examine official level discourses. It is because official level discourses can manipulate the reality

about Afghan people in the mind of the world opinion and can be constructed with false representations. In this context, this research will analyze masculinity in official level discourses as an element that feeds the construction of reality in the US invasion of Afghanistan. For this purpose, Gramsci's model of hegemony will be used to discuss how masculinity and cultural superiority manifested in the US invasion of Afghanistan as a hegemonic project and how it shaped the US hegemony. Therefore, the next section will present Gramscian perspective on hegemony.

2.2. Gramscian Model of Hegemony

The English term 'hegemony', meaning "leadership", derives from the Ancient Greek word *hegemonia*, which is distinct from the concept of domination (Gills, 1993, p. 116). In the 5th century BC, Athens had military, political and cultural leadership over the other city-states of Greece, which had their own autonomy (Ives, 2004, p. 63). Therefore, it is important to explore the evolution of the concept. The Russian version of the concept of hegemony, known as *gegemoniya*, was one of the major political campaign slogans of Russian Social-Democratic movement from the 1890 to the Bolshevik Revolution and put forward by Plekhanov, Axelrod, Lenin and other theorists, one of the pioneers of the revolution (Anderson, 1978, p. 15; Bates, 1975, p. 352). In the Russian context, the concept of hegemony was utilized to garner support from the peasantry and the working class, aiming to achieve dominance over Tsarist Russia through consent rather than coercion. This approach, which relied on the economic, political, and cultural organizations of the proletariat, formed the basis for Gramsci's development of the concept of hegemony (Anderson, 1978, pp. 15-18)

Gramsci defines hegemony as the dominance of one group over the other group or class' interests, tastes, preferences, and ways to perform the tasks of everyday life by consent rather than coercion (Gramsci, 1971, p. 58). At this point, there are two different ways that shows the supremacy of class as "domination(dominio) or coercion" and "intellectual and moral leadership" (*direzione intellettuale e morale*). Second type of supremacy constitutes hegemony (Femia, 1981, p. 24). Social control affects behaviors and choices in two ways.

The first is external control, based on reward and punishment, and second is internal control based on moral leadership, which identifies personal convictions with dominant norms (Femia, 1981, p.24).

In his *Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci differentiates society as civil and political as “two major superstructural level” (1971, p. 12) and this distinction affects all of his works. He points out that civil society refers to private realm and it also ensures the intellectual and moral leadership through education, religious and other associational institutions. As for political society is equal with state and which coincides with hegemony and it dominates society through the coercive means of state (Williams, 1960, p. 590). Gramsci’s works are the cornerstone that changed the traditional understanding of state-centered hegemony by emphasizing the importance of obtaining consent as a means to achieve hegemony (Cox, 2010, pp. 216-7).

According to Femia, the concept of consent has historically meant a moral limit to political authority. Over time, it has been expanded to mean the direct or indirect participation of the governed in governance within the framework of their demands and freedoms. In this sense, when speaking of consent, Gramsci referred to a kind of psychological state that can be explained by the subordinates' tacit acceptance of the socio-political order (1981, p. 37). For Gramsci, hegemony includes “the spontaneous consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group” and “the apparatus of state coercive power which legally enforces discipline on those groups who do not consent either actively or passively” (1971, p. 12). The sovereign group's historical position in the world, its function and prestige are sufficient to persuade the masses to consent spontaneously. But in the opposite case, that is, when spontaneous consent fails, the coercive power apparatuses of the state are ready to step in at a “moment of crisis” (Gramsci, 1971, p. 12).

Following Gramsci, to sustain a normally practiced hegemony, a balance between coercion and consent must be maintained. Consent should not be overpowered by force, but it should be something that people actively accept, internalize and support (1971, p. 80). Put it differently, Gramsci emphasize consent over coercion to the control of the masses. For this

emphasis, according to Gramsci, Machiavelli's *The Prince* invokes the mythical Greek centaur, that is, half animal and half man, as a symbol of the “dual perspective” in political action (Simon, 1991, p. 24). This dual perspective “are the levels of force and of consent, authority and hegemony, violence and civilisation, of individual moment and of the universal moment” (Gramsci, 1971, p. 170). In other words, hegemony is not domination with force, but consent with ideological and political leadership. It is the formation of consent (Simon, 1991, p. 24).

For Gramsci, hegemony is about how the ruling class acquires and maintains power over subordinate classes with consent (Fusaro, Xidias & Fabry, 2017, p. 11). In this regard, Başkan (2018) draws attention to Gramscian approach to cultural hegemony in relation to how the dominant class gains the consent of the masses (p. 47). Although Gramsci's writings do not specifically define “cultural hegemony,” his perspective on the necessity of “spontaneous consent” to the achievement of hegemony characterizes the concept of cultural hegemony (Lears, 1985, p. 568). From a Gramscian perspective cultural hegemony is “the process of moral, philosophical and political leadership that a social group attains only with the active consent of other important social groups” (Artz & Murphy, 2000, p. 1). According to Başkan, establishing hegemony involves persuading other groups, turning their unconscious perspectives into conscious ones, and obtaining their spontaneous consent to the ethical, cultural, and political values of the dominant class (2018, p. 47). On the other hand, Giroux introduced a discursive dimension to cultural hegemony. According to him, hegemony as a dominant ideology provides an ideological control by defining the content and form of discourse produced in society. This process of ideological control produces dominant values, beliefs and social practices in institutional spaces such as the family, school and media. In this context, the dominant group manipulates or controls the discourse produced in society by claiming that certain ideas are natural and universal (1981, p. 94).

In this context, hegemonic projects are specific practices of internalization that constitute the dominant rules structuring the identities and discourses of societies. This linguistic dimension subjects society and discourse to certain constraints. The discursive facet of cultural hegemony is about to “who is going to be master” (Howarth, 1995, p. 124).

In other words, discourses construct masters, serve to maintain their mastery; and in doing so, they reveal the spontaneous consent of societies. Cultural hegemony is thereby established. In order to comprehend the construction of cultural hegemony, it is vital to examine the state apparatuses that Gramsci attributed an important role in his work. Therefore, we turn our focus to the synthesis of civil society and political society in the next section.

2.2.1. Civil Society and Political Society

In *Risorgimento*, Gramsci stated that the dominance of social groups manifests itself in two ways. As mentioned above, these "superstructures" are "political" and "intellectual and moral control" (Gramsci, 1949, p. 70 cited in Williams, 1960, p. 590). One of the two layers of this superstructure, civil society refers to the "ensemble of organisms commonly called private" (1971, p. 12). The layer of political society, which manifests itself as the state, corresponds to the function of "hegemony" exercised by the dominant group over the whole society and the layer of "direct rule" as "juridical government" (Gramsci, 1971, p. 12). Political society refers to dictatorship or repressive apparatuses to shape the masses, while civil society, that is, the means to realize the hegemony of a social group over all national communities are the church, schools and municipalities, the media, the family, individual behavior, tastes and values, and intellectuals play an important role in this hegemonic function of civil society (Williams, 1960, p. 590; Jones, 2006, p. 329). In other words, although Gramsci expressed hegemony by distinguishing between "political hegemony," which he positioned within the state (1971, p. 246), and "civil hegemony," which he positioned within civil society (1971, p. 246), instead of seeing them as opposites, he expressed hegemony as a "syntheses of consent and coercion" (Anderson, 1978, p. 22). For Gramsci, civil society is not different from state, rather it is part of state. In a nutshell, Gramsci (1971, p. 263), states that:

State=political society+civil society

For this reason, Gramsci does not attribute a major crash between these two superstructures. Hegemony is therefore a combination of coercion and consent. When spontaneous consent fails, the state's coercion apparatuses come into play and this is usually carried out through violence (Jones, 2006, pp. 50-51). Although Gramsci reduces coercion to "moment of force," and Jones, citing Bourdieu, also refers to hegemony as "symbolic violence." This symbolic violence takes place through texts by excluding and marginalizing ruled groups and undermining their ways of life. This situation manifests itself by reproducing the authoritarianism of the dominant group and reinforcing the position of the ruled group (Jones, 2006, p. 52).

When Gramsci's distinction of political society and civil society is applied to the US invasion of Afghanistan, we encounter a combination of coercion and consent for the construction and maintenance of US cultural hegemony. In this study, the US invasion of Afghanistan in response to the 9/11 attacks refers to the direct control exercised by the military, one of the coercive apparatuses of political society. The apparatuses of civil society such as the media, education and intellectual leadership, and political discourse to legitimize the invasion, on the other hand, represent indirect control, which refers to the consent of the international community and the public. In this context, the discursive dimension of civil society has an important place in the construction of consent. Because civil society aims to create a common sense by attributing normality and universality to the dominant group's worldview, beliefs and values. In the US invasion of Afghanistan, the discursive emphasis of 'liberation' was deeply gender-ed and Orient-ed as a tool of production of consent of civil society. The discursive dimension of cultural hegemony established by the synthesis of coercion and consent expresses the ideological control of the groups that the dominant group subjects to itself. In other words, according to this study, Western ideological control tries to claim superiority by undermining the ontology of the East. Now, we need to turn our focus to the role of the subaltern, the element that takes an active role in political and cultural programs.

2.2.2. Subaltern

Although Gramsci did not give a clear definition for the theoretical basis of the concept of subalternity, he did talk about its main characteristics. The concept of “subaltern” is “broadly inclusive” of all oppressed (Crehan, 2016, p. 15) and it is understood in many different forms, including inequality and oppression. The common point is that the term subaltern here refers to a relationship of subordination to another group or a subordinate position within an comprehensive institution such as state (Crehan, 2016, p. 185). Gramsci calls non-hegemonic groups “subordinate,” “subaltern” and “instrumental” (Hoare&Smith, 1971, p. xiv). While analyzing the relationship between subaltern classes and dominant classes, Gramsci argues that “subaltern classes are subject to the initiatives of the dominant classes” even even in moments of rebellion; they exist “in a state of anxious defense” (1996, p. 21). Gramsci first coined the term subaltern to touch on low-ranking soldiers who were under the command of their superiors (Buttigieg, 1996, p. 139). He later expanded the concept of subaltern to refer to all non-dominant social groups beyond the slaves, working class and peasants. This later extended definition encompasses women, various racial and religious groups and other oppressed groups as well (Green, 2002, p. 2). More precisely, the view that makes all these groups subaltern and causes them to remain subaltern is the widespread belief that they lack political autonomy (Gramsci, 1996, p. 24) and that they lack a coherent philosophy to adequately understand and interpret the world (Ives, 2004, p. 78).

In the following decades his work is concerned with how the subaltern remains subaltern or how to overcome subalternity (Crehan, 2016, p. 98). Gramsci proposes the collectivization of subaltern groups to overcome subalternity (Buttigieg, 1975, p. 347). This collectivization comes from the idea that subalterns have a worldview that manifests itself at least in action, if not in thought or language (Ives, 2004, p. 78). This is because subaltern groups are not concretely intertwined with the state like the historical unity of the ruling classes, but rather they are intertwined with civil society and lack historical unification (Gramsci, 1996, p. 91).

The dominant class establishes its hegemony through the administrative and coercive power of the state by identifying its class interests with the social practices associated with

the unconsciously accepted values and assumptions of civil society. According to Gramsci, if the subalterns want to realize hegemony, it must find a way to resist the spontaneous consent. This can only be done through political activity. Simon gives an illustration by extending the scope of the concept of spontaneous consent by applying it to civil society (Simon, 1991, p. 99).

Accordingly, the feminist movement's rise in the latter part of the 1960s meant an expansion of consciousness in political activity. In other words, all the values, assumptions and ideas that reinforced the subordinate status of women in society met with resistance, which led to a conscious awareness of what women's role in society had been and should be. Although Gramsci did not comment directly on the subordination of women, but in *Americanism and Fordism*, he emphasized that women's feminine personalities should provide them with a new role, a new consciousness, in sexual relations (Simon, 1991, p. 100).

According to Gramsci, this consciousness constitutes a new ethical order and is important for women's independence from men (1971, p. 296). For Crehan, especially female subalterns have neither a word nor a concept to express their oppressors. At this point, Gramsci argues that the dominant group maintains its hegemony through a number of theoretical and practical activities in order to gain the consent of those it dominates (Crehan, 2016, pp. 13-14). However, in the globalized world, the different characteristics of groups attributed subalternity are ignored and this prevents the dominant group from ruling the "hearts and minds" of subalterns (Jones, 2006, p. 34). Therefore, dominant groups resort to the coercive apparatus of the state for the production of consent in order to construct hegemony.

2.2.3. Historic Bloc

I examined the distinction between civil society and political society in Gramsci's model of hegemony above. Gramsci argues that weaker states rely on the use of force to assert their domination, while stronger states express their superiority through hegemony. In this context, powerful states resort not only to coercion but also to consent (Adamson, 1980, p. 170). Another meaning of hegemony is to overcome the "economic-corporative" barrier.

Gramsci refers to specific historical stages in this regard. This progress occurs with an advancement in "class consciousness." However, this advancement takes place within the context of a common intellectual awareness and shared culture among the classes (Gramsci, 1971, p. 57).

For Gramsci, hegemony intersects with culture, ideology, intellect, revolution, and political education. Within this intersection, Gramsci highlights the concept of the "historical bloc." As mentioned earlier, this concept stems from the formation created by the "intellectual and moral bloc" (Adamson, 1980, p. 176). In this context, Gramsci argues that for hegemony to be realized, dominant groups must focus on the preferences and interests of subaltern groups. The dominant and subaltern groups have to sacrifice something along with the other members of their alliance in order to achieve consensus between them (1971, p. 160). This consensus serve to what Gramsci called the historical bloc (Sassoon, 1991, p. 230). According to Adamson, "hegemonies always grow out of historical blocs, but not all historical blocs are hegemonic. In other words, while the formation of an intellectual and moral bloc within a social group is defined as hegemonic, it is unclear whether its alliances with other similar groups will be hegemonic (1980, pp. 177-178).

In this study, the US hegemony is analyzed as a result of the historical bloc that emerged within the United States, especially after the Second World War. This bloc is a combination of different elements such as economic institutional interests, military resources and political elites cooperating to establish the US hegemony. This historical bloc aims to defend US interests, values and dominant norms at the global level. This is a consequence of the growth of a hegemony within the historical bloc.

2.2.4. Intellectuals and Language

In Gramsci's work, intellectuals are seen as producers of knowledge. However, this production process is not individual, but rather involves the "whole process of knowledge production." In the process of knowledge production, the source of the knowledge produced by intellectuals is shaped by the society they live in (Crehan, 2016, pp. 26- 27). Although intellectuals consider themselves autonomous, they are intertwined with the beliefs, attitudes

and cultures of their society (Crehan, 2016, p. 19) and they manifest the knowledge they produce through language.

According to Gramsci, language is vitally related to politics and hegemony as a mindset about and making sense of the world. Beyond the combination of words, sounds and idioms, language defines intellectual activity. This intellectual activity is closely related to politics, philosophy and culture. Gramsci therefore divides intellectuals into “organic” and traditional (Ives, 2004, pp. 72-73). He opposes the perception of philosophy as a purely intellectual activity. This is why he said that “all men are ‘philosophers’ by defining the limits and characteristics of ‘spontaneous philosophy’ which is proper to everybody.” This philosophy is found in “language itself”, that is, language that contains meaning beyond the combination of words, language in “common sense and good sense”, and language in “folklore” the whole system of beliefs, thoughts, ideas, perceptions and actions in folk religion. (Hoare & Smith, 1971, p. 353)

Gramsci states that “all men are intellectuals” (1971, p. 9), however he focuses on the way intellectuals perceive the world when distinguishing among them. In other words, all intellectuals can engage the intellectual activity, but Gramsci’s identification of certain individuals as “organic intellectuals” depends on their ways of comprehending the world and organizing themselves in the context of the interests of the ruling group (Ives, 2004, p. 73). Thus, Gramsci emphasizes intellectuals not for their essence or intellectual activity itself but for their functions, particularly in utilizing elements of common sense in their organizational structures as a means to attain truth and reason. For instance, the position of an academic within society becomes intellectual when it involves the function of disseminating their thoughts and their impact in an organized manner. Intellectual activity thus takes place and is related to our class within society (Ives, 2004, p. 75).

According to Gramsci, traditional intellectuals may appear to assert themselves independently, but they actually serve as tools for the interests of the dominant social group. For instance, priests, despite seeming to possess independent authority, ultimately serve the dominant class. As the power of the dominant group increases, traditional intellectuals are organically created. They utilize their own power in alignment with the dominant class's

ideological interests, thus playing a role in shaping the social structure. This process of transforming traditional intellectuals into “organic intellectuals” serves to maintain the hegemony of the dominant power (Ives, 2004, pp. 75-76). All intellectuals have an organic nature, but traditional intellectuals pretend to have an 'objective worldview' that appears disconnected from the dominant social group (Gramsci, 1971, p. 7). This situation benefits in legitimizing the dominant social group. Traditional intellectuals function as agents contributing to the realization of spontaneous consent in society, serving the interests of the ruling group. Gramsci utilizes the “language metaphor” to examine different potential ways of constructing 'common sense' and the basic ideologies of hegemony and the consent of the masses to the dominant group (Ives, 2004, p. 77).

Civil society is a "marketplace of ideas" where ideas are bought and sold, and intellectuals participate as sellers of conflicting cultures. To the extent that intellectuals succeed in shaping the worldview of the rulers to the ruled, they establish hegemony in society and thus ensure that the people freely "consent" to law and order. To the extent that intellectuals fail in the production of consent, the ruling class, in anticipated moments of command crises, resorts to the coercive apparatus of the state built for the whole society, which regulates those who do not consent (Gramsci, 1996, p. 9 cited in Bates, 1975, p. 353).

2.2.5. War

Another important component of Gramsci's theory is the differentiation he made between the "war of position" and the "war of maneuver" (Egan, 2014, p. 521). According to him, there is always a “military substratum” in every political struggle (1971, p. 230). The war of maneuver refers to a "frontal attack" (Gramsci, 1971, p. 238), while the war of position consists of long-term "actual trenches" and the entire organizational and industrial system of the territory that supports the struggle (Gramsci, 1971, p. 234). In other words, a maneuver warfare signifies any attempt to seize government power through armed confrontation, democratic elections, and other ways, while the war of position represents the other processes related to the struggle (Ives, 2004, p. 107). The war of position involves an ideological struggle that takes place in the cultural area of civil society and is akin to overcoming strong defenses. This struggle requires a concentration on capturing and subverting the mechanisms

of ideological interaction before coming to power (Gramsci, 1971, p. 59; Morton, 2007, p. 190).

In military warfare, the realization of strategic objectives brings about peace and puts an end to the war. These strategic objectives can be identified as the complete elimination of the enemy's military capability as a first step, and the subsequent occupation of enemy territories as a second step. However, political struggles are more complex processes than military warfare. Even if the military is victorious, the preparation process continues in the military and political domains (Gramsci, 1971, p. 481).

Gramsci's distinction between the war of maneuver and the war of position is often associated with the geographic distinctions between Tsarist Russia and the West (Simon, 1991, p. 32). For him, in Tsarist Russia “state was everything” but “civil society was primordial and gelatinous” whereas in the West, there is a balanced relationship between civil society and state (Gramsci, 1971, p. 238). Therefore, in Tsarist Russia, power was highly concentrated within the state, and it was possible to seize power in a single historical moment. However, in countries like Western Europe where civil society was well developed, a war of maneuver had to give way to a different strategy, a war of position (Simon, 1991, p. 32). Revolution entails the gradual expansion of working-class dominance, the formation of a new historical alliance, and is not a sudden shift where control of state power swiftly transfers from one class to another in an moment.

In other words, in the West, however, Gramsci argues that in revolutionary strategy a war of position is more appropriate than a war of movement. This means that the war of movement does not disappear completely, but is relegated to a lower level and essentially becomes part of a war of position. Therefore, according to Gramsci, Communists in the West should wage a kind of “siege war” in ideological and cultural struggles in the social civil sphere before attempting to seize state power directly (Hoare&Sperber, 2016, pp. 59-60)

Gramsci's concepts of war of maneuver and war of position are used to describe different stages and approaches in political struggle. The war of maneuver refers to an open and direct conflict, while the war of position represents a more long-term and ideological struggle. Based on Gramsci's understanding of hegemony in the West, in the US invasion of

Afghanistan, before the direct war of maneuver, that is, before overthrowing the Taliban, the US waged a kind of war of siege that would produce the consent of the international community and public opinion through ideological cultural struggles in the social and civil sphere. This was realized through the orientalist and gendered discourses produced about the invasion through liberation discourse. In this context, the liberation discourse has been a reasonable tool for a war of position in the long-term. These ideological and cultural struggle efforts alongside military operations, and Gramsci's concepts help us to better understand the dynamics of this struggle.

2.2.6. Ideology

According to Gramsci, specific material, political, and cultural conditions intertwine to form social relations. In this regard, ideologies are necessary to categorize and rationalize any understanding of social relations in the context of actions, relationships, and conflicts. Ideologies exist both in human thought and human actions; they do not freely circulate independently of humans. The circulation of ideas relies on individuals expressing their thoughts in accordance with these ideas, thus enabling masses of people to act based on them. In any hegemony, events, actions, and relationships are given meaning based on how the dominant ideology is systematically expressed (Artz & Murphy, 2000, p. 30).

In this context, individuals who are involved in social events, actions, and relationships consciously create social interactions through the transmission of knowledge among people. This is crucial for hegemony because the foundation of consent is directly linked to how subordinates understand, express, and enact existing relationships. However, acceptable knowledge is contingent upon the manifestation of practices and meanings expressed as collective ideologies concerning social groups' perspectives on the world and human relationships. In this regard, every ideology emerges from and also organizes cultural practices (Artz & Murphy, 2000, pp. 30-31).

Gramsci views culture as a sediment constantly formed in the historical process, an autonomous domain. In other words, culture is the formation of specific forms of existence and ways of life on the world through the interaction of historical processes (Crehan, 2002,

p. 72). From this perspective, it is important to further examine Gramsci's view on cultural hegemony.

2.2.7. Cultural Hegemony

Culture has a significant impact in the works of Antonio Gramsci who was influenced by Croce in the realm of culture. In his pre-prison writings, Gramsci argues that culture is "exercise of thought, acquisition of general ideas, habit of connecting causes and effects." He links the fact that everyone has the ability to think with the fact that they are cultured and attributes primitiveness to this interconnectedness, and therefore he states that people tend to be tolerant or intolerant according to different circumstances (1971, p. 25). However, considering Gramsci's role as an activist, his primary concern is the transformation of capitalist societies through revolutionary projects. While classes are the ultimate actors in this transformation, culture occupies a central position in this revolutionary project. This is because culture reflects the worldview of different classes. In this regard, Gramsci distinguishes between reactionary cultures and progressive cultures, focusing on cultural change (Crehan, 2002, p. 71). According to Gramsci, culture is a form of organization through which the inner self is disciplined. In this process, the individual gains a higher consciousness and understands one's historical values, one's role and function in life, one's rights and responsibilities (Forgacs, 2000, p. 57).

For Anderson, in the establishment of cultural hegemony, when analyzing the West, we can replace what Gramsci calls "military struggle," as class rule through violence, with "coercion" and "political struggle" as class rule through consent, with "culture" or "ideology." However, as mentioned above, Gramsci states that consent and coercion are not independent of each other but rather form a synthesis (1979, p. 42). The military struggle and political struggle as the pillars of hegemony manifested themselves in the US invasion of Afghanistan. To put it more precisely, the production of the consent manifested itself in discourses from an orientalist framework to claim the superiority of Western culture, or civilization in the US invasion of Afghanistan.

According to Gramsci, culture is the result of many historical interactions and refers to historically intertwined ways of being (Crehan, 2016, p. 53). However, in Gramsci's project of revolutionary transformation, in other words, in his hegemonic project, different cultures are valued simply for existing and do not automatically deserve respect (Crehan, 2016, pp. 53-55). Therefore, the state, which is identified with coercion, and civil society, which is identified with consent, have played an important role in the US invasion of Afghanistan as a hegemonic project. As a part of the state, parliament was an effective tool both to obtain the consent of the people and to show the illusion of popular sovereignty. In addition to parliament, there is "public opinion," which is considered a more modern instrument. Public opinion serves political sovereignty as a point of contact between civil society and political society. When the state intends to take an unpopular action, it shapes "public opinion" by regulating certain elements of civil society (Bates, 1975, p. 363). At this point, Peter Ives states that "language is an important constituent element of hegemony." Gramsci finds in language a specific world design. He sees language as important for philosophical investigations apart from technical ones (2004, pp. 82-83). Thus, Gramsci argues that language means both culture and philosophy (1971, p. 349). According to Gramsci:

The whole of language is a continuous process of metaphor, and the history of semantics is an aspect of the history of culture; language is at the same time a living thing and a museum of fossils of life and civilisations. (1971, p. 450)

Fontana argues that since language expresses the mindset and value structure of a social group, linguistic conflicts are recognized as a cultural struggle to transform the population and spread philosophical innovations. Within this framework, linguistic reforms are needed to express the new world philosophy for moral and intellectual reform, which Gramsci identifies with civil society. In this regard, Gramsci tries to create a form of discourse and knowledge based on the emergence of the masses, not only as an accumulation or a collective community, but also as an essential body that can move from the sphere of private interests to the sphere of universal interests (Fontana, 1993, pp. 10-11). These forms

of discourse are realized through the "thought thinks" of the political community, which are seen as pivotal apparatuses in the construction of hegemony. Because politics is meant to manipulate, manage and control people's emotions (Fontana, 1993, p. 69) and primarily aims to produce spontaneous consent.

