Women of Mass Destruction

Combating Radicalization on the Web

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Brief No. 7.5

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Terrorist groups, such as Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, have invested significant resources in radicalizing Western women from Europe and North America. Women enhance terrorist capabilities by being able to generate greater media attention because their assumed gender roles do not fit the typical profile of a terrorist. These women are also more familiar with Western culture and less likely to generate suspicion because of their gender, increasing the likelihood that they can perpetrate attacks against well-defended targets.

To combat the threat of radicalized Western women, this white paper proposes a two-pronged approach to counter extremist narratives. First, online government campaigns should highlight terrorist atrocities toward women and publicize defector stories of women. Such publicity will undermine popular support for radical groups and emphasize the gap between the negative reality and the positive perception some may have of such groups. Second, governments should encourage private groups to establish an international grant-making foundation dedicated to empowering moderate Muslim voices in communities and online.

Introduction

Women have always played a role in domestic terrorist attacks. They enhance terrorist capabilities by recruiting other women to join the organization, enlarging the size of the group, and increasing the number and type of attacks the organization can conduct because women are able to perpetrate attacks against more well-defended targets.

However, the nature of the terrorist threat is evolving to include new actors and targets. Western women will likely become a new category of perpetrators among transnational terrorist groups, such as Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), where they can serve as useful tactical weapons.[1]

Current policies do not address women as a security threat because they predominantly counter male radicalization through conventional institutions, for example, prisons, universities, and mosques. Western women, instead, radicalize primarily online through social media. And they are difficult to detect online because they wear full-face veils, share few biographical details, and communicate across a range of social network platforms.

This white paper proposes a two-pronged approach that entails: (1) online government campaigns that highlight terrorist atrocities against women and publicize defector stories, and (2) the establishment of an international grant-making foundation. The foundation would empower moderate Muslim voices in communities and online. Together these policies will counter extremist narratives and discourage Western women from radicalizing.

Women Enhance Terrorist Capabilities

Terrorist groups are increasingly employing new technologies and global communications. As a result, any successful innovations quickly spread. One such innovation is the deployment of female bombers. Terrorist groups began using female bombers in 1985.[2] And these women bombers are a tactical advantage now used by many terrorist groups, regardless of their ideology or attitudes toward women.

The Roles of Women in Terrorism

Women enhance terrorist capabilities in three ways. First, they increase both the number and type of attacks that terrorist groups can execute. Second, women expand the size of terrorist organizations, allowing groups to draw recruits from the other half of the population. Lastly, women, as mothers of future terrorists, provide a base of continued support for terrorist groups.

- *Women as fighters, bombers, and leaders.* Women play a variety of roles in terrorist groups: logisticians, suicide bombers, guerrilla fighters, operational leaders, and political vanguard.[3] Typically, women in right-wing terrorist groups are denied leadership positions within the group's core.[4] However, women are still used to carry out attacks because of the need to adapt to new pressures, such as increased checkpoints.[5]

- *Women as recruiters.* Successful attacks executed by women pose a greater security threat because they influence both males and females to carry out more attacks. First, they shame men by calling into question their masculinity, especially in traditional patriarchal societies, and incite more men to join the cause. For example, an Egyptian news article described Wafa Idris, the first Palestinian woman bomber, as worth a thousand men.[6] Second, they serve as an effective role model for other women and cultivate a culture of female martyrdom.[7]

- *Women as mothers of future terrorists.* Several scholars have found that children are more likely to become radicalized if their mothers support terrorist organizations or are terrorists themselves.[8] These children are key to the success of any terrorist group, because they are an essential base of future support.[9]

Women as Lethal Weapons

Women typically increase the number and type of attacks committed by a terrorist organization. In conservative societies, there is more reluctance to search women, and they are able to access targets with greater ease, because they are assumed to be less dangerous.[10] Further, female attackers guarantee media attention because women do not fit the stereotype of a terrorist. Women bombers will continue to shock the world with their attacks as long as these gender perceptions persist. And the greater psychological impact of female attacks enhances the ability of terrorist groups to achieve their political goals.[11]

- *Deadlier attacks*. According to the Suicide Attack Database, women bombers on average kill 10.2 persons, while men kill 8.9 persons.[12] This higher number is partly the result of women being able to gain access to defended sites more easily.[13]

- *Greater media coverage*. The media is an important vehicle for transmitting terrorist messages simultaneously to three different audiences: domestic constituencies, foreign governments, and international public opinion.[14] However, the media falsely assumes that men are more prone to violence and, therefore, are surprised by female acts of terror. The media then responds by speculating on the attacker's possible motivations and publicizing the minute details of her life.[15] This reaction enhances the impact of terrorist attacks committed by women, bringing them to the attention of all three audiences. As a result, the majority of terrorist groups are eager to claim responsibility for attacks executed by females.[16]

- *Larger psychological impact*. Robert Pape argues that suicide terrorism produces a climate of fear among the targeted population.[17] Female suicide bombers amplify this effect because the notion that a woman can kill other women and children is unfathomable. As a result, female acts of terror generate a greater psychological impact.

The Radicalization of Western Women

The radicalization process is occurring more quickly, more widely, and more anonymously in the Internet age, raising the likelihood of surprise attacks by unknown groups whose members and supporters may be difficult to pinpoint.

