

Abstract

Civilian harm mitigation and reporting is a mechanism which is used by liberal democracies to illustrate they have taken all measures to prevent harm to civilians during conflict, and therefore abide to principles of Just War theory. However, vast amounts of civilian suffering continue to take place, with no repercussion to the governments at fault, regardless of these technologies. Using the case of the US military during Operation Inherent Resolve in Syria and Iraq from 2014-2018, this research seeks to address this puzzle. In doing so it will attempt to bridge the gap between the work of the US military, and that of non-profit organisations who represent local experiences. This research will make the case that the US militaries failure to construct suffering adequately due to the association of suffering with femininity and the use of masculinised language during conflict. Furthermore, it will illustrate how local knowledge is rejected on the basis of its foundation in emotion and subjectivities which are also associated with femininity. This contradicts the militaries own subjectivities in their decision making found through this research. All in all, this will challenge the ability for the US military to hold the responsibility of mitigating and reporting civilian harm. Making the case that, for civilian harm mitigation and reporting to be genuinely successful, modern conflicts must no longer be constructed along the lines that they can be considered 'just'.