In summary, as previously discussed, establishing hegemony requires a structured foundation (Joseph, 2002, p. 131). In this study, this structure is defined as gender, with Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity being a key element that reinforces gender as a structural framework. In the context of the US invasion of Afghanistan, hegemonic masculinity is evident in the discourses employed, actively serving to strengthen US cultural hegemony. Gramsci's idea of hegemony becomes apparent in the cultural sphere, utilizing a combination of coercion and consent within civil society and the political realm. Language plays an essential role in this process, as the generation of consent primarily occurs through discourse. During its invasion of Afghanistan, the US strategically focused on garnering consent from both the international community and the public to consolidate and perpetuate its cultural hegemony. The upcoming chapter will delve deeper into the concept of hegemonic masculinity, bringing us closer to addressing our research question.

2.3. Conceptualizing Hegemonic Masculinity

Regarding gender as social structure of hegemonic project of the US in the invasion of Afghanistan, hegemonic masculinity as a cultural ideal (Connell&Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 842), manifest itself as an element of that structure. Connell highlights that gender is "a way of structuring" societal activities in a broader sense, not a distinct form of practice, and it is inevitably intertwined with other social structures. This is because gender interacts and intersects with nationality, race, class, and one's position in the world order (2005, p. 76).

The social theory of gender includes arguments ranging from the dynamics of industrial capitalism, sexual divisions of labor, family structure, the social subordination of women, the oppression of people who do not conform culturally idealized gender roles, the formation of masculinity and femininity. Although these arguments are labeled as patriarchy or sexual politics, they are insufficient to represent all aspects of the relationship (Connell,

1985, p. 261). Connell (1985) calls this spectrum of arguments "gender relations" (p. 261). The synthesis of gender relations takes two forms. The first is the "social construction of categories of gender," which refers to sex roles, stereotypes and socialization. The second is the perspective that takes gender identities as social construct and focuses on the relations of power and exploitation between them. The latter focuses on sexual politics, oppression and patriarchy (p. 262). In other words, these relations of power dynamics and exploitation dictate the acceptable and unacceptable roles of masculinity and femininity in society, and it determines the status of individuals in the hierarchy of privilege and authority (Shin, 2020, p. 1), in the patriarchal order.

The notion of patriarchy has been criticized by feminist authors (Messerschmidt, 2018, p. 1), due to prescribing women and men to specific roles (Connell, 1985, p. 264). Radical feminists believe that patriarchy derives from relations between men and women in terms of class, race, sexuality and age, and they see male-dominated power and privilege as the root cause of social inequality. In this context, they see women as the first historically oppressed group and the most common form of oppression in every society. However, radical feminists have reduced the root cause of patriarchy to biological arguments (Messerschmidt, 2018, p. 2). Connell (1985) pointed out that men's sexual domination over women, in the areas of division of labor, mothering, violence, rape and pornography (p. 264), reduces the focus of gender relations to biological dimension, in other words "male power" in terms of authority, thought, violence and culture (p. 266).

Regarding gender relations reduced to the biological dimension, Simone de Beauvoir (1956) in *The Second Sex* described her intellectual views on the supremacy of men over women (p. 18), the biological destiny does not dictate the role that an individual assumes within society; it is the entirety of civilization that shapes this entity, which exists in an ambiguous state between male and eunuch and is commonly referred to as feminine. Taking this into account, women's position in society is determined by social destiny rather than biological destiny because women are embedded in socially unequal patriarchal relations and are always assumed to be 'second' (p. 273).

Reducing the term patriarchy to biological sex in feminist literature has led to “the shift from patriarchy to gender.” Categorizing women and men based on a singular understanding of their identities disregards the diversity such as race, age, sexuality, and nationality, and reinforces the binary opposition between men and women. In other words, focusing solely on patriarchy means confining women and men into a single category. Consequently, it becomes challenging to understand unequal power dynamics in the relationships between women and men and also relationships among men (Messerschmidt, 2018, pp. 13-14). Therefore, it is necessary to eliminate the assumption of inherent natural differences between sexes-genders in order to comprehend unequal power relations (Connell, 1985, p. 268). By this way, gender can be approached as a social structure.

When gender is approached as a social structure, unequal power relations manifest themselves in the relationships between women and men, involving processes of domination and subordination (Connell, 1987, p. 95). For Mitchell, there are four infrastructures within the gender structure to facilitate a clearer understanding of men's subjugation of women through various forms of control. These infrastructures are production, reproduction, socialization, and sexualization (1966, p. 17). However, Raewyn Connell (1987) argues that this fourfold structure model actually represents practice rather than structure. According to her, the infrastructures of gender intertwine to form a complex pattern of desire, including the unequal division of labor between women and men, the production of heterosexual control through coercion, and production of trust in emotional relationships (pp. 96-97).

In short, these patterns, which reveal themselves in power relations, can explain the superiority achieved through oppression in social relations with a structure (Connell, 1987, p. 107). Considering this, gender in power relations manifests itself as a structure and serves the sustainability of hegemonic projects. For instance, misrepresentations of subordinated women and men in the media and discourses constitute a form of violence related to cultural ideology. Speaking about the relationship of this cultural ideology with authority Connell states that by defining authority as legitimate power, “the main axis of the power structure of gender is the general connection of authority with masculinity” (1987, p. 109) which is manifested in every social power relations.

Kimmel defines masculinity as the societal roles, actions, and interpretations assigned to men within a particular society at a specific point in time (2004, p. 503). However, masculinity can not be seen as a fixed entity embedded in individuals' personality traits or bodies. Rather, masculinities are practical constructions realized in social action and therefore can change in line with gender relations in different social settings (Connell&Messercshmidt, 2005, p. 836). Thus, the reflection of masculine ideology in society shows the pluralistic character of social power. For example, masculine ideology is often identified with violence. This may be because the instruments of violence, such as weapons, are exclusively under male control or hands (Connell, 1987, p. 107), as seen in wars. But this is a symbolic illusion when different types of masculinity are considered. This is because there is no one unique type of masculinity and a perspective associated with violence ignores other types of masculinity. This both reinforces and disregards types of masculinities that do not align with the culturally idealized norms of masculinity. Examples include the idealized masculinity associated with firefighters and police officers after the 9/11 attacks and the idealized masculinity attributed to those who went to war to defend the in the US invasion of Afghanistan.

Another reflection of masculine ideology in society is related to the subordination of women. As mentioned above, women are seen as the “second sex” (Beauvior, 1956) in politics, at the level of high-level bureaucracy, in daily life and in business life is a reflection of biological sex on socially constructed gender roles. In sum, the pluralistic character of social power subordinating those who do not conform to its ideals implicitly reveals the male-dominated ideology. This serves hegemonic projects through maintaining the culturally constructed gender order as mentioned above. In short, when gender is considered as a structure, it is a structure that is constructed, embedded in society, and maintained in order to sustain the hegemonic power.

The gender order is a manifestation of implicit relationship between the state and society in relation to an ideology associated with the authority of an ideal form of masculinity, namely 'hegemonic masculinity', which Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) conceptualize as a “cultural ideal” (p. 842). The concept of hegemonic masculinity first

emerged to highlight social injustices in Australian high school (Kessler et al., 1982), and it was later conceptualized by Connell focusing on different types of masculinity (1985;1987;1995;1998;2000;2002). Subsequently, the concept of hegemonic masculinity was systematized in order to address the lack of literature on the “male sex role” of different types of masculinity. This chapter will continue with the acceptance of the structural reality that femininity and subordinated types of masculinity are subjected to global domination of the idealized form of masculinity (Carrigan, Connell & Lee, 1985, p. 590). Because this acceptance is the starting point of the concept that foregrounds the ideal form of masculinity. According to Connell, hegemonic masculinity is always shaped in connection with diverse subordinate forms of masculinity and also in connection with women. The interaction among various manifestations of masculinity is a crucial component of how a patriarchal societal structure operates (1987, p. 183).

Looking at the historical background of the concept of hegemonic masculinity, Connell is inspired by Gramsci. As mentioned above, Gramsci, while analyzing the working class in Italy, explains the achievement of domination in the organization of political, cultural and private life processes with the concept of hegemony. In this regard, hegemonic masculinity is a form of supremacy that is manifested through the intertwining of political, cultural and private life processes at the level of social relations. Hegemonic masculinity should not be understood simply as the superiority of a particular group of men over other groups through violence, pressure or coercion (Connell, 1987, p. 184). Rather, it is “the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women” (Connell, 1995, p. 77).

The dominance established through hegemonic masculinity is not aimed at annihilating the subjugated groups but rather at subordinating them. This is because superiority cannot be claimed over realities that are socially erased. The concept being discussed here is not absolute cultural superiority but rather a "state of play" (Connell, 1987, p. 185). In this game that is highly public in a society where mass communication prevails, the way where hegemonic masculinity manifests in the subjects of powerful men becomes

significant. In other words, what sustains power and directs society towards supporting power is how hegemonic masculinity is achieved (Connell, 1987, p. 184).

Looking at the Gramscian concept of hegemony, it becomes evident that hegemony is not solely achieved through force but also requires a significant degree of consent (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 832). When viewed as a gendered structure, hegemony is associated with cultural dominance throughout society and presents a gender-based hierarchy of dominance and subordination, including particular groups of men and the relegation of women to a secondary position (Connell, 2006, p. 78). The fact that the majority of men benefit from women being marginalized and that hegemonic masculinity manifests as cultural superiority requires a nuanced understanding (Connell, 1987, p. 185). Indeed, the subordination enforced by hegemonic masculinity can be examined in two ways when considering social and power relations.

The first aspect of subordination, For Connell (1987), is the manifestation of "emphasized femininity" which refers to women conforming to ways of life shaped by men's interests and desires at both micro and macro levels. In other words, it is the submission of women to gendered norms and practices that serve the interests and desires of men. There is a synergy between hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity, as they work together to institutionalize practices that establish men's superiority over women. This synergy is achieved through the successful embodiment of a shared strategy in the relationship between hegemonic masculinity and women (Connell, 1987, pp. 185-186). This embodiment occurs through the standardization of feminine attractiveness, as implied by the fashion industry, positioning women as objects of heterosexual desire (Connell, 1987, p. 113). The dominance structure that constructs femininity is nothing but the global dominance of heterosexual men. The process revolves around a tendency for polarization between submission and resistance (Connell, 1987, p. 187).

At the core of maintaining 'emphasized femininity' lies a practice that prevents the cultural expression of other forms of femininity (p. 188). When feminist describes women's experiences as "hidden from history," as Rowbotham puts it, it is partly in response to this reality. Traditional history writing has concealed the experiences of marginalized women,

including "spinsters, lesbians, unionists, prostitutes, madwomen, rebels and maiden aunts, manual workers, midwives, and witches" (Connell, 1987, p. 188). Hegemonic masculinity, as a structure, not only embodies the ideal type but also reveals all other forms of inequality and establishes a hierarchical order. This hierarchy grants privileges to white and upper-class women, as well as exerting privilege over other women and men who do not align with the ideal type. Thus, the dominant and socially accepted form of masculinity takes on whiteness and inclusive power, effectively eradicating a hegemonic femininity type (Shin, 2020, p. 1).

This study argues that in the discourses produced in the US invasion of Afghanistan, Afghan women are subjected to hegemonic masculinity as a site of emphasized femininity. This study also asserts that in the US's claim to liberate and modernize Afghan women, the model of the Western woman, which it takes as an example of emphasized femininity, is subject to hegemonic masculinity.

The second aspect of subordination is the manifestation of masculinities that do not align with the "tough, dominant, combative" image that many patriarchal cultures try to sell. These forms of masculinity are relegated to a secondary position in the gender-based hierarchy. It should be emphasized that this image is not designed to be followed. For example, representations of masculinity in popular culture, such as John Wayne, Stallone, and Rambo, are reflections of the patriarchal core (Connell, 1987, p. 110). At this point, subordinated women and masculinities in power relations reinforce class and racial divisions. Connell in her book *Masculinities* expresses that the intersectionality of gender, class and race generates different types of masculinities (2005, p. 76). These types of masculinities, in turn, form a hierarchy among themselves.

The top-down hierarchy of masculinities is composed of five elements. The masculinity type at the highest level of the hierarchy is hegemonic masculinity. There is no consensus on the ranking of the other four types of masculinity. However, in this study, regarding their relationship with hegemonic masculinity, the other masculinity types are listed as complicit masculinity, subordinated masculinity, marginalized masculinity and protest masculinity respectively. In this study, we regard as US subordinated and marginalized el-Qaeda and Taliban members to claim its hegemonic masculinity and

Western superiority. Therefore, we will now examine how the hierarchy among masculinities is constructed.

1.*Hegemonic masculinity* is at the highest level of the hierarchy and is defined as "the most honored way of being man, it required all other men to position themselves in relation to it, and it ideologically legitimate the global subordination of women to men" (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 832). Connell conceptualized the other four layers of the hierarchy in terms of non-hegemonic masculinities.

2.*Complicit masculinity* also known as conservative masculinity, is situated in the second layer of the hierarchy. Complicit masculinities are placed directly below hegemonic masculinity in the hierarchy in terms of helping the claim of hegemonic masculinity as they are practically involved in maintaining the inequality of gender relations (Messerschmidt, 2018, p. 29). In other words, they are "complicit in the collective project but not its shock troops" (Connell, 1987, p. 110). In essence, complicit men serve the hegemonic projects by benefiting from the overall subordination of women, a concept referred to as the "patriarchal dividend" but they do not fully embody hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2005, p. 79).

3.*Subordinated masculinity* is located in the third layer of the hierarchy. Subordinated masculinities are constructed as lower or deviant compared to hegemonic masculinity, such as feminine men (Messerschmidt, 2018, p. 29; Connell, 1987, p. 110). In European and American societies, men who do not conform to the culturally idealized form of masculinity are subordinated and subjected to hegemonic masculinity. This goes beyond the cultural stigma attached to such men; it reflects a material reality where they not only face political and cultural exclusion but also experience various forms of discrimination, including legal violence, street violence, and economic discrimination. This discrimination is particularly pronounced among individuals of different races or sexual orientations (Connell, 2005, p. 78).

4.*Marginalized masculinity* is located in the fourth layer of the hierarchy. While hegemony, subordination, and complicity are components of the gender hierarchy, the intersection of gender with other systems such as class and race fosters more robust links among different expressions of masculinity. In this context, "race relations may also become

an integral part of the dynamic between masculinities." In other words, within masculinity relations, black masculinities assume symbolic roles in the construction of white supremacist masculinities. For example, the attributed endurance of black athletes, the fantasies associated with black rapists, and the changing position of black labor in American capitalism actually serve the production of white masculinities through institutional racism. This, to some extent, signifies a construction of masculinity by white masculinities that is defined by institutional oppression, led to the construction of black masculinities within the context of white masculinities (Connell, 2005, p. 80; 1987, p. 85).

5. *Protest masculinity* is located in the fifth and final layer of the hierarchy. It represents compensatory hypermasculinities that develop in reaction to social conditions characterized by economic and political powerlessness (Messerschmidt, 2018, p. 29).

In this context, the last four layers of the hierarchy are subordinated to hegemonic masculinity in various ways, reflecting intertwined relationships. As gender relations are assumed to be historical, gender hierarchies can change and it means that types of masculinity can vary under specific conditions, in specific spaces, and at specific times. They can eliminate each other or engage in struggles for hegemony (Messerschmidt, 2018, p. 29). In conclusion, when Gramsci's outlook intersects with Connell's conceptualization, Başkan and Alkan arrive at the understanding that "male controlling behavior at the macro level is hegemonic masculinity." This means that men's controlling behaviors, within the boundaries set by the social context, continuously reproduce masculinity to the extent permitted by power and dominance relationships in various social settings (2023, p. 11) This research examines how the social action options, preferences, subjectivities, and perceptions of Afghan women are shaped by the cultural, military, and political apparatuses of male controlling behaviors, such as media representations and discourses. Specifically, it explores how the ontologies of Afghan women were constructed during the US invasion of Afghanistan, and highlighting how hegemonic masculinity emerges as a cultural ideal at macro and micro levels through male coercive attitudes.

According to Gramsci (1971), every individual is considered a potential philosopher in society, aside from their professional work life. They can contribute to the existence of

new ways of thinking, consciously choose certain moral behaviors, and participate in the maintenance, and transformation of the worldviews in society. However, Gramsci argues that not every individual can fulfill this role in society due to embedded structural hegemonic barriers in different social contexts. Therefore, the gendered hegemonic nature of controlling behavior has subjected Afghan women and men to isolation within the notion of “liberation.” In this context, the invasion of Afghanistan serves as a significant case of a hegemonic project in terms of the establishment of the US's hegemonic masculinity to the achievement of the cultural hegemony.

To put it clearly, the application of hegemonic masculinity to this research is related to the strategy in which the US subordinated the Afghan people during the invasion of Afghanistan. Because the US subordinated Afghan women as the subject of the Taliban's oppressive rule and tried to distort the knowledge about Afghan women by establishing a link between freedom and the emphasized femininity. In addition, they evilized Taliban and al-Qaeda members in discourses and associated them with subordinated masculinities and marginalized masculinities, which are types of non-hegemonic masculinities. This research argues that the US, in its invasion of Afghanistan, established and consolidated its own cultural hegemony by manifesting its hegemonic masculinity through discourse within the gendered structure.

CHAPTER 3: ANALYTICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: A SELECTIVE REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter will provide a review of literature focusing on hegemony and masculinity-based studies within the context of US hegemony. The initial section of the chapter will center on research concerning the US's global role in the “War on Terror,” where key concepts such as empire, hegemony, unipolarity, and supremacy will be delineated. Subsequently, the second part of this chapter will delve into how masculine behaviors and actions becomes apparent during the US invasion of Afghanistan. In this study, acknowledging the US's role in global politics as hegemony, we assert that cultural hegemony gains legitimacy through discursive hegemony, further reinforced by the hegemonic masculinity, as exemplified in the US invasion of Afghanistan.

3.1. Concept of Hegemony

In the hegemony-based literature, there are studies which delve into conventional dimension of hegemony. While some focus on the material aspect of hegemony on the basis of issues like military capability, markets and capitals, control of raw materials (Waltz, 1979; Keohane, 1984; Kindleberger, 1973; Gilpin, 1981:1987; Krasner 1976; Ikenberry and Kupchan, 1990; Mershaimer, 2001; Morgenthau, 1948; Doyle, 1986; Mowle&Sacko, 2007, Hardt&Negri, 2000). Others focus on more cultural perspective of hegemony (Gramsci, 1971; Cox, 1981:1987, Nye, 2003; Russett, 1985:2011). On the other hand, there are researchers who are affected by post-structuralism. They analyze hegemony with the radicalist perspective by focusing on the discursive dimension (Foucault 1972; Laclau and Mouffe, 1985; Laclau, 2000). Furthermore, some authors focus on gendered dimension of hegemony by analyzing on multiple types of masculinities (Connell, 1995; Kimmel 1996: 2005; Jeffords, 1989; Enloe, 1983:1990: 2000; Hooper, 2001, Tickner, 2001).

In the existing literature about the hegemony, there is no agreed-upon definition for the concept of hegemony and scholars diverge on it. All approaches for hegemony with various connotations such as unipolarity, empire, and primacy effects and contributes to world politics differently. Despite the diversity of definitions, most of the studies on the hegemony are usually focus on authority, domination and leadership (Lester, 2000, pp. 1-51)

and capacity of coercion on the behaviour of international structure and its units (Antoniades, 2008, p. 3). In Susan Strange's definition, hegemony do not form a unified body of uniform or coherent concepts. Instead, "they are a bundle of concepts," and hegemony centers on the hegemon, leadership, the dominant state and the stability of the system (1987, p. 554).

Some scholars consider hegemony as overwhelming or preponderant power (Schmidt, 2018, pp. 2-4), and specially supremacy of economic and military capabilities (Ikenberry&Kupchan, 1990, p. 49). For Keohane, hegemony is preponderance of material resources (1984, p. 32). In the same line, Clark considers hegemony is concentration of power in the one actor in terms of material resources, capabilities and international distribution of power (2011, p. 18). Besides these, Lentler defines hegemony as exercising leadership that involves domination over others (2006, pp. 107-8). Cox attributes this dominance to the states (1983, p. 264). Vital (2006) considers hegemony as a hierachical order among contending great powers (p. 26).

However, contemporary expression of hegemony lies at a point that is stiffer than benign leadership but literally lighter than coercion (Norrlof, 2015; Russet, 2011, p. 1). Hegemony in international relations means the existence of the only actor who has the power to influence the international system in coercive and non-coercive ways, as exemplified by the presence of Great Britain in the 19th century, and the United States in the 20th and 21th centuries (Norrloff, 2015). In other words, as a central concept in international relations, hegemony is interested in how dominance effect the world politics (Ashcroft et al. 2007, p. 106). This will be followed by a review of the approaches in the literature on the US invasion of Afghanistan. At this juncture, it would be appropriate to differentiate between hegemony, unipolarity, and empire when constructing a framework to analyze the role of the US in the world. Agnew made this separation simple. For him, if hard power operated by military coercion strongly, that is, empire; if it operated weakly, that is neo-empire on the other hand if soft power operated by cultural values strongly, that is hegemony; if it operated weakly, that is, leadership (2005, p. 21). So far, we have looked at how hegemony has been analyzed in the literature. We will now analyze briefly some of the studies about hegemony in the context of US invasion of Afghanistan.

3.2. The Literature on Hegemony-Based Studies about the U.S. Invasion of Afghanistan

John Agnew (2005), in *Hegemony: The New Shape of Global Power*, analyses the difference between empire and hegemony in the context of US role in the world. For him, the global role of the US depends on the current situation. Nonetheless, Agnew recognizes that the historical connection between the US and the rest of the world is characterized as hegemony, and he defines hegemony as the process of persuading, coaxing, and compelling others to align their interests with yours and adopt your desires. In other words, hegemony is formed in a triangle of coercion, consent and active cooperation shaped by common rules, institutions and values supported by superior economic, military and cultural power. In contrast, Agnew associates empire with "a high degree of territorial organization" and "centralized power" (p.viii) as a political structure that implies absolute power and sovereignty (pp. 20- 21). Although America is likened to empire, it does not overlap with empire due to the lack of a territorial organization. In this context, he refers to the IMF, WTO and WB as hegemonic projects (p. 1-2).

According to Agnew, the 9/11 attacks are important events that demonstrates the importance of globalization, both in their nature and in the response to the attacks (p. 224). Although 9/11 was an attack on the geographical inviolability of the US, the US claimed that the attack was against the world economy, universal values and the US role as a global policeman, and the US sought to maintain its hegemony by building global support for the response to the attack. Although the militaristic, aggressive and asymmetrical nature of the US invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq is associated with imperialist tendencies, Agnew calls the US global role hegemony due to the lack of a territorial reference (pp. 17-22). In this context, emphasizing that unknown things and unknown enemies existed and will exist regardless of the response to the attack (p. 224), the US created a triangle of pressure, consent and cooperation within the framework of common rules, institutions and values.

In their book *Empire*, Hardt and Negri (2000), describe the empire not as a historical regime that emerged as a result of conquest, but as an order that makes the current situation eternal by influencing history. In fact, they attributed the concept of empire, which is

constantly washed with blood, beyond ruling a piece of land and a group, to a universal permanent peacefulness (pp. 20-21) In this context, they mention that the factor that will make the hegemon's dominance on the world surface permanent as the determinant of the empire's power is military capacity, and they attribute the claims of the United States to being the only superior power of the period to its increasing military power. Mershaimer states that since the United States entered the arena as part of the international system, it has transformed into a regional hegemon that separates itself from the rest of the world by oceans, creating a continental empire (2001, pp. 140-141). On the other hand, Ariboğan states that it is impossible for hegemony to remain regional due to the globalization of economic relations as she sees hegemons as products of global orders and orders as products of empires. (2019, p. 302).

In *Liberal Leviathan* (2011), Ikenberry argues that international rules and institutions are necessary to sustain a liberal economy-based international order (pp. 70-72). The state that leads this international order is called the hegemon. The US emerged as the hegemonic organizer of the international order after the Second World War, committed to stability, an open market and security (p. 3) With the end of the Cold War, the US-led liberal international order has moved towards globalization and unipolarization. Increasing security threats have called this liberal order into question. In this regard, after 9/11, the US was not satisfied with being the guardian of the old world order (p. 8). According to Ikenberry, the hegemonic role of the US in the 21st century is less liberal and more imperial in character (p. 254) The Bush administration's fight against terror and the fact that other states support the US is the most significant factor identifying the structure of global relations. The Bush administration expects states to choose whether to side with America or not and portrays the fight against terrorism as a struggle between civilization and chaos. At this point, the US redefined its role in a world of new threats by presenting itself as a global security provider and a threat detector, redefining Bush's grand strategy in terms of coherence, capability and legitimacy (pp. 263-269).