− Office of the Director of National Intelligence, 2006[18]

According to the Worldwide Threat Assessment of the U.S. Intelligence Community, Syria has become a base of operations for terrorist groups, such as ISIS, to recruit, train, and equip extremists to conduct international attacks.[19] While the majority of these extremists tend to be male, terrorists are investing significant resources in radicalizing Western women.

Western women enhance terrorist capabilities because they—more so even than women recruited from other regions—do not fit the typical profile of a terrorist. Their familiarity with Western culture, language abilities, and access to Western passports make them more mobile than women from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. Western women also wear full-face veils on social media, making them difficult to detect and track. But during an attack these women can assume Western-style dress, allowing them to blend seamlessly with the targeted population.[20]

Western women are radicalized largely through online contacts and relationships.[21] Indeed, according to Peter R. Neumann, Director of the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation (ICSR), "the Internet has been a game changer for women" and "has lowered the threshold for women to become involved."[22] Social media fosters a common identity among the women who are radicalized, regardless of their country of origin or various backgrounds. Umm

Layth, a British woman, posted on Tumblr: "The family you get in exchange for leaving the ones behind are like the pearl in comparison to the Shell you threw away into the foam of the sea which is the Ummah. The reason for this is because your love for one another is purely for the sake of Allah."[23] Thus, the Internet has served to politicize Western women and draw them into international conflicts.[24] For instance, Western women, after joining ISIS and Jabhat al-Nusra, have become embroiled in the Syrian Civil War with the hopes of ousting Bashar al-Assad.[25]

Case Study: Western Women and ISIS

Terrorist organizations with international and territorial aims, such as ISIS, are particularly likely to use Western women to execute attacks. Western women are useful for conducting attacks beyond their terrorist bases—and especially against international targets. Other terrorist groups from the MENA region are geographically limited. For instance, Al-Shabaab is composed of local Somali fighters, who have few aims beyond Somalia.[26] Their foreign fighters are motivated by nationalism and adventurism rather than international jihad.[27] As a result, the recruitment of Western women is less attractive because they are not needed to carry out external attacks.[28]

- *Anti-Western sentiments.* ISIS has a black and white view of the world, which is rooted in the division of territory into *dar al-harb* and *dar al-Islam* by early Islamic jurists.[29] *Dar al-Islam* referred to territory where the Islamic state and law prevailed, whereas *dar al-harb* referred to territory of war that does not have a treaty of nonaggression with Muslims.[30] Currently, this division of territory holds little meaning as Muslims have dispersed into numerous states. Nevertheless, religious-political terrorist groups have appropriated this concept and used it to justify attacks against the West or *dar al-harb*.[31]

- *Territorial aims.* Syria is a strategic base of operations for ISIS due to its proximity to the West and Turkey's porous border. ISIS's current area of control in Syria and Iraq provides it with funds from oil revenue, extortion, and ransom.[32] This revenue allows ISIS to project its influence abroad and pay for some of its recruits' travel expenses. Furthermore, ISIS's territorial holdings provide terrorists with a safe haven, regardless of how horrific their attacks, as long as they claim to be Sunni Muslims.[33] Although ISIS's area of control has been greatly exaggerated for propaganda, it remains a dangerous threat to regional stability. ISIS fighters claim in their propaganda videos that they will break all Middle East borders to establish control over Jerusalem.[34]

- *International aims.* To date, ISIS has focused its resources on "the near enemy," and thus, it threatens U.S. allies in the MENA region.[35] However, the coalition and airstrikes against ISIS have shifted ISIS's focus to attacking "the far enemy," renewing its calls for lone wolf attacks in the West.[36]

ISIS's tactics may very well become a model for future terrorist groups, which means that other groups—those with similar territorial and international aims—will also seek to radicalize Western women. These Western women serve as tactical weapons against the West because of

assumptions regarding their gender and their familiarity with Western culture. As the number of radicalized Western women grows, so will the threat posed to U.S. security.

Western Women as the ISIS Advantage

Since its inception in 2013, ISIS has focused on female recruitment and the recruitment of Western women, in particular. Currently, ten percent of ISIS's total foreign fighters are female and at least 550 Western women have joined.[37]

Earlier this year, for example, two Austrian sisters were recruited by ISIS and traveled to Syria.[38] They are now poster-girls for ISIS, and their identities are used widely online to attract other Western females, particularly adolescents.[39] Western women are also seen as more dedicated recruits, since they willingly adopted ISIS's ideology.[40] Western women are given more elevated positions in ISIS than MENA women. These positions include becoming members of all-female policing brigades and running brothels, both of which require basic weapons training.[41] And earlier last fall, ISIS twice sought to trade captives for Aafia Siddiqui, a Western woman serving 86 years in prison for the attempted murder of American agents.[42] The FBI identified Siddiqui as "an Al-Qaeda operative and facilitator," and she became the Most Wanted Woman in the World.[43] This move underscores the important role for Western women within ISIS: as perpetrators of terrorist attacks.

Even so, the West maintains a narrative regarding Western women recruits as victims and "jihadi brides," who are motivated by "naïve romanticism."[44] Western media has also concluded that these women will not carry out attacks by pointing to ISIS's own stated goals—that their only purpose is to care for male fighters and populate the state.[45] Hence, if ISIS were to deploy Western female attackers, it would result in an added shock value.