Mowle and Sacko (2007) in *The Unipolar World: An Unbalanced Future*, put forward the idea that today distribution of power in the system is unipolar. They distinguish between

hegemony and unipolarity with several supportive argument from the perspective of realism. The authors, who define unipolarity as a power relationship and hegemony as an authority relationship, have exemplified their hypotheses with the US. They portrayed the United States as in a position to exert more power than any state would in any case. The authors see the unipolar world as a more stable world and argue that there are fewer international disputes in the periods when unipolar power prevails in the world.

According to Mowle and Sacko, the concept of hegemony gives states a leadership role, whereas the only requirement of the unipolar system is the concentration of power in a state. (p.7). In this context, states have the offensive advantage while the tendency to start pre-emptive and preventive wars will occur if the dominant position of unipolar power weakens. They exemplified their hypotheses with the use of military force by the US against Afghanistan and Iraq after September 11 (p.6). Authors states that “Everything did not change at about 9 a.m. New York Time on September 11, 2001, but comfortable assumptions about American vulnerability did” and they focus on the US’ vulnerability. In this regard, the invasion of Afghanistan by the United States, which has caused the restructuring its national security strategy against the remote danger of terrorism and strengthened its unipolar position (p.134). The United States, which became the hyperpower of the world at the end of the cold war, is likened to the Roman Empire by these authors. Rome was not only an empire based on military power, it was a political structure based on a legal framework built on norms and ideologies. At this point, military force was a means to maintain this order (Ando, 2000).

The fact that the United States shows imperial tendencies while using military power to maintain order is seen in the events of 9/11. Referring to Agnew, it can be said that the difference between hegemony and empire does not necessarily entail an explicit commitment on a territory. Although the invasion of Afghanistan has an imperial tendency, the liberation discourse that legitimizes the invasion disrupt this preliminary acceptance.

If we were to examine the US hegemony, the general framework of which is drawn, more closely in *Global Responses to Terrorism: 9/11 Afghanistan and Beyond* (2003) edited by Mary Buckley and Rick Pawn, Barry Buzan. They focus on how the events of 9/11

affected the international relations theories and say that the nature of theories has not changed, but the events of 9/11 have changed our view of theories on hegemony (p. 306). By evaluating the September 11 attacks as a result of unipolarity, Buzan states that the US response to the attacks aimed at increasing its own military capacity in the world, and that Huntington's thesis is confirmed (pp. 301-302).

Distinguishing between globalists and regionalists, Buzan describes the globalist understanding that sees the expansion of the Al-Qaeda network into a transnational space as a victory over the territorialization assumption (Keohane, 2002, p. 33); it is considered as a transition from the Westphalian order, which symbolizes the events of 9/11 in terms of military capacity, to the post-westphalian order in terms of non-territorialized units (Buzan, 2003, p. 303). In contrast, regionalists consider the events of 9/11 in the context of the importance of regional security as a key point of the international order, and the deterritorialized al-Qaeda network as regional structures of security that interact at the global level (Buzan, 2003, pp. 303-305).

In the book chapter *Superpower Response The United States of America*, Robert Singh (2003) also refers to the events of 9/11 as a remnant of America's innocence after 1991. He considers the United States to be in an exceptional position with the capacity to deploy its resources on a global scale. The US, which emerged with the elimination of the Taliban, considers the use of military force to protect its hegemonic power as “neither peer nor prior” and calls this power “mega power”, “hyper power” or “behemoth” (Kennedy, 2022, p. 22). But another point that Singh touched on is that the United States, which achieved a strong economy and military successes between 1991 and 2001, is no stranger to terrorism, and Bin Laden's declaration of war on the United States in 1998 is actually a clear and immediate security danger (Singh, 2003, pp. 52-65).

Christopher Coker (2003), on the other hand, prefers to call the 9/11 attack the “ignominy of history” rather than calling it the turning point, but refers to these attacks as “war without warriors.” In this context, he said that the extent of violence will have symbolic meanings for the innocent and the guilty. The 9/11 attacks, which gave prestige, status and recognition to the criminals, have a meaning of anxiety and humiliation for the innocent (pp.

284-288). From the Hassner point of view, the response to the 9/11 attacks actually deciphered a dialectic between the bourgeoisie and the barbarians (2000, p. 67).

Carla Norrlof (2010) in *America's Global Advantage US Hegemony and International Cooperation* pointed out that the US is a benevolent hegemon in the international system in terms of trade, monetary relations and security issues. Norrlof's main point is that other states gain more from this special position of the United States. In order for a state to be considered benevolent, its own benefit must be less than that of other states. Benevolence means serving the interests of others for the continuation of one's own interests in certain situations. On the other hand, coercive hegemon is a type of hegemony based on forceful means and accelerating international cooperation (p. 14).

Charles-Philippe David and David Grondin (2006) argue that the US foreign policy of the Bush era is a regional revolutionary change and the role of the US in the world is informal empire in the context of globalization within the dichotomy of empire and hegemony. For example, the role of the United States is called the informal empire in Latin America, while in the Philippines it is called the formal empire (p.6). According to Grondin, the role of the United States, which still insists on expressing its own role as anti-imperial and anti-colonial, lies somewhere between Decency and illegality, legitimacy and rebellion, rhetoric and written texts, and expresses the 'empire of liberty' as a national identity.

David and Grondin considered the 9/11 period as a period when the US revived the national security discourse based on "manifest destiny," and the global war on terror as a fantasy of the empire of security. Another point mentioned in the book is that the choosing the word of war in the war on terror discourse is not a coincidence, but it was predicted that the word war was chosen to serve the above-mentioned purpose, namely major strategic goals. The response to the 9/11 attacks, which was an attack not against a deployed US force, but against the symbols of US power, is proof of the noble heroism and manliness of American fighters.

Ian Clark in *Hegemony in International Society* (2011) states that the United States unilateralism after 9/11 has eroded faith in the United States as a leading state's benevolence and reliability. The aforementioned unilateralism has left the United States facing a legality

problem, as it was seen in the declaration of the War of Terror. Therefore, 2001 is seen as the beginning of a new hegemony, and some saw it as the collapse of hegemony. But the real problem is the crises of legitimacy of the US.

John Edwards (2004), in his article *After the Fall*, points out that September 11 represents a point of global division and the discourses that produced related to attacks and the the War on Terror aimed at the garnering global consent in order to legitimize US actions. Because 9/11 attacks were seen against the United States and against democracy and world freedom. According to Edwards, claiming that terrorists attack the world by targeting the United States implies that America represents the world, or at least the ideal to which the rest of the world aspires (p.157). In this context, with the words of Norrlof, it is reasonable that the response to the attack against a benevolent hegemon should be legitimized in the eyes of other states and people.

Noam Chomsky (2003), in his book *Hegemony or Survival: America's Quest for Global Dominance*, the war in Afghanistan is viewed from a geopolitical dimension by the United States. He argues that the US invaded Afghanistan as part of a grand game to control the resources of Central Asia and expand its Persian Gulf encirclement (p. 108). Chomsky argues that just war theory has been reasserted in the regard of the age of humanitarian intervention and international terrorism.

In the light of the course of the research, finally, if it is necessary to define a hegemony from Lordon's perspective (2014), that domination or hegemony is an asymmetric relationship based on the satisfaction of one person's desire through another or it is the effect that gives some people the ability to allocate and dispose of some opportunities to themselves (2014, pp. 138-140). With reference to Bourdieu, Lordon sees soft domination (domination established by consent) as a means of joyful feelings, as well as meticulously selected minor objects of desire as a source of desire. For example, he considers the satisfaction of the wage labourer's vital interests as a small object of desire and evaluates this situation in the context of the combination of the master-desire relationship and individual desire. The individual desire is reflected as the service of the person to himself, not to his master (p. 140).

In the context of the US invasion of Afghanistan, we observe clear expressions of hegemonic power through the master-desire relationship, which is shaped by a Western desire of domination. As previously discussed, Gramsci distinguishes between two dimensions of hegemony: coercion and consent. Coercion is exerted by the political society, particularly through the state's apparatus, which includes the use of force and violence. Consent, on the other hand, is established within civil society by persuading others to endorse and legitimize the state's actions. In the case of the US invasion of Afghanistan, we witness a synthesis of both coercion and consent. The invasion itself can be seen as a coercive action undertaken by the state, while the discourses surrounding the invasion aim to persuade both domestic and international communities. This is why the concept of hegemony, as understood in the Gramscian sense, is highly appropriate to this study.

3.3. The Literature on Masculinity-Based Studies about the U.S. Invasion of Afghanistan

Michel Kimmel (2006), has done many studies on the development of masculinity and masculinity in the U.S. According to her, masculinity is fueled more by the desire for superiority than by the fear of others controls, and that this is a homosocial element. At this point, he stated that when masculinity is threatened, it is a phenomenon that people work to revive it. If the 9/11 attacks were perceived as a crisis point as a threat to America's masculinity, the US invasion of Afghanistan in response to these terrorist attacks has been one of the tools to remasculate the country.

Susan Jeffords (1989) also supports Kimmel, and she argues that aggression and virtue is the main component of US hegemonic masculinity. For her, soldiers returning from Vietnam should be referred to not as heroes, but as baby killers, and therefore the hegemonic masculinity of the United States has been emasculated for many years. At this point, Michelle E. Bellini (2010) in her thesis titled *Wanted: Dead or Alive* pointed out that the US became feminized with the 9/11 attack and in this context declared a war against terrorism in order to reassert its masculinity. Accordingly, 9/11 opened a space for Americans to assert hegemonic masculinity. According to Bellini, this was an opportunity for American men to assert their masculinity on the battlefield. G.W. Bush, on the other hand, used sexist language

to legitimize the response to the attacks, that is, the military intervention. In this context, Bellini in his thesis sought hegemonic masculinity in the masculine personality and discourses of G.W. Bush.

Lazar and Lazar argue that the rhetoric of liberation and rescue should be interpreted as collateral benefits in military self-defense. For them, liberation as a rhetoric is considered as political pragmatism for the US's own interests in the context of 9/11 and the War on Terror (2007, p. 61). Nilep and Hodges, in their book *Discourse, war and terrorism*, (2007) claim that they focus on the removal of the burqa as a sign of the liberation offered by the US. In this context, they focused on Bush's use of sexist language to manifest his own perceptions of freedom to the world (pp. 93-99).

Lila-Abu-Lughod (2002), in her article *Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving?* criticizes the US invasion of Afghanistan under the pretext of saving Afghan women. In this context, Abu-Lughod critically analyzed the desire to provide Afghan women with the freedom that women in the West are supposed to enjoy. This is because it ignores the diversity of Afghan women. According to her, freedom should not be imposed on a person by their history or civilization (p. 787). In this context, the invasion of Afghanistan, focusing on the freedom of women and ignoring differences, should be evaluated within a gendered and orientalist dynamics.

In his book *Manliness*, Harvey C. Mansfield (2006) argues that masculinity is a phenomenon that is emphasized in times of war. Asserting that the 9/11 attacks reminded Americans that sometimes fighting may be necessary (p. 12), Mansfield makes a distinction between rationality and irrationality by classifying 9/11 rescuers as "good manly rescuers" and 9/11 attackers as "badly manly attackers" (p. X).

Tickner (2001), in *Gendering World Politics*, examines how Third World women are associated with Western cultural imperialism. Tickner focuses on the construction of knowledge and the reclaiming of identities of Third World women, examining race and class relations in "women, truth and knowledge" (p. 42). According to her, the subordination of women through feminist commitments leads to both physical and structural violence (p. 48). This results in women and children being relegated to a "position of weakness" and the

preservation of hegemonic masculinity (p. 55). In the context of the US invasion of Afghanistan, she argues that the male images of war make women "invisible" (p. 57).

Another important contribution to masculinity-based studies is Linda Ahall's *Sexing War/Policing Gender* published in 2015. According to her, the US invasion of Afghanistan has significantly affected the ways in which women are involved in war. Ahall argues that even when women are involved as combatants, they are often over-personalized for stepping outside of gender roles and are often met with an inappropriate attribution of femininity. In particular, the impact of war on motherhood and women's roles has created a tendency to limit women's role in the production of violence and to represent them more as "sacrificial and nurturing mothers." This coincides with the portrayal of Afghan women as "victims" and the role of the US as the "supreme protector" in the legitimization of the war in the context of the US invasion of Afghanistan. Linda Ahall's perspective aims to clarify not only the physical dimension of the US occupation of Afghanistan, but also its effects on gender and maternal roles. In this context, Ahall's work can be considered as an important resource for understanding how the war reshaped women and the concept of motherhood and how gender roles were reflected in the invasion.

Laura Sjoberg and Sandra Via (2010), in their edited book *Gender, War, and Militarism* focus on feminism and conduct a power relations analysis. They delve into the hierarchies of masculinity within military organizations and examine the ways in which women become involved in warfare (p. Xii). Sandra Via, in the context of gender, militarism and globalization, emphasizes that private military and security companies (PMSCs) operate within the domain of hegemonic masculinity. In other words, she associates gendered militarism with hegemonic masculinity, highlighting how masculine norms become dominant within specific institutions and thereby exert social control. This, in turn, helps maintain a patriarchal social and political order (p. 43).

Christine Delphy (2015), in her book *Separate and Dominate: Feminism and Racism After the War on Terror* focuses on issues such as increased Islamophobia, racism, and sexism following the September 11 attacks. In this context, Delphy approaches the concept of the 'Other' as an invention of Western tradition and argues that groups attributed with

'otherness' are stigmatized (p. 17). Additionally, Delphy questions whether the US invasion of Afghanistan was genuinely aimed at promoting women's rights and suggests that the sudden emergence of feminist concerns was a tool to legitimize the war (pp. 93-94).

In this chapter, we examined hegemony-based studies and masculinity-based studies focusing on the US invasion of Afghanistan. As a result, we concluded that Afghan women were used as a tool to legitimize the occupation and the US's global role to the world public opinion. In this study, both the victimization and emancipation of Afghan women will be discussed as strategic steps that feed the cultural hegemony of the US and the elements of masculinity in the depictions of Afghan women in the discourses produced by the the then President G.W. Bush and his administration will be investigated. Therefore, the next section will introduce discourse analysis as the research method chosen to better understand how discourse shapes people's beliefs, values, ideas and especially their minds and how discourses are manipulated in international relations to serve hegemonic desires.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

In this chapter of the study, we turn our focus to discourse and discourse analysis in order to understand how hegemonic discourses are constructed through consent. This chapter aims to explain the methodology used in this research and to demonstrate how government discourses can influence the political sphere and in what manner. This aim can be achieved with the guide of Foucault's approach to discourse. The research question of this study: how and why was hegemonic masculinity manifested through hegemonic discourse and served the cultural hegemony of the US in the invasion of Afghanistan?

This question problematizes the synthesis of both coercion and consent in the establishment of cultural hegemony of the United States in the invasion of Afghanistan (Gramsci, 1971, p. 12). Additionally, this question leads us to examine the main reasons behind the "liberation" discourse that the United States used as a legitimization tool in its invasion of Afghanistan. In this context, the "liberation discourse" needs to be deeply analyzed as a move to persuade the world in order to legitimize the invasion. In this study, we focus on the notion of 'hegemonic masculinity' as the site that feeds the cultural hegemony of the US in the invasion of Afghanistan, which we categorize as the hegemonic project. The concept of hegemonic masculinity is manifested in both war of maneuver as military confrontation and the war of position as long-term cultural and ideological struggle in the invasion of Afghanistan (Gramsci, 1971, p. 238) In order to understand how hegemonic masculinity is constructed by persuading the domestic and international community, it is necessary to look at discourse and the production of discourse. Before discussing discourse, the qualitative data of the study will be introduced in the next section.

4.1. Qualitative Data of the Research

In this research, Foucault's approach to discourse has been conducted for the purpose of examining the discourses and their impact in the invasion. It seeks to examine power and knowledge relations within discourse and how power produces or constructs knowledge (Foucault, 1969, 1971; 1978; 1980). Discursively, portraying the agential subjectivity of Afghan women as a victim who needs to be liberated from the misogynistic oppression of

Taliban (Partis-Jennings, 2019, p. 11), demonstrates that the triangle of how hegemonic masculinity manifested as complex and multifaceted, based on the assumption that power and knowledge are discursively constructed and they both intertwined.

This study is a qualitative research that examines the official level discourses of the G.W. Bush administration and their reaction to the September 11 attacks. In total, 30 official-level discourses were analyzed. Starting from the George W. Bush's *Address to the Nation on September 11 Attacks* on September 11, 2001, to the *State of the Union Address to the 108th Congress* on January 28, 2003 will also be analyzed. The reason why the scope of the discourses remained between the given dates is that after January 28, 2003, the focus of the discourses shifted to Iraq. Furthermore, in order to understand the reactions of the senators and representatives, *Proceedings and Debates of the 107th Congress* held in 2001 will also be discussed. Between September 11, 2001 and October 31, 2001, 10 hearings of the 107th Congress will be analyzed. The research provides a multidimensional analysis to understand the official policies of the US and the attitudes of political leaders during this critical period. In this context, it should be noted that the study was conducted with a qualitative approach and was based on critical discourse analysis. However, in this study, Foucault's discourse approach, which argues that meaning should be conceptualized through interactional settings rather than reducing discourse to meaning (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008, p. 115), has been chosen as the method of the study. Before discussing about Foucault's approach on discourse, critical discourse analysis will be examined in the following sections.

4.2. Research Method: Discourse Analysis

In the first part of this chapter, the official level discourses of President George W. Bush and the discourses and reactions of senators and representatives in the *107th Congress* in 2001 were introduced as data for the study. The second part of this chapter will explain the research methodology of the study in the context of the concept of discourse and discourse analysis. The purpose of choosing discourse analysis as the research method is to show how discourse constructs consent. Foucault's approach to discourse is the research method chosen for this study. Finally, this chapter explains how hegemonic discourse, introduced by Laclau

and Mouffe (1985), is produced in order to legitimize the US invasion of Afghanistan as a hegemonic project.

4.2.1. Discourse

In social sciences, the concept of discourse has been used in different meanings and contexts. While Lupton contends that discourse can be defined as a set of ideas or structured thought patterns identifiable in written and spoken communications, and can also be situated within broader social frameworks (1992, p. 145), and discourse also refers to all aspects of “symbolic interaction” among individuals (Bloor&Bloor, 2007, p. 7). In its broadest sense, discourse encompasses all forms of verbal communication, ranging from ordinary conversation to complex dialogues, where each utterance is intended to influence the other, assuming a speaker and a listener. However, it also includes written texts such as letters, memoirs, and instructional works (Benveniste, 1971, pp. 208-209). But at this point it is significant to remember that "text is a product of discourse", that is, text refers to the actual written and spoken data while discourse encompasses whole process of producing and understanding communication (Bloor & Bloor, 2007, p. 7). In this production process, Foucault believes that discourse articulates meanings. In other words, discourse can sometimes generalize, individualize and sometimes regulate meanings (1972, p. 80).

According to Howarth and Stavrakakis (2000), discourse presumes that the meanings of all objects and actions are historically given by a system of rules (p. 3). In addition, discourse investigates how the discourses that constitute social reality emerge through social practices as non-completely exhaustive system of meaning (p. 4). Discourse analysis refers to the practice of studying wide range of language and non-linguistic data as discursive structures. Non-linguistic data includes "texts" or "writings" from many different sources, for example speeches, memoranda, historical events, interviews, reports, policies, ideas, and institutions (p. 6). In other words, discourse analysis naturally centers on the structure of spoken language, while text analysis centers on the structure of written language (Crystal, 1987, p. 116). At this point, we will focus on critical discourse analysis in the next section to examine how discourse analysis has acquired a critical dimension.

4.2.2. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

What makes discourse analysis critical is not that it is language-based, but that it is a multidisciplinary field that focuses on asymmetries in the production of power (Tenorio, 2011, p. 187). According to Van Dijk, CDA focus on “primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context” (2001, p. 352). For Barker and Galasinski, CDA defines discourse as “socially constitutive” (2001, p. 64), “system of options” and “ideological” (p. 65) in the construction of social relations with power, while defining text as “multifunctional” (p. 67) and “intertextual” (p. 68). In this regard, there is no single version of critical discourse analysis and it is usually connected with the ideas of, Ruth Wodak, Teun van Dijk and Norman Fairclough agree on the idea that “language as a means of social construction: language both shapes and is shaped by society,” which means that CDA is more concerned with how linguistic decisions shape both cultural and social processes (Machin&Mayr, 2012, p. 4)

For example, Fairclough (1989, 1995) proposes a Dialectical-Relations Approach from a Marxist framework in the triangle of language, ideology and power. On the other hand, Teun Van Dijk (1985, 1993, 2015) proposes a Socio-Cognitive Approach characterized by cognition, discourse and society, while Ruth Wodak proposes The Discourse-Historical Approach, which posits that language is used to maintain the domination of power (Tenorio, 2011, p. 190). Rather than delving into the different methods of CDA scholars, this section will provide a general framework in order to comprehend CDA. Tenorio notes that Gramsci's concept of hegemony has influenced many CDA scholars. It characterizes the idea that power can be practiced not only with coercion but also with “the persuasive potential of discourse” (2011, p. 189). In this context, power has been central to the CDA project. Basically, power gives authority and status to those who gain privileged access to education, knowledge and wealth, and it also allows them to coerce, dominate, and control over subordinate groups (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 24). These power relations are discursively constructed and the meaning that power is conveyed through discourse (Machin&Mayr, 2012, p. 4). In this

discursive relationship, the CDA is mainly concerned with two questions. These are as follows:

1. How power relations are practiced in discourse? (Fairclough&Wodak, 1997, p. 272)
2. What types of social power relations exist both explicitly and implicitly in texts? (Dijk, 1993, p. 249).

Dijk defines power as a tool of elites and institutions that leads to social inequality in the political, class, cultural, ethnic and gender areas and placed it at the center of CDA. Dijk also emphasizes on the "role of discourse in the (re)production and challenge of dominance" when analyzing power relations. According to him, in this process of reproduction, discourse-power relations are seen to "jointly reproduce" power and power abuse through a "top-down" relationship. In other words, elites and their discursive strategies serve to maintain social inequality by convincing subjugated groups that dominance is natural or legitimate (1993, pp. 249- 250). According to Dijk, power entails domination, specifically exercised by members of one group over members of other groups. This control is a cognitive power that restricts the free movement of others and influences their minds. In sum, "cognitive power" operates "by persuasion, dissimulation or manipulation, among other strategic ways to change the mind of others in one's own interests" (1993, p. 254).

Dijk states that critical discourse analysis comes into play at this point. According to him, "managing the mind of others" is the function of discourse and text (1993, p. 254). Mind management includes "knowledge, beliefs, understanding, plans, attitudes, ideologies, norms and values" in order to achieve "access to public mind." Dijk conceptualizes this situation as "social cognition." Because it is based on an interaction between the public mind and the power that tries to access it through discourse (1993, p. 257). The information controlled in this way shapes the public mind's interpretation of the world. (1993, p. 258). In other words, knowledge is a hegemonic apparatus used to reach a public in the hands of the power that controls it.

For the successful achievement of this hegemonic apparatus, that is, the construction of knowledge through the conquest of another's mind, it is necessary to look at the term "manufacturing consent" introduced by Chomsky and Herman in 1988. Fairclough (1989) distinguished between the utilization of power through coercion and consent, stating that "ideology is the prime means of manufacturing consent". In this regard, Fairclough shifts the focus to ideology when examining how language is instrumentalized as a means of coercion within power relations (1989, pp. 3-4). According to the original Marxist understanding, ideology is significant mean for the dominant groups in society to exercise power over subaltern groups (Machin&Mayr, 2012, p. 24).

Fairclough (1989) describes the role of language in the instrumentalization of ideology in social relations as "internal" and "dialectical" (p. 23). In this context, he describes language as a "form of social practice" and "part of society" and "social process" and "socially conditioned process" (p. 22). Given this close relationship between language and social life, language is not only a tool for persuasion but also a tool for dominance. Because the social life reproduced through language serves the interests of the dominant society while producing and legitimizing social inequalities and injustices. Thus, discourse not only simply center on social processes and structures, but also contributes to their reproduction (Machin&Mayr, 2012, p. 24).

In this process, ideological power is a discursive manifestation of economic and political power that can project itself as "universal" and "common sense." As mentioned above, in Gramscian model of hegemony, power is exercised and maintained in two ways. These are coercion and consent. The ruling class generally prefers manufacturing consent as much as possible because it is considered less risky and costly (Fairclough, 1989, p. 33). In other words, the dominant groups of society seek to manufacture consent of subordinate groups to willingly embrace and internalize their moral, political and cultural values and institutions. Within this context, discourse produces hegemonic attitudes, opinions and beliefs, which may appear natural and common sense, but are essentially ideological in nature (Machin&Mayr, 2012, p. 24). For Fairclough, "ideology is the key mechanism of rule by consent, and because it is the favored vehicle of ideology, discourse is of considerable social

significance in this connection" (1989, pp. 33-34). In order to unveil this connection, we shift our focus to Foucault, who has made significant contributions to discourse studies and discourse analysis by examining the effects of discourse on social and ideological mechanisms as a tool of power.

4.2.3. Foucault's Approach to Discourse

For Foucault, ideology is a form of power/knowledge, which are used to justify the actions of all groups. The marginal and subordinate group also have ideologies that organize and justify ideas. As Foucault argues that we are all implicated in power relations. The difference between the dominant and subordinate group is not between ideological and non-ideological ideas, but between degrees of power and different basic worldviews (Barker & Galasinski, 2001, p. 66). Foucault asserts that cultures and ideologies possess their own "truths" that may not be objective, yet still appear as true within a particular era or within a specific context (Donno, 2017, p. 5).

According to Foucault, discourse as "practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak" (1972, p. 49) in line with the "regulated ways of practising the possibilities of discourse" (1972, p. 70). In addition, Foucault considers the constructive role of discourse and its effect on desire and institutions, and sees desire as the fundamental component of power, while also arguing that truths emerge in "transparency" (Foucault, 1981, p. 52). In other words, he argues that discourse produces and constructs objects of knowledge as intelligible. While Foucault focuses on the rules and conditions of how statements are put together and organized, he also creates the domain of knowledge/objects by focusing on "particular set of concepts" (Barker & Galasinski, 2001, p. 12). When Foucault speaks "regime of truth" he means "the ensemble of rules according to which the true and the false are separated and specific effects of power attached to the true" (1980, p. 132). The "regime of truth" can be broadly conceived as a truth management strategy. It includes the types of truth it recognizes and accepts; the mechanisms that distinguish true from false statements and how they are evaluated; the techniques and procedures by which the acquisition of truthful knowledge is evaluated; and the status of who is responsible for determining what is considered truthful (Foucault, 1980, p.131) In this context, discursive

practices determined by rules make it almost impossible to think outside them (Perezalonso, 2009, p. 43). According to Foucault, discourse:

is not simply that which manifests (or hides) desire - it is also the object of desire; and since, as historians constantly teaches us, discourse is not simply that which translates struggles or systems of domination, but is the thing for which and by which there is struggle, discourse is the power which is to be seized. (1981, pp. 52-53)

Foucault points out that there is a dialectical relationship between discourse and power and that discourse is both produced by power and embedded in and shaped by power (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, pp. 19-21). For Foucault, “power and knowledge directly imply one another” (2010, p. 20). Traditionally power is thought of as flowing in one direction from top to bottom, but according to Foucault, power circulates. It is not concentrated in a single center, but it operates across all facets of social existence, spanning from personal aspects like family and sexuality to broader domains such as politics, the economy, and the legal system. Moreover, power is not only repressive but also productive, producing knowledge, generating pleasure and producing discourse (Foucault, 1980, p. 119).

Foucault, however, does not deny that language has a systematic and fixed meaning but attributes to it a social dimension (Chouliaraki, 2008, p. 675). And these fixed meanings are not enough to obtain meaning in linguistic formation. Foucault argues that knowledge production occurs through discourse, not limited solely to language but extending beyond it. His focus lies in understanding the mechanisms by which our understanding of "the social, the embodied individual, and shared meanings" has evolved throughout different historical periods (Hall, 1997, pp. 42-43). In other words, for the object of discourse to emerge, for example "say anything" in the different historical conditions, different circumstances for different people to say different discourses, many conditions such as proximity, distance, similarity, transformation are necessary (Foucault, 2002, p. 44). This demonstrates that the “relations of power not relations of meaning” (Foucault, 1980, p. 155).

Foucault treated discourse, not language, as a “system of representation” (Hall, 1997, p. 44). According to him, discourse refers to a set of statements that serve as a means of discussing a subject during a specific historical period and as a method of conveying knowledge. Discourse revolves around the production of knowledge through language. Nonetheless, since all social activities inherently carry meaning and these meanings mold and impact our actions and behaviors. This means that “all practices have a discursive aspect” (Hall, 1992, p. 291). This situation is most accurately characterized by Foucault's *Archeology* approach, as it pertains to subjectivities, identities, and the methods employed to unearth and expose them (Foucault, 2002, p. 138).

Foucault's approach to discourse distinguishes itself from other language-based approaches because it treats discourse at a distinct level of organization. (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008, p. 114). Hook states that this organization is based on "the rules, systems and procedures which constitute, and are constituted by, our will to knowledge" (2001, p. 523). According to Foucault, discourses should be examined in terms of their distribution (Perezalonso, 2009, p. 50).

In *The Order of Discourse*, Foucault states that "in every society the production of discourse is simultaneously controlled, selected, organized and redistributed by a certain number of procedures whose role is to end off its forces and dangers" (1981, p. 52). Foucault mentions "procedures of exclusion" in his work. The first of these is "prohibition." He states that "we do not have the right to say everything and under no circumstances can we talk about anything" (Foucault, 1981, p. 52). Second, the "opposition between reason and madness," where mad is someone whose discourse is not of the same value as others, whose words can even be considered "null," "void" and non-truth. But a wisdom can also be attributed to madness by attributing to it the power to reveal hidden truths (Foucault, 1981, p. 53).

The third is "opposition between true and false," which is non-random, changeable, non-institutionalized and non-violent. But in a varied extent, when we ask what is this "will to truth," this desire for truth that spans many centuries of our history, when we see what kind of distinction there is in the general form of the genre that governs the desire for knowledge, perhaps what is beginning to take shape seems to be a kind of system of

exclusion, a system that is historical, changeable and institutionally restrictive (Foucault, 1981, p. 54).

Foucault argues that meaning is constructed within discourse, in other words, “nothing has any meaning outside of discourse” but he does not deny that objects can have a tangible existence in the real world (Hall, 1997, pp. 44-45). In his later works, Foucault placed greater emphasis on the utilization of knowledge within distinct institutional settings and its role in governing the conduct of individuals. He directed his attention toward the connection between knowledge and power, exploring how this power functions within an institutional framework along with its associated methods and techniques (Hall, 1997, p. 47).

Put it differently, the key point in Foucault's discourse analysis is formed by the rules, procedures and systems that constitute discourse and "will to knowledge" (Hook, 2001, p. 523). In order to more clearly articulate the processes and manifestations of discourse, Foucault attempted to establish an analytical method to uncover the unarticulated effects of ideas, thoughts and ideologies in human interactions (Cataldi, 2004, p. 67). Foucault defined discourse in *Archeology of Knowledge* as "a group of statements in so far as they belong to the same discursive formation" (1972, p. 117). In a different manner, the formation of discourse depends on the conditions under which it emerges and for this reason, discourse is a part of history rather than an ideal. Historical approaches claim generalizations about the past as certain and indisputable "truth" (Cataldi, 2004, p. 58). Rather, what is ascribed reality is a discursive structure, but the regimes of knowledge produced by power determine what is true and what is false (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 13). He explained the archaeological method by reframing all data and research outputs as discourse (Luke, 1999, p. 171)

As an alternative to historical and universal reality, Foucault introduced a *genealogical* viewpoint (Cataldi, 2004, p. 60) Foucault introduces the genealogical method in his books *History of Sexuality* and *Discipline and Punish*. In these works, Foucault focuses on power, knowledge and the body. He argues that this power acts through "justifications and rules" (2010, p. 23). In his view, genealogy approaches events by focusing on their most distinctive traits and “their most acute manifestations.” (Foucault, 1998, p. 381). In his genealogical analysis, Foucault examines the relations of power, truth and knowledge shaped

within discourse as a method of reaching the truth (Anaïs, 2013, p. 127). In this context, genealogy is about the “play of dominations” (Foucault, 1998, p. 376). Put it differently, he reveals discursive and non-discursive practices without attributing superiority over each other (Anaïs, 2013, p. 125). For him, power has a reciprocal relationship with discourse in knowledge production. For this reason, he argues that power is manifested at many different points in society, departing from traditional power theories that focus on the oppressive practice between oppressed and oppressor. They are body of knowledge, techniques and 'scientific' discourses that are constructed and closely linked with the act of the “power to punish” (Foucault, 2010, p. 22).

Foucault's approach to discourse provides us with a methodological framework for examining the official-level discourses in the US invasion of Afghanistan and how power produces the knowledge of the Afghan people in the face of particular circumstances and how it subordinates them. In this context, his works on archeological and genealogical analysis provides a departure point for this study.

4.2.4. Formation of Hegemonic Discourse

Based on Foucault's conceptualization of power/knowledge, we need to focus on the forces that resist the power that produces knowledge. This leads us to the formation of hegemonic discourse. As noted above, Foucault argues that there is no fundamental principle in the totality of discourse, but there is dispersion. However, Ernesto and Laclau present an argument that the organizing effects of the principles of difference and equivalence create a certain order in discourse by creating a “totality” (Torfing, 1999, pp. 99-100). In other words, they explain the "construction of order in the diffusion of discourses" through the theory of hegemony (Perezalonso, 2009, p. 277).

According to Laclau and Mouffe, elements of political and moral leadership play a role under the influence of a hegemonic power in creating a discursive structure that gives expression to demands, opinions and attitudes. Hegemony is seen as the expansion of a discourse towards a dominant position among conflicting forces. However, rather than a Marxist understanding, a discursive unifying principle is generally adopted here. The

formation of a hegemonic discourse is the outcome of "articulation," which is defined as the practice of establishing relations between different elements, and this action is argued as a process through which identities can be transformed (Torfing, 1999, p. 101). This leads to the notion of "social antagonism" coined by Laclau and Mouffe (1985). In other words, the formation of hegemonic discourse occurs when the meaning constructed within one discourse is limited by the existence of another discourse (Laclau & Mouffe, 2014, pp. 108–13). According to James Martin, social antagonism is:

Dominant discourses succeed by displacing alternative modes of argument and forms of activity; by marginalising radically different discourses; by naturalising their hierarchies and exclusions presenting them in the form of 'common sense'; and by effacing the traces of their own contingency. (2002, p. 24)

This view is also in line with Foucault's approach. Foucault emphasizes the conflict of different strategies of resistance against different forms of power as an important dimension in the analysis of power relations (Foucault, 1994, pp. 128-129). A hegemonic discourse does not have a completely fixed meaning. Because exclusion and difference is an intrinsic part of hegemonic discourse. In other words, there is always an exterior that threatens stability. This external practice actually serves hegemonic stability (Martin, 2002, p. 24). This is because not every articulation is hegemonic. At this point, what distinguishes hegemonic articulation is that it is constructed through coercion and consent. Because only in this way are alternative discourses and identities marginalized or relegated to the background. As a result, social conflicts arise. The hegemonic power sees the identity and discourses it excludes as an obstacle in the process of producing hegemonic discourse, that is, in the process of selecting discourses (Torfing, 1999, p. 120).

On the other hand, hegemonic discourse provides a theoretical foundation for the construction of intersubjective meaning and the formation of power. Therefore, it provides a method for why and how events occur in the construction of their relation to desirable subjects (Broecker, 2022, p. 108). In other words, hegemonic discourse can construct security relevant, civilization relevant and masculinity relevant meanings within the discourse. Thus,

where hegemonic discourse is successful, they cease to be perceived as a serious threat by certain marginalized antagonistic discourses (Broecker, 2022, p. 116)

In the context of the US invasion of Afghanistan, the formulation of hegemonic discourse pertains to the strategic use of discourse to legitimize US actions. This form of discourse aims to justify the US's decision to invade Afghanistan by invoking concepts such as national interests, security concerns, and human rights. Prior to and during the invasion, the US endeavors to create a dichotomy between 'Self and Other,' 'East and West,' 'Civilization and Barbarism,' 'Hegemonic Masculinity and Subordinated Masculinities,' as well as 'Hegemonic Masculinity and Subjugated Femininity' through hegemonic discourses. This serves the purpose of establishing, reinforcing, and perpetuating cultural hegemony. In this study, the concept of "liberation" is recognized as the most effective form of hegemonic discourse because it is deeply ingrained in the intersection of masculinity, civilization, and hegemony. The focus on the emancipation of Afghan women positions the invasion within a discursive battle. This is because states resort to referencing human rights, specifically women's rights in an efficient way, as a means to garner consent from both domestic and international communities in order to legitimize the invasion. This strategy is pivotal in the construction of cultural hegemony in the Gramscian way. In the next chapter we will examine how gendered images are manifested in US foreign policy and the war on terror before discussing discourses that produced in a hegemonic way in the US invasion of Afghanistan.

CHAPTER 5: GENDERED DYNAMICS IN THE U.S. FOREIGN POLICY AND THE WAR ON TERROR

In this chapter, we will examine how the US foreign policy has been shaped by gendered dynamics beginning with the analyzing the border dispute between Venezuela and British Guiana to the War on Terror. The US has often reinforced its national identity by portraying and othering its enemies with non-masculine characters in order to legitimize its international disputes, military interventions and occupations. It has also sought to assert its masculinity by assigning specific roles to men and women in wars. At times, the US has perceived its own masculinity to be in crisis, such as during the Vietnam War. The September 11 attacks represent one of these periods of crisis. The US presidents have often used the metaphor of masculinity in foreign policy speeches to justify their wars and emphasize themes of freedom and justice. The aim of this chapter is to analyze the role of hegemonic masculinity as a cultural ideal (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005), in the construction of the US cultural hegemony, focusing on the gendered roles and images historically embedded in the US foreign policy. Therefore, to comprehend the process of masculinization, emasculation, and re-masculinization in the US foreign policy would be a logical starting point.

5.1. Construction of Masculinity in the U.S. Foreign Policy

Recent discussions in political philosophy about identity have revolved around the rational and autonomous individual as a universal model of selfhood which is shaped by the concept of Enlightenment, and its role as a starting point for political action. In this model of the selfhood, the concepts of rational mind and body are treated separately. As a universal human subject, the male subject, is equated with mind and the female subject is equated with body. However, in the philosophical tradition, mind have domination on human subject. In this way, the identity of a man is produced as mind, whereas the identity of a woman is produced as body. On the other hand, although there is no consensus among feminist thinkers on the production of gender identity, criticism of mind/body dichotomy primarily centers

around the effects of physical embodiment (body and reproductive biology), institutional practices (family, economy, state), and discursive dimensions (Hooper, 2001, pp. 19-20).

We can use Foucault's notion of *productive power* to explain the production of gender identity. Productive power is described as modern power operating with the construction of certain knowledge or discourse and people are produced as a subject by the means of certain knowledge and discourse (1980). According to Baring and Cashford, gendered identities constructed through discourse are based on dualistic or binary oppositions. The binary oppositions are based on the figure of a subjugating father god and a subjugated goddess, believed to originate from Babylonian mythology. These pervasive gendered binaries are influential in Western thought (1993).

Gendered binaries are constructed on each other's opposition, in this context they are relational concepts in the linguistic system. In the modern Western culture, womanhood is associated with femininity and manhood is linked to masculinity. Relational and dualistic dimensions of masculinity and femininity are based on phallogocentric logic. From this point of view, masculinity as a concept, emerges through the deconstruction of common gender-based binaries and gains value through femininity. The concept of masculinity, associated with civilization, hardness, rationality, strength, toughness, public, science, independence, aggression, self, war, is valorized or constructed through its relationship with the concept of femininity, associated with nature, body, soft, irrationality, weakness, tenderness, privacy, art, dependency, victimness, otherness, peace (Brons, 2018, p. 4; Hooper, 2001, p. 43).

In a similar vein, Tickner states that gender identities produced through discursive dualism play a part in the formation of national identities that influence the foreign policy behavior of states. In order to consolidate their legitimacy in foreign policy decisions, states utilize the metaphor of the family by depicting the nation within the metaphors of motherland, fatherland and homeland. These portrayals are deepening gendered identities by the hands of the state and are reflected in the images of foreign policymakers in the West, revealing figures of elites, white man and masculinity (2001, pp. 53-54), furthermore masking certain realities (Hooper, 2001, p. 45).

For Rice, the ideology that defines the US national identity is based on masculine character and this national identity shapes the image of the US in the international arena (2018, p.1). The masculine culture that constructs national identity in the areas of family, sexuality, division of labor, power and authority is transferred to the field of foreign policy through the discourses of leaders (Peterson&Runyon, 1999, p. 42). However, the discourses used by states to realize their international goals need to be analyzed beyond the masculinity/femininity dualism as an ideological tool. Hooper argues that while dualism create inequalities, they also reinforce each other and cause a hierarchy within themselves (2001, p. 53). This hierarchy leads us to examine different forms of masculinity.

According to Carrigan, Connell and Lee, there are multiple types of masculine identities in the hierarchy of power relations (1985). One of them is hegemonic and others are subordinated. This way of understanding shows that emphasized femininity and subordinated forms of masculinity are tied to male power and the functioning of patriarchal social order at all levels of society. R.W. Connell points out that dominant form of masculinity is “hegemonic masculinity” and it has taken place in American culture (1987, p. 184). As mentioned above, hegemonic masculinity is distinguished from other types of masculinities. As stated above, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) describe hegemonic masculinity as the currently most respected model of manhood, which necessitates that all other men align themselves in reference to it, and it justifies the worldwide subordination of women to men (p. 832).

Looking at the dominant position of men in the US foreign policy, Kimmel (2006) takes us back to the 19th century. He discusses three types of manhood in the early 19th century in the US. These are “Genteel Patriarch, Heroic Artisan and Self-Made Man.” These types of manhood did not gain the upper hand over each other until the beginning of the civil war. However, the market revolution in the USA between 1800 and 1840 marked the commencement of a new era in which the American man invented himself, that is, man made himself. In this context, the prominent type of manhood is the *Self-Made Man*, has success in the market and economic autonomy and dominance in the enrichment of the middle class.

Namely, Self-Made Man is seen a type of masculinity where “success must be earned, manhood must be proved” (pp. 13-30).

To show that American man, Goffman presents two types of man. Firstly, a “complete men” has features of being white, conforming to the culturally idealized form of being man, belonging to the middle class, and secondly “incomplete men” have features of being color, men who do not conform with culturally idealized form of masculinity, immigrant and working-class (1963, p. 128). This perspective became the reference point for Kimmel's conceptualization of socially constructed anhood as the hegemonic form of masculinity in the US. In this context, the dynamic that shapes the daily life of American men which gives them an identity is, as mentioned above, the experience of proving manhood (2006, pp. 1-5).

Towards the end of the 19th century, the bellicose policies pursued by the United States can be considered an attempt to prove manhood. Hoganson (1998) evaluated the border dispute between Venezuela and British Guiana in 1895 as a point where the pro-war-supporters and arbitrationist confronted each other in the US, and the war supporters were able to realize their martial ideals. The war-supporters believed that war would give a manly character to the men of the country and benefit American democracy. They saw the arbitrationists as dishonorable and non-true man who effeminized American policies. In contrast, the arbitrationists saw the war supporters as uncivilized cavemen, uncultivated and brutish men. The Arbitration Treaty that was signed in 1897 to resolve the border dispute was ultimately cancelled by the Senate under pressure from the war-supporters who sought to protect the nation's honor and integrity. Senator Mr. William M. Stewart's statement, “I want American manhood asserted,” supported the war supporters claim to preserve the masculine character of American policy (pp. 15-16).

By the year 1898, it is important to examine the ‘chauvinistic desire for war’ in order to clarify the cultural roots of the Spanish-American War. The war supporters believed that the US military intervention in the Cuban-Spanish war to provide for *Cuban Libre* would revive the ideal of manly politics in the US (Hoganson, 1998, p. 44). To legitimize the intervention, press coverage portrayed Cubans in gendered terms. Cuban women were depicted as pure, virtuous victims of Spanish lust, while Spanish men were depicted as

effeminate aristocrats and savage rapists, and Cuban women who should be liberated by chivalrous Cuban men were depicted as chivalric fighters. Considering the US' racist tendencies towards non-white people, sympathy was created towards mixed-race Cubans in the US. That is to say, Cuba was portrayed metaphorically as a maiden waiting to be rescued by a brave Knight (Hunt, 2009, pp. 60- 62).

Another tool used to legitimize Cuban intervention was the disaster of the USS Maine, which was sent to Havana in 1898 to protect American citizens. Despite the lack of evidence that Spain was responsible for the incident, war supporters marked the Maine Disaster as an insult to American manhood. Representatives such as James A. Norton, Mahlon Pitney, and George F. Hoar emphasized “manly qualities, such as bravery, liberty, glory, and manhood” by using the word “honor” and arguing that “honor comes first” (Hoganson, 1998, pp. 68-70). The reluctant steps taken by President William McKinley (1897-1901) towards intervention led to his masculinity being tested by the “backbone factor” that is considered a sign of manhood. Under pressure from politicians and war supporters, McKinley who saw the war as a political necessity, made the decision to intervene and proved America's backbone or masculinity (Hoganson, 1998, pp. 91-106). To be sure, these pro-war attitudes played an important role in constructing masculinity in the US foreign policy.

According to Hoganson, the United States ended a war in the name of freedom, only to start another one in the name of empire. However, gender dynamics remained the same. After Spain's defeat, the Philippines, which were seeking independence, were handed over to the United States. The US revived the concept of manhood to serve its own imperial tendencies in order to legitimize its war with the Philippines, portraying Filipino men as effeminate, and Filipino women as highly feminine. The press depicted Filipinas as “Typical Filipina Beauty,” “Dusky Venuses” and “Philippine Girls Bathing” portraying the Philippines as a sexually desirable island waiting for the touch of the US. In short, the Philippines was depicted as an untouched territory eagerly awaiting the influence of the US. The use of the marriage metaphor as a consent tool in the imperial relationship between the US and the Philippines would contribute to proving American manhood and ultimately serve martial desires (1998, pp. 132-140).

By the early 20th century, there were different approaches to manhood and ways of proving it in the United States, but the former President of the US, Theodore Roosevelt's (1901-1909) unique ideology of masculinity, which he called the "strenuous life" was strong. According to Roosevelt, a man should live his life in a constant struggle as if he were in a boxing ring (Brinck-Johnsen, 2004, p. 2). He believed that his life of struggle due to his childhood asthma built his masculine character (p. 48). In his mind, manhood and statehood were intertwined, and he argued that men should act with a national masculine character also in foreign policy (p. 198). Theodore (Teddy) Roosevelt openly expressed the male metaphor in his speeches, advocating in his 1901 entitled *National Duties*, he argued that the United States' international actions should be manly. According to his speech, men should strive for their nation in the outside world as they strive for their family. For the American nation, like a man, works first for the welfare of its own country and, when necessary, plays a role in the international arena (Roosevelt, 1926, p.474 cited in Brinck-Johnsen, 2004, p. 1).

Teddy Roosevelt's foreign policy approaches carry symbolic manifestation of masculinity. For example, the diplomacy of "speak softly and carry a big stick" implies that a nation carrying a big stick is a nation that abandons its wife and family to play the role of the man on the global realm (Brinck-Johnsen, 2004, pp. 4-5). Roosevelt's policies in the Spanish-American War and the Caribbean, and the obtaining of the Panama Canal demonstrate how he used his conception of masculinity in his foreign policy behavior (pp. 60-61). Altogether, it can be said that Roosevelt is, as he himself has expressed, a complete example of a 'Self-Made Man' (Cooper, 1986, p. 356), because he was thinking that he proved his masculinity.

When it comes to the Woodrow Wilson, who served as president between 1913 and 1921, and was also a supporter of masculine ideals, it seems that he shared the same logic as Theodore Roosevelt in associating manly behaviors with the nation. However, Wilson preferred that masculinity in foreign policy to be acted upon with self-control and focused on peace in problem-solving rather than the use of force in the international arena (Brinck-Johnsen, 2004, p. 220). In Wilson's foreign policy model, his interest in constitutions, his inclination towards collective action, and his eventual leading the establishment of the

League of Nations at the end of the First World War, were the result of his belief in an ideal masculinity. But these ideas were at odds with Roosevelt's idea of the independent man (Brinck-Johnsen, 2004, p. 39). Wilson's logic of collective security eventually resurfaced years later with the establishment of the United Nations (UN) after World War II, despite his League of Nations initiatives that advocated a particular form of masculinity through concepts of collective security, self-discipline, and Christian moralism (Brinck-Johnsen, 2004, p. 252).

Following World War II, the United States emerged as a global leader in terms of military capability, democratic governance, and economic power. Consequently, the U.S. began to quest for a "fatherly role" in the global order (Sjoberg, 2013, p. 213). These developments created a national glorification of the U.S. in the World War II caused the construction of an idealized image of American masculinity (Adelman, 2009, p. 261). On the international level, states overtly display their hegemonic masculinity by othering enemies they perceive as threats to their national security. As seen in the examples above, when faced with a foreign security threat, the US instinctively emasculates the enemy, highlighting American masculinity. This hegemonic masculinity tactic has been used as a foreign policy motivation by portraying the enemy as softly and less masculine (Kimmel, 2010, p. 170). For example, during the Cold War, communism and its sympathizers were associated with softness, femininity, and which are seen as the antithesis of masculinity, and eventually emasculated (Kimmel, 2010, p. 170).