An Inadequate U.S. Response to the Radicalization of Western Women

There is currently no specific policy designed to combat female radicalization in the West.[46] Instead, states craft general policies for preventing radicalization. This approach is problematic because, while men and women may be motivated similarly, the methods used to radicalize each are sometimes gendered. That is, ISIS appeals to each sex differently, as evidenced by its separate media campaigns for men and women.[47]

The greatest majority of Western female foreign fighters are from France, the United Kingdom, and the United States.[48] Western counter-radicalization programs and preventative initiatives can be divided into two broad categories: (1) general initiatives and (2) targeted interventions.[49] Counter-radicalization is a catch-all term that includes de-radicalization, disengagement, and radicalization prevention.[50] General initiatives aim to make at-risk societal groups less susceptible to terrorist recruitment efforts, while targeted interventions focus on individuals believed to be at risk of adopting pro-terrorist ideologies. The U.S. preventative initiatives fall into the first category.

The United States' Current Approach to Building Community Resilience

The U.S. counter-radicalization program focuses on "empowering American communities and their local partners in their grassroots efforts to prevent violent extremism."[51] Washington claims that communities are best placed to recognize and confront the threat of violent extremists, because terrorists target their children, families, and neighbors.[52] Rather than creating new institutions, the United States builds on existing models, such as the comprehensive gang model, which is driven by local stakeholders and supported by the federal government.[53] The resulting counter-radicalization program essentially increases the scope of and funding to the gang model to address violent extremism.

Limitations of Current U.S. Counter-radicalization Programs

However, U.S. government officials acknowledge that these efforts often fail to gain traction.[54] The difficulty remains in countering violent extremism domestically, since Muslim communities have lost faith in Washington.[55] Referencing Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson's visit to the Noor Islamic Cultural Center, Linda Sarsour, the director of the Arab American Association in New York stated, "I don't know how we can have a partnership with the same government that spies on you."[56] Furthermore, the United States' focus on building community resilience is ineffective for tackling the radicalization of Muslim converts. Converts are scattered across the country and are already well integrated into Western society.

Because the U.S. counter-radicalization program focuses on preventing radicalization in prisons, universities, and mosques, it does not adequately address the radicalization of Western women, who are radicalized primarily online. Further, because women's increased participation in religious-political terrorist groups is the result of the Internet, their radicalization is difficult to detect and highly individualistic.[57]

In December 2013, the U.S. State Department's Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications attempted to address online radicalization by launching the "Think Again Turn Away Campaign."[58] The main function of the $6 million campaign is to counter terrorist propaganda.[59] Nevertheless, the campaign fails to address three main components.[60]

- *Viewership.* The campaign does not reach the appropriate audience because Western women do not engage with the core of terrorist groups. Instead, they reach out to other women through various social media accounts that are difficult to follow. For instance, Umm Layth's Tumblr account gives Western women advice on how to travel to Syria through Turkey.[61] She also invites women who are seriously considering the trip to contact her individually.[62] This form of communication builds social networks that are difficult to infiltrate. Most tellingly, terrorist websites and social media accounts receive more views and followers than the State Department's campaign.[63]

- *Messenger.* The aftermath of September 11, 2001 has led to a significant increase in discrimination against Muslims; consequently, Muslim communities have lost faith in the United States. Therefore, Washington is not in a position to speak to potential recruits or

sympathizers among Muslims. Although Richard Stengel, Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, supports the State Department's campaign, he acknowledges, "We're not always the best messenger for our message."[64]

- *Content*. The "Think Again Turn Away Campaign" emphasizes the horrors of the daily life of terrorists. While this content would dissuade the Western public, it appeals to potential male and female recruits as a glamorous lifestyle that sensationalizes brutality. For instance, ISIS women post photos on their social media accounts that display a combination of violence and domesticity—images of suicide belts and severed heads are juxtaposed with images of Nutella and kittens.[65]

Policy Recommendation

Messages promoting violent extremism flood cyberspace; ISIS alone generates an average of 90,000 extremist messages per day.[66] Online radicalization, therefore, should be countered with comprehensive yet flexible policies. This white paper proposes a two-pronged approach to counter extremist narratives. First, governments should disempower extremists by publicizing atrocities against women and defector stories. Second, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) should empower moderate Muslims through community and online-based projects that amplify their voices. This two-pronged approach recognizes that governments are not always the best messengers to address potential recruits. And the best messengers do not always possess the necessary intelligence to discredit terrorist groups from within. Therefore, this approach capitalizes on the strengths of both governments and grassroots efforts.

Figure 1: Countering Extremist Narratives
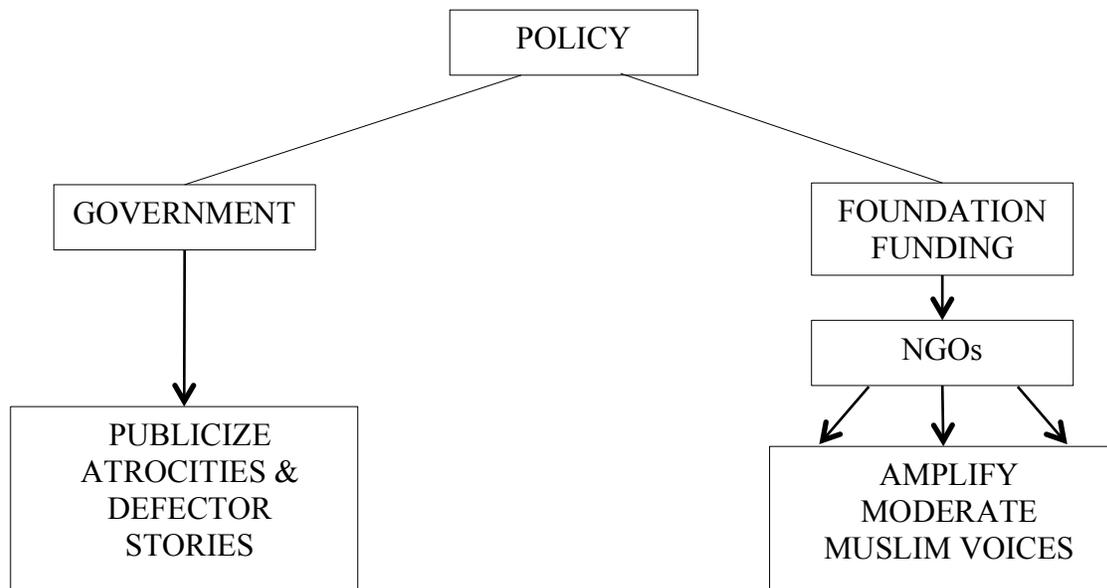
The Role of Governments: Disempowering the Extremists

Governments should disempower extremists by countering their narratives through online public information campaigns. These campaigns should highlight terrorist atrocities toward women and publicize stories from women who defect. Disseminating this information will help to undermine popular support for radical groups and emphasize the gap between the negative reality and the positive perception some women have of these groups.

- *Violence against women.* The government underplays the widespread rape, underage marriages, and countless abuses against women and girls perpetrated by terrorist organizations.[67] Instead, Washington should track and publicize these atrocities as the reality of terror tactics.[68] Sara Khan, the director of Inspire, a women's rights and counter-terrorism organization, states that we must acknowledge "the relationship that exists between extremism and the lack of women's rights," since "extremists are keen to disempower and marginalize women."[69]

- *Limited role of women.* The U.S. government should publicize how women are mistreated by terrorist organizations. Its intelligence agencies could search current terrorists' social media accounts for posts that portray the boredom, infighting, and oppression faced by foreign fighters. For instance, Umm Layth states in her Tumblr posts, "You will have too much free time here" and "learn how to wash your clothes by hand."[70] Other Western women have also described their interactions with the "native" people or the Syrians as being unpleasant.[71] They mock Syrian women and in some cases subjugate them because Syrian women question their notion of sisterhood and identity.[72]

- *Rise in defectors.* The negative experiences of terrorist defectors should be widely reported. Terrorist defectors have credibility because they have undergone the radicalization process, understand terrorist recruitment, and have experienced the hypocrisy of terrorist groups. But terrorist defectors are unattractive partners for NGOs. Even for governments, it is virtually impossible to allow defectors to return home after they have traveled to a terrorist base. However, Washington could publicize the stories of defectors and current members, who are pleading to come home via the Internet and social media. The government could record these types of posts before the accounts are blocked and highlight them in their online campaigns. These posts would address one of the main critiques of the U.S. "Think Again Turn Away" campaign's content, which glamorizes terrorism and only widens the gap between the negative reality and positive perceptions that some may have.

The Role of NGOs: Empowering the Moderates

Governments should encourage private groups to establish an international grant-making foundation dedicated to amplifying moderate Muslim voices in communities and online. As was evident during the Arab Uprisings, the collective moderate voice can be large and unified. David Patel argues that Egyptians had been protesting the brutal regime of Hosni Mubarak by the thousands for over a decade. However, due to decades of preference falsification, Egyptians were

unable to collectively estimate the size of the opposition and feared government crackdown.[73] It was not until January 2011 that the Egyptians adopted a model "that made it easy for them to see how many others had joined the opposition."[74] Patel terms this model "The Tahrir Square Model," since protest groups were able to organize large demonstrations in a central square. And members of the opposition could then monitor the size of the movement by watching the news, visiting Tahrir, or hearing reports from family and friends.[75]

There are also numerous NGOs and Muslim groups dedicated to countering extremist narratives. However, moderate Muslims have yet to come across a means to estimate the size of their movement and coordinate their actions. But these moderate Muslim voices do exist. Their efforts need to be unified to create a "revolutionary bandwagon" similar to the one generated by the Egyptian opposition.[76]

These moderate voices could be empowered through an international grant-making foundation. While the funds may be collected from a variety of sources, the key to this foundation is that it should remain independent from the U.S. government to bolster its legitimacy.[77] NGOs may apply for funds to support projects that amplify moderate voices in their communities and online. These projects should first be based in the West to ensure the security of participants and to hold them accountable. The foundation could hold participating NGOs or Muslim communities accountable through performance monitoring and data collection.[78] The success of online projects can easily be measured through a variety of social media tracking and analytic tools. Once the foundation is established in the West, it can begin to fund projects in other regions of the world.

Examples of Project Types

The foundation should support a number of different project types, as long as their main focus is on amplifying moderate Muslim voices:

- *Countering theological narratives in local communities*. Many local mosques and community members are ill equipped to counter the theological narratives used by extremists. One possible community-based project could involve teaching community members those counter-narratives, since simply condemning extremism is not enough.[79] Some extremists are motivated by promised rewards of heaven established by the existing culture of martyrdom. Counter-narratives would help break down this belief by emphasizing the extremists' limited understanding of religious texts. While the majority of Western women are radicalized online, a project of this type, in conjunction with other projects, will allow parents to take proactive measures and to start the conversation about radicalization with their children early.