The Cold War period created a political environment in which the legitimacy of leaders such as John F. Kennedy, who served as president between 1961 and 1963, and Ronald Reagan, who served as president from 1981 to 1989, was determined by gendered power and weakness poles. The gendered political polarization against communism led to the consolidation of hegemonic masculinity by highlighting the overly masculine personality of the US presidents in the international arena (Dean, 1998, p. 30). As it was revealed, during the Cold War the US implemented a containment policy that was gendered in the metaphor of the white middle-class American household where the man served as the breadwinner man and the woman as the housewife. In the event of nuclear war, women's protected domesticity

and men's role as protectors, that is, stand-up against communism served to reinforce the masculine image of the US in the international arena. However, by the 1960s and 70s, the masculine hegemony that the US had been trying to cultivate for years was shattered or emasculated with the Vietnam War (Tickner, 2001, p. 55).

Sjoberg argues that the US entered the Vietnam War as a proxy war to establish its fatherly role (2013, p. 213), and as an arena to prove its masculinity. American soldiers, who were initially viewed as exemplars of manly virtues, were ultimately seen as failed men in the quagmire of Vietnam (Kimmel, 2006, p. 173-174). More specifically, soldiers returning from Vietnam were welcomed as baby-killers instead of being welcomed as heroes (Bellini, 2010, p. 38). America felt the need to revitalize its faltering claim to masculinity. Susan Jeffords, in her book *The Remasculinization of America: Gender and the Vietnam War*, argues that after the Vietnam war, America constructed its remasculinization through popular culture with films such as *Rambo: First Blood* and other violent movies (1989, p. 2).

During the era of Lyndon Johnson's presidency (1965-1969), American masculinity experienced a crisis. Johnson's political rhetoric, characterized by aggressive masculinity and phallic metaphors, contributed to the escalation of the Vietnam War (Kimmel, 2006, pp. 108,178). Although Johnson was fueled by the fear that withdrawing from Vietnam would make him appear less masculine than Kennedy, he ultimately proved to be a leader who couldn't fully establish his masculine identity (Fasteau, 1974, pp. 172-173). Richard Nixon who served as president from 1969 to 1974, was also concerned about appearing soft on communism and being perceived as inactive, impotent, and dependent (Mazlish, 1972, p. 116). Nixon's nickname was "compulsive manhood". His plan for Vietnam, "Peace with Honor," offered the U.S. with an exit strategy from the war or at least discursive strategy to claim that the U.S. didn't lose. This allowed Nixon to maintain his masculine credentials. Jimmy Carter, who served as president between 1977 and 1981, was another president perceived as soft-spoken. Carter claimed it was too early for the "new man" he represented to be traumatized by the defeat in Vietnam (Kimmel, 2006, p. 179). Despite concerns for human rights and a willingness to negotiate with the Soviet Union, which could have been

seen as feminine, Carter was actually perceived as aggressive and masculine (Bellini 2010, p. 40).

By the 1980s, American men were more confused than ever, as they had no clear role models for masculinity to emulate. As a result, the fear of the "wimp factor" in masculinity emerged. American men were now presented with new role models of masculinity as John Wayne in magazines and movies. This new model was the "new man," who was warm, sensitive, cuddly, and compassionate. Because, there was a perception as Kimmel states that "the manhood regained under Reagan and Bush was the compulsive masculinity of the schoolyard bully," that is a defensive and disturbing type of masculinity where men have to prove their masculinity in every situation (2006, p. 192).

While Ronald Reagan clearly demonstrated his masculine character in his fight against the Soviets and communism, showing aggressive and violent leadership traits, labeling the USSR as "the evil empire" (Bellini, 2010, p. 41), George H.W. Bush, who served as president from 1989 to 1993, could not escape the wimp label. When George H.W. Bush announced his candidacy for president in 1987, he was forced to fight against the "wimp factor" and prove his masculinity through actions, as evidenced by the headline in *Newsweek* (Ducat, 2004, p. 85). During his 7-year tenure as vice president, he was seen as effeminate and unmanly (Blumenthal, 1990, pp. 50, 73), for following kinder and gentler policies that were perceived as both feminine and weak, leading to the association of the "wimp factor" with him (Kimmel, 2006, p. 195). Ducat argues that being biologically male is not enough to uphold masculinity, and that masculinity needs to be repeated with words and actions (2004, p. 5). To reverse George H.W. Bush's feminine image into a masculine one, the media highlighted the "combat factor" and portrayed the presidency as a military duty. Additionally, G. H.W. Bush's opponent Dukakis' effeminate image was used to paint Bush as macho (Balzar, 1988; Ducat, 2004, p. 93). In this context, the Gulf War in 1991 and the defeat of Saddam's army were presented as both proof of his masculinity and the ultimate cure for the Vietnam Syndrome (Ducat, 2004, p. 99).

The symbolic victory in the Gulf War, along with media censorship, covered up the passed away of hundreds of thousands of people. On television, military analysts and

commentators gave briefings on "Bush punishing Saddam." In this discourse, the phallic superiority helped construct G. H.W. Bush's masculine image. Personifying nation-states as male actors in words or images is an effective discursive strategy for winning public support in wars (Ducat, 2004, pp. 102-103). Steve Niva pointed out the Gulf War was a period in which the US rebuilt its shattered masculinity, with toughness and compassion being seen together (1998, p. 109). At this point, Tickner has noted the US's enlightened masculinity and its oppressive policies towards women in the Gulf have reinforced the boundary between self and other. In this context, the US, which constructs its own national identity as "civilized" has portrayed the identity of Gulf residents as "strange" and "threatening" constructing them as "uncivilized" (2001, p. 55). When it comes to the era of Bill Clinton (1993-2001), whose masculine image was controversial, used a "tough but tender" image during his presidency. Although he was reluctant to intervene in Bosnia after the defeat in Vietnam, he suppressed the war in Bosnia through NATO intervention (Bellini, 2010, p. 41).

The 9/11 attacks are significant point in terms of the reproduction of masculinity in US foreign policy. According to Bellini, George W. Bush's, who served president from 2001 to 2009, discourses about the 9/11 attacks and the invasion of Afghanistan, were influenced by the gendered structure of Afghanistan's patriarchal society, leading George W. Bush to manifest the hegemonic form of masculinity (2010, p. 73). Bush was humble, coherent and kind in foreign policy, but after 9/11 he changed his presidential profile to that of a masculine leader (Immelman, 2002, pp. 89-98; Bellini, 2010, p. 76). Because as president, G. W. Bush's masculinity actually represented the masculinity of the nation. The Bush administration consistently sought to justify its policies within the triangle of justice, liberty, and freedom. As a result, he pursued a foreign policy that emphasized the highest levels of masculinity, promoting muscularity and moral certitude both nationally and internationally (Maruska, 2010, pp. 241-244).

Because the 9/11 attacks aimed at emasculating America's masculinity. G.W. Bush (2001a) reacted that "night fell on a different world." In other words, American masculinity had lost its supremacy and it had to reassert its masculinity. That is why Bush, claimed the War on Terror as a "civilization's fight" (2001b) for getting consent to its own

remasculization process, and pushed the world towards a decision "either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists" (2001c). This discourse was actually the first step in an attempt to reassert American masculinity with global support. George W. Bush (2011) speaking on the National Geographic Channel 10 years after 9/11, said:

I remember thinking: the first one was most likely an accident, the second one was an attack, and the third plane was a declaration of war.....it became clear that we were facing a new kind of enemy. This is how the war was in the twenty-first century. (NatGeo, 2010)

In this new war, gendered dynamics were shown in relation to the hegemonic masculinity in order to remasculate American manhood. In this context, it will be useful to firstly look at gendered images in the War on Terror in order to analyze how hegemonic masculinity manifested in the US invasion of Afghanistan

5.2. Gendered Images in the War on Terror

Socially constructed gendered identities is discursively shaped by the worldview of masculine cultures. When this cultural worldview feels threatened or weakened, it responds with a global defense mechanism. Hegemonic masculinity emerges as a radicalized and idealized form of masculinity in response to perceived challenges to traditional gender roles (Brons, 2018, p. 10). Bush administration perceived a threat to American masculine culture after the 9/11 attacks. This was particularly evident in the US invasion of Afghanistan, where discursive expressions of masculinity played an important role in justifying the invasion. G.W. Bush, in his address to the Joint Session of the 107th Congress, presented the world with a binary choice: "Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists" (107th Congress, 2001). This choice presented to the world has no fixed meaning as a hegemonic articulation and is at the top of the hierarchy of discourses produced in the War on Terror. It aims to produce spontaneous consent to legitimize military interventions in the War on Terror by subjecting the world to the us vs. them distinction (Gramsci, 1971, p. 12). This distinction is closely related to hegemonic

masculinity because ‘us’ as a discursive articulation represents power in the context of the War on Terror, creating a binary opposition between the enemy to whom otherness is attributed.

Considering the US invasion of Afghanistan, discursively portraying the agential subjectivity of Afghan women as a victim who needs to be liberated from the misogynistic Afghan male (Partis-Jennings, 2019, p. 11), demonstrates that the triangle of how hegemonic masculinity manifested as complex and multifaceted, based on the assumption that power and knowledge are discursively constructed and they both intertwined.

Arguing for the necessity of masculine policies even without masculine leaders, Fukuyama argues that a democratic, female-dominated, post-industrial world will have to cope with regions that are still ruled by young, ambitious and uninhibited men, even though they are now more involved in economic struggles (1998, pp. 36-37). Five years earlier, Samuel Huntington, in his book *Clash Of Civilization*, argued that the degree of violence Islam and the West would be influenced by religious commitments (1996, p. 211). This emphasis on the “otherness” of the East, deepened the Orientalist logic which means the depiction of the stereotyped and exoticized East by the West. Said’s notion of *Orientalism* is based on the collective identities of the West and the East produced through ontological and epistemological binary oppositions. In other words, the West is constructed as rational, civilized, moral and superior, whereas the East is portrayed as irrational, barbaric, exotic, primitive and inferior (1979, p. 2).

When Western-centric concept of orientalism is applied to the American context, there is no difference in the way both Europeans and the United States have approached the Middle East historically and politically (Khalid, 2011, p. 17). In the War on Terror, democracy, liberation, progress, power and authority are legitimized through the discursive construction of “gender-ed and race-ed” dichotomies within the orientalist logic such as “Us vs Them”, “Western and Eastern”, “Self and Other”, “Women and Men” (Khalid, 2014, p. 2-7). Based on these dichotomies, Nader (1989, p. 324), intersects Gramscian model of hegemony (1971), and Foucauldian concept of true discourse (1972), through the Western desire to “control Eastern women”, arguing that the West claims a “positional superiority”

(Said, 1994). In the War on Terror, US claims of ‘positional superiority’ can be read from the perspective of gender that is embedded in the discourses, policies, actions and practices.

According to Feitz and Nagel, war is a theater where male aggression is reinforced by hypermasculinity (2008, p. 217). In this theater, certain identities are assigned to women and men. To be more specific, the female identity is associated with “life-giving”, while the male identity is associated with “life-taking” (Skjelsbaek, 2001, p. 220). Ehrenreich notes that "it is not only men that make wars, it is wars that make men" (1987, p. xvi). Within this framework, the military and war are examples of the places where a direct relationship is established between the hegemonic type of masculinity and the male body as an area where the proof of male identity is demonstrated. (Morgan, 1994, p. 168). The War on Terror provided an opportunity for America to reassert its hegemonic masculinity, due to certain turning points in its history, especially after the September 11 attacks.

In her analysis, Nicola Pratt (2012) discusses how the War on Terror is “gender-ed, sex-ed, rac-ed, and class-ed.” She points out that Muslim women are often portrayed as passive and oppressed, Muslim men as terrorists, and Western military power as an enlightening force in this war (p. 1821). The War on Terror is often seen as a hypermasculine war, fought by virile and aggressive men in defense of their nation’s honor and freedom. Despite their ideological differences, George W. Bush and Bin Laden deepened gendered identities by placing women at the center of the war while simultaneously rendering them invisible (Maruska, 2010, p. 169), in others words “in women’s very inclusion they are excluded” (Masters, 2009, p. 30). Because of the fact that visibility does not mean that existence of women’s self (Franks, 2003, p. 137), it is just making them visible by relying of women’s support. (Enloe, 2000, p. 297). If one needs to express it more clearly, involving women in militarization processes under the guise of making them visible actually masks the presence of their identities.

To fully grasp the dichotomy of visibility and invisibility, it is significant to examine the ways in which women are represented in militarization processes. Women have been involved into these processes in a variety of roles, including as mothers, supporters, soldiers, sexual objects, victims, perpetrators of war, and legitimization tools. These roles typically

arise from the beliefs of female subordination (Nader, 1989, p. 346). In contrast, men are integrated into the process of militarization as soldiers, heroes, warriors, stars, and chivalrous fighters. But, I am arguing about the ways in which Western men are involved in wartime with third-world countries. Constructed as Eastern, the male's involvement in the war is as terrorist, evil, unmanly, primitive and backward. It shows the duality between hegemonic and non-hegemonic types of masculinity.

There are iconic images of motherhood related to war. These include the grieving mother, the reproductive mother who has the life-giving capacity to produce children/soldiers, and the "Spartan mother" who brings up her son to be a warrior willing to die for his country (Enloe, 2000, pp. 248-249). These images of motherhood are seen as part of women's heroism and patriotism in proving themselves in wars (Ahall, 2015, p. 23). From this angle, the image of motherhood represents women's supportive roles in the background of the war process. On the other hand, direct supportive roles such as nurses, cooks, and seamstresses provided by women can be seen during the American Revolution (Sherrow, 2007, p. 14). During World War I, women supported the war effort as Yeomen and Marinette, secretaries, clerks, and telephone operators (Monahan&Neidel-Greenlee, 2010: 22). Women's roles in the military changed during the Vietnam War and after the Panama invasion, women were appointed to leadership roles in the military. At the onset of the 21st century, the US military had become a more gender-integrated area, especially with the US invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq (Sherrow, 2007, pp. 24-28).

To comprehend the paradox that "women's presence marks their absence" in the military, Masters explains it with the concept of Foucault's *productive power* and Agamben's notion of *bare life* (2009, pp. 30-31). Foucault argues that the primary task of sovereign power is *making live rather than making die*. This aligns with his analysis of power as productive rather than repressive. Power changes the nature of sovereign power by creating certain subjects through the body (Foucault, 2003, p. 247; Edkins&Pin-Fat, 2005: 7). In other words, power creates a sovereign distinction by determining which lives are worth living and which are not. It determines politically qualified lives and produces bare life (Masters, 2009, p. 3).

Agamben expands Foucault's approach by using the Holocaust as an example. The Jewish community is mentioned in the constitution of Nazi concentration camps and Nazi Germany as bare life, that is, "life is neither worthy of living nor worthy of sacrifice" (Agamben, 1995, p. 82). He theorized the notion of bare life with the Roman conception of *homo sacer* (Mutimer, 2007, p. 163). Based on this, a conclusion can be drawn about how power operates in the War on Terror. When sovereign power defines bare life, it makes it possible to establish a relationship on how bare life can be killed, injured, imprisoned, silenced, and excluded, and tortured from making live. Therefore, *homo sacer* [sacred life] becomes a necessity for sovereign power (Masters, 2009, p. 3). Sovereign power needs to embody the *homo sacer* in certain areas, such as the battlefield, in order to legitimize its war. As stated above, the inclusion of women in the WOT actually means their exclusion (Pratt, 2005, p. 1055). Ronit Lentin argues that the embodiment of women in the war on terror must be understood through the category of *femina sacra*, as she states that "at the mercy of sovereign power, woman, due to her function as a vehicle of ethnic cleansing, and to her sexual vulnerability, arguably becomes *femina sacra*" as a being who can be killed, but who can also be conceived, but who cannot be sacrificed because of purity (2006, p. 465)

The concept of *femina sacra* offers a different aspect for understanding how war affects women's bodies and reduces them to a state of bare life. This offers a different perspective on how war affects women's bodies. However, this does not imply that women's lives are more bare than men's lives. It only provides a critical way of revealing the masculine and racist biopolitics on the female body (Masters, 2009, pp. 32-33). Because of the gender-based distinction between the public and private spheres, it is implausible to assume that the mechanisms of war and militarization operate uniformly for both men and women (Pratt, 2005, p. 1056). Sovereign powers are deeply linked to gender differences, hereby women's bodies are used as a weapon of war in armed struggle, as well as a means of legitimizing the politics of violence (Freidman, 2010, p. 594; Masters, 2009, p. 34). In this context, representations of women in war are constructed in a way that serves to maintain, reproduce and even transcend the contemporary forms of dominant masculinity (Masters, 2009, pp. 24-35).

5.2.1. Women's Involvement in the War on Terror

The representation of women in wars is based on the conflicting perceptions of the female body by those in power. Mary Anne Franks argues that patriarchal and misogynistic ideology simultaneously portrays women as vulnerable, virtuous, and in need of protection, yet as threatening, corrupting, influential, and subjected to stringent limitations. As an example of this duality, in the US War on Terror in Iraq, two different female bodies can be identified: Jessica Lynch, a body worth rescuing, a Madonna, and Lynndie England, a body worth sacrificing, one of a few bad apples within the military, a whore (2003, p. 144; Masters, 2009, p. 35).

As a victim, Jessica Lynch was one of the six soldiers captured by Iraqi military forces, along with four male soldiers and one female soldier in 2003. For the purpose of American military propaganda, Lynch was portrayed as an idealized image of militarized woman as someone who needed to be rescued before the other five soldiers. Moreover, Lynch was feminized by the media, as a beautiful and innocent soul who couldn't escape from the traditional gender roles, a courageous woman who was a victim of sexual violence and Iraqi oppression, and a white woman in need of saving. All of these depictions were sufficient to create a story of rescue. After all, strong and virile men were supposed to fight to protect the honor of innocent and pure women, even if women served the same role in the military as men (Sjoberg, 2010, pp. 211-212). Pentagon officials told to Jessica Lynch "we're United States soldiers and we're here to protect you and take you home" (Schmidt, 2003, p. 1). In fact, what Lynch represented was a hypermilitarized representation of American hegemonic desires for masculinity (Masters, 2009, p. 36). Conversely, the other four male soldiers and Shoshana Johnson, the Black single mother and soldier, were perceived as racialized bodies deemed unworthy of rescue (Douglas&Donnelly, 2003). Because she did not reflect purity like Lynch and did not correspond the Western identity (Khalid, 2011, p. 83).

As a perpetrator, Lynndie England was another representation of women's involvement in war, who was involved in the torture and abuse of prisoners in Abu Ghraib in Iraq, which was revealed on the television program *60 Minutes* in 2004. The images of

this torture deeply shook the self-representations of the United States, which were based on pre-emptive attacks, bringing democracy, liberation, and a just cause to Iraq. Particularly, the photo of a naked Iraqi prisoner with a bag over his head, while England points at him with her fingers as if they were a gun and holds a leash attached to the neck of another naked prisoner who is crawling on the floor like a dog. The image was taken at the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq and became emblematic of the US military's use of torture and dehumanization of Iraqi prisoners. As a result, Lynndie England faced charges of plotting to mistreat detainees and other offenses at Abu Ghraib prison, leading to her receiving a three-year prison sentence on September 25, 2005. Charging and sacrificing her in the juridical process was also aimed at demonstrating that the US dominant power is value-based (Masters, 2009, pp. 37-39).

Jessica Lynch, a woman with a fresh face with blonde hair, blue eyes and a desire to become a teacher, and England with dark and cropped hair, a monstrous face, and a boyish, bisexual body, giving off a 'masculine' appearance, were involved in the WOT. Although their stories seem to differ from each other, they actually serve the same purpose. As a victim and a symbol of heroic masculine power (Khalid, 2011, p. 25), Lynch being deemed worthy of saving, and as a perpetrator of abuse, England being deemed worthy of sacrificing contribute to the reproduction of the hegemonic masculine representations of the US. From a political subjectivity perspective, both of them have a name, but one of their stories was published while the other told her story in court (Masters, 2009, pp. 37- 40). To put it more clearly, their self-identities reproduced as acceptable and unacceptable femininity (Khalid, 2011, p. 27), and have been manipulated to serve the hegemonic power of the US.

As a sexual object, a manifestation of the specific masculinities and femininities assigned to men and women in times of war is sexualized violence, which is part of a masculinized military culture (Kaufman-Osborn, 2005, p. 618; Khalid, 2022, p. 27). It can be seen in the images of Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay in the WOT. Sexualized torture was used as a way to claim US' hegemonic masculinity by feminizing the male 'other' (Khalid, 2011, p. 26). In other words, the racialized, sexualized, gendered, orientalized 'other' is tortured with the logic of emasculation. The Abu Gharib scandal was brought to

public attention by journalist Hersh in 2004. The report by Major General Antonio M. Taguba emphasized the institutional failure of the Army and described systematic abuse as "sadistic, blatant, and wanton criminal abuses" (2004).

Another example of sexualized violence is torture in the US prison Guantanamo Bay in Cuba, which is used since 2002 to imprison suspected members of al-Qaeda and the Taliban (Mutimer, 2007, p. 161). According to a report by Amnesty International, the Guantanamo Bay camp is the best known "extraterritorial detention center" (2005) and its interrogation techniques include cruel conditions such as "stress positions, isolations, hooding, sensory deprivation and the use of dogs" (2006). The visibility of US sovereign power in Abu Gharib and Guantanamo Bay can be explained by Foucault's concept of 'biopolitics' and Agamben's concept of 'bare life'. Biopolitics means that political power controls and regulates the biological aspects of human life, such as health, reproduction and death (Foucault, 2003, p. 244). The torture of detainees is about control over their bodies and minds. However, biopolitics alone is insufficient to explain the exercising of sovereign power, because of the fact that Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay demonstrate the extreme version of control. Therefore, Agamben's concept of homo sacer would be more accurate in explaining this extremity which means that "life that can be killed but not sacrificed" (Perezalonso, 2010, p. 151)

Saturatte (2005) points out of the consolidation of sovereign power by inflicting pain on the body and she states that "You who humiliate us will be shocked and humiliated by our power. You and the rest of the world will then be horrified by our power, and so you will respect us for humiliating you" (p. 52). If Saturatte is right, torture and humiliation are not accidental but deliberate (Perezalonso, 2010, p. 154). G.W. Bush acknowledged that the CIA operated secret prisons and he stated about interrogations, "I can't describe the specific methods used. I think you don't understand why.....But I can say that the procedures were difficult, safe, legal and necessary" (2006). Bush was referring to torture exercised by American agents as a site of power. Scarry (1985), points out that in *The Body in Pain*, torture as "the production of the fantastic illusion of power" (p. 27), and "an emblem of regime's strength" (p. 56).

As a manifestation of a masculinized militarized culture, the US Army, through sexualized violence, attempts to break the masculinity of Iraqis, suspected members of al-Qaeda and Taliban, whom they see as exotic, by feminizing them through nakedness and not to conform idealized form of masculinity, that is, to prove their hegemonic sense of home-grown masculinity (Enloe, 2004, p. 99). Because the traditional gender role assigned to men in wartime was to wield violence. As a 21-year-old woman, Lynndie England was portrayed by the media as a monstrous (Thomas, 2004), inhuman woman for breaking the traditional gender role assigned to women in wartime. However, Charles Graners, her sexual partner while on active duty in Abu-Gharib, who impregnated England, was not often mentioned in the media (Enloe, 2004, p. 91-2). The American approach to the situation can be described as the instinctive response in patriarchal societies (Kaufman-Osborn, 2005, p. 600).

In this context, one way of communicating the masculine power of the US to the world has been through torture, what Perezalonso calls "sending a message through practice". To explain it another way, the rendering of sovereign power through bare life (2010, p. 153) can be read through the traditional gender roles of the US. In the distorted masculine scenario within the war climate, despite the chaos caused by the Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay abusements (Enloe, 2004, p. 95), in the United States' claims of hegemonic masculinity, Schmitt asserts that "sovereign who decides on the state of exception" (Mutimer, 2007, p. 165). In this context, the aforementioned events can be evaluated within the state of exception of the hegemonic power that claims sovereignty.

Another example of the wartime victim role assigned to women in traditional American gender roles is militarized rape. This time, however, women in the US military were not victimized by the enemy 'other', but by their own colleagues. This is an example of women's involvement in the war as victims of sexualized violence. In this context, militarized rape stands out and its instances can be seen at the international level such as the Bosnian war and the Rwandan genocide. Being subjected to militarized rape does not automatically demilitarize a woman's life, but making women raped by male soldiers visible is also a difficult task. Some of the reasons for militarized rape include a woman in the same

military unit such as refusing to date, rewards for boosting morale after the war, recreational rape, national security rape, and systematic mass rape (Enloe, 2000, pp. 109-111).

Regarding sexual harassments and assaults within the military, they were common issues experienced by US female soldiers in the War on Terror. In addition to all the difficulties they faced in war zones, they also had to deal with the fear of being assaulted or even killed by male soldiers in the US army, who they saw as even more dangerous than Al-Qaeda. Female soldiers in the US army also faced the extra stress of knowing that some male soldiers viewed them as sexual objects, even if it meant using violence and assault to obtain sexual satisfaction. Although rape is not unfamiliar to war, the patterns of rape and murder that emerged in Iraq and Afghanistan were very different from those in previous wars (Monahan&Neidel-Greenlee, 2010, pp. 514-515). Many American women soldiers decided not to go to the latrine at night as a way to avoid sexual assault, rape, and even death. Some women stopped drinking liquids after 3:00 p.m. as a result of this decision, and some died due to dehydration (Cohn, 2006). This decision is a reflection of how afraid some women were. Women were dying because the Pentagon and U.S. Army had not done anything substantial to prevent sexual assault and rape against women or had chosen not to do so (Monahan&Neidel-Greenlee, 2010, p. 518-519).