- *Achieving hashtag popularity*. A number of terrorist groups operate Twitter accounts, through which they are able to disseminate their views and communicate with their supporters. Blocking these Twitter accounts is not an effective solution, since new ones are almost immediately created. A potential online project could include the

establishment of Twitter accounts by tech-savvy NGOs. The NGOs' main goals would be to get hashtags, like #UnIslamic State, trending and to maintain their online momentum.[80]

- *Unifying the moderates to form a large opposition.* ISIS employs a social media strategy to spread and control its message.[81] They developed a Twitter app that was previously available through the Google Play store.[82] Users who downloaded the app agreed to share a fair amount of personal data with ISIS. ISIS's social media operators then controlled the accounts and the content posted to them. In addition, the tweets were spaced out to avoid Twitter's spam detection.[83] One online project could be a similar app developed by an NGO, which could generate messages reflecting Islamic ethics of war based on the Quran and authentic sources of *hadith*, or sayings of the Prophet Muhammad. Other NGOs receiving or applying for funds along with funders, community groups, and individuals could sign up for the app. The app could post tweets in response to trending extremist hashtags.

  This strategy is in line with what Anne Aly, Dana Weimann-Saks, and Gabriel Weimann describe as making 'noise' online.[84] This noise can be mechanical/technological or psychological/social and will interfere with terrorist media campaigns.[85] They argue that the Internet is a powerful tool for online psychological campaigns that attract users and try to shape their attitudes.[86] However, before an effective campaign of this nature is launched, the individuals involved must know the profiles of potential recruits and the messages that will likely affect them.[87] NGOs and Muslim groups proposing projects, such as the app, are best positioned to know the content that will most likely affect potential recruits or sympathizers.

Conclusion

The online radicalization of Western women poses a critical security threat to Western countries. These women will likely become the next category of perpetrators among transnational terrorist groups. Their familiarity with Western culture allows them to blend seamlessly with the targeted population, enabling them to commit more and deadlier attacks. And since Western women do not fit the typical profile of a terrorist, their attacks have a larger psychological impact.

Although the United States has made an effort to counter radicalization, current policies focus predominantly on how men are radicalized, which is through conventional institutions. However, the radicalization of Western women, which is mainly through social media, has not received adequate attention. Female radicalization must be countered with a two-pronged approach that capitalizes on the strengths of governments and NGOs. Governments should publicize terrorist atrocities and defector stories, and NGOS should amplify moderate Muslim voices. This approach would be more effective than current approaches, because it counters extremist narratives, while simultaneously amplifying the voices of moderate Muslims.

Extremist narratives are flooding the Web and thousands of young women and men have become radicalized. Washington should not only condemn those narratives but also counter them. If this

problem of radicalization remains unaddressed, then the radicalization process will occur more quickly and more widely, raising the likelihood of surprise attacks against the West.

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[1] Western women are broadly referred to as women from the North America and Western European countries. The main qualifier is that these women speak the language of their respective countries and hold Western citizenship. There has been much discussion over what to call the terror group. I refer to the group as ISIS throughout my paper. Although the more accurate title is Al-Dawla Al-Islamiya fi al-Iraq wa al-Sham (DAISH), the term ISIS situates the group in Iraq and Syria based on its territorial holdings in comparison to using the term Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). I also prefer ISIS to Islamic State (IS) since IS legitimizes the group beyond its few land holdings. The distinction between the terms is not that great. For a more in-depth conversation over the debate see: Ishaan Tharoor, "ISIS or ISIL? The Debate over What to Call Iraq's Terror Group," *Washington Post*, June 18, 2014, http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/worldviews/wp/2014/06/18/isis-or-isil-the-debate-over-what-to-call-iraqs-terror-group/.

[2] The first female bomber was sixteen year old Khyadali Sana, who was a member of the Syrian Social Nationalist Party. Sana killed two soldiers by driving a truck into an Israeli Defense Force convoy in Lebanon. Her motive was to "avenge the oppressive enemy." See: Clara Beyler, "Chronology of Suicide Bombings Carried out by Women," International Institute for Counter-Terrorism, December 2, 2003, http://www.ict.org.il/Article.aspx?ID=855.

[3] Kim Cragin and Sara A. Daly, *Women as Terrorists: Mothers, Recruiters, and Martyrs* (Santa Barbara: Praeger Security International, 2009), 105-106.

[4] Women are an unforeseen security threat because of the assumptions surrounding their gender. It is assumed that they are politically and militantly less capable of carrying out terrorist attacks. Furthermore, an assumption is also made that women within Islamist groups are oppressed and disenfranchised. As a result, women's involvement and capabilities in these groups are greatly underestimated.

[5] Mia Bloom, *Bombshell: The Many Faces of Women Terrorists*, 211.

[6] Paige Whaley Eager, *From Freedom Fighters to Terrorists: Women's Roles in Political Violence*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 188-189.

[7] This culture of female martyrdom is more established in the Middle East than in other regions of the world, such as South East Asia. These female martyrs receive many of the same praises as men. Posters are made of them dressed in the same male regalia. Additionally, their departing videos follow the same script as men. While there is no account of men receiving 72 virgins in the Quran, extremist groups have maintained this reward to entice young males. However, an equivalent reward has also been established for females as well. Terrorists tell would-be female martyrs that they will be the chiefs of the 72 virgins, the fairest of the fair. In addition, these women are told that any of their sexual deviances on this earth will be forgiven and they will be pure in heaven.

[8] See: Kim Cragin and Sara A. Daly, *Women as Terrorists: Mothers, Recruiters, and Martyrs* (Santa Barbara: Praeger Security International, 2009); Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006); and Jessica Davis, "Women and terrorism in radical Islam: Planners, perpetrators, patrons," (May 2006).

[9] Peter Singer, "The New Children of Terror," in *The Making of a Terrorist: Recruitment, Training, and Root Causes*, by James J. F. Forest (Westport: Praeger Security International, 2006), 105-108. Western women are not only supporting the radical ideologies of men but, in some cases, are even implementing them as schoolteachers. Currently, Raqqa, Syria is depopulated of moderates. As a result, ISIS ideology is becoming more naturalized. The ratio of female teachers to children is having a multiplier effect on the number of possible terrorists. Raqqa has become an incubator for breeding radicalized children. See: Ahmad Khalil, "A Teacher in Raqqa, Living Under ISIS Rule," *Syria Deeply*, November 18, 2014, http://www.syriadeeply.org/articles/2014/11/6391/teacher-raqqa-living-isis-rule/.

[10] Audrey Kurth Cronin, *Terrorists and Suicide Attacks*, 2003, Accessed March 22, 2015, 12, http://fas.org/irp/crs/RL32058.pdf. Most famously, a woman bomber killed Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1991. The woman bomber was wearing explosives under her clothing that made it appear as if she was pregnant.

[11] Robert A. Pape, "The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism," *American Political Science Review* 97, no. 3 (2003), 344.

[12] Chicago Project on Security and Terrorism (CPOST), 2015, Suicide Attack Database (February 27, 2015 Release), Retrieved from http://cpostdata.uchicago.edu/.

[13] Mia Bloom argues that some women have passed through checkpoints with explosives strapped to their bodies by wearing loose clothing or feigning pregnancies, especially in areas where searching women is taboo.

[14] Boaz Ganor, *The Counter-Terrorism Puzzle: A Guide for Decision Makers* (New Brunswick, NJ & London: Transaction, 2005), 235-236.

[15] Barbara Victor, *Army of Roses: Inside the World of Palestinian Women Suicide Bombers*, 21-27.

[16] Mia Bloom, "Female Suicide Bombers: A Global Trend," *Daedalus* 136, no. 1 (Winter 2007): 5. After the first female Palestinian suicide bomber, Wafa Idris, the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades formed its own special units to train female suicide bombers, and scores of young women were ready to sacrifice themselves for the national struggle. As a result, other groups along the Palestinian political spectrum invested in women bombers.

[17] Robert A. Pape, "The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism," 343-361. There have also been countless studies linking the effects of watching 9/11 media coverage and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). In addition, the Subway Sarin Incident of 1995 by Aum Shinrikyo led to scores of the "worried well" reporting to hospitals. Surveys of the victims showed that many were still suffering from PTSD. See: Olson, Kyle, "Aum Shinrikyo: Once And Future Threat?" *Emerging Infectious Diseases* 5, no. 4 (1999): 513-516.

[18] Sergio E. Sanchez, *The Internet and the Radicalization of Muslim Women,* Western Political Science Association, (April 2014), 12.

[19] United States, Office of the Director of National Intelligence, *Statement for the Record: Worldwide Threat Assessment of the US Intelligence Community,* by James R. Clapper, January 29, 2014, 4, http://www.dni.gov/files/documents/Intelligence%20Reports/2014%20WWTA%20%20SFR_SSCI_29_Jan.pdf.

[20] Barbara Victor, *Army of Roses: Inside the World of Palestinian Women Suicide Bombers*, 21-27. Victor explains how the first female Palestinian suicide bomber wore Western style clothing as she walked the streets of Jerusalem.

[21] Gus Martin, *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Terrorism, Second Edition* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2011), 631.

[22] Katarina Montgomery, "Through Social Media, ISIS Sympathizers Draw Foreign Fighters to the Battlefield," *Syria Deeply*, December 22, 2014, http://www.syriadeeply.org/articles/2014/12/6525/social-media-isis-sympathizers-draw-foreign-fighters-battlefield/.

[23] Carolyn Hoyle, Alexandra Bradford, and Ross Frenett, "Becoming Mulan? Female Western Migrants to ISIS," ISD report, January 2015, 24, http://www.strategicdialogue.org/ISDJ2969_Becoming_Mulan_01.15_WEB.PDF.

[24] Gus Martin, *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Terrorism*, 631.

[25] Chris Hughes, "British Women among Hundreds of UK Jihadists Fighting Brutal Holy War in Syria," *The Mirror*, April 24, 2014, http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/syria-conflict-british-women-among-3453236.

[26] Stephanie Sanok, "From Al Shabaab to Al Nusra: How Westerners Joining Terror Groups Overseas Affects the Homeland" (address, Statement before the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Homeland Security, Cannon House Office Building, Washington, October 9, 2013), 2-3, http://csis.org/files/attachments/ts131009_kostro.pdf.

[27] Stephanie Sanok, "From Al Shabaab to Al Nusra: How Westerners Joining Terror Groups Overseas Affects the Homeland," 2-3.

[28] There are conflicting reports of whether or not Samantha Lewthwaite or the White Widow played a role in the 2013 Westgate shopping mall attack in Kenya. However, the Al-Shabab maintained that no women played a role in the attack.

[29] Walid Phares, *Future Jihad: Terrorist Strategies against the West* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 26-28.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Graeme Wood, "What ISIS Really Wants," *The Atlantic*, March 2015, http://www.theatlantic.com/features/archive/2015/02/what-isis-really-wants/384980/.

[32] Karen Leigh, "ISIS Makes Up To $3 Million a Day Selling Oil, Analysts Say," *Syria Deeply*, July 28, 2014, http://www.syriadeeply.org/articles/2014/07/5856/isis-3-million-day-selling-oil-analysts/.

[33] Erin Banco, "How Hayat Boumeddiene Entered Syria and Is Avoiding Detection," *International Business Times*, January 12, 2015, http://www.ibtimes.com/how-hayat-boumeddiene-entered-syria-avoiding-detection-1781334.

[34] "ISIS Fighter Says Group Will 'Break All Borders to Reach Jerusalem'" *The Jerusalem Post*, June 30, 2014, http://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/Watch-ISIS-fighter-says-they-will-break-all-borders-to-reach-Jerusalem-361019.

[35] Fawaz A. Gerges, *The Far Enemy: Why Jihad Went Global* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 1-15; Scott Shane and Ben Hubbard, "ISIS Displaying a Deft Command of Varied Media," *The New York Times*,

August 30, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/31/world/middleeast/isis-displaying-a-deft-command-of-varied-media.html?_r=0.

[36] Scott Shane and Ben Hubbard, "ISIS Displaying a Deft Command of Varied Media."

[37] Steven Erlanger, "In West, ISIS Finds Women Eager to Enlist," *The New York Times*, October 23, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/24/world/europe/as-islamists-seek-to-fill-ranks-more-western-women-answer-their-call.html?_r=1.

[38] Adam Withnall, "ISIS's Teenage Austrian Poster Girl Jihadi Brides 'Have Changed Their Minds and Want to Come Home'" *The Independent*, October 12, 2014, http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/isiss-austrian-poster-girl-jihadi-brides-have-changed-their-minds-and-want-to-come-home-9789547.html.

[39] Ibid.

[40] "UK Female Jihadists Run ISIS Sex-slave Brothels," *El Arabiya News*, September 12, 2014, http://english.alarabiya.net/en/variety/2014/09/12/UK-female-jihadists-run-ISIS-sex-slave-brothels.html.

[41] While ISIS's ideology appears to be unchanging, it is in fact quite flexible. ISIS feared the possibility of males dressed as females attempting to infiltrate the group. As a result, ISIS formed all-female policing brigades, al-Khansaa and Umm al-Rayaan. The brigades' main task is to search women and enforce a strict dress code. A distinction must be made between Western women and women from the MENA region. ISIS has produced Arabic videos geared towards Middle Eastern women. The videos continue to remind Middle Eastern women of their appropriate duties, which are limited mainly to the domestic sphere.

[42] Sally Jacobs, "The Woman ISIS Wanted Back," *The Boston Globe*, December 28, 2014, http://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2014/12/27/aafia/T1A0evotz4pbEf5U3vfLKJ/story.html.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Katherine Brown, "Analysis: Why Are Western Women Joining Islamic State?," *BBC News*, October 6, 2014, http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-29507410.

[45] "Hungry ISIS Fighters Just Want Their Wives to Cook Pancakes," *New York Post*, November 29, 2014, http://nypost.com/2014/11/29/hungry-isis-fighters-just-want-their-wives-to-cook-pancakes/.

[46] Center for Human Rights and Global Justice, "Women and Preventing Violent Extremism: The U.S. and U.K. Experiences," (New York: NYU School of Law, 2012), 6.

[47] "Hungry ISIS Fighters Just Want Their Wives to Cook Pancakes," *New York Post*.

[48] "Saudis Most Likely to Join ISIS, 10% of Group's Fighters Are Women," *Middle East Monitor*, October 20, 2014, https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/news/middle-east/14758-saudis-most-likely-to-join-isis-10-of-groups-fighters-are-women.

[49] James Brandon and Lorenzo Vidino, "European Experiences in Counterradicalization," Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, June 21, 2012, https://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/european-experiences-in-counterradicalization.

[50] This paper borrows the definition of counter-radicalization used in an ICSR report on countering radicalization in Europe. For more terminological clarifications see: James Brandon and Lorenzo Vidino, "Countering Radicalization in Europe," ICSR report, 2012, 8-9, http://icsr.info/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/ICSR-Report-Countering-Radicalization-in-Europe.pdf.

[51] Ed Husain, "Low Bar Set in U.S. Counterradicalization Strategy," Council on Foreign Relations, August 4, 2011. http://www.cfr.org/radicalization-and-extremism/low-bar-set-us-counterradicalization-strategy/p25593.

[52] United States, The President of the United States, *Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States,* by Barack Obama, August 2011, 3-5, https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/empowering_local_partners.pdf.

[53] United States, The President of the United States, *Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States,* 4.

[54] Eric Schmitt, "U.S. Is Trying to Counter ISIS's Efforts to Lure Alienated Young Muslims," *The New York Times*, October 4, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/05/us/us-is-trying-to-counter-isiss-efforts-to-lure-alienated-young-muslims.html?_r=1.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Sergio E. Sanchez, *The Internet and the Radicalization of Muslim Women,* Western Political Science Association, (April 2014), 8-11.