The case of 19-year-old PVT La Vena Johnson, who was found dead at a military base in Iraq, Balad, in 2005, despite strong evidence that she was murdered, and the US Army's claim that she shot herself with her M16 rifle, is an example of the military's internal sexual assault and murder in the war on terrorism. According to documents given to Johnson's family regarding her death, it was revealed that she had suffered a blow to her face which resulted in a broken nose, and photos of her naked body showed bite marks and bruises and also cuts in her genital area (Monahan & Neidel-Greenlee, 2010, p. 520). Although the US Army initially classified LaVena's death as a homicide, it later changed its original finding to a non-combat suicide. The requests to reopen the case were later denied. Another soldier who suffered a fate similar to LaVena and whose death was also ruled as a suicide by the Army was 20-year-old Pfc Tina Priest. She was raped by a fellow U.S. soldier in the Taji

camp in Iraq in 2006, and 11 days later, she was found dead in her room with an M16 wound to her chest (Monahan & Neidel-Greenlee, 2010, p. 521).

Enloe states that militarized rape embodies the rapist's own conceptions of 'enemy', 'soldiering', 'victory' and 'defeat' on the woman subjected to rape (2000, p.110). As another example of this concretization, stories of sexual abuse and rape and murder committed by US soldiers were also committed against Iraqi and Afghan women. For example, in 2006, 14-year-old Iraqi Abeer Qassim al-Janabi was gang raped and killed, along with her family was murdered by 5 US soldiers (CTW News, 2006). Abeer was neither the first nor the last girl to be raped by US soldiers, but she received the most media visibility because she and her family were killed. In addition, American spam e-mails for the dehumanization of Iraqi women were releasing pornographic images of US military men raping Iraqi women. (Heffernan, 2016, p. 129) In this context, systematic rape is a permissible form of violence as a means for military men to prove their masculinity, as raping the women of the enemy country is also an attack on the masculinity of the enemy men. Because they have now failed in their duty to protect women and children as defined by traditional gender roles (Bellini, 2010, p. 63). In this way, the enemy male is subordinated and subjected to the hegemonic form of masculinity.

Heffernan (2016) points out another example of the militarization of women was encouraging US male soldiers to fight to liberate helpless Afghan women from the oppressive regime of the Taliban. Throughout the war, this was materialized as the patriotic duty of Western women, who participated in 'Operation Playmate' to boost the morale of the US military with their nude models. It is therefore natural that the saving women trope normalizes the depiction of American male soldiers as heroic manly men and veiled women as saviors instead of American female soldiers, who are not very prominent in the media. For example, an advertisement in an e-mail said, "Exclusive Quality Lingerie- Look So ... Sexy!" and with every order the buyer was promised "a free link to 'blast bin Laden'" This patriotic duty was associated with freedom and power (p. 125). In other words, American military men rescued veiled Afghan women from what they saw as emasculated Afghan men. In return, unveiled Western women were presented as a reward. This was all done in the name

of national identity and patriotism, with the unveiled woman symbolizing a central aspect of the American nation's image (p. 126).

5.2.2. Men's Involvement in the War on Terror

Men's ideal type is characterized by "citizen warrior" and "military masculinity," while women are expected to embody "vulnerability and defenselessness" and "femininity" (Sjoberg, 2010, p. 215). This construct of militarized masculinity creates a hierarchy (Enloe, 1993, p. 56), that is reinforced by hypergendered expectations during wartime such as being strong but willing to die in the War on Terror, unquestionably loyal to his cause, tireless, ethical, helpful (Sjoberg, 2000, pp. 215-216), self-disciplined, smarter than civilians, able to control his emotions, physically fit, and in different ranks from others (Hinojosa, 2010, p. 179). However, militarized femininity subjected to militarized masculinity is a type that depends on controlling the boundaries of femininity (Enloe, 1973, p. 174).

In parallel to Connell's claim that hegemony will be established by the overlap of institutional and cultural power, the military provides men with an institutional infrastructure where they can build and assert their masculinity legitimately, which is necessary to overcome feelings of weakness. (Connell, 1995, p. 77; Hinojosa, 2010, p. 180; Nayak, 2006, p. 43). This institutional power reinforces hegemonic masculinity in both institutional and cultural realms. In the US Army, masculine power is embedded in the structure of the army, because women are excluded from participating in direct combat positions (infantry, armor, artillery, etc.), and because of the structure of the military rank system, men maintain their dominant position over women (Demetriou, 2001).

Laura Sjoberg (2010) argues that gender ideologies institutionalized to present the empire as fair or feminine and as powerful or masculine are used to legitimize the war. To avoid public backlash, the stories presented to the public are often hypergendered (pp. 209-210). In order to construct a masculine image in the War on Terror, the US created several narratives that were promoted to the public. *As a star*, one such story was the death of former NFL player Pat Tillman, which was gendered and instrumentalized. Despite initial claims by army officials that Tillman had been killed by enemy fire, it was later revealed that he had in fact been killed by friendly fire. According to Zirin, Tillman's idealization was significant

because of his whiteness, attractiveness, and athletic background (The Nation, 2005). The media portrayed Tillman as a virtuous, patriotic, and masculine individual who had sacrificed himself for his country in Afghanistan while manipulating the true cause of his death to idealize masculinity and manipulate public opinion (Sjoberg, 2010, p. 210).

Another manifestation of the hegemonic masculinity of the U.S. in the War on Terror can be seen in the actions of Private Military Corporations (PMCs). Throughout history, soldiers' manly behaviors have been idealized and linked to heroism, braveness, aggression, accuracy, and defense (Hooper, 2001, p. 81). In the war on terror, private military corporations have emerged as a field where soldiers can prove their manly behaviors. Previously known as Blackwater but now called Xe, a PMC played a contractor role for the U.S. military in the Iraq War. Xe is an entity that highlights hegemonic masculinity in gendered militarism (Via, 2010, pp. 42-43). Although PMCs are not a new phenomenon, after the 9/11 attacks, Donald Rumsfeld invited Blackwater to participate in the War on Terror (Clark, 2007, p. M18). When looking at the photos on Blackwater USA and Blackwater Worldwide's official websites, men are portrayed as protectors holding weapons, reflecting a masculine echo (Via, 2010, p. 48), because Blackwater hires individuals who reflect the language of masculinity, such as mavericks and cowboys (Scahill, 2007, p. 4). Therefore, Blackwater is an area where the relationship between violence, gender, and power is privatized without regulation (Higate, 2009, p. 4), leading to the reproduction of masculinity in militaristic ideologies. (Hooper, 2001, p. 160).

The masculinities produced in times of war, assigning the role of the heroic warrior to men, are not related to biology but to culture. That is, cultures associate the qualities of a good warrior with masculinity to make men warriors (Goldstein, 2003, p. 252). However, in the war against terrorism, G.W. Bush, in order to reinforce the idealized form of masculinity in this culture, emphasized "our heroes and their terrorists", associating heroes with collective love and terrorists with collective hatred (Lorber, 2002, p. 383; Yanay, 2002, p. 53). From this perspective, for Connell, warriors defined as heroes consolidate the masculine structure of Western civilization by claiming that it deserves cultural exaltation. In order to be culturally exalted, one must be heroic in the mold of masculinity. For Connell, this cultural

glorification balances the structure of dominance and oppression across the gender order. (1990, p. 94). In this context, two types of masculinity are observed in wars as good-doers and evil-doers, which are also culturally conflicting with each other. (Lorber, 2002, p. 383).

In addition to the heroic warriors, the Bush administration also identified working-class men and firefighters as heroes of 9/11. However, the problem of whether or not to glorify them as heroes is parallel to Connell's relationship between hegemonic masculinity and education. Because firefighters were subordinate to white, working-class and strong ethnic men. But with the 9/11 attacks, firefighters saved the lives of high-level financiers and investors, hegemonic men. They were not born hegemonic, of course, but they were elevated to that position through a college education. On 9/11, the discursive declaration of firefighters as heroic elevated them from subordinate to hegemonic status, the same status as financiers. But at this point, the forgotten men are the poor, non-white, cooks, dishwashers, waiters, waitresses and other laborers of the World Trade Center, often immigrants, who were not called heroic enough. (Lorber, 2002, p. 385)

However, when it comes to the heroic American women involved in 9/11, they have not been emphasized much in the media. Bellini equates the subject of these heroic American women with Afghan women who are depicted as faceless (2010, p. 51). Because, in the gendered dynamics of patriarchal societies, when it comes to women, there is always a sense of helplessness. The US invasion of Afghanistan was concretized and justified in the context of the oppression of Afghan women with the representations of good, that is, freedom, liberty, democracy, America's God-given special mission (Esch, 2010, p. 267). G.W. Bush stated that "We did not ask for this mission, yet there is honor in history's call. We have a chance to write the story of our times, a story of courage defeating cruelty and light overcoming darkness. This calling is worthy of any life and worthy of every nation. So let us go forward, confident, determined, and unafraid" (2001d). In the next chapter, the discursive articulations of hegemonic masculinity revealed by the representations of the Bush's Administration about the Afghan women will be analyzed.

CHAPTER 6: HEGEMONIC DISCOURSE AS LEGITIMATION OF THE US INVASION OF AFGHANISTAN: “LIBERATING WOMEN?”

It [veil] covers and hides every single Oriental thing that the Western subject wants to gaze at and possess. (Yeğenoğlu, 1998, p. 48)

In this chapter, the relationship between the discourse of ‘liberation’ and the concept of ‘hegemonic masculinity’ in the US-led invasion of Afghanistan will be examined. Joanne Esch sheds light on two ideologies that have shaped American political culture: American Exceptionalism in the sense that democracy promotion (as discussed above) and the dichotomy of civilization v. barbarism. These ideologies not only defined American national identity but also provided legitimation for military violence throughout American history (2010, p. 358). This study provides a third approach to understanding American political culture as ‘hegemonic masculinity’ by using the example of the US-led invasion in Afghanistan as a hegemonic project. The discursive manifestation of hegemonic masculinity in the invasion of Afghanistan can be seen in gendered discourses of George W. Bush, State Department, the Congress at the official level and of American intellectuals as well as in the media. The embodiment of these three ideologies has intertwined with each other aiming to legitimize the US-led invasion of Afghanistan. Particularly, the discourse of ‘liberation’ in the name of women’s rights in Afghanistan operated as the most visible hegemonic discursive articulation. Within this framework, Foucauldian perspective is useful to uncovering the gendered discourses, because he believes that power produces knowledge and they are interactional phenomena (1977, p. 27). In this study, we focus on how power produces, controls, and manipulates knowledge about the War on Terror and the ontology of the Afghan people, specifically Afghan women, in order to manufacture consent for legitimizing its war in the eyes of the international community.

6.1. Just War Theory and the US Invasion of Afghanistan

Following the 9/11 attacks, the US and its coalition allies launched *Operation Enduring Freedom* (OEF) in Afghanistan on October 7th after the Taliban regime refused to close terrorist camps. This military operation was in accordance with the Bush doctrine, which committed the US to fight against both the perpetrators of the attacks and those who supported them, without distinguishing between them. The doctrine also aimed to promote human freedom with the goal of establishing enduring peace in the Middle East and the world (Thiessen, 2009, p.4).

Despite the War on Terror is metaphorically and discursively constructed (Beshara, 2018, p. 90), choosing the word 'war' needs justification. Walzer notes that "war is hell" because people get killed but "some wars are not hell" (2006, pp. 22-25) because it has a just cause. Walzer points out the 'just war' theory, if a war is necessary it must be based on 'just cause' (2006). In addition, it must be committed by just authority with the right intent and as a last resort (Temes, 2003, p.15). The American reflexivity on the war often relies on the notion of 'just' cause to provide moral and political leverage for getting support domestically and globally (Lazar&Lazar, 2007, p.58). The moral cause of just war is one of the tools used by hegemonic powers to legitimize their extra-territorial operation, and it provides a domain for hegemonic powers to speak for 'all' and to make war reasonable for 'all'. In this way, the moral cause serves as a means for powerful nations to assert their dominance on the global stage (Flint&Falah, 2004, p. 1385). For the aim of unveiling why the War on Terror is just war, sixty American intellectuals, one of them was J. K. Elshtain, signed and released *What We are Fighting For: A Letter From America* in February 2002. They argued that:

We fight to defend ourselves, but we also believe that we fight to defend those universal principles of human rights and human dignity that are the best hope for humankind.

Mann (2006) criticized those who signed the letter, arguing that none of the signatories joined the war, but they spoke on the behalf of those who are fighting this war.

The use of the pronoun 'we' tells us about the national style of America (p. 151). It is another level of legitimization that the signatories attribute universality to the values they defend, morally embedded the war in the just war ethic and try to carry the war to a global legitimacy. Elshtain argues that the WOT's just cause is based on Al-Qaeda's motivations and she states that "they loathe us because of who we are and what our society represents" (2003, p. 3). Regarding the role of intellectuals in the production of knowledge (Gramsci, 1971, p. 9), American intellectuals constructed their own sense of human rights and human dignity by attributing universality to them with the aim of manufacture consent of public and international community in order to legitimate invasion. In other words, intellectuals played a role in the construction of the cultural and ideological dimension of what Gramsci called the war of position (1971, p. 238). This is a siege war in America's construction of cultural hegemony.

In accordance with Foucault's power and knowledge mechanism, we need to take into account that discourses are controlled, selected and organized (1970, p. 52). In this context, G.W. Bush's emphasis on just war ethics in his discourses shows how power produces knowledge. In these power relations, the Bush administration shapes the desired knowledge by producing hegemonic discourses. In the light of these considerations, the American war campaign should have been guided by the principles of just war ethics, which are rooted in the protection of civilian life, self-defense, and human rights (Lazar&Lazar, 2007, p. 59). In the days following 9/11 attacks, one could observe in the following discourses defensive phase of just war theory embedded in the speeches of George W. Bush:

(1) We will take *defensive* measures against terrorism to *protect* Americans (G.W. Bush 2001e).

(2) We *defend* not only our precious freedoms, but also the freedom of people everywhere to live and raise their children free from fear (G.W. Bush 2001f).

(3) Price of freedom and security is high, it is never too high. Whatever it costs to *defend* our country, we will pay (G. W. Bush 2002a).

(4) We will *defend* ourselves and our future against terror and lawless violence (G.W. Bush 2001g).

(5) We will *defend* the peace against threats from terrorists and tyrants (G.W. Bush, 2002b).

Discourses of protection and defense reflect to call for the operation against terrorism in order to boost national security (Lazar&Lazar, 2007, p. 59). In this way, these discourses consolidated the idea of just cause because of the fact that these framed a national unity for the sake of freedom. The last element of just cause is human rights. In the name of human rights, a liberation mission is also a popular vision to justify a war. America positions itself as the hero and liberator of the world (Khalid, 2011, p. 20). Choosing the names of military operations such as *Operation Enduring Freedom* and *Operation Iraqi Freedom* reflects the US' just cause materialization in the name of human rights (Lazar&Lazar, 2007, p. 61). Mann notes that 'the harboring of terrorists' and 'weapons of mass destruction' and their connection with Al-Qaeda were the reasons for the legitimization of the conversion of imperialist tendencies towards just war (2006, p. 147). It should be noted, however, that there is no concrete evidence that the Taliban are harboring al-Qaeda members (Williams, 2011, p. 570). Therefore, the harboring of terrorists is a manufactured justification for the invasion of Afghanistan. G. W. Bush emphasized just cause in his discourses to persuade the international community and public opinion that the invasion was a just war. It is clearly seen in the following discourses:

(6) To all the men and women in our military, every soldier, sailor, every airman [...], I say this: Your mission is defined. The objectives are clear. *Your goal is just* (G.W. Bush, 2001h).

(7) Our cause is *just*, and worthy of sacrifice (G.W. Bush, 2001i)

(8) Our cause is *necessary*. Our cause is just. And no matter how long it takes, we will defeat the enemies of freedom (G.W. Bush, 2001j).

(9) We have come together to mark a terrible day, to reaffirm *a just and vital cause* (G.W. Bush, 2002c).

Emphasizing that the cause of war is just to create a frame of why war is necessary (Walzer, 2006, p. 22). This is because these statements argued that terrorists and the states that harbor them deny human rights and hate the United States (NSS, 2002, p. 14). For this reason, the US, ascribing universality to its missions, uses human rights and morality as part of its hegemonic project. This study concerns the questions of which human rights causes should be acknowledged as just in the US invasion of Afghanistan and how does the notion of hegemonic masculinity provide a foundation for these causes in order to legitimization of the invasion?

Lazar and Lazar argue that although liberation as a part of just cause is often interpreted as a “collateral benefit” of military self-defense and the political pragmatism of American self-interest (2007, p. 61). Reducing the concept of liberation to a secondary cause would be a mistake. It is not only part of the invasion but also a cultural reason that creates a legitimization tool for the invasion fed by the gendered structure of the war. The palatable discursive relationship established by president G. W. Bush between al-Qaeda and saving Afghan women created a heroic and noble vision of the invasion of Afghanistan in the eyes of international and domestic community (Hirji, 2005, p. 1). Therefore, in his public addresses, he often highlighted the oppression of Afghan women in order to changing parameters of the world towards to the legitimization of invasion. In the following discourses, we can see some example of the discourses of the G. W. Bush referencing to the women oppression by the Taliban.

(9) Afghanistan’s people have been brutalized... Women are not allowed to attend school. You can be jailed for owning a television. A man can be jailed in Afghanistan if his beard is not long enough (G. W. Bush, 2001k)

(10) Women are executed in Kabul’s soccer stadium. They can be beaten for wearing socks that are too thin (G.W. Bush, 2001l).

- (10) The Taliban's days of harboring terrorists and dealing in heroin and brutalizing women are drawing to a close (G.W. Bush, 2001m).
- (11) They[.....]subjecting women to fierce brutality (G.W. Bush, 2001n).
- (12) We value life; the terrorists ruthlessly destroy it. We value education; the terrorists do not believe women should be educated (G.W. Bush, 2001o).
- (13) The mothers and daughters of Afghanistan were captives in their own homes-forbidden from working or going to school (G.W. Bush, 2002d).

Inspired by from Foucault's view that power produces knowledge, the ontology of Afghan women and men was shaped in a way to gain public consent. Foucault described discourse not only as the manifestation or concealment of desire, but rather as the subject of desire (1981, pp. 52-53). Discourses about the oppression of Afghan women have become hegemonic discourses, constructing the desired knowledge. With these discourses, George W. Bush made Afghan women one of the main objectives of the invasion as victims to be rescued by the US (Russo, 2006, p. 560). Articulating Afghan women as victims of brutality and oppression has not only assigned a heroic masculine warrior role to the United States and its allied partners but also constructed Afghan women as inherently inferior and dependent (Gregory, 2001, p.4). These articulations were a means of subjecting Afghan women to the hegemonic masculinity embedded in US foreign policy. In addition to G.W. Bush, in the 107th Congress, representative Ms. Norton from Columbia stated that:

What we are seeing in Afghanistan is.... gender apartheid. This is very different from gender inequality.... As we are seeing in Afghanistan is much like the stigmatization we saw Nazi Germany or slavery. Indeed women in Afghanistan have been essentially converted into slaves. All the element of slavery are there. They can not work. They can not go to school. They can not go to universities. They can not even leave home except in the company of a man. It has become shameful to the woman. You are covered from head to toe, not just your face and head as so many religious require, but every part of you. It is shameful to be seen as a woman.

She has drawn a comprehensive and accurate analysis of women under the Taliban's oppression, but in describing the extent of the oppression, she ignores the agencies of Afghan women through discursive reductionism. However, these discourses have been framed within a historical and Orientalist perspective that portrays the benevolence and superiority of the United States in constructing gender equality, thus reinforcing American hegemonic masculinity (Russo, 2006, p. 558). In addition, First Lady Laura Bush played an significant role in promoting the just cause of the war. She portrayed a compassionate image and integral part of justifying the military intervention campaign. She focuses on the necessity of intervention for the women of Afghanistan (Dubriwny, 2005, p. 84). In her radio address on November 17, 2001, she stated that:

The brutal oppression of women is a central goal of the terrorists,....the Taliban and its terrorist allies were making the lives of children and women in Afghanistan miserable....Women have been denied access to doctors when they're sick. Life under the Taliban is so hard and repressive, even small displays of joy are outlawed -- children aren't allowed to fly kites; their mothers face beatings for laughing out loud. Women cannot work outside the home, or even leave their homes by themselves.....only the terrorists and the Taliban forbid education to women..... threaten to pull out women's fingernails for wearing nail polish. The plight of women and children in Afghanistan is a matter of deliberate human cruelty, carried out by those who seek to intimidate and control. (Bush, L. 2001)

G. W. Bush and Laura Bush's discourses reduced war to gendered dynamics. Tickner argues that portraying women as vulnerable and men as heroic, sacrificing themselves to protect the vulnerable, legitimizes war. (2001, p. 57). A woman's reference to women's oppression is an important reference because it mobilizes the experience of proving masculinity. In other words, masculinity is manifested by referring to the people of military as heroes who save the helpless victims in times of war (Connell, 1990, p. 94), because it makes war reasonable. For Cockburn, war can be thinkable with some reasons such as oil resources, national autonomy and gender issues. Focusing on the liberation of Afghan women reminds mythical Helen of Troy as gender-themed war (2010, p. 149). Regarding gender,

the War on Terror in Afghanistan, Kim Berry shed light on the *Symbolic Use of Afghan Women* in her famous article argues that “although ideologically opposed to each other, both the Taliban and the U.S. have used Afghan women as symbols in their respective wars.” For the Taliban, the control of women was a symbol of the synthesis of Pashtun traditions and radical Islam in order to establish ideal society, while for the US it was used to justify the bombing campaigns against Afghanistan and the war against terrorism (2003, p. 151).

According to Mann (2006), every action, decision and discourse pushed into the sphere of politics needs to be legitimized by something else. Aesthetics is one of the legitimization tools of politics, because of the fact that their meaning is not pre-determined or subjective, but is formed by the knowledge and values of the perceivers. Aesthetics are “deeply embedded and tacitly assumed” in the representations (pp. 149-150). It shows that there is a gap between the mode of representation and political representation (Bleiker, 2001, pp. 510-511). As a form of representation, the successful production of the aesthetics of war bridges the gap between the just cause and the aggressive nature of war. Masculine style of the US’ war on terror in Afghanistan, aestheticized representation of Afghan women by veiling and evilization of Taliban and Al-Qaeda contributed to the reproduction American manhood (Mann, 2006, pp. 149-150).

In this context, the experience of proving American masculinity (see Kimmel, 2006) is deeply racialized and gendered through the use of liberation discourse in the US invasion of Afghanistan. This thesis argues that the aestheticization of the unveiling and the evilization of the enemy are intertwined and both feed into and reinforce the hegemonic form of US masculinity within the Orientalist framework. I therefore choose Said’s concept of orientalism as a form of cultural and ideological discourse of the Western perception of the Oriental ‘Afghans’ as a starting point.

6.2. Orientalist Images in the US Invasion of Afghanistan

Said described Orientalism as “the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient, dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it”, to put it concisely it refers to “Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient” (Said, 1979, p. 3). These

representations manifested the Orient's knowledge (image, idea, personality, experience) as 'Other', but also positioned the West as everything that the Orient is not, that is, its opposite, and completed European civilization (Said, 1979, pp. 1-7). In this context, Orientalist assumptions reinforce the idea of liberating the East, which they see as the Other, through Western intervention.

Eastern Other's gendered representations depict 'other' women as "voiceless victims" of barbaric male others/enemies. In contrast, Western Self's gendered representations construct US soldiers as heroes, enlightened and civilized, while portraying American women as free individuals, thus legitimizing military invasion (Khalid, 2011, p. 16). In this context, the feminist reading of Said's notion of Orientalism has generated a hierarchy between white and brown men and women through the dichotomies of femininity and masculinity. By placing deviant, barbaric brown men and oppressed brown women at the bottom of the scale, it positions the civilised or hegemonic, benevolent white masculine man at the top of the scale (Khalid, 2014, pp. 2-3; 2011, p. 20).

Bush's post-9/11 discourse being filled with motifs of war reflects a gendered logic that exalts masculinity by portraying the enemy as irrational and barbaric others. This is, because the "Orient was not (and is not) considered a free subject of thought or action" (Khalid, 2011, p. 16). The then Senator Biden from Delaware described the 9/11 attacks as a "cataclysmic tragedy" and stated that "this is struggle between civilization and barbarity" (107th Congress, 2001). Attributing the barbarity to the enemy makes pivotal the US shared beliefs as freedom, justice and liberty and Senator Akaka from Hawaii, by associating these values with American citizens, emphasized that within civilization, "each of us shine as a beacon" (107th Congress, 2001). In this regard, G. W. Bush's subsequent discourses on freedom and civilization reinforce the claim that the US is the "beacon of freedom" and a hegemonic power through its struggle with the uncivilized. In the following discourses, the distinction between civilized and uncivilized, as produced by G.W. Bush, is clearly evident.

(14) We wage a war to save civilization (G. W. Bush, 2001p).

(15) This is civilization's fight. This is the fight of all who believe in freedom (G. W. Bush, 2001q).

(16) The civilized world is now responding. We act to defend ourselves and deliver our children from a future of fear. We choose the dignity of life over a culture of death (G.W. Bush, 2001r).

(17) enemies of freedom committed an act of war against our country. Americans have known wars (G.W. Bush, 2001s).

(18) Americans are asking, why do they hate us? They hate what we see right here in this chamber — a democratically elected government. Their leaders are self- appointed. They hate our freedoms — our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other (G.W. Bush, 2001t).

The relationship between hegemonic masculinity and Orientalism in the invasion of Afghanistan should be read as a mutually reinforcing relation to Western superiority over the East. Put it differently, the hierarchy between Western men-Eastern men and Eastern women-Western women are the manifestation of hegemonic masculinity within the Orientalist framework. Hegemonic masculinity is the "more specific treatment of embodiment in contexts of privilege and power" (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 829), and is constructed in relation to emphasized femininity and subordinated masculinities (Connell, 1987, p.186). In the US invasion of Afghanistan, to construct the knowledge of the Orient 'other' man as subordinated and evil (Barber, 2015, p. 441), and constructing the 'other' woman's knowledge as someone who must achieve the emphasized or aestheticized femininity (Oakley, 2018, p. 1), and subordinating both to the savior means claiming hegemonic masculinity as the cultural ideal.

Subordinating the 'other women' and foregrounding the 'saving trope' as one of the ways in which wartime femininity involved women in war is a manifestation of masculine violence legitimized by protectivity (Fluri, 2009a, p. 144). In the context of Afghanistan,

however, the saving trope is not new. It has been used in the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan (saving women from the patriarchal structure of Afghanistan) and in the mujaheddin's struggle against the Soviets (saving women from the Soviet ideology) and in the Taliban's struggle against the mujaheddin (saving women from the gang rape and violation of human rights of Mujaheddin) and finally in the US invasion of Afghanistan, as saving Afghan women from the oppressive regime of Taliban (Rashid, 2001). At this point, the following questions need to be asked. Liberation from what? Liberation from the oppressive regime of the Taliban or Liberation from the veil? Which one was the US aiming for? The veil was known as one of the oppressive practices dictated by the Taliban, while it also became a pivotal point in the discourses that produced by the G.W. Bush and his administration in order to legitimize its invasion of Afghanistan. However, it was the most emphasized practice for the West. In the next section, I will try to convey how the aestheticization of the unveiling can be seen as a manifestation of US hegemonic masculinity.

6.3. Aestheticization of the Un/Veiling as Site of Emphasized Femininity

In the symbolization of Afghan women, veil can be seen as a reasonable legitimization tool because of the fact that it was provable. The discursive articulation of 'liberation' has narrowed the parameters of our knowledge about Afghanistan through representations in media and official statements, the image of burqa-clad women has been imposed on the world's perception, despite it is not being the primary issue for Afghan women. Given this context, the aestheticization of the (un)veiling as a manifestation of US hegemonic masculinity takes place as a control of women bodies as a site of 'emphasized femininity' within the Orientalist framework. Thus, trying to control of Afghan women body by intervening their choice about the veiling and unveiling was the part of persuasion attempt to international community in order to legitimate invasion.

From this perspective, for the West, veiling is a practice that challenges the dominant gender norms. Therefore, Connell defines hegemonic masculinity, as stated above, practice that responds to the question of the justification of the patriarchal order, which guarantees the "dominant position of men and the subordination of women" (1995, p. 77). In Connell's

definition, this dominant position of masculinity is realized through the control of the female body, in other words, maintaining the gender roles assigned to women and constructing women's knowledge as subordinate through emphasized femininity. That is, this subordination is intended to serve the advantages and desires of men on a global level (Connell, 1987, p. 183). But women can also feel subjugated by non-hegemonic forms of masculinity. What makes hegemonic masculinity dominant over other forms of masculinity is that it is based on the sustaining of practices that institutionalize its domination over women. This institutionalization is a practice that simultaneously embodies female domesticity, violence, misogyny and heterosexuality (p. 186). Connell (1987) states that "the option of compliance is central to the pattern of femininity that is given most cultural and ideological support at present, called here *emphasized femininity*" (p. 187). She cited Marilyn Monroe as both the archetype and satire of emphasized femininity (p. 188). In this context, emphasized femininity gives importance to visibility. The veil, as a religious symbol, is a practice that conceals visibility. Fluri argues that in contrast, unveiling is a process based on the control of the female body, the imposition of norms of masculinity, the visibility of sexuality and the objectification of the female body in accordance with certain (Western) beauty standards (2009a; 2009b, p. 148).

Nader argues, control of other women with saving trope is a means of asserting 'positional superiority' (1989, p. 324), and in the context of the US invasion of Afghanistan, this assert of superiority has been materialized by trying with the fantasies of penetration and accessing the inaccessible. The US discursively and visually reduced the ontology of the East to the metaphor of the veil and played a role in the production of Easternness by making a discursive move. The veil evokes a metaphysical imaginary that simultaneously represents both reality and its concealment, that is, the veil is discursively constructed between "appearance and reality" and "surface and depth" (Yeğenoğlu, 1998, p. 52). The veil creates a barrier between the oriental female body and the Western perspective. The West sees the veil as an "enigma and a fantasmatic figure" of the mystery of the Orient. Therefore, the inaccessibility of the veiling woman leads to "Western fantasies of penetration" (Yeğenoğlu, 1998, p. 39).

In the West, there was a tendency to ignore the different contexts of the veil although it can be a religious or cultural symbol, and it can be forced by the state or it can be choice. However, the liberation discourse renders the different contexts of the veil invisible and it means, as if, you (Afghan women) want to be free from the veil and I will do it for you. For Kapur, the US intervention in Afghanistan was also an intervention in women's agency and choices (2002, p. 219). For the West, Islam as the barbaric and uncivilized source of women's inequality and veiling as the extreme oppression of women by patriarchal culture, with reference to the repressive practices of the Taliban in Afghanistan as seen in the media (Hirschmann, 1998, p. 345).

In this context, Putri refers to veiling as a reflection of the hegemonic masculinity of patriarchal culture (2020, p. 117). However, many Muslim women practice veiling as a voluntary act, while others see it as a sign of their agency and a symbol of their cultural code (Hirschman, 1998, p. 117). For some it refers to honor and resistance against the West in Iran, and rejection of assimilation in immigrant communities in the Western countries (Kapur, 2002, p. 217). Veiling practices range from the headscarf to the black hijab, and the burqa as a form of head-to-toe covering. Some Muslim women do not choose veiling. Identifying a common practice of veiling across Islamic countries is therefore biased as it ignores the cultural, historic and religious plurality. However, interpreting veiling practices can reveal the manifestation of gender oppression in certain cultures, such as the use of the burqa in some Muslim countries as an example (Hirschman, 1998, p. 346). Because when the veil becomes an imposition of the state, patriarchal culture and male hegemony, it ceases to be a personal choice and produces gender inequalities.

In Afghanistan, the burqa, a form of veil, is a traditional garment worn by women in rural areas, particularly among the Pashtun ethnic groups (Abu-Lughod, 2002, p. 785). Women in rural areas have embraced the burqa as a sign of anonymity, privacy, and prestige. However, women in urban areas have preferred contemporary and urban-looking scarves. Even within the local context, the veil does not have a fixed and singular meaning, and this point has been continuously overlooked by those who seek to liberate women from the veil (Pazira, 2005, p. 311). Contrary to the West's perception about veil, Abu-Lughod notes that

“Taliban did not invent burqa” (2002, p. 785). However, the Western gaze has aesthetically rendered the burqa penetrable because it does not conform to Western women's standards. Fluri points out discursively that visual representations of the burqa marginalized Afghan women as victims in need of saving from the oppression of Taliban (2009, p. 147).

As a means of acquiring knowledge about the world through the media, visual language is important (Weber, 2008, p. 138), for aestheticizing Afghan women. Toynbee notes that “for the West, the burqa was the easy symbol of Taliban oppression, a shorthand moral justification for liberating Afghanistan” (The Guardian, 2002). Western representations of the burqa often reproduce the idea of women's liberation as a part of the moral just war through the use of symbolic clichés and generalizations of the veil associated with cultural knowledge about the Islamic world (Pacwa, 2019, p. 13). In *Time Magazine's* article titled "About Face" the burqa is described as a "kind of bag for the living" (Lacayo, 2001), and some Western media have depicted women who wear the burqa as ghostly and silent victims (Heffernan, 2016: 102). Furthermore, other media outlets have fetishized the act of unveiling by producing ideographs celebrating the removal of the veil (Kensinger, 2003, p. 15), and these Western ideographies of burqa distance it from its cultural, religious, and personal choice context (Pacwa, 2019, p.13). However, it should be emphasized that the media is not the only actor in the aestheticization of the veil. The U.S. Department of State *Report on the Taliban's War Against Women* has described women as "donning the tent-like burqa" (2001)

According to Fluri, the narrative of 'saving Afghan women' became a significant method for ‘rallying public opinion’ (2009a, p. 143) and discursive construction of women’s victimization due to veiling is also a method for manipulating public opinion within the Congress to get support for the intervention (Abirafeh, 2009, p. 34). Senator Barbara Boxer refers, in her statement, that the burqa constitutes an understandable symbol of oppression because it is positioned in opposition to cultural representations of US women's independence and emancipation (Fluri, 2009, p.148). In addition, the president of the Feminist Majority Foundation (FMF), Eleanor Smeal, equates burqa with “shroud”. (US Congress, 2001). For West, The burqa was one of the most visible sites of suffering and oppression because it was

the antithesis of Western perceptions of modernity. For this reason, the West thought that Afghan women should be saved by "heroic men." Delphy points out that in order to legitimate the role of men, willingness to liberating mission had to be demonstrated as State Secretary Rumsfeld stated that "I'd rather die than see Afghan women suffer one moment longer under the heel of the Taliban" (Delphy, 2015, p. 94). But two decades later, the US withdrew from Afghanistan, leaving Afghan women back in the hands of the Taliban. Today, girls are denied access to education in Afghanistan and women and gender-based oppression still persists (Akbar & Verveer, 2023). This has systematically erased what the US thought was 20 years of progress and exposed the symbolic use of women in the US war in Afghanistan, as Kim Berry has argued above.

Emblemization of veil as a practice of subjugation (Kapur, 2002, p. 217), is also related to the Western apprehension of third-world women and lies in the distinction between the Western bikini and the Eastern burqa (Heffernan, 2016, p. 122). A popular cartoon by Catherine Beaunez is an example of the misrepresentation of veiling and unveiling. In this cartoon, a woman in a burqa and a woman in a bikini stand side by side and express their thoughts in the same bubble. In this bubble it is written: "Je ne voudrais pas être à sa place" '[I would not want to be in her place]'. In analyzing Beaunez's representation of the burqa and the bikini, Heffernan (2016) argues that the burqa-wearing woman sees the burqa as a manifestation of her faith and self-respect, and also the burqa-wearing women may perceive the bikini-wearing woman as someone oppressed in the secular and materialistic predicament of the West. On the other hand, the bikini-wearing woman, perceives the burqa-wearing woman as an individual who cannot escape the controlling hegemony of an outdated and patriarchal religion over her body and whose sexual freedom is restricted (pp. 119-20). Because contrary to Afghan cultural practices the unveiling and revealing of the female body is identified with liberty in the US (Fluri, 2009b, p. 148).

Another point of the US desire of liberating Afghan women was based on a comparison between sexual oppression and sexual freedom between Muslim women and their American counterparts through veiling and unveiling. When the Taliban regime fell in 2001, Western media was ready to photograph women removing their burqas. International

cosmetics and beauty brands such as L'oréal, Vogue and Revlon were also ready to introduce Afghan women to the modern world, the sexual revolution and their own consumer pleasures of cosmetics (Heffernan, 2016, p.122).

6.3.1. Modernizing Women of Afghanistan

Another way for the US to manufacture international consent for the legitimacy of the invasion was to modernize Afghan women and demonstrate it to the world. For the purpose, the US sponsored The Beauty Academy of Kabul and participation in Miss Afghanistan as a part of Miss Earth pageant in 2003 served the Western mission of “saving Afghan women” (see Lila Abu-Lughod, 2002), socially, economically and politically. The US endeavor to modernize Afghanistan, as a justification for its invasion, aimed to manufacture consent from both the national and international community. This is because, in the Western context, modernization is often perceived as a means of achieving liberation.

Fluri (2009b) notes that in this scenario, the burqa serves as a site of Taliban oppression, thereby associating corporeal femininity with the ideal of promoting the female body through Anglo-Saxon facial features such as light skin color, a slim, tall, and youthful appearance (p. 243). In addition to these, red lipstick, nail polish, blush and perms were metaphors for this ideal femininity. (Stiles, 2006, p.1). Functionalizing corporeal modernity as part of the saving and liberating mission was used to exemplify why the Western ideal of freedom was necessary. In addition, linking beauty to liberty was used as a way to gain the consent and acceptance of Afghan women by the US (Fluri, 2009b, pp. 241).

The Western perception of freedom and modernity is geared towards preserving their position as the first world by reinforcing the world they perceive as the third world, which includes uneducated, impoverished, and oppressed women (1991, pp. 56-73). The aestheticization of the burqa as a symbol of oppression can be seen as a reductionist approach that forces Muslim women to choose between gender identities and religious beliefs. However, Muslim women are not only Muslim, but also not just women (Kapur, 2002, p. 219). The reductionist perspective that associates veil with unfreedom is to render invisible the subject roles of women in the way their *sui generis* perception of the world in different

social and historical contexts. In other words, to standardize Muslim women's religious attitudes or preferences is a violation of their own understanding of freedom. Lila Abu-Lughod (2002) has advocated “recognizing and respecting differences” to deal with differences without rejecting cultural relativism in a structure where different cultures and ways of living are intertwined. By questioning normative approaches to liberation, she argues that liberation has different interpretations, desires and choices for different personhood (p. 786). Her approach is a critique of the universalization of the rhetoric of liberation of Afghan women that reinforces cultural divisions. She (p. 787) asks:

Can we only free Afghan women to be like us or might we have to recognize that even after "liberation" from the Taliban, they might want different things than we would want for them? What do we do about that?

The answer to this question is ‘no’. Because there is an asymmetry between veiling, constructed as the ontology of the East, and unveiling, constructed as the ontology of the West. For the West, in contrast, there is a symmetry between the discourse of ‘liberating women’ and ‘Western standards’. Yeğenoğlu (1998) states that the idea of the Western perspective only wants to construct Afghan women as the Eastern other and render their subject invisible is a simple fallacy. According to Yeğenoglu, modernity is a form of structural supremacy that relies on “visibility and transparency” while at the same time tolerating “darkness”. But discursively constructed knowledge problematizes the object, defining it as an object to be controlled (1998, p. 41). It reveals that the Eastern ethico-political program cannot be separated from the patriarchal subjectivity that is disrupted by the presence of the veiled woman and disappears under her veil. This discomfort is something to be enjoyed. Because by transforming the difference between East and West into a controllable discursive object, it gives the West an imaginary sense of unity and superiority. But this feeling is produced by an epistemological metaphysics (1998, p. 47). In this context, veiled women are marginalized in a different way by the West (Yeğenoğlu, 1998, p. 41). Because for the West, they are potential women who need to reach the modernity of the West.

Therefore, the inclination to modernize Afghan women has been a significant realm for legitimizing the invasion on the international stage. This is because actions framed by references to human rights, particularly those concerning women, are often the most straightforward way to legitimize wars. However, when considering the US invasion of Afghanistan and the attempt to shape the ontology of Afghan women by the hands of the West, the tendencies towards modernizing Afghan women have become a site that reinforces the distinction between the West and the East.

6.3.2. Burqa as a Legitimization Tool

As a critique, the marginalization of women in that way is a manifestation of liberation on the behalf of human rights and it means attributing to man the possession of the power to liberate. In other words, men who have power, such as political leaders or military personnel, are often expected to embody hegemonic masculinity. This can lead to the reinforcement of gender inequality and the subordination of women. The aestheticization of the veil in the US invasion of Afghanistan is, in fact, a way for the U.S. to say to Afghan women, you are liberated by our power. Everyone will witness the power of our liberation forces, and as a result, the world will respect us for liberating you. This reinforces a cultural hegemony constructed through discourse. Ayotte and Hussain note that while the US emphasizes in its discourse that liberation has to come from outside (2005, p. 123), Afghan women were not so close to a US-promoted idea of freedom. Amani Abu-l Fadi (2007), for example, pointed this out in a speech she gave at the Women's Forum at Cairo Conference:

They [the West] try to influence us with their consumerism and immorality. They want us to be like their women. Do not teach us freedom because we know what freedom is. Freedom is getting rid of the occupation and controlling our own wealth. It is not the freedom of homosexuality and immorality. It is not the freedom promoted by Condolezza Rice.

Amani Abu-l Fadi criticized that freedom brought by the US would erase women's agency. Because Western way of life-saving is based on what postcolonial scholar Spivak calls "white men saving brown women from brown men" (1999, p. 284) and highlights the

intersectionality of race, gender, and subalternity in the pursuit of liberation. However, giving honorary whiteness to the savior and silencing the knowledge of third-world women by reducing them to a subaltern class constitutes “epistemic violence” (1999, p. 285; 2003, p. 92). Ayotte and Hussain (2005) point out that the US symbolic representations of burqa constitute an example of epistemic violence because they depict Afghan women as “gendered slaves in need of saving by the West” and erase their agency as subjects in international relations (p. 112-113). Furthermore, reducing Afghan women, to the status of objects victimized by male perpetrators of patriarchy is a metaphorical aestheticization of subaltern subjects (p. 121). The West's obsession with the burqa masks the structural violence inflicted upon Afghan women, including limited access to education and healthcare, exploitative employment conditions, hunger, and physical violence (p. 126).

Afghan women had more important problems than the burqa. When the Taliban came to power, promising to liberate Afghan women from the Mujaheddin and establish a pure Islamic state, they banned women from going to work, from being educated, and from going out without a male company. The compulsory burqa was just one part of this gender oppression (Tickner, 2002, p. 341). In addition, the Taliban era can be seen as a completely state-sponsored model of misogyny. It was a model that controlled women's lives and bodies by all means on behalf of honor and protection of patriarchal institutions (Ahmed-Ghosh, 2003, p.7). In masculine relations at the local level, Afghan women's bodies were used by the Taliban for political alliances, and in masculine relations at the international level, they were used to protect the international interests of the hegemonic power of the United States (Stabile & Kumar, 2005, p. 773)

However, rather than passive recipients of the Taliban's misogyny and the discursive fantasy of the US invasion, Afghan women demanded freedom of speech, equality and the right to political participation, even if they remained veiled (Kapur, 2002, p. 225). Founded in 1977 in Kabul to protect the rights of Afghan women and ensure social justice, *The Revolutionary Association of Women of Afghanistan* (RAWA) has continued the fight for human rights against the Soviets, against the mujahideen, against the Taliban and against the warlords, fueled by religious fundamentalism, who were deployed in Afghanistan after the

US invasion. However, RAWA receives limited financial assistance from international NGOs in its fight against misogyny and brutality because its intention is undoubtedly to empower women in politics in a way that will change political and social relations in Afghanistan (RAWA).

In contrast, the US has emphasized media representations of the burqa because it considers it less risky to portray women as helpless victims and silent prisoners in its foreign policy perspective (Tickner, 2002, p. 348; Ahsan, 2021, p. 2; Gallagher, 2000, pp. 70-71). As Tickner says, "when women fight for their rights, they generally get less support than when they are perceived as victims" (2002, p. 347). While RAWA has also resisted the forced veil as part of the state's impositions on the female body, they have never prioritized the veil in their resistance. They even used "the burqa against the burqa" to conceal their cameras to document human rights violations by the Taliban (Fluri, 2009b, p. 245). But when these documents, films and transcripts of violence and human rights violations were publicized worldwide, it reinforced the saving trope and the necessity of US bombs. But US bombs did not have the sensors to select and kill specific individuals (i.e. members of the Taliban or al-Qaeda), despite their rhetoric of smart-bomb technology (Fluri, 2009a, p. 150). Nevertheless, as a marker of US hegemonic power, the saving women trope has also shaped our perception of the invasion of Afghanistan as a discursive space in which the hegemonic form of masculinity is manifested.

6.4. Evilization of the Enemy as Site of Subordination

Another echo of the manifestation of hegemonic masculinity in the war on terror is the evilization of the enemy from an orientalist framework. Evilization is an extreme form of securitization and a powerful manifestation of identity politics due to the qualities attributed to the so-called enemy (Sahill, 2019, p. 196). Therefore, evilization is more than a simple discourse, it is a policy that needs to be examined in political and cultural dimensions (Geis&Wunderlich, 2014, p. 461). As mentioned in the Introduction, America believes it has a mission against evil. It is actually part of American Exceptionalism (Esch, 2010, p. 374). In his inaugural address in 2002, G. W. Bush referred to the US as the "maker of heaven"

and "author of liberty" (Judis, 2005, p. 59). The US used religious references to embody the idea of the "chosen nation", America's mission against the evil. Judis called this the "apocalyptic outlook" and he cites Abraham Keteltas of the Revolutionary Army in 1777. According to Keteltas, choosing wrong over right, choosing injustice over justice, choosing the tyrant over the oppressed, choosing bigotry over pure religion, choosing the prince of darkness, the evil, over the good parent of the universe is the cause of war (quoted in Judis, 2005, p. 56).

Applying this apocalyptic standpoint to international clashes, it would seem natural for the US to legitimize the War on Terror as "a story of courage defeating cruelty and light overcoming darkness" (G.W. Bush, 2001u). In this discourse, there is a triangular relationship between Orientalism, evilization of the enemy male other and masculinity. As stated above, there are multiple types of masculinities. Hegemonic masculinity is attributed to power, authority, whiteness, eliteness, heterosexuality, superior race, and Western upper-class privilege, while subordinate men are associated with racial minority status, lower-class position, and not conform to the culturally idealized form of masculinity (Peterson & Runyon, 2014, p. 160). In this asymmetric relationship, subordinate masculinity is subjugated to the hegemonic masculinity. In the context of the US invasion of Afghanistan, subordinated and marginalized form of masculinity come into play, where Al-Qaeda and Taliban members are discursively evilized and subordinated, thus being subjected to the hegemonic masculinity of the United States.

Shabazz argues that the US hegemonic masculinity refers to male hegemony, heteronormative bias, coercion and merciless rivalry (2012, pp. 165-166). Furthermore, the construction of power and authority (Peterson&Runyon, 1999, p. 42), the desire to control other masculinities (Cheng, 1999, p. 297) and rationality (Connell, 2005, p. 187) and lastly "benevolent and benign paternalism" (Nayak&Malone, 2009, p. 270), identify the hegemonic masculinity of the U.S. Connell (2005) also states that:

with masculinity defined as a character structure marked by rationality, and Western civilization defined as the bearer of reason to a benighted world, a cultural link between the legitimation of patriarchy (p. 187).

Kireççi, on the other hand, points out that Western civilization has constructed a global perception of self/other and gained political supremacy beyond Western borders. (2007, p. 38-39). The Western way of perceiving the world, its values and ideals serve the hegemonic power beyond borders. When it comes to the Taliban, its "strictest interpretation of Sharia law," "subjugation of women" and the "new style of Islamic extremism" (Rashid, 2001, pp. 29, 33, 93) were in a clash with Western ideals and values, but also reinforced US hegemonic masculinity. For this reason, the G. W. Bush administration discursively constructed the enemy 'other' as, evil, unmanly, savage irrational, deviant, barbaric, incapable to govern, enemy of freedom, backward, uncivilized, women hating with non-hegemonic masculine characteristics because of the security, ideological and historical reasons. Because not all men are compatible with the idealized form of masculinity, in that, they are not the powerful and superior. The following discourses produced by G.W. Bush clearly associate the enemy with non-hegemonic masculine characteristics. These discourses, by aligning the enemy with non-hegemonic masculine traits, subordinate and marginalize the enemy, emphasizing the superiority of the Western man within an orientalist framework while also nurturing the cultural hegemony of the United States.

(18) They are the heirs of all the murderous ideologies of the 20th century (G.W. Bush, 2001x).

(19) The United States of America is an enemy of those who aid terrorists and of the barbaric criminals who profane a great religion by committing murder in its name (G.W. Bush, 2001y).

(20) We will never forget all the innocent people killed by the hatred of a few (G.W. Bush, 2001z).

(21) Today, we are a nation awakened to the evil of terrorism, and determined to destroy it (G.W. Bush, 2001za).

(22) They dwell in dark corners of earth. And there, we will find them (G.W. Bush, 2001zb).

(23) Heinous acts of violence perpetrated by faceless cowards (G.W. Bush, 2001zc).

(24) The struggle of humanity against tyranny is the struggle of memory against forgetting. When we fight terror, we fight tyranny (G.W. Bush, 2001zd).