[58] Adam Taylor, "State Department Suggests Syrian Regime Soldier a Hero in Stray Retweet," *The Washington Post*, October 22, 2014, http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/worldviews/wp/2014/10/22/state-department-suggests-syrian-regime-soldier-a-hero-in-stray-retweet/.

[59] Ibid; Rita Katz, "The State Department's Twitter War With ISIS Is Embarrassing," *Time*, September 16, 2014, http://time.com/3387065/isis-twitter-war-state-department/.

[60] I focus mainly on the U.S. counter-radicalization programs, even though the greatest share of Western fighters are from France and the United Kingdom, since the majority of Western programs are similar and suffer from the same problems. In France, counterterrorism investigation is synonymous with criminal investigation. As a result, France increases its police and intelligence presence in light of terrorist attacks. Also, the deep roots of French secularism and its colonial history have led to the marginalization of Muslim communities. ISIS has capitalized on this feeling of marginalization, especially with women, by endorsing the face veil that France banned in 2010.

France has the greatest gap among reality and perception of the presence of Muslims in all of Europe. According to a Pew Research poll conducted in 2010, only 8 percent of French residents identify as Muslims, while the average guess was 23 percent. This distortion has instilled fear among the French. Therefore, the French government has responded to the recent Charlie Hebdo attacks by launching a $480 million initiative to combat extremism. The new counter-terrorism efforts include a $60 million online presence, "Stop Djihadisme." This online presence resembles the U.S. State Department's online campaign. While the State Department welcomed France's campaign, it will likely suffer from the same criticisms experienced by the U.S. campaign.

The United Kingdom first attempted a grand preventative program. However, this program is flawed because it generates a feeling of suspicion between Muslim communities and the state. The U.K.'s anti-terrorist hotline relies on public reports of terrorist activities, which could cause Muslims to become vulnerable to the discrimination of British people.

Helen Ball, Senior National Coordinator for Counter Terrorism Policing, urged women in particular to report citizens who may travel to Syria or have become violent radicals. This maternal strategy fails to explain why many women join their spouses in traveling to Iraq or Syria. Family members are pitted against each other and feel as if they are recruited informants. In addition, it exacerbates the gender divide by assuming that women are incapable of carrying out political acts of violence in both European countries and the United States. The Home Office denies the multiple roles of women in terrorism. Even those that remain in the United Kingdom may still be ISIS sympathizers, since the number of Western women traveling to Syria and Iraq is not indicative of the total number of women becoming radicalized. ISIS has already begun its appeal for lone wolf attacks.

[61] Umm Layth, http://fa-tubalilghuraba.tumblr.com [last accessed 28 November 2014]

[62] Ibid.

[63] U.S. Department of State, "Think Again Turn Away," https://twitter.com/thinkagain_dos. Currently,

[64] *State Department Faces Criticism in Uphill Social Media War Against Islamic State Group*, by Gwen Ifill, PBS Newshour, October 22, 2014, http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/islamic-state-lures-teens-social-media/.

[65] Katherine Brown, "Analysis: Why Are Western Women Joining Islamic State?"

[66] Eric Schmitt, "U.S. Intensifies Effort to Blunt ISIS's Message."

[67] Aki Peritz and Tara Maller, "The Islamic State of Sexual Violence," *Foreign Policy*, September 16, 2014. http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/09/16/the-islamic-state-of-sexual-violence/.

[68] Ibid.

[69] Sara Khan, "ISIS and Women's Rights," Lecture, from Kraemer Middle East Distinguished Scholar-in-Residence, Williamsburg, March 4, 2015.

[70] Umm Layth.

[71] See: "UK Female Jihadists Run ISIS Sex-slave Brothels," *El Arabiya News*; Carolyn Hoyle, Alexandra Bradford, and Ross Frenett, "Becoming Mulan? Female Western Migrants to ISIS," 25.

[72] Carolyn Hoyle, Alexandra Bradford, and Ross Frenett, "Becoming Mulan? Female Western Migrants to ISIS," 25.

[73] David S. Patel, "Preference Falsification, Revolutionary Coordination, and The Tahrir Square Model," in *The Annual Proceedings of the Wealth and Well-Being of Nations*, ed. Joshua C. Hall, vol. 5 (2013), 62.

[74] Ibid., 62-63.

[75] Ibid., 62.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Abdullah F. Ansary, "Combating Extremism: A Brief Overview of Saudi Arabia's Approach," *Middle East Policy Council* XV, no. 2 (Summer 2008), http://www.mepc.org/journal/middle-east-policy-archives/combating-extremism-brief-overview-saudi-arabias-approach?print.

[78] Performance monitoring and data collection are both measures that the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation use to hold participants accountable.

[79] The project type mentioned is one aspect of Sara Khan's Inspire campaign in the United Kingdom

[80] This hashtag would be based off of the name that British Muslims urged UK Prime Minister David Cameron to use instead of Islamic State. Other hashtags could highlight the growing opposition to ISIS, similar to Sara Khan's #MakingAStand campaign.

[81] J.M. Berger, "How ISIS Games Twitter," *The Atlantic*, June 16, 2014, http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2014/06/isis-iraq-twitter-social-media-strategy/372856/.

[82] Ibid.

[83] Ibid.

[84] Anne Aly, Dana Weimann-Saks, and Gabriel Weimann, "Making 'Noise' Online: An Analysis of the Say No to Terror Online Campaign,"*Perspectives on Terrorism* 8, no. 5 (2014), http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/376/html.

[85] Ibid.

[86] Ibid.

[87] Ibid.