(25) Its (Islam) teachings are good and peaceful, and those who commit evil in the name of Allah blaspheme the name of Allah (G.W. Bush, 2001ze).

(26) Al Qaeda is to terror what the mafia is to crime (G.W. Bush, 2001zf).

In this context, the Bush administration's process of evilization of the enemy we analysis can be explained by Foucault's approach to discourse, that is, *opposition between reason and madness*. According to Foucault, madness is what the sovereign power subordinates and marginalizes by having it evaluated as "null" and "void" (1981, p. 53). The evil, tyranny, deiliness and barbarism attributed to the Taliban and al-Qaeda are Foucault's examples of how power constructs knowledge and conveys it through discourses. This process of knowledge production inherently manifests hegemonic masculinity. Kaufman states that one defining aspect of hegemonic masculinity is the possession of some sort of power associated with manhood (1994, p. 144). G.W. Bush's statement as "we are in conflict of good against evil, and America will call evil by its name" (2002e) demonstrates America's power to claim cultural superiority through the marginalization and subordination of the ontology of the enemy male other, using the concept of 'good'.

At this juncture, Khalid argues that the US portrays itself as the saviors of civilization and teacher of the East on how to govern itself, this approach generates an Orientalist dichotomy and reinforces the hegemonic male's dominance over the male portrayed as 'other' (2011, p. 23). As an example of the evilization process in official level discourses, in the 107th Congress, Representative Mr. Sawyer from Ohio described enemy male other as "cynical evil." Representative Ms. DeGette from Colorado referred to the enemy as the "tyranny of extremism" (107th Congress, 2001). Likewise, Senator Mrs. Carnahan from

Missouri characterized them as "faceless fanatics" and "sophisticated" individuals (107th Congress, 2001). Additionally, Representative Mr. Shays from Connecticut stated that "it is the weapon of an uncivilized, spiritually bankrupt enemy who dares not confront us openly" (107th Congress, 2001). These discourses in many ways aimed at manufacturing consent domestically and internationally.

The feminization of the other as non-hegemonic masculine characters (Khalid, 2014, p. 8) shows the 'masculinist anxiety' of the Bush administration. Sahill refers to the process of evilization of Al-Qaeda and the Taliban as part of the "de-politicization of the conflict" (2019, p. 195). In that, Bush's frequent emphasis on the civilized moral superiority of the West constructed binary opposition between the self and the other. According to this approach, the Taliban and Al-Qaeda believe in a false God (Toros&Mavelli, 2014, p. 512), is evident is G. W. Bush's statement "Theirs is the worst kind of violence, pure malice, while daring to claim the authority of God" (2001zg). Thus, the discursive production of terrorists as evil and positioning them against the Western civilization reinforced the rational and benevolent image of Western men as a site of hegemonic masculinity in the invasion of Afghanistan (Butler, 2004, p. 41). To overcome this masculinist anxiety, military solution was a reasonable tool for the US (Nayak, 2006, pp. 49-50).

G.W. Bush's statement as "We wage a war to save civilization, itself. We did not seek it, but we must fight it—and we will prevail" (2001zh), creates an image that terrorists represent a civilization. In this context, Cloud asks, what does the civilization Bush talks about look like? (2004, p. 286). Huntington identifies civilization with "our way of life" and sees Islam as the other of the West. The main conflict is "between two different versions of what is right and wrong, who is right and who is wrong" (1998, p. 209). Indeed, in President Bush's *Address to the Nation on September 11*, it is evident from his opening statement, "our way of life, our very freedom came under attack" (2001zi), that he emphasized the relevance of the attack on American way of life and emphasized the threat it posed to their loved ones. It was an easy process for an enemy evilized and subordinated through Bush's defined civilization so as to be pushed out of the political sphere.

According to Sahill, the evilization of the Taliban and Al-Qaeda goes beyond Huntington's clash of civilizations. For many Muslims, al-Qaeda and the Taliban do not accurately represent Muslim civilization. The war on terror is seen not as a conflict between two separate civilizations, but as a struggle between terrorists and nations that consider themselves civilized. But George W. Bush has positioned Al-Qaeda and the Taliban as the opposite of civilization, constructing the enemy as barbarians living in weak states such as Afghanistan, with metaphysical evil characteristics (Sahill, 2019, p.199). As G.W. Bush stated "we know they have this mad intent, and we're determined to stop them" (2001zj), is similar to the marginalization of madness in the 17th and 18th centuries within the dichotomy of reason and unreason. The removal of madness from the political and social sphere in Europe and its confinement to the field of medical intervention (Jonas, 2015, p. 586; see Foucault, *Madness and Civilization*), is parallel to the confinement of the enemy, marginalized as evil, to the field of cultural intervention.

Marginalization through race relations also serves as a complementary part within masculinities and represents the "authorization" of hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1995, p. 80). Edward Said refers to this as the "subject race" and discusses the hegemony of the dominated white race (1979, p. 35). According to Foucault (2003), "race wars" that emerged as a discourse after the 16th century (p. 78), and he states that racism is characterized by biopolitics, presenting a hierarchy between the superior race and the inferior race, between "what must live" and "what must die," while also directing the threat towards the side that sovereign power must eliminate (pp. 254-55). In this context, Mutimer (2007, pp. 172-73) states that "the discourse of the war on terror....is extensively racialized. It has articulated its enemy as people identifiable not just by their religion.... But more particularly by their (racial appearance)." In explaining this situation, Mutimer argues that the discourse on the fight against terrorism has produced a more racist and global discourse since European colonialism. This is because when defining the enemy, it is generally associated with Arab characteristics (2007, pp. 172-73). In this context, the process of evilizing the enemy can be defined as a space for producing a hegemonic discourse.

In addition to the common knowledge constructed around race and otherness, there is a failure for the United States, which attempts to prove its hegemonic masculinity through portraying the evilization of the enemy as a site of subordination. This failure lies in the educational background of the perpetrators of the 9/11 attacks. In her book *Masculinities*, Connell (1995) discusses how hegemonic masculinity is produced through college education (p. 238). Higher education based on technical knowledge and rationality privileges certain types of men over others (p. 165). According to Western perspectives, gender regimes in the Middle East have not prioritized college-educated and working-class men. Poverty, low levels of development, and a weak economy have been associated with them (Lorber, 2002, p. 386), this is the depiction of their knowledge as uneducated and irrational. Most of the Al-Qaeda and Taliban members have received education in madrasas, grown up in refugee camps marked by poverty, have been taught to hate women, and have been defined as men who boost their self-esteem by exerting power over women when they feel powerless (Tickner, 2002, p. 338). Up until this point, the subordination of other men as the enemy may be perceived as reasonable tool for the manifestation of hegemonic masculinity.

However, the point that forms the failure is that the profile of the perpetrator pilots of 9/11 attacks does not fit this narrative. They were well-educated individuals from middle or high class backgrounds, coming from wealthy families who sent them to study in America or Europe (Lorber, 2002, p. 286). Friedman stated that what radicalized Mohamed Atta was the Islamist elements he encountered at a mosque during his time in Europe. Later, Mohamed Atta went to Afghanistan for further training (2002, A13). According to Kandiyoti, the anger and alienation that Atta acquired could have stemmed from the difficulties of adapting to Western society (1994, p. 198). It is important not overlook the diverse motivations and backgrounds of terrorists who perpetrated the 9/11 attacks (Crenshaw, 2007).

As a result, articulating terrorists as evil through non-hegemonic masculine traits within an orientalist perspective is a strategic discursive maneuver aimed at accessing the minds of both the public and the international community in order to create an illusion that asserts the superiority of Western civilization and the cultural hegemony of the United States, thereby attempting to legitimize the invasion.

6.5. Illusion of Liberation

It must be said that the liberator role of the United States can only be comprehended if the context of its support for the Taliban and its originator Mujaheddin is ignored (Berry, 2003, p. 150). In the Cold War, the US responded the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan by funding the Mujahideen (Berry, 2003, pp. 138-139). They were even invited to the White House by the US President, Ronald Reagan, the mujahideen were introduced to the media as "[T]hese gentlemen are the moral equivalents of America's founding fathers" (Mamdani, 2002, p. 5). This obvious support for the mujahideen actually paved the way for the emergence of the Taliban. The reason of that support according to Rashid, was geopolitical. This could be seen in UNOCAL, a Texas-based multinational oil company, which was to build a pipeline to transport Turkmenistan's rich natural gas reserves to Pakistan via Afghanistan. The Taliban's control of the region and Iran's balancing power in the region was an opportunity for the US (p. 6). This is why, when the Taliban took over Afghanistan in 1996, the US remained silent on the human rights violations and oppression of women (p. 177).

In May 2001, the US gave 43 million dollars to the Taliban as part of the War on Drugs (L.A. Times), however it became apparent that Afghan women were under an aggressive regime of the Taliban after 9/11 (Kapur, 2002, p. 214). By constructing the notion of gender as one of the important parameters of the invasion, the US offered Afghan women a choice in which they were not in a subject position as living under the oppressive regime of the Taliban or living under the US bombs, because Afghan women were not friends of the US (Delphy, 2015, p. 88). But ironically the US believed that they would save the souls (freedom) of the Afghans, even if they had to kill them to save them (Delphy, 2002, p. 315). That contradiction shows that Afghan women were (are) femina sacra and it shows that how war effects on Afghan women's body.

In the aftermath of 9/11, the portrayal of the Taliban as both supporters of terrorism and oppressors of women prompted the US government to engage feminist concerns and legitimize the military invasion under the name of liberating Afghan women (Ayotte & Hussain, 2005, p. 122). In other words, the US invasion of Afghanistan was a masculine war

with feminist motivations (Shepherd, 2006, p. 30), without considering the agency of women (Viner, 2002) and Muslim feminists who advocate for the coexistence of Islamic practices and gender equality (Lorber, 2002 p. 391). Portraying the enemy as deviant and abnormal and symbolizing Afghan women as vulnerable through the burqa reinforcing gendered dichotomies. In that, if military solutions were pushed into the masculinist realm, humanitarian concerns would be feminized. Military interventions were pushed into the masculine realm through the hard/soft dichotomy, while humanitarian concerns were feminized. In other words, gendering the enemy and gendering intervention contributed to the production of consent in the US invasion of Afghanistan (Shepherd, 2006, pp. 26-29).

According to Russo the role of the Feminist Majority Foundation (FMF) should not be underestimated on this issue. They had an effect on the production of third-world women's knowledge by focusing on the Taliban's "gender apartheid" instead of joining the popular movement against the invasion after 9/11. The FMF contributed to the hegemonic project of the US through imperial feminism, arguing for the necessity of an invasion. In other words, there is an interplay between the US saving trope and the FMF's desire to restore the rights of Afghan women. But by focusing on gender-based oppression, imperial feminism fails to consider the role of exploitation. The FMF's claim of solidarity with Afghan women plays a role in the production of knowledge of the East as Orientalism and justifies interventions (Russo, 2006, p. 558). Feminism, embraced by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice but "not as a woman and not for women and their rights", became a metaphor for suppressing women's equality and racial justice (Eisentein, 2008, p. 27). In other words, feminism is socialized as "bombing Afghanistan to liberate women" (Shigematsu & Kristina & Paintedcrow, 2008, p. 88). In this regard, the U.S. instrumentalized feminism to justify the invasion rather than embracing feminism's advocacy for gender equality.

Although the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan intersects with issues of race, gender, and Orientalism, Afghans have internalized the discourse of liberation to some extent. For example, Thomas E. Gouttierre, Director of the Center for Afghanistan Studies, stated in his *Testimony Before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations* that Afghans expressed their desire for American leadership and aid in the rebuilding process of Afghanistan (2004, pp.

7-8). Gouttierre translated the Dari poem "Rose and Clay" by Sadi Shirazi (from the Gulistan of Shaykh Muslihiddin Sadi) into English, which is a poem that Afghan people often use to describe their feelings towards Americans. The translation is as follows:

*One day at bath a piece of perfumed clay was passed to me
from the hand of a friend.*

I asked the clay — Are you musk or ambergris?

because your delightful scent intoxicates me.

*It answered — I am but a worthless piece of clay that has
sat for a period with a rose.*

*The perfection of that companion left its traces on me
who remains that same piece of earth that I was.*

For those who use this poem, communicating with the perfumed fragrant clay could represent the interactions of the US when they came to Afghanistan with the discourse of “liberation.” The soil in the poem is described as having the effect of being together with the rose for a period of time, which could represent the influence of the Americans on the Afghan people. The Afghan people seem to internalize the changes brought by America, the process of modernization, and the traces of change can be understood as manifesting in this land, in the Afghan people. At the same time, however, this poem indicates that the Afghan people still remain attached to their roots and preserve their local cultural identity. These interpretations reflect how the Afghan people perceive and internalize the American occupation and modernization efforts. It also emphasizes that local identities and cultural values are still important, despite foreign intervention.

In this study, we focused on how Western women and men and Eastern men and women were represented in the US invasion of Afghanistan. In the meantime, the G.W. Bush administration discursively portrayed Afghan women in need of saving from the Taliban oppression and also depicted Afghanistan as feminine way and claimed the superiority of the

West, considering that Afghanistan was unable to govern itself and needed foreign intervention. This approach carried out both the material and ideological dimensions of the invasion at the same time and combined the concepts of coercion and consent. This laid the foundation for the establishment of cultural hegemony. As a result, although the Afghan people were hopeful with the US discourse of "liberation", today they have realized that this discourse was only a tool for legitimizing the invasion. In the next section, an overall analysis of the study will be presented and key findings will be discussed.



CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

The 9/11 terrorist attacks had significant implications for U.S. foreign policy. Despite two decades after the attacks, their impact continues to resonate in U.S. foreign policy. In response to the 9/11 attacks, the U.S. invaded Afghanistan in 2001, which was justified on the basis of the claim that the Taliban harbored Al-Qaeda members. Although the US militarily invaded Afghanistan in the discourses of the Bush administration, in the discourses of senators and congressional members cultural and ideological dimensions of invasion were also manifested. Although this was seen as a mean to establish notion of legitimacy for the invasion, some aspects of this hegemonic discourse highlighted the masculine culture. George W. Bush's statement, "either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists" compelled the world to make a choice. While the choice offered by G.W. Bush can be seen a choice between terrorists and the US it expresses "us" as Western civilization and, "them" as terrorists.

This research shows how official presidential statements from the September 11, 2001 attacks until 2003 manipulated and controlled the perception of the international community regarding the legitimization of the invasion. The Bush administration employs a hegemonic discourse such as us versus them "us and them," "good versus evil," emphasized masculinity "hegemonic masculinity and subordinate masculinities," and "hegemonic masculinity and subjugated femininity." Among these discourses, as my study shows, the most significant one was on liberation, both of the Afghan nation and the Afghan women. By this military intervention, the United States claimed that it liberated Afghanistan. At the same time, the liberation discourse subordinates Afghanistan to the hegemonic masculine discourse by ascribing femininity to it as a country to be liberated. In a speech delivered by George W. Bush in 2002, he stated, "In the first phase of our military operation, American and coalition forces have liberated — have liberated —[sic.] the people of Afghanistan from a barbaric regime" (Thiessen, 2009, p. 117). According to G.W. Bush, the military operation for the liberation of Afghanistan was successful.

My thesis examined the ontological and epistemological foundations of the US claim of liberating Afghan women by using the perspective of critical realism. I therefore claim

that the US invasion of Afghanistan is a hegemonic project; and that the US used gender as a structure that feed hegemonic masculinity. Inspired by Gramsci's writings on hegemony, I tried to provide theoretical framework for the US efforts to manufacture consent both within nation and on the global stage, all aimed at legitimizing the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan. Thus chapter 2 gives a detailed explanations of 'hegemonic masculinity,' conceptualized as a cultural ideal by Connell and Messerschmidt (2005).

In Chapter 3, I reviewed on the literature on hegemony concerning the US invasion of Afghanistan, including the literature on masculinity related to the invasion.

The following chapter, discusses the research methodology and the sources for the study consist of official-level discourses produced by the Bush administration. These discourses were selected with the aim of examining the manifestation of hegemonic masculinity. Official statements produced by the G.W. Bush administration from September 11, 2001, to January 28, 2003, were chosen. The statements of members of Congress and the senate regarding the invasion about 10 hearings in the 107th Congress were analyzed. Foucault's approach to discourse was employed as the analytical method to understand these data within the context of cultural hegemony. In addition to, Foucault's approach, the study also used Ernesto and Laclau's theory of hegemonic discourse. This theory focuses on how different elements of hegemonic projects come together through discourse to create a common identity.

With the aim of understanding gendered images in the US foreign policy and the War on Terror, chapter 5 conducts a historical analysis.

It shows how the war party have pushed American foreign policy into masculine domain throughout the history of the US foreign policy, from the specifically Spanish-American War in 1898 to the “War on Terror.” In this chapter, an examination is carried out on how the US presidents responded to situations of wars and conflicts in foreign policy. Furthermore, this chapter also shows through the discourses that how the War on Terror became gendered, racialized, sexualized, classed, and orientalized, with a focus on how women and men became involved in the war on terrorism and how their involvement manifested masculinity.

Chapter 6 examined how the “liberation” discourse served the construction of the US cultural hegemony by producing several hegemonic discourses about the US invasion of Afghanistan. This chapter highlights efforts of liberation discourses as a hegemonic mechanism including efforts of manufacturing consent among the domestic and international community. This chapter concludes that the Orientalist framework which is created through the efforts to liberate and modernize Afghan women. The discursive evilization of the terrorists who perpetrated the 9/11 attacks and the Taliban, contribute to the production of consent regarding the invasion and thus serve the cultural hegemony of the United States.

This study recognizes hegemonic masculinity as a reality independent of hegemonic projects. However, peoples' knowledge of hegemonic masculinity is shaped through the construction of hegemonic projects. This approach aligns with the Gramscian notion of cultural hegemony, emphasizing that the establishment of ideological control is achieved by producing social practices, beliefs, discourses, and values (Giroux, 1981, p. 94).

The primary motivation of this study was to explore how the "liberation" discourse used by the United States in the invasion of Afghanistan contributes to the construction and endurance of cultural hegemony through discourse production. With this aim in mind, the research question was addressed: how and why was hegemonic masculinity manifested through hegemonic discourse and served the cultural hegemony of the US in the invasion of Afghanistan? This question led us to investigate the concept of hegemonic masculinity, as discussed by Connell and Messerschmidt (2005), in relation to the invasion of Afghanistan. It also prompted an exploration of how discourse shapes our perception of reality. This research examined in depth how consent is sought after through the production of relevant discourses and in return how they all served the construction of US cultural hegemony. I also aimed to explain, the complexity and diversity of discursive strategies shaped by the interaction of social dynamics, political discourses and gender dynamics and the notion of Orientalism. As discussed in Chapter 6, the US has historically shaped its political culture and actions through the dichotomy of civilization and barbarism. The discourses built on this distinction have served to legitimize the wars in which the US has been involved throughout its past.

The September 11 attacks were seen by the US as a threat to its national security and its post-Cold War hegemonic status. Additionally, the attacks were viewed as a challenge to American masculinity. To reaffirm its historical identity rooted in masculinity, the US responded globally to the attacks in order to remasculinize American society. The discourses that produced regarding the War on Terror has played a pivotal role in the construction of the US cultural hegemony because it includes the superiority of the West over the East, the superiority of men over women and the superiority of hegemonic men over subordinated men.

In analyzing the US invasion of Afghanistan, Foucault's approach on discourse played a key role, offering a framework to grasp the Bush administration's discursive practices. Foucault highlights the link between power and knowledge, revealing how the discourses that produced in relation to the invasion of Afghanistan both reflect power dynamics and influence public perception. The exploration of connection between discourse and consent sheds light on how the US employs discourse to sustain its dominance.

Connell's notion of hegemonic masculinity has been an important theoretical tool for understanding the discursive strategies of the US invasion of Afghanistan. This study examined how gender, race, orientalism and masculinity were intertwined in the discourses of G.W. Bush and his administration in the US invasion of Afghanistan. I argue that hegemonic masculinity in the US invasion of Afghanistan was realized in two ways in relation to Orientalism. Firstly, the identity of Afghan women was discursively constructed as 'other women' by associating and identifying them only with burqa. This approach defines Afghan women as women who need to be liberated and to eliminate their ontology and to conform to Western standards. This promotes the concept of emphasized femininity and subordinates it to hegemonic masculinity. The production of consent for the construction of US cultural hegemony, therefore, is carried out by claiming to have the power to liberate.

Secondly, the subordination of men who do not conform to the ideal form of masculinity is achieved through the evilization of the enemy in discourses that produced in the US invasion of Afghanistan. The US portrayed the enemy as other and attributed evil characteristics to the enemy in its discourses. Focusing on the dichotomy of civilization and

barbarism in this evilization process, the G.W. Bush administration drew attention to the superiority of Western civilization from an Orientalist framework.

In the light of the main research question, it was concluded that the discourses that manifested hegemonic masculinity in the US invasion of Afghanistan were the discourses that enabled the production of consent to legitimize the invasion in the international community and public opinion. The discourses produced before and after the invasion also masked the material dimension of the invasion and led people to a dichotomy between good doers and evil doers through the West and East distinction and through veiling and unveiling. This approach served the construction and maintenance of cultural hegemony. Moreover, the discourses produced in an orientalist framework created a hierarchy between West and East, and the international community was expected to take a position on the side of the West, specifically the US.

The discursive articulations of freedom and liberation were important in the production of consent for the coercive power that occupied a region to claim hegemony. Given that deeper structural hegemonies determine projects and their boundaries, based on Jonathan Joseph's (2001, 2008) distinction between hegemonic and non-hegemonic, the US hegemonic project is constrained by these deeper structures. As a hegemonic power, the US used discursive manifestations of hegemonic masculinity to gain the consent of the international community and its own public in its invasion of Afghanistan.

Regarding the invasion of Afghanistan, the discourses produced by the G.W. Bush administration (including the senators and members of the Congress) are the result of the intention to establish a discursive hierarchy by asserting the superiority of the West over the East, and persuasion for the production of consent. In the hegemonic discourses produced, hegemonic masculinity is manifested as a cultural ideal and these discourses aim to distort, control and manipulate the ontology of the East through orientalist framework. In this way, it emphasizes the superiority of the West and aims to maintain US hegemony. In this context, the aim of limiting the production of alternative discourses is also evident.

The US historically considered itself to be a nation chosen by God and therefore had a privileged power, adopting the unique role of being the defender of "good against evil" and

"civilization against barbarism" in every war. As international media was an important tool for transmitting discourses to the international community, the US use in every possible way which support its perceived role within Western civilization. Moreover, the visual power of the media was used to reinforce the perception of freedom and modernization that shaped representations of Afghan women through veiling and unveiling. Along with discourses, visual representations functioned as a strategic way to "change the minds of others" (Dijk, 1993, p. 254). In other words, the discourse of "liberation" was discursively aimed at subordinating and marginalizing Afghan women and men.

Gramsci claims that every human being is born a philosopher, but the number of those who realize this philosopher identity is very few (1971, p. 9). In this context, the inability of Afghan women, who are subjected to epistemic violence through "veiling and unveiling" to reveal their philosopher qualities due to structural reasons, that is, due to the subordinating power of hegemonic masculinity, means the neutralization of Afghan women. At the same time, this leads to the West asserting its superiority over the East by using them as a tool to legitimize the invasion.

In sum, the hegemonic discourses produced through the discursive manifestations of hegemonic masculinity have served the US's construction of cultural hegemony. Because the US invasion of Afghanistan served the hegemonic project of the US as intertwined dynamics between orientalism, masculinity and discourse that feed, synthesize, interact and intertwine each other. In this context, the US hegemonic power used the mechanisms of cultural othering, manly behavior and consent producing to disguise military violence in a very effective way.

The US invasion of Afghanistan is a discursively successful operation in terms of putting liberation at the center; however, the abrupt withdrawal of the US from Afghanistan in 2021 failed all of the claims, discursively or otherwise regarding liberation of the country and emancipation of Afghan women from the Taliban. After 20 years of presence of military present in Afghanistan, the US left the country to the mercy of the Taliban again. However sad it might have been, the US withdrawal from Afghanistan erased all the relevant

discourses (i.e. about saving civilization, saving Afghan women, liberating Afghan people, human rights, etc.) as if nothing ever happened and as if nothing ever said.

According to the United Nations Assistance Mission, after the withdrawal of the US-led coalition from Afghanistan in 2021, the situation in the country deteriorated further. As of 2023, Afghanistan continues to face the world's largest humanitarian crisis (Kaliyev, 2023). According to Amnesty International (2023), the Taliban's takeover on August 15, 2021 marked the beginning of a period of serious violations of human rights in Afghanistan, particularly women's rights. The Taliban did not fulfill their promises to protect human rights, especially women's rights and these violations went unpunished. The Taliban continues its gender-based oppression by denying girls the right to education and excluding women from public life.

This study can provide a foundation for future research and offer a more different perspective by building bridges between disciplines of international relations, gender studies and regional studies. In conclusion, the US invasion of Afghanistan is an important example that helps us understand the complexity of discursive strategies and how cultural hegemony is constructed.